

Working with a Franchise Company with Todd Hopkins

Wed, 12/30 3:20PM 32:33

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

franchisees, business, pride, people, franchise, cleaning, office, system, grow, employees, brand, company, relationship, teach, big, customers, janitorial, year, talked, fraternity

SPEAKERS

Todd Hopkins, Halie Morris

- H** Halie Morris 00:00
Hello, everyone, my name is Halie Morris with The Business of Cleaning. Welcome back for our second season. We're excited to jump into the idea of continuous connections within the cleaning industry. With me today, I have Todd Hopkins, and we're going to be discussing Office Pride and exactly what you need to know about Office Pride and why. So Todd, if you don't mind introducing yourself a bit more for us.
- T** Todd Hopkins 00:24
Absolutely. My name is Todd Hopkins. I started Office Pride Commercial Cleaning services in 1992. I was like 10 years old, maybe. But uh, but anyway, 1992 it was a result of a college research paper that I did at Butler University as part of my MBA. So it was like a research paper turned into a real life business started from scratch. And this was in Indianapolis. Now we're in Palm Harbor, Florida suburb of Tampa, is where our corporate headquarters is that but so we have, we're a franchising model. So we chose to grow our brand, through local independently owned and operated franchisees. So we have 135 franchises around the country and 25 states. And we're just all about branding and systems and support it. It's my pleasure to be here.

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Halie Morris 01:23

Thank you for coming on. I'm super excited to have you. And I'm super excited to dive into more about what office pride is. Because working with business cleaning and working with janitorial manager, I hear about you all the time. And so super exciting episode, what can I ask what the paper was that kind of got this all started? What was that about?

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Todd Hopkins 01:45

so I had three credit hours left in this MBA program. And I'm looking through the well. And to go back the previous semester, we actually had a visiting professor from Harvard. And he taught an entrepreneurship class. And in that class, I was I had created this business, we each had to create a business. And there was a lady in there who had a janitorial service she had started, it was failing. And it was kind of going out of business. But as she was in my small group, and I was hearing about it, I'm thinking, you know, this is something I believe it's done right could scale. And I started doing this, I do research on it. So I applied to let this independent research study, credit opportunity, three hours be given to me to do independent research in the commercial cleaning industry on how to franchise and scale in the commercial cleaning industry. And that was my paper. And so as a student, I went interviewed the guy that on the company that was cleaning the Sears Tower, I went over to Cincinnati and interviewed gentlemen over there who had a successful cleaning business, and just start doing the research, basically asking all of the same question if no one you know, now if you could start over and create the the best possible commercial cleaning business, how would you do it, and I created a research paper, got an A on it, by the way, got my three credit hours and graduated, and then put it into practice. So that's a little more to the story, but was out there cleaning those first buildings myself selling, you know, watching VHS tapes, trying to learn how to strip and wax a tile floor. We didn't have things like janitorial manager back then, you know, you had to kind of figure some things out the hard way. And but that's the power of franchising. We've got those systems in place now. And others get a big head start.

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Halie Morris 03:41

it's incredible to think I just came out of my bachelor's program. So imagine one project or one semester long, I guess it's a little bit longer than a project, turning into something that, you know, has evolved so far and become such a big, important part of the industry is it's mind blowing, to say the least.

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Todd Hopkins 04:01

Yeah, yeah. God's blessed us. I mean, and it's been a lot of fun. I, you know, especially this

year, are in, you know, with COVID, and all these things that have been going on, were part of the solution. And, you know, it's good to be out there making a difference.

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Halie Morris 04:21

So as far as, what does it mean, when somebody decides to partner with Office pride decides to partner with a franchise company then?

