

Tampa Cleaning Business Increases Revenues by 500% & Reduces Employee Turnover with TWO MAIDS & A MOP™ Franchise

When Jaime Kulaga and her partners launched Collegiate Cleaning of Tampa, they planned a big future for their company.

But the realities of the cleaning industry slowed their progress. Like other cleaning businesses, Collegiate Cleaning struggled with marketing, compensation, and employee turnover. And, as managing partner, Kulaga was so busy with day-to-day operations that she had no time to build the business.

“I didn’t have the systems in place,” says Kulaga. “I was focused on making the schedule, getting the crew out, and keeping the clients happy. I wanted to do more, but I was stuck inside the daily business cycle.”

Struggling with Industry Challenges

Collegiate Cleaning’s challenges will be familiar to anyone in the cleaning industry. Employee turnover was high, so Kulaga spent a lot of time finding, hiring, and training trustworthy workers. Sometimes she held onto the wrong people, simply because she needed to be able to put a crew out.

The problem was worsened by the difficulty of determining fair compensation. “I was tearing out my hair trying to figure out how to pay a fair rate, factor in mileage, and still buy product,” says Kulaga. “You want to treat your people well, but you also need to keep your costs in check.”

On top of that, the company’s marketing was hit-or-miss. Kulaga was relying heavily on standard industry methods like door hangers and flyers. And she was squeezing her marketing into an already overwhelming schedule. “I was ducking out in the afternoon to attend networking meetings or hang door tags. Our marketing took a lot of time and effort, and it wasn’t very successful.”

“I wanted solutions, says Kulaga, I was looking for solutions. But those solutions take time and money that a small business doesn’t have.”

SUMMARY

Franchisee

Jaime Kulaga, Two Maids & A Mop of Tampa

Challenges

- High employee turnover cost time and money and threatened to compromise service delivery
- Acquiring new clients was inefficient and costly
- Owner wanted to build the business, but felt stuck managing day-to-day operations

Solution

Two Maids & A Mop franchise provides a fair compensation plan that ensures employee performance; hiring systems that improve the quality of applicant pool and new hires; and a focused marketing strategy that automates new client acquisition and referrals.

Results

- Monthly revenues increased 500%
- Quadrupled number of recurring clients
- Attracted and hired better employees
- Reduced staff turnover

Finding the Solution

Despite the difficulties, Kulaga and her partners were committed to growing the business. They dreamed of someday franchising Collegiate Cleaning – so they didn't give much thought to becoming franchisees themselves.

But then they met Ron Holt, CEO of Two Maids & A Mop.

"When I met Ron, I knew franchising was something I would consider," says Kulaga. "Always before, I resisted the idea — because Collegiate Cleaning was mine. It was small and it was a struggle, but it was mine."

After talking to Holt, however, Kulaga had a change of heart. Impressed by Holt's passion and knowledge, she said 'yes' to the franchise. "I'm taking the systems and policies — but Two Maids Tampa is still my business. And it's better for my family, better for my stress level, and better for my clients."

"I was doing all this extra legwork, and it's just amazing that all this weight has been lifted off of me. Because now there are systems and procedures in place, and everything's running smoothly. I have Google doing its thing in the background for me. It's finally one or two jobs that I'm doing, instead of feeling like I'm holding every position in a major company."

Systems for Success

Holt's personality did a lot to convince Kulaga that she was making the right choice. "Ron is so enthusiastic," she says, "and he invests so much energy in our success. I don't see that in a lot of other franchisors."

Two Maids & A Mop also offered innovative systems for marketing, hiring, and employee compensation — three of Kulaga's biggest frustrations. Two Maids uses effective, low-cost Internet marketing methods that automate much of the process. And Two Maids provides franchisees with a hiring system and a Pay for Performance compensation plan that improves employee performance and reduces turnover.

"I was doing all this extra legwork, and it's just amazing that all this weight has been lifted off of me," explains Kulaga. "Because now there are systems and procedures in place, and everything's running smoothly. I have the internet doing its thing in the background for me. It's finally one or two jobs that I'm doing, instead of feeling like I'm holding every position in a major company."

