

# Why Industry Groups are Important for Growth

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## SPEAKERS

Todd Hopkins, Halie Morris

**H** Halie Morris 00:32  
Hello, everyone, and welcome back to The Business of Cleaning. My name is Halie Morris. I'm your podcast coordinator and host we're launching into our second season. This is our second episode. Today I wanted to talk about an organization that you are all probably hopefully aware of at this point. And that's BSCAI. So I've actually been fortunate enough to get Todd Hopkins, the president of BSCAI. Join us. So if you don't mind, Todd, would you introduce yourself?

**T** Todd Hopkins 01:01  
Well, thank you, Haley. I'm Todd Hopkins, I have a commercial cleaning business called Office Pride and, and we're a franchise or so we have people own and start and grow commercial cleaning businesses, started that back in 1992. And during my research, Haley, you don't probably don't know this. I don't think I've ever told you this before. But during my research, when I was interviewing somebody about commercial cleaning, he said best thing you can do is join BSCAI. They've got the answers to all the questions. So he was like my check number 101. Right. In the business, I wrote the membership used to be sci fi, and back in 1992. And I haven't looked back. So been involved with BSCAI a long time. And it's been, you know, a great journey. And I'm delighted to be able to be wrapping up my year

as president of the trade association.

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Halie Morris 01:59

Thank you for that I'm excited to dive in just because we previously had you on for our episode about Office Pride. So we get to truly kind of see that journey from member to helping oversee and this organization really do incredible things. And it's been doing incredible things. So before we get too far, I wanted to go ahead. And for those who don't know, yeah, just talk about what bsci is and what you guys do.

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Todd Hopkins 02:29

Sure. Well, it's BSCAI, stands for Building Service Contractors Association International. And basically, it's a trade association, whose members are people who own commercial cleaning companies. And we have events and a lot of continuing education. But there's been 635 of us that are members of this trade association. And we share best practices. It's an incredible group. And of course, we have like the events, we have three per year. So there's a CEO seminar we do typically every year at the end of January. And then somewhere at the end of April, middle of May, we'll do an executive seminar where members can come, the business owner can come and bring his or her executive team. We have guest speakers and a lot of best practice sharing there. And then in the fall or even winter, September, October, it varies. We'll have an annual conference, which we call contracting success conference. And you guys, JM have been a part of those conferences and some of those events and worked with a lot of our members, and our sponsor at BSCAI. So we appreciate that. So part of what the industry trade association does is it will bring supporters of our industry in for trade shows and events and all that's good information. I would say big relationship building is probably the the hidden benefit. When people join, they don't realize the relationship potential with owners of other contractors or people that work for other contractors. But you know, and then there's the whole list of benefits Haley that a lot of associations would have purchasing power, videos, resources and things like that.

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Halie Morris 04:27

I was gonna say and then, I mean, it's just a lot. It's a really cool opportunity. It's like you said one of the first things you did when you start office pride, which has grown and done so many incredible things, is join BSCAI. And so I wanted to dive in from your perspective as that new member back in '92. Why what, you know, what really you gained from that relationship? Initially?



Todd Hopkins 04:56

Well, I will tell you I finally I think we had sixteen employees or something like that, and I left the four guy in charge, my wife and I, we drove down from Indianapolis to Atlanta. For my first conference, I think that was 1993. Because I thought I keep seeing this advertised. And I'm gonna go and try to learn, I had 1000 questions, and our operations manager and his wife with us, and we got down there. And just one thing I learned in one seminar more than paid for the whole trip, because they you don't know what you don't know. And I'm sitting there, it's all about insurance. And they were saying, Oh, yeah, give us ask for this. And this, you can get discounts. And I immediately went back and I got the very discounts they were talking about, from my same insurance carrier that I had the whole time. And that discount exceeded the cost of going to the conference. And, and every year, there will always be something every event, there's something that you learn that will pay for the trip. Now after being in for 28 years, it's easy to kind of get more in a giveback mode. Because back then I remember the guys who were just teaching me and sharing, but we always welcome new members and our associations real good about embracing the new members. And just because we all been there, and we, we like to help, and so it's a close group, a lot of great friendships have developed. So that was a side benefit all those years. And we've taken family vacations with some of these folks. I mean, it's it's been a wonderful thing. But the key is to come ask questions and learn and come with your questions so that the things you want to answer to you can be intentional about getting them, and it'll pay for your trip.



