

For Clean Way of York, customer convenience is the foundation for continued growth

By Joseph J. Chalmes
for *The Evening Sun*

There are as many strategies for a successful business as there are business enterprises, but for Elda Mangold, president of Clean Way Professional Cleaning Services, Inc., of York, the plan that propels continued growth is built around customer convenience.

That's why what started out as just a cleaning service has grown to include 5 divisions and from 20 employees to more than 70 workers. All this in just 9 years since the Mangolds purchased the business in 1995.

And, the growth has just begun, says Steve Mangold, Chief Operating Officer. "We just had a phenomenal, record setting year. We went from

DUSTING 101:

New owners found there's more to the cleaning business than they ever dreamed!

When Elda and Steve Mangold took over Clean Way Professional Cleaning Services, Inc., they had no idea what they were walking into.

After working on the road for 22 years as a sales manager, Steve Mangold thought, "how difficult could it be to run a cleaning company?"

Now, with a wry smile, he says, "Little did I know that there were cleaning specifications that must be adhered to or you will LOSE the customer."

What they faced and how they solved their problems is a perfect learning example for any would be small business owners.

In the beginning, he says, high turnover, lack of employee communication and a smaller management team were problems that had to be solved.

He and his wife, he says, sought training from the Building Services Contractors International Association. "More than \$5,000 worth of training tapes," he says, in what he calls "Dusting 101."

We went to seminars, conferences, conventions and trade shows to learn the cleaning industry technology and the state-of-the-art processes."



Office staff at Clean Way Professional Cleaning Services, Inc., Seated, from left to right, Executive Vice President, TOM BEAMENDERFER, President, ELDA MANGOLD, Chief Operating Officer, STEVE MANGOLD
First row, from left to right, Administrative Assistant SHIRLEY LAIRD, Office Manager NANCY REEVER, Residential Sales Manager JEAN STERNER, Human Resource Manager SHARON SHEFFER, Administrative Assistant MONICA MALONE
Second row, from left to right, Industrial Sales Manager SEAN MILLER, Information Technology Manager TOM BILLET

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one sales person to three in the last 18 months."

Steve admits, he was always "the poster child for clean windows. When I was a kid, I always cleaned the windows. Everybody hated the job. I just loved it." And, he adds, he has a military background so "I like everything to be spit and polish clean."

Both brought their expertise to the business. Elda is a trained and educated beautician with 34 years experience running her own beauty salon. Elda is the majority owner of Clean Way and is responsible for the financial side of the business. Steve's prior business experience consists of 22 years as a sales manager working side-by-

side with 13 sales people satisfying customer needs. At Clean Way, Steve oversees the daily operations as Chief Operating Officer. From the beginning, they were looking for ways to expand the core business of cleaning services.

IN THE BEGINNING...

The strategy they devel-

oped was to stay to the basic core business of janitorial cleaning while looking for related cleaning opportunities.

"For instance," says Elda, "assume that you need to have your carpet, your windows, and your upholstery cleaned. Wouldn't it be much easier and convenient to contact one company to take care of all of these cleaning needs." That philosophy has helped Clean Way expand into "Five divisions and growing," Elda explained, offering a wide variety of services, including janitorial cleaning, carpet cleaning, floor care solutions, water restoration services, window cleaning, concrete floor services and even the sale of wholesale supplies.

Clean Way currently has divisions offering Professional Floor Care Services, Professional Construction Clean-Up Services, Professional Home Care Services, Professional Wholesale Supplies and, of course, the Cleaning Services that were the beginning of the entire operation.

The expansion strategy has had an almost snowball effect

to the point where now Clean Way crews clean, vacuum, dust, polish and shine more than 700,000 square feet of office space in York and adjoining counties five nights a week.

AND THE NEXT STEP IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER

The Mangolds are not finished yet. As Steve Mangold says, five divisions are not enough. We are already working on a new division to go after more Water Restoration work. The job of eliminating mold and drying surfaces after floods or other water damage is a highly skilled and very technical process, Steve says. "When water damage occurs, you have about 36 hours to dry the floor, wall, furniture, insulation, carpet and padding before mold sets in. After that period of time you start to develop mold and mildew. Once mold and mildew set in, you have a whole new set of problems. Now you're talking about people's health," he



Clean Way's fleet of service vehicles.

