Nick Carter spent five years in the Army as an Infantry Officer with the 101st Airborne Division and served two tours to Iraq. He left the service in 2007 and joined the corporate world as a warehouse manager. Yet he quickly realized that it wasn’t for him. After two years and a short stint in a sales job, his parents offered him an opportunity to assist them with their cleaning business in a different state. “I started to help them with their business and quickly realized the opportunity that existed in this industry,” he says. In 2009, he started his own company, Pro Quality Cleaning.

“I’m not afraid of making mistakes, and I’m not afraid of my employees making mistakes, as long as the same mistake isn’t repeated, and we learn from them.”

When you started your company, you were the only employee. What did you learn during that time that you still keep in mind today as president? I learned so much! It was tough work. More than anything, I learned a true appreciation of the hard work that our janitors put in. I’m better able to put myself in their shoes and see things from their perspective.

You have a number of industry designations. How have these impacted your career, and what advice do you have for others who may be considering certification? Striving to be the best in whatever it is I do has always been important to me. The designations I’ve earned have been incredibly valuable in providing me working knowledge and expertise. It’s helped me to build a better business, provide better services to customers, and more importantly, it has helped me develop our other employees to be better managers and leaders. I highly recommend industry certifications for anybody who wants to have a successful career in this industry.
What advice do you have for new BSCs coming into the industry?
If a new BSC wants to find long-term success in this industry, then he or she needs to understand that lasting success in this business is a marathon, not a sprint. Since this industry is labor-intensive, he or she needs to understand that they'll be dealing with many different types of people and personalities and should be prepared to handle each in the appropriate manner. Also, a new BSC needs to truly embrace this industry and take advantage of the many professional learning opportunities that the BSCAI, IICRC and ISSA provide.

How do you create a great company culture for your team members?
I'm not afraid of making mistakes, and I'm not afraid of my employees making mistakes, as long as the same mistake isn't repeated, and we learn from them. That's really the only way to improve and get better — by executing, adjusting and executing again.

What is the best piece of advice you've received in your career?
There's a saying I've heard before: "A good plan now is better than a perfect plan tomorrow." It's advice that I've used when moving our business towards our long-term goals.

When it comes to your own staff, how would you describe your leadership style?
There's a great saying I learned in the Army as an Infantry Officer: "Mission first, people always." The mission always needs to be taken into consideration when making decisions, especially tough decisions, but people and their emotions also need to be taken into consideration.

You also give back to the youth in your community through education. Why is that important to you?
I'm passionate about business education. A lot of today's youth don't always receive the best financial or business advice in their schools or homes, so I do what I can to help educate today's youth, who will be tomorrow's business and political leaders.