Halie Morris 06:48

It goes back a lot to the things that I'm starting to see just talking to you with what you value, that continuous education to trash the relationship building the pride in what you do. And it's just an incredible opportunity to make a business better. Like if they don't start with bsci. And they don't build along with that education foundation. I can't imagine where they're gonna go, you know, I mean, that is to say,



Todd Hopkins 07:15

No, I think I like to say we teach people how to grow a commercial cleaning business the right way. Right? We want to raise the bar in our industry. Listen, as soon as COVID hit. I mean, we hear we are all different companies, different owners, but we started having town halls right away to say, what are we seeing out there? What what are you guys hearing in different cities? How are you responding to this? What kind of products can we use? How do you get them, I had guys that I was texting back and forth. And we went in together to order a shipment of masks from China, you know, back when you couldn't get masks. So this is the power of BSCAI And the things that happen. And we actually just

wrapped up before the end of the year, our 20th townhall that we've had since COVID hit where members were coming together, and just asking questions and talking things through. And it was an amazing thing. So a lot of a lot of benefits, a lot of friendships, a lot of purchasing power a week. I think vendors give our members preference, you know, because we're all there and we're trying to do things the right way. We're following industry standards. And, and, and guidelines, a lot of good things happening.

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Halie Morris 08:38

It's like you said there's an elevation to what you're trying to do. And what you're accomplishing that just kind of sets you apart sets those members apart from those who are just kind of going it alone trying to dig through the weeds and find out this information by themselves.

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Todd Hopkins 08:54

Yeah, why do that when the information is there. There's an association that's willing to help. By the way, even a year, like we've had, our renewals are higher than ever. New members are joining at a pace we haven't seen in years because they're desiring the association. They don't want to do this alone anymore. And it's amazing how many of the larger companies have joined. And we also, as you as you are aware, cleaning our frontline cleaners are part of the solution here. So they're essential workers when back when COVID was hitting and you didn't know are you going to get pulled over if you're not essential. Everybody was working on that. And and so we established with some partners cleaning coalition of America to have a voice on Capitol Hill for our industry, because we are important part of that solution. And, and so it's been a good thing. It's it's, it's been a crazy 12 months, but but bsai has been a big part of the solution. You And a lot a lot of resources as it relates to COVID. And, and how to fight it and how to keep people safe.

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Halie Morris 10:06

It's a huge. It's kind of weird to think back to March, to even think of right now of how vast and overwhelming the situation can be. so easily. I mean, even now, when we are months in, and there's more knowledge out there about what's going on that just the unknowns, the ups and downs, and like you said, these workers are at the front lines, they along with medical, they're right, they are dealing with, you know, direct interactions with things that could be dangerous. And with all the concerns around health and cleanliness, it's, it could be a lot. So being with an organization with bsci. And just having that unifying point, and kind of like that light at the end of the tunnel, so to speak.



Todd Hopkins 10:54

Yeah, I remember having a discussion with the board, which is made up of 18 contractors from around the country in Canada, who make up the board of directors, and we just try to, you know, from our experiences and what we see make the decisions for the association. And we decided, you know, we need to come up with a disinfection course to teach people how to do this correctly, what personal protective equipment to wear. So we have a COVID-19 disinfection and safety course that our members can use, and provide to their employees and the employees can take this. And what it does is when you know what you're up against, when you know how to do things correctly, it gives you confidence in it. And for those employees, it shows their employer cares about. So BSCAI wants that. And that's been a huge success. And, you know, so we're just trying to create a lot of resources to help our members really continue to be the leaders out there in the marketplace, when it comes to commercial cleaning.



Halie Morris 12:08

It's great to see, it's like you said it, when you can be confident in what you're doing calms things down a lot. It takes away that poor decision making because things are hectic, and you're panicking, and who knows what's happening tomorrow, and you can create what happens tomorrow because you're in control.