Submitted photos

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continued, "because mold affects your indoor air quality. If you get to the point of developing mold, you'll wish you were just back to the dampness problems."

Proper Water Restoration requires a trained and certified technician that knows what they are doing. "You're not only drying the carpet, but everything down to where the carpet is bonded to the floor."

High tech equipment, including "moisture meters, dehumidifiers, ace blowers and flood pro extractors" are used in the process of determining the moisture damage and then returning the damaged structure back to a preloss condition.

Steve says there will be more divisions to come in the future.

GROWTH WITHIN DIVISIONS

Adding divisions is not the only form of growth within the company. Within divisions, growth has been sometimes explosive as well.

When the Mangolds took over the company, the Cleaning and Floor Care Divisions were in place, but since then the Floor Care Division has grown and now includes two "Mobile Carpet Cleaning Plants," trucks that contain everything needed to do the highest quality carpet, upholstery and tile & grout cleaning. With this equipment, we are the only one who will guarantee you the following:

- Your carpet fibers will be cleaner.
- Your carpet fibers will dry faster.
- Your indoor working or living environment will be healthier.
- Your carpet fibers will be restored to a like new condition.
- Your carpet will dry in one hour or your money back.

"We have the equipment built to our specifications, which exceed the carpet cleaning industry standards," Steve says, proudly.

"Another truck," he says "contains everything to strip, buff and re-apply finish to tile floors." They clean all types of floors--Quarry Tile, Concrete, Brick, Wood, Linoleum (VCT), Terrazzo and Slate. "We use state-of-the-art equipment such as propane buffers, propane strippers, high speed burnishers and EZ Ridder Automatic scrubbers." For example, one of their most recent projects was to strip and apply finish to a 25,000 square foot retail store.

CONSTRUCTION CLEAN UP

One division is devoted to cleaning up behind construction crews after building or repairs are finished.

Clean Way cleaning specialists primarily detail clean a building or facility after construction work has been completed. However, if needed the cleaning specialists will also remove left over lumber and scraps. According to Elda, "Clean Way's goal is to remove all the final layers of dirt and dust so that you can come into the building and no matter what you touch, it's going to be clean."

She says the company "customizes cleaning" because no two jobs are the same. "We tailor our job to their specific needs." To achieve this goal, she explains, company representatives do "an extensive interview with each client to make sure we totally understand what they want us to do. We are flexible to meet any drop dead dates without any rework."

EMPLOYEES A KEY TO SUCCESS

"The strategy of convenience is great, Steve says, but adds that without talented, dedicated and well trained employees to back it up, the incredible growth rate Clean Way has experienced would not have occurred.

"We hire as many creative, talented and experienced individuals as we can and we work very hard to retain and maintain them," he says. "We pay higher wages and provide better benefits than most cleaning companies, and we feel that is one of the key factors for our success." Clean Way currently has positions available in many of the divisions.

CUSTOMER DEMAND LEADS TO HOME CARE SERVICES DIVISION

Clean Way's Home Care Services Division grew out of customer demand, Elda says, stating, "Some of our janitorial cleaning clients asked if we also cleaned homes."

That was back in the late 1990's and now Clean Way has a Home Care Services Division devoted to cleaning homes. Just like the Construction Cleanup, Clean Way will customize the cleaning specifications to meet the customers needs.

Some of the services provided by this division include: high and low dusting, removing trash, sanitizing rest rooms, kitchens, stoves, refrigerators and microwaves, vacuuming, polishing furniture and window cleaning. Additional services provided by this division include moving day cleaning and even before or after party cleaning services.

In short, Elda says, "We clean your world for health and safety with cleaning industry expertise."

WHOLESALE SUPPLIES DIVISION

The same type of customer demand led to the opening of the Wholesale Supply Division. "Customers asked if they could buy their janitorial supplies from us," Steve says. So, in July of 2002 Clean Way started their Wholesale supply division. "Because we buy in bulk quantities directly from the manufacturer, we can offer our products at a reduced price. We pass these savings along to the customer," says Mr. Mangold.

The company offers many name brand products in such areas as hand soaps and dispensers, toilet tissue and dispensers, trash liners, hand towels and dispensers, air fresheners, Styrofoam beverage containers, cleaning agents, and more.

As an extra service, the Wholesale Division provides FREE off-the-shelf delivery of products to your home or office.