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Todd Hopkins 04:31

Well, a lot of people they, you know, they still own their own business. So they're 100%, owner of their own business, they typically form a corporate entity. They're wanting to build a business that can provide for their family or just give them the independence. They want everybody, you know, they all have different goals that they're trying to accomplish. And then somewhere along the way, they make a decision. Am I going to do this on my own and create it as I go, or am I going to align myself With a franchise system that has already been there and done that, and help can help me get where I want to go quicker. And that. So when you when they purchase a franchise rights, they're basically getting licensing rights to grow their business using our brand in our system, they they get to share in that Office Pride brand equity from day one. So what they get is their their meetly getting access to coaching, training from people who've done what they want to do. They've got the brand, we got the purchasing power, we have vendor relationships, which JM, of course is one of them. And so all the systems are in place to help them get where they want to go quicker. And it's a big deal. Because I think a lot of people when they look at a franchise, they think, well, could I do this on my own? Well, maybe you could, but if it took a lot longer, it took five or 10 years, I mean, we see that a lot of times with our franchisees the speed at which they grow, what's the opportunity cost, the time, and the opportunity cost of time, is usually a whole lot less than a franchise fee or say, a royalty, which would be our share. And so we have people they're like minded, they join us, we all set out to win together, and everybody wins. That's the goal.

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Halie Morris 06:24

It's a great, I can't imagine, especially right now, starting a cleaning company, and just being like, I'm going to completely do it all myself. And I mean, there are people who do it amazingly, but this is something I would say that it's hugely beneficial to kind of give you that leg up. And also kind of like you said before, when you started, there wasn't all of these, you know, resources and knowledge that was easily accessible to pull from. And so just making it that much more accessible, it sounds like is a huge factor. Before you even get to the branding, and things like that, too



Todd Hopkins 07:02

well, and it's not just teaching folks what to do, but it's what not to do. You know, it's, it's the days that these folks that start business shouldn't do that gets them in trouble, or cause them potentially to lose the whole business. So, you know, I found it's a lot easier to learn from somebody else's mistakes. I'd rather do that. And that's what somebody coming into a franchise system, you get to learn from accumulation of learning accumulation of mistakes, you know what that, you know, that's the value of a mistake is to learn from it. But then learning from the things that others have done right, and then build upon the brand equity. So a lot of times, we'll go into a brand new market with the Office Pride brand. And we're like a breath of fresh air, and the customers are excited to see us. And, you know, we're excited to be there.



Halie Morris 07:52

That's awesome. I'm really excited to see that too. Knowing where you started, how much you've grown, how big you've gotten, and how much you've been able to accomplish. So I guess, when it comes to somebody who's decided, Okay, I think working with a franchise company would be the best bet. What are some of those things that they should look for to make sure that they're establishing a partnership that is worth their time?



Todd Hopkins 08:19

Yeah, so we always there's a process, we would walk somebody through who's interested in a franchise, and there's calls that happen. And of course, now, a lot of things happen over Zoom. So but but it was happening that way, even before a lot of the initial calls. And then franchisees will come in for a discovery day where they get to learn about us, everything that they any questions they have about us, they can ask they get to kind of we we show them some of our operations, we let them look under the hood to see that we're the real thing. And we get to ask them questions about themselves, because we want to make sure we're bringing on people who are Business Builders, and who are going to help grow our brand and not damage it. So this is a discovery day where we learn about each other. And then from there, they were they also are talking to other franchisees. So they're we're doing mutual validation, we're checking them out, and they're checking us out. So I think anytime you talk about the word, you know, a really bad legal definition, not partners, but you know, partnering or sharing common goals and all those things are you know, it's kind of like a marriage you, you want to do all your dating, get to know each other really well before you make that decision, because it's it's a big commitment moving forward. And we take it very seriously. And our existing franchisees expect us to take it seriously before we let somebody else in the system. So there's a lot that goes into it. But we also amazingly, have a lot come in and they can go through that

process pretty quickly because the trust levels very high. They know somebody already has office pride franchise so the validation is already been there. So sometimes that process can happen in just a couple of months.

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Halie Morris 10:06

It is very much a relationship building experience. It's not just a sign up and walk away type thing. It's, you have to establish that relationship, you have to work at that relationship and continue to respect it. So

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Todd Hopkins 10:20

yeah, and when they sign up for a lot of companies, a lot of deals, a lot of times when somebody signs that's kind of the ending, you've been working up to that point for us, it's just the beginning. Because of the level of training and JM is very familiar, they they've been able to get in there and see attend our franchise retreats, and so they know the extent of the you guys, you know, the extent of our training, what we do for franchisees, not just in the first year, but but every year thereafter, there's so much available.