Challenges to Implementation

Despite the benefits, merging into another company's systems was a daunting prospect.

Though Kulaga was confident in Two Maids & A Mop, she faced problems integrating with third-party vendors. Fortunately, she was able to rely on Two Maids home office to help her out. "As a franchisee, I don't have the clout of a bigger company. If our scheduling system goes down and the vendor doesn't respond to me, I know I can call Two Maids and they'll make sure the issue gets resolved right away."

In fact, Kulaga found that Two Maids & A Mop went above and beyond to help improve her leverage with third-party providers. When a search for affordable employee leasing elicited sky-high quotes, Two Maids took matters into their own hands. "They kept pushing to get a rate that was acceptable to us and comparable to what they pay as a larger entity," says Kulaga. "I really appreciate that they'll fight for us."

Six Weeks to a Total Turnaround

Once the new systems were in place, Kulaga saw several weeks of steady growth. Then, at week six, the company's SEO (search engine optimization) formula kicked in.

"The SEO completely flipped the company," Kulaga says. "For the two years I ran Collegiate Cleaning, my goal had been to acquire 30 recurring clients. Within 90 days of becoming Two Maids & A Mop, we had 55 recurring clients — and that doesn't include all the other stuff we're doing."

And the marketing almost takes care of itself. No longer does Kulaga have to sneak away to spend an afternoon distributing door hangers. "The marketing formula is doing everything behind the scenes," she says. "It's taken such a weight off me, and at the same time we've quadrupled our clients."

The Pay for Performance plan also works in the background, saving time and lowering costs. "It lifts so much responsibility and frustration from the owner," explains Kulaga. "There's a lot of math behind it, but it's so simple to use — and it saves us a lot of money."

Best of all, Kulaga's revenues have exploded. "We were doing maybe \$1000 a week when we merged, and then we started seeing \$2000 and \$3000 weeks. Which was great. But then the marketing formula started working, and suddenly we were doing four, five, six thousand. We're less than 90 days into the transition, and this month we're projected for \$20,000. I never anticipated so much growth so quickly."

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Keeping Up With Hiring

The sudden explosion in business came with some stress. Initially, keeping up with hiring was the biggest issue. A month after the merge, Kulaga was ready to hire two more employees. Two weeks later, when the SEO formula kicked in, she suddenly needed six.

Fortunately, with Two Maids' sourcing and hiring methodology behind her, Kulaga was able to build a strong team. "I've found awesome people who have stuck with us. They're efficient and motivated and they want to work." Even better, Kulaga is now confident that she'll be able to maintain client satisfaction. "We need to hire a few more people, but it's not the end of the world like it used to be."

Tapping Into Industry Expertise

Kulaga was thrilled by the rapid increase in revenues. But she's been just as pleased by the industry knowledge and research that Two Maids & A Mop brings to the table. "Ron's been doing this for 11 years," she says, "and he has a perspective on the industry that I just can't match."

One outcome of Two Maids' expertise was a change in location. Kulaga had been in South Tampa for two years and liked the area. But the Two Maids home office encouraged her to move to a more central location, so she would be closer to her employees and within reach of more territory.

"It seems obvious that being central would be better," says Kulaga, "but I'd built my base in South Tampa. Changing locations would never have occurred to me. But Two Maids was right. In fact, the move may be a large part of why our revenues have so exceeded everyone's expectations."

Building On Success

Though she's excited by the company's rapid growth, Kulaga appreciated having a few slower weeks to learn the new system, master the Pay for Performance plan, hire teams, and acquire the right product. She was able to keep things running smoothly in the background, while still putting her crew out for the day. And when business suddenly tripled, Kulaga was ready for it.

"It was nice to take a few weeks to jump to \$6,000," says Kulaga. "And once you have the marketing formula and systems in place, you'll see how your business goes from minimally existing to, holy cow, you're tripling."

Her business has already surpassed expectations for the Tampa location. But Kulaga's not ready to relax. She finally has the time and resources to build the business she and her partners have dreamed of. In fact, they're already considering franchises in additional cities. "This is why you want to merge and why you're relieved to join a company like Two Maids & A Mop," says Kulaga. "I'm so excited, and I'm looking toward our next big goal."