Steve Garcia, CBSE, Discusses the Changes in the Industry

Name: Steve Garcia, CBSE
Title: Executive Vice President & General Manager
Company: SMI Facility Services

Steve Garcia, CBSE, had been working as a senior installation tech at a national electronic security company when his older brother, Val, president of SMI, approaching him about joining the business. That was in 1992, only four months after SMI had opened its doors, and Steve — ready for a change — gladly accepted the opportunity to help build and grow the company. Now, 21 years later, Steve is executive vice president and general manager at SMI Facility Services. Here, he discusses the changes he’s seen since his time in the industry as well as the importance of being a part of organizations like BSCAI.

SMI Facility Services has been in business since 1992. What have you seen change in the BSC industry since SMI was founded?

There have been many changes in the industry — some good and some bad. The advancement of technology in equipment, chemicals and processes has been great for the industry. In my opinion, it has helped separate true professional cleaning companies from the rest.

But due to stiff competition, economy and other factors, the monetary value of BSC services overall has been degraded. It’s been proven that our service is the most important factor in keeping the customers’ workforce healthy and operable, yet its budget is usually the first to be cut or streamlined.

What does SMI do to create memorable customer experiences?

I know it sounds cliché, but true customer service is what I feel makes a memorable experience. Our most energetic and positive people have to be the first line of communication with our customers. We teach the ability to make a negative situation into a positive one.
How would you describe your management style?

I feel my management style is somewhere between democratic and chaotic. I strongly believe in results-oriented management and that keeping an employee within a box or parameters, in some cases, can limit their true potential.

What traits do you look for when hiring?

While the ability to perform the job function is key to success, the ability to fit into our culture is also important. We are looking for individuals who can work within a team environment and can bring positive attributes to the company.

What factors contribute to a great corporate culture?

I feel that a strong work/life balance, values and attitudes coupled with a good work environment are key factors in a great corporate culture.

How does participation in organizations like BSCAI help you in your business?

BSCAI participation by far is the reason for SMI’s success. We have been a member since day one and have developed personal and business relationships with many other companies in BSCAI. We have partnered with fellow members in contracts throughout the southwest. We are also part of a peer group with four other companies within the membership.

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received in your career?

I think the best advice I received came from my dad, during a personal situation I was going through. He told me to tackle my problems head on and not to look for pity. Not to dwell on things I can’t control but tackle the ones I can. That advice has also served me well in my career.

What book are you reading now?