Jerry Flug Jr. may be fairly new to the building service contracting industry, but one thing he knows for sure is that if you’ve got the right people in place and you treat them well, you’re on a forward path to success. Flug is the owner of Davis Professional Services, and the company is celebrating 25 years in business. Flug attributes the company’s longevity to its employees, some of whom have been with Davis for 18 years. Here, he discusses how Davis differentiates itself and some of the trends he sees in the industry.

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How did you get your start in the BSC industry?
In 2007, I became the owner of Davis Professional Services, and this was my first official entrance into this industry. Prior to this, I was director of operations at a large church and its partnering school. My start in the industry began when a friend approached me with the news that his father-in-law was selling his mom-and-pop janitorial company. I loved the idea of owning my own business, so I decided to purchase it. Since then, my love for the business has continued to grow, and I have learned something new every day.

Davis Professional Services is celebrating 25 years in business. How has the company been able to withstand throughout the years?
One thing that I have found in this business is simply that how you treat your employees and how you treat your customers are the keys to success. People are your greatest asset. When you treat people with respect and value them, it is much easier to get everyone to buy into your team approach. We care for our people and we respect them, and as a result, we have several employees who have been with Davis for more than 18 years.
How has Davis worked to differentiate itself in the current competitive marketplace?
We have maintained a midlevel management that has enabled us to keep our customer service at peak performance at all times. Our response time is also a crucial part of this success. We have also integrated new software that has quickly set us apart in our region and has allowed for exponential growth in our company.

How would you describe your management style?
I like to think of myself as a leader not a manager. If I have to define it, I would say that I stay approachable and available to my team. I do my utmost to be relational and diplomatic and to use the people skills that are so important in a customer service industry. I also stay informed of all aspects of the business; I want my team to be successful so I lead in a way that lends itself to this goal.

What are some tips you have for employee retention?
Competitive pay, employee bonus programs and always celebrating the wins with your team. We strive to create an atmosphere at Davis where our team knows that they are cared for and celebrated, and it starts from the top. To emphasize that, we have semi-annual team parties to celebrate company success and to enjoy time together outside of working hard as a team.

What is one challenge you’ve experienced in your career, and how did you handle it?
I have found myself questioning the timing of when to hire management for the company. Understanding rate of growth and how to handle it and make the right decisions at the right time comes with a learning curve. Sometimes you have to evaluate the numbers, the facts and your gut feelings all to move forward.

What are some trends that you see developing in the building service contracting industry?
In our area, as medical and educational providers have increased their efficiency in output, we have seen huge growth in these specific venues seeking our services. We are seeing real increase in the need for training in those areas as well as training in the maintenance of high-end floor care. You have to constantly re-invent yourself, adding to brand value and reputation, to stay ahead of the curve. This is a great industry, and we are encouraged about the future. Our market, just like any other, has its issues, but this is all a part what makes it great to be a business owner in this country. It’s the excitement of the opportunity to create and pioneer new ways to be successful.

What qualities do you think make for a good culture?
Organizational health trumps everything else in business. We’ve adapted some of the ideas Patrick Lencioni discussed in his book, “The Advantage.” Building trust, providing and maintaining accountability, mastering conflict and focusing on results are a few goals that we are building and working towards. My personal favorite goal for our team is simply to have fun. If you don’t have fun as much as possible and enjoy what you are doing, then it creates a miserable workplace. I want everyone on my team to want to get up and be excited to come to work.

What is the best piece of advice you’ve received in your career?
There are two pieces of advice that I have lived by. The first is from my business mentor who owned a successful trucking company. He said: “Nothing beats a try but a fail.” The second is this: “The most dangerous words in a work environment are, ‘That’s the way we’ve always done it.’” I encourage people to change it up if things aren’t working.