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Halie Morris 10:53

It is been one of the things I know I've heard about how much you guys do as far as it's, it's not that checkoff sign off whatever and done. It is something that people who work with you those franchisees take huge pride in, which is exciting to see.

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Todd Hopkins 11:10

Yeah, yeah, we like using that word pride. So it stands for personal responsibility and daily effort. And so going back to the very beginning, I used to say, hey, if you can, that's something we commit to our customers, we would expect from the employees. We taught it to the franchisees over the years. Now they expect personal responsibility and daily effort from their employees. So So yeah, it's a win win. And the continuing education is awesome. I mean, we always want to be learning, we like to develop good habits, we think success comes from choices and habits. And so we want to teach franchisees how to make good decisions as they grow this business, also how to develop good habits. And we've had great speakers.

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Halie Morris 11:54

Good. I was just gonna say with being running a business, being in a business and doing

those types of things. Continuous education is part of it or you don't succeed you don't reach that next level at all. fell.



Todd Hopkins 12:07

Yeah, yeah, we had Stephen Mr. Covey speak at our last franchise retreat, I was taking tons of notes as we're the franchisees, because right now Trust is everything and to be have a history of 28 year history behind our brand. And customers are depending on cleaning companies now to deliver disinfecting services and all that to be able to, to go in and share our history to communicate who we are to build trust is everything. Right now. Our customers are trusting us to do the right things. So we had him come in and speak this year, Maryland's Sherman on just how to make a difference. Take a front row seat in business and in life. And right now, we've been on the front row with all the COVID. I mean, as soon as something happens, that customer calls us and our franchisee goes in, and they take care of things. So yeah, we value it this year. We have Larry Laney, who's going to be coming in and speaking, who's a very top thought leader when it comes to strategic planning and execution. So I think he'll do a great job of helping our franchisees get to the next level.



Halie Morris 13:19

That's incredible. How many franchisees do you have?



Todd Hopkins 13:23

Well, we have 135, we have three new ones that are starting as we're speaking. So say that will put us at 138. So yeah, we're very excited.



Halie Morris 13:34

That's incredible. I was wondering, just because you have grown so much. And you know, we were talking about the name as well. So I was going to ask you how you came up with the name Office Pride and where that originated as well. Oh, man.



Todd Hopkins 13:51

So here it is, I'll tell you. So I I'm at the University of Memphis, where I did my undergraduate, I was in a college fraternity. And we didn't have a lot of fraternities, you hear about them, they kind of get in trouble for hazing or something like that. We didn't have that. So we treat everybody as equals. And so when we had a big cleanup day, we

wouldn't like make all the the pledges or whatever do all the cleanup, everybody pitched in together. And there would be a big sign in the lobby that said this Saturday is house pride day. We're going to take pride in our house, everybody comes over and pitches in and cleans it together. And so as I'm thinking, this is it, I'm just telling you, this is how it happened. So I'm trying to come up with a name. And I had two front runners, but one of them was Office Pride because I thought this be cool. I'm used to house pride. And it would just call Office Pride. And, and, and just take pride in you know, doing things the right way. And then over time that developed you know, and had the personal responsibility and daily effort and all that but that's where it came from. Just spin off of what we used to do back in the old fraternity days, usually a Saturday after a Friday night party. Wow.

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Halie Morris 15:09

No, it's kind of cool. I was in an academic fraternity. So we had, where we had different families. And when we had any kind of gathering, we were an academic one. So we didn't say party we saw like gathering or social or something like that. We'd have assigned DVDs assigned silver brothers, and a cleanup crew. And then if we had any kind of cookouts and stuff, they were food signups. So whatever family was hosting, would make sure that they got the people lined up to make sure that everybody was taken care of from beginning to end. So it's not quite the same, but it it reminds me of that feeling of taking care of our people sort of thing.

