



Clean, green and winning

Ian Beach on how he turned Ridge Crest Cleaning into a polished success, his green credentials and his passion for supporting rugby in Kent schools.

Tell us about yourself

I am 50 years old, a family man with five children. I've worked in the service industry for more than 30 years. My first managerial positions were at the RAC, where I became the youngest general manager at 26. In the 1990s I held senior roles in two of the UK's top 50 fastest-growing companies.

Describe your business

We provide a complete range of facilities services to commercial and public sector premises, delivering a high quality cleaning service that is both environmentally responsible and cost effective for our clients. We won environmental awards for our green credentials in 2006 and 2007, using environmentally friendly and biodegradable cleaning products.

Our commitment to the environment is an integral part of the company's ethos and something our 350 employees have bought into. We have 17 clients – 70 per cent of them schools. My first contract was with Skinnners' School, Tