

## Her business will take the cleaners to yours

Pride, skill, attention build janitorial service for area's small offices

By TOM ADAMS

**A**ngella Luyk has grown Midnight Janitorial Inc. into a six-figure revenue producer in just over two years since founding it in November 2005.

The business grew by 95 percent last year, up from 65 percent in 2006. The company has posted gross revenues of \$321,000 over the three years, says Luyk, CEO of Midnight Janitorial.

**PROFILE**  
Midnight Janitorial Inc.

"My accountant is amazed at how well I've done in three years," the 34-year-old Irondequoit resident says.

Midnight Janitorial provides cleaning services for small and midsize offices, primarily for doctors, dentists and lawyers and primarily in Monroe County. Luyk says she spares no expense when it comes to cleaning supplies. She uses 100 percent paper products and eco-friendly cleaners.

The company employs 24. All but two are part time.

"Most of them have full-time jobs," Luyk says of her work force. "They just need some extra money. I'm very flexible with their schedules. And we don't work any weekends because that's their family time."

She runs the company from her home. Since Luyk visits her clients, she believes having an office is a "waste of money."

She estimates she saves \$1,000 a month, money that she can reinvest in the business and her staff.

Luyk employs an accountant, a human resources officer and a lawyer on a contractual basis. The Midnight Janitorial workday runs from 5 p.m. to 11 p.m., Luyk says.

"We don't go past 11 o'clock because they have to go to work the next day," she says. "I don't want them being tired for that next job because that's not fair. I try to run the company like how I would want to be treated if I were an employee."

Luyk, in fact, joins her troops at least once a week at a job site—a lot of times, she says, her staff does not recognize her. She estimates working 60 hours each week.

"I figured no matter how big my company got, I'd be there cleaning with them one day a week so I don't lose touch with them," she says. "How can I make policies and procedures if I don't know what they're going through?"

Luyk says she wants Midnight Janitorial to be a \$1 million company with 50 employees by the end of 2009 and a \$5 million company with as many as 100 workers within five years.

"There's enough work in Rochester that it's quite possible," she says. "There are a lot of doctors and dentists and lawyers."

Luyk has a handful of larger assignments, among them a 45,000-square-foot building on Route 96 in Perinton that houses the offices of Merrill Lynch & Co. Inc.

"I have high-profile clients," Luyk says. "They are somewhat larger buildings, but they're not 10-story buildings. I won't do those because you lose control when



Photo by Kimberly McGinzie  
**Angella Luyk: "I try to run the company like how I would want to be treated if I were an employee."**

they're that big."

Luyk's professional expertise prior to Midnight Janitorial was working as a waitress and as a nanny for a set of triplets.

"I have no business skills," she admits. "Being a waitress and a nanny for three kids, I had to learn to think on my feet, to move quickly and to multi-task all the time. I was good at those things, and I figured I could try this."

After hearing stories of how some cleaners did not pay attention to details, she de-

ecided to take time to clean offices. Midnight Janitorial employees undergo training that lasts from two weeks to a month.

Luyk relies on word-of-mouth referrals. "I've tried to stick to a niche market," she says. "I want to do small and medium-sized offices because they appreciate the cobwebs being taken down and the baseboards being wiped."

Adds Luyk: "That's the kind of stuff that most cleaning companies don't do anymore, whereas my employees are so proud of what they do because I instill that pride in them. They're almost like mini-owners themselves."

She allows her employees four hours per month of company time for volunteer work and says she is able to generate revenue and keep her staff happy.

"I have a nice car. I have a nice house. If I can live decently, why do I have to have a million dollars?" she says. "I'd rather have my employees who are scraping by working two jobs have a little bit more money."

The business community has taken notice. Midnight Janitorial was a 2007 finalist for the Rochester Area Business Ethics Foundation's Rochester Business Ethics Awards.

"(The cleaning business) is very male-dominated," Luyk says. "I've had to fight that. And because I'm young, I get told that this is going to fail. That's what drives me to make it better."

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*Fast Start is a biweekly feature focusing on young entrepreneurs. Send suggestions for future Fast Start stories to Associate Editor Smriti Jacob at sjacob@rbj.net.*