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Todd Hopkins 15:53

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Well, that's where I get you know, everything has a story. And and it's amazing. Sometimes somebody asked me a question, I'll think of a story that I hadn't told in 20 years. But yeah, that's where the name came from.

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Halie Morris 16:08

I think, you know, when I saw it, I thought it's kind of iconic. It kind of sticks out. And I wanted, I was very curious. And I'm sure our, our listeners would be very curious too. So thanks for sharing that though.

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Todd Hopkins 16:20

Yeah, thanks for asking. Yeah.



Halie Morris 16:23

No, did you imagine back in your fraternity days, that you would be where you are now with, you know, an organization like office pride? Well, I



Todd Hopkins 16:34

I've always been an entrepreneur. Um, yeah, I had a business in the second grade. And you know, I had all these kid businesses growing up. So yeah, I always thought I would be in some sort of a business and entrepreneur that I'm have multiple locations, I always thought maybe it might be like sporting goods, but Well, there's big companies that could put you out of business if they chose to. So, but I like the idea of, of creating a service business. And if we do this with excellence, then big companies can come in. Because our customers value a job well done. They value higher quality service and a personal relationship with the owner of that business, which is what our system our model gives them. So I feel good about it. But But I did, I kind of always envisioned it would be something like it is now God's really blessed us, we have wonderful franchisees, our franchisees are bigger, have less franchisees, but they're much bigger than I had planned in my original business plan. Because 2010, we kind of shifted to a business builder model, we chose to help the franchisees we have get bigger, and to recruit Business Builders, and that was a good decision for us. So we don't have 1000s and 1000s of franchisees, we have 138. And they're happy, and they're growing. And, and it's one big happy family right now.



Halie Morris 18:05

Know that. I mean, that sounds a lot better than having, you know, like we talked about before, it is kind of a relationship a partnership. So instead of having 1000s, where you kind of loosely connected now you have these stronger relationships that you can nurture better. Yeah,



Todd Hopkins 18:20

yeah. I mean, and just, you know, you can get a text message and just see how somebody's doing, you know, if they're somebody who's having surgery, I mean, it's just, you only live once, so I like just doing it with high quality, do it the right way with people I like, and, and we have that in office, Brian.



Halie Morris 18:43

Awesome. And then it was my last I'm trying to think about it. Um, but did you have any, like advice? Oh, I know what it was before I move on. Um, when does that relationship that franchisee typically come to you to work like what point in their business? Would they look at joining up with Office Pride.

T Todd Hopkins 19:06

So most of the folks we have who become office prior, franchisees have never owned a business before. So they've usually been kind of growing in corporate America, they know they don't want that anymore. But usually they dreamed of owning their own business. But now they're finally pulling the trigger and making the decision for it to happen. So most of our franchisees they've never owned a business. Most of them have never been in the cleaning industry, which we like that because they don't bring with them any bad habits, we can teach them the Office Pride way. And then and then we do have some who happen to own their own business before and so they bring some good business ownership skills to the table, which is great. And then we will have a few that been in the commercial cleaning business that just want to be associated with a high quality brand. And they want to leverage our brain and our systems to grow to the next level. Even though they may have been doing this all their life, so it's all over the board when they come to us, and we just kind of meet them where they are, and begin to teach them our processes and our system. So that once they're out there operating is Office Pride. Everybody's delivering the same quality.

H Halie Morris 20:20

Oh, and then I was going to ask to, what advice do you have for somebody who maybe isn't working with you, but is trying to start their own business? I mean, especially right now given current, you know, back and forth circumstances, and uncertainty.

T Todd Hopkins 20:41

So somebody who's wanting to start their own business in the cleaning industry, yeah. without working with Office Pride

H Halie Morris 20:48

or they haven't got that far in the thought process, yet. They just know, they want to join the industry, and they have the thought that they want to start a cleaning company.