Todd Hopkins 12:26

Yeah. That's Well said. I mean, there's fear in the unknown. Right? And, but when you can watch a video and take a course, and even there's little test there, so the employers can know, the employees have completed it. It built like you said, it builds confidence, and that helps create some calmness and you know, so it's, it's, it's been overall, I would say, we've seen contractors come together and help each other. And I was on a call with one and they said, Well, you know, we're trying to get these products and I can't get the electric, I have an electrostatic sprayer, but I can't get the chemicals. And another contractor said, I'll send you some. And, I mean, that was amazing. But that's the power of the BSCAI trade association and that membership and it goes deep, it's deeper than just being part of a member and being able to use the logo on your marketing materials. Right. It's it's a huge relationship and learning experience.



Halie Morris 13:26

It's a community, you know, it's something to tie you back. And when you falter your communities behind you. It's not just you by yourself out there on the front lines.

**T** Todd Hopkins 13:39  
yeah, that's a good word community. I think that would describe BSCAI, for sure.

**H** Halie Morris 13:45  
Without a doubt. So Building Service Contractors Association, International, how far reaching are you? Where are your members coming from?

**T** Todd Hopkins 13:57  
Most of our members are in North America. So we're United States, Canada. We have in years past had more international members, there is a World Federation of building service contractors, that kind of meets that need. And we do have international members. But there's another organization that we're very supportive of that helps meet that need now, so most of our members are United States and Canada. And then there's other countries, but I'd say 90 percent, or North America, and 10 percent are from other countries around the world. And it's always fun to get to learn from others. And we've done that and we've had joint meetings with contractors from Germany and Brazil and all these things because they're doing some things maybe that we're not and so there's always ways to learn. And so the international part of it actually right now is bigger than ever with the COVID because we're all dealing with a lot of the same things. And we can learn from each other

**H** Halie Morris 15:05  
That international kicks in when it comes to the sharing of the education experience, and just kind of again, making sure you're optimizing all your resources. I mean, we've covered a lot as far as just why somebody would want to join, like, why it makes sense. Is there anything else that you would like to say specifically about BSCAI, about your experiences, or just what you guys are doing as an organization?

**T** Todd Hopkins 15:35  
Well, it's, it's, it's amazing. BSCAI is 55 years old, right? That's easy for me to remember, because I'm 55 years old. So we were born at the same time, I guess. And it's kind of fun, because there's so many companies in this industry that are multi generation companies, there's their guys who've been president of bsai, who their father was president, at some point in time. And so and we've seen now a third generation. So there's a lot of that dynamics. And then at the same time, there's others who are first generation, I'm first

generation. And so what we see every year, here comes somebody, they just started their commercial cleaning business last year, right. And so you get this mix of companies that have been around for many, many, many years, brand new companies sitting around a table, and sharing ideas, because we're in this industry, which we, we like this industry, we know we make a difference, we take care of our customers, we provide a tremendous number of jobs. And it's, it's a growing industry. So that's a that's a fun dynamic to see. And, you know, I think leaders are learners. And so, you know, BSCAI is a good place to go and learn and learn how to get better. And we should always, I think, be willing to invest in ourselves. So I will say, BSCAI has never cost me anything. Everything I've ever done with them has been an investment. And I've always got a huge return, myself. And now my team, because I'll take members of our team here at office pride, to the meetings and they're learning from their peers, and we all get better.

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Halie Morris 17:25

I it's kind of, it's just cool to learn about me 55 years, you've got a great foundation, it's like you said, you've got these guys who are second and third generation, they've got history with your organization, but you still have an influx of new and fresh and a different coming in. So it's just really cool. It's like those communities that you want to be a part of, where they're still growing and building and evolving. But they're strong at their base, they're going to last because they've been there, done that so to speak. So

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Todd Hopkins 17:59

yeah, we take a lot of pride in this association. And we there, like I said, there's a group of leaders that get together. And then there's, there's a full blown Board of Directors, elections and things like that. And so they're you rotate on and off. But these people care. I mean, they'll do anything for each other. I've seen, there were guys that stepped up guys and gals, I used the term guys, you know, generically, that stepped up and contributed their experience to this COVID disinfection course, so that the association would have this collected mind power to then distribute to its members or make available to members. And and they did this during COVID. I mean, it was they had their own business to run. So very selfless group of people. And I'm delighted to be a part of it. It's been a lot of fun to be a president this year and to work with Eric Luke, who's vice president. And the rest of the team, Michael diamond, who is president elect, I big shoes to fill. But these guys are lifetime friends. As we've walked through this together and look forward to many years to come.