RELIEF FOR THE CLEANING HEADACHE

The strategy that is pulling Clean Way toward greater expansion and success is clearly to be "your total cleaning resource for all your cleaning needs," as company literature states.

But, Steve Mangold puts it even better when he says, "If trying to have a clean building is your headache, then consider Clean Way as your aspirin."

Because of this philosophy, growth at Clean Way is still an ongoing process, not a finished cycle at all. As a former sales manager, Steve knows that excellent service is the best sales pitch of all and he sums up Clean Way's philosophy is one sentence, "We don't just want to meet the customer's expectations, we want to exceed their expectations.

LONG HOURS, SURPRISE SHIFTS

"This is not an 8 to 5 job," he says. "This is a 24 hour a day operation, 365 days a year. The emergency numbers must be manned at all times."

In the early days, he says, "Elda and I both had our share of cleaning buildings in an emergency when someone didn't show up for a shift. "When you have a restaurant that needs cleaning starting at 11:00 p.m. and then nobody was there, guess who had to do the job? We did a lot of that early on."

Now, however, that is behind the couple.

All employees undergo strenuous training and receive benefits and pay that is higher than industry standards, so there is less turnover and more responsibility in manning shifts.

And, as Steve explains, with the company's growth, they have been able to "create positions and to empower people to do the things that are needed to be done when we are not here."

"We now have an operations manager, quality control manager, carpet manager and janitorial supervisor positions," he says, freeing he and his wife up to provide the planning, administration and vision to keep the company not only solvent, but on a constant growth program.



If trying to have a clean building is your headache, then consider Clean Way as your aspirin.

Submitted photo

"I did it my way"

That Elda Mangold is owning and running a successful cleaning service business in York County in the United States of America is a stretch of the imagination that she never would have had growing up in her native Germany.

It's taken some major planning and a lot of elbow grease to achieve this classic American success story.

Her story begins in 1966 when she meet and married an American serviceman, Steve Mangold and then returned to this country with him. The first challenge she met was the language barrier. She obviously spoke fluent German, but her school English was helped out by what she terms "OJT" or On-The-Job Training dealing with Americans.

A TRAINED BEAUTICIAN

Elda was a trained beautician in Germany, and while Steve worked on the road as a sales manager, she opened her own beauty salon in the United States. Running that shop gave her the financial understanding to deal with banks and accountants in running a business.

But even that didn't prepare her for the headaches of a major, multi-employee firm that had to run around the clock every day of the year.

How she learned to deal with workmen's compensation, unemployment, tax ramifications and employees is a lesson in what it takes to build a successful business.

RELIED ON THE ACCOUNTANTS BUT ON THE JOB TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

In the beginning, Elda says, she relied heavily on the accountant for good advice on all financial decisions and left it up to her lawyer for legal matters.

She says she learned how to be a leader, not just a manager, by "working shoulder to shoulder with our employees, even if it was until 4:00 a.m. That way I know first hand what it means to clean a building. And, if I did the job, I now exactly how long it should take for someone else to do that same job."

BEING ACCEPTED AS A BOSS AND A WOMAN

"Being accepted as the boss and being a woman is sometimes difficult," she says, saying that she learned step by step how to treat employees fairly by "getting all of the facts before you make a decision, get both sides of the story in a conflict situation before making a decision and listening to the staff of experienced supervisors."

One of the biggest learning experiences, she says was understanding "that to succeed in business as the president and being a woman I have to surround myself with a team of experts to help me solve the many daily challenges of a cleaning company."

PERSONAL PRIDE, ACCOMPLISHMENT AND SATISFACTION

"Although I was born in Germany, I am extremely proud to be an American," she says, adding, "it is definitely the land of opportunity."

"I truly believe that if you are willing to work hard, the sky is the limit."

What owning Clean Way Professional Cleaning Services, Inc., means to her is that "I have lived the American dream." Even more importantly, "as ole Blue eyes, Frank Sinatra, once sang, "I did it my way."

"I came to this country, worked hard and helped to lead this company to one of York County's largest cleaning companies." She adds that the company growth from fewer than 25 employees to over 70 in the last nine years is a source of great pride and sense of accomplishment.

"I thank God every night for my family, our company and our clients," she says. "I hope we all stay healthy and have a long lasting partnership."

For more information on Clean Way Professional Cleaning Services, Inc., visit their web site at www.cwpcs.com