Todd Hopkins 20:58

Well, yeah, I would just say just do a lot of research and talk to people who are doing it. But, you know, give us a call. And we'll, we'll guide you through the process for sure. But there's, there's no, you know, bsci is the number one industry trade association in the world for commercial cleaning. So there's, there's a lot of resources there, we always encourage, you know, really everybody who's in the commercial cleaning industry should be a member of bsci. And there's a lot of good things going on there to this year.



Halie Morris 21:32

Yeah, it's not really I'm winging it type of situation anymore. Now with all the resources that are out there with, you know, bsci with you, and just with I mean, even YouTube sometimes,



Todd Hopkins 21:44

yeah, right. What it doesn't have to be, yeah, like a lot of people winging it. But that's, that's usually not a good business strategy.



Halie Morris 21:54

So, with someone who has joined you recently, what are the things what are the what are honestly, I don't want to say skill sets, but what are the things that franchisees do that helped kind of them really hit that that growth potential?



Todd Hopkins 22:11

Yeah, well, they execute what we teach them, they they listen, they ask questions, or they they become a franchisee, because they want the systems so they follow the system so that the franchisee, bosses system and is engaged and asked questions and participates in the things that we've got going on as a brand, are the ones we usually see growing, they have to bring to the table a real can do attitude. So really, all the folks that come in, they're already high level people can do attitudes, because we've screened them, people we think are going to be successful. And so then it's a matter of them executing and following the system, and they execute and follow the system, they'll be fine. If they decide to start trying something a little bit different, then things can get sideways, but we have coaches assigned to each franchisee. And so we really try to create a system of, you know, help them be accountable to their own goals. Right. They all have franchise vision plan, that becomes a map that they're wanting to follow. Our coach helps them march to

that. Wow,

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Halie Morris 23:23

thank you. I was wondering to what, what additional things should we know about Office Pride? As you know, I know I'm coming from the game side. But what other things should our listeners know about Office Pride that maybe we haven't touched upon yet?

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Todd Hopkins 23:42

Well, one thing we haven't talked about that usually comes out a lot is we have a faith based business model. So we're like to chick fil a a commercial cleaning, right? People know who chick fil a is they're they're a lot more famous. We're behind the scenes where commercial cleaning, but we want to honor God and all we do we have a real journey focused vision to make a difference as we go. And our mission is to honor God by positively impacting people in workplaces. So we want to make the difference in the lives of people. And we certainly want to make a difference in in our, with our customers and their workplaces. Give them a place where people like to come and work and they feel like it's safe and it's clean. And so, you know, that's our mission. That's my vision. People are, you know, have bought into it. And we march forward together. So that'd be one thing I'd bring up Haley to that maybe we haven't talked about that's important part is this whole idea of culture. And, you know, if you're looking to join any organization, you want to make sure that that the culture of the organization is in alignment with what you believe and what you agreed to so that you guys are on the same page.

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Halie Morris 25:00

That's awesome to know. I know one of the biggest things, just whether you're an employee working in a company, or you're joining a new, like a suburb or something like that, or you are joining up and becoming a franchisee with someone like Office Pride is, like we said before, it's a relationship and a relationship goes two ways. So I'm glad we touched on that, that you can bring that up. And it makes me excited too, because, you know, one of the biggest things that you think about with a company like chick fil a, is that that customer service and that interaction and the employee happiness is so high on the list and so high on the priority thing, and it's well executed. And that's kind of what I think of with Office Pride, too.

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Todd Hopkins 25:47

Yeah, yeah. And and there's a way that that franchise systems get measured for

happiness. So they call it the FBR, franchise, business reviews, franchisee satisfaction survey. So they surveyed franchisees in all different types of systems. And we have, fortunately been in the top 50 for over 10 years, and we made the Franchise Business Review Hall of Fame two years ago. And this year, we hit like our highest score ever, even in with all the COVID, the craziness and all the stuff that's happening. But we found that our level of working together and trust between us and the franchisees grew the franchisees and their customers grew, everybody was working together. And as a result, the satisfaction level went up. So like a lot of companies would be trying to help their employee satisfaction go up, you know, we're focused on helping franchisees be successful and wanting them to be happy and satisfied. And then they in turn, do that with their employees and their customers.

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Halie Morris 26:53

Just as far as Office Pride goes, and your reach with, I think what I wanted to say with COVID-19. And with just this up and down that we've seen this year, and we're you know, we're hitting another period, where it's hard again, is that we've actually started to see the companies will start to rise above, if they're doing it right, they've got the right approach, they've got the priorities in the right places. And so I think that's what we're seeing with Office Pride is, you're already on the right track. And now a difficult situation has come along. And you've really been able to kind of hold steadfast and stick with your franchisees and show this is not only why you want to be with us, but this is how much we care. And this is where we've we've built our good foundation. So

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Todd Hopkins 27:46

yeah, and that's where trust really matters, because we were already a high trust organization. So immediately I remember middle of March we got we scheduled a town hall and and we we had like 70, something of the franchisees that were able to join us just on very short notice, because we're all saying what in the world is happening and here, what are we what what is it that we should be aware of or looking to do or how to respond. And we really kind of everybody came alongside each other. So they knew they weren't in by themselves, it wasn't just happening to them, and helped each other think and get resourceful to find the personal protective equipment. We had our team working on that here to help people. As you remember, there was so much information coming out from the CDC, like you couldn't keep track of it. And so we were digesting that, and then sending that out to the franchisees in bite sized chunks that they could handle because they were on the frontline making this happen. We were sending videos out and and then they were keeping their employees working and being part of the solution, not just let this happen to. And so we we've seen a lot of wonderful things happen with our franchisees.

So I'm really really proud of them. They stepped up. It was a challenging few months there but but they stepped up and and they I think they're all stronger for it. We are.

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Halie Morris 29:18

I was gonna say that's what it sounds like is that you've come out stronger from it. It was one of those training things, but the trials made you better from it.

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Todd Hopkins 29:30

yeah, and you always seem to find out who your real all stars are, right? Because you have employees who just rise to the occasion. And we've seen that here at the corporate office. And our franchisees have seen that in their businesses as well. So it's it's been, it's been good from that standpoint, I think people have you had an opportunity to rise up and show what they're made up and a lot of people have done a lot of great things.

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Halie Morris 29:56

It's great to hear. And that was the last question. I kind of want to end From my side is just going into 2021. As we begin this year, what are your plans? What things do you have coming up for your franchisees and just in general?

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Todd Hopkins 30:11

Well, we're going to do a lot of virtual education. So we've been putting a lot of good content together, I just finished a full blown seminar on identifying and overcoming distractions, which I think a lot of people are getting caught up in. And, you know, I really love that our franchisees are able to stay focused and make a difference and, and to stay on course, to achieve their goals, because that's what they want for them their family would. So we have a lot of things like that, a lot of best practice sharing. So I think the key is just a lot of communication. And to let people know that they're not in it alone, we're going to look for some acquisition opportunity and plan to help franchisees do that so that give them opportunity to grow through some acquisitions. So I think that'll be something new for us in 2021. We're looking forward to an exciting year.

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Halie Morris 31:05

It sounds like and I'm excited to see why you accomplish as we go forward. So anything else you would like to mention as we wrap up?



Todd Hopkins 31:15

Well, I appreciate a janitorial manager. All you guys have done our franchisees are always talking about how you make their lives easier. And you know, just with the organization of different things from inventory and timekeeping and all the other services you provide. And your level of support has been good. So when we bring somebody like General Manager to the table, you guys make us look good. And our franchisees are happy. And so I just like to say thanks to you, and Archie and you know, Jill, and everybody for all the support you've provided us and our franchisees. So that would be my final comment.



Halie Morris 31:57

Well, thank you for that. I'm glad we can we can rise to the occasion on our part two and just continue to, to bring like you said that higher quality service because it's something we take pride in. So all right, well, I want to thank you Todd for joining us for our very first episode of The Business of Cleaning. And we'll also see you again next episode we'll have a blog post and a transcripts. And you can find any contact information for Office Pride right there and our description and in that blog post. Thank you and have a great rest of your week.