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Halie Morris 19:13

Wow. It sounds like a great group of people just I mean, even talking about it. Now. We've been fortunate to work with you guys. Speaking of years to come, though, what are the plans for this year? What are the plans for 2021?

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Todd Hopkins 19:29

Well, we have a lot of things planned. Specifically, we have an executive conference coming up down in Fort Lauderdale in the end of April. I double check those dates, you can go to the BSCAI website and learn all about that we have an annual conference coming up Vegas, toward the end of the year. There's tremendous amount of certification programs going on. We're always given awards. There's all kinds of ways to get involved. And we're going to continue these virtual towns halls, because we've we've learned that, that our members like to engage with each other. And we're going to do some virtual new member receptions, things we haven't done in the past. So I would say we learned some things from COVID, that's caused us to get better. And we're going to move forward in somewhat of a hybrid way, taking the best and maybe what we weren't doing before that we learned through COVID. And then we're gonna bring back the events that everybody absolutely loves. Because they like to get together. So we have a full year plan. It's gonna be a good year.

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Halie Morris 20:33

It's exciting to hear I'm excited to start to see it. I mean, exciting places on the board. And, of course, we're starting to see some some positive outlook with vaccines and stuff starting to start to have whispers I guess right now. But I'm excited to see this next year come and just to see what bsci does. So I did want to ask, do you have any advice, as somebody who's just been in the industry for a while worked with BSCAI for so long? For somebody who has a fresh face to the organization? Do you have any advice in general, as far as how they can just kind of take the reigns right now?

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Todd Hopkins 21:14

Yeah, but the best thing to do is just get involved one to attend events and read the emails that come out and go to the website and just make connections. But when you go to the events, we have like a new member ribbon and, and the others guys want to get to know you. So feel free just to visit and make some connections and exchange business cards. And we actually Halie have peer groups that bscs vsca helps organize. So there'll be 345 contractors in a peer group. They'll talk once a month, about something that's going on in their business, and they can share ideas and best practices. And that goes on in between the bigger bsci meetings. So we see a lot of that. So I would encourage people



to get involved. And let the investment give you a tremendous return.



Halie Morris 22:09

So you're not just out, show up to the big events and done, you've got all these opportunities to keep that momentum in between and to keep that strength and now you're adding the town halls and these other opportunities to it as well.



Todd Hopkins 22:23

yeah, yeah, a lot of opportunity. It's really continuous. So we've got more education than most people would ever tap into. So it's there. And we encourage you to investigate it and participate.



Halie Morris 22:38

All right, well, thank you for that. Is there anything you would like to add to our episode before we start to round out?



Todd Hopkins 22:45

No, I would just say anybody listening to this who's in the cleaning industry, and, and they're not a part of BSCAI to check us out. And we would love to have you. And then in visit, visit our events and, and just plug in. So it's more than just signing up and being a member but engaged member. That's what we're after. And, and that's who benefits the most. So we encourage you to do that. And we appreciate JM now one of our sponsors, you guys have really helped a lot of the contractors in our industry. So it's good to have vendors, like you come alongside our members and help them make their life easier. Right. And so we really appreciate you guys and thank you for having me today.



Halie Morris 23:31

Thank you. I'm glad we can help. Like I said, well, like Todd said we're sponsors now. So we're gonna have plenty of information not just on the blog posts and the transcription for this episode. But keep an eye on our social media and our website too because we'll post about events coming up as they come up. Thank you for coming on, Todd. Thank you everyone for tuning in to another episode of The Business of Cleaning and we will see you next week.