Q&A with BSCAI President Sally Schopmeyer

2011 BSCAI President Sally Schopmeyer has been in the building service contracting industry with Maintenance, Inc., for nearly 21 years. Learn more about Schopmeyer and her approach to leadership.

What are some current trends and challenges in the industry that you think BSCs should be aware of?

Cleaning for health is more than a trend, it is normal operating procedure for BSCs. I believe this will continue for all BSCs as the standard. Also, another trend is utilizing technology more and more in our industry because technology helps businesses run more efficiently. A serious challenge, unfortunately, is that due to the difficult economic conditions and the impact it has had on property owners/managers, reduced cleaning costs has been a trend. Customers want us to operate our businesses with a lower per square foot price at the same time our operating expenses are increasing. I have talked to many BSCs who believe this trend will not be reversed as the economy recovers.

What is your approach to leadership within your company?

[My approach is to] always find ways to improve our company, our management and our outreach. We cannot be complacent with the success we have had; we must always strive to improve. The BSC industry is faced with many struggles and obstacles, and as a leader, it is my job to find solutions to those problems and obstacles so our company will remain strong in the marketplace. I am passionate about our company and our industry and that is reflected in my style of leadership.

Describe your management style.

I am fortunate to have an extremely talented group of executives who work within our firm. I want all of our team members to make decisions, not just look to someone else to make decisions for them. When mistakes are made, I expect people to learn from them and not repeat them. I believe that most everyone who works for us has potential. It is our job to develop all of our personnel and keep them growing.

What do you look for in hiring managers?

We look for socially mobile people with a servant’s attitude. It has been true forever; people conduct business with people they like. That being said, this is a tough business. If someone is extremely well-liked but doesn’t want to work hard, we don’t have a place for them.

What advice would you give a new BSCAI member?

Get involved! Attend the annual convention and introduce yourself to any board member, committee member and staff member. Find an area where you would like to contribute and serve. Research our vendor partners to find ways to save your company money. Most members recoup their dues within a few months by the savings they receive from various vendor partners.

What do you think is the biggest opportunity for BSCAI in the future?

I think the Purchase Advantage Program has tremendous potential. The National Service Alliance (NSA) has brought BSCAI a program that will enhance member benefits. This program has the potential to save our members large sums of money and streamline their purchasing efforts.

What do you think is the most important lesson that you’ve learned in the business?

Never burn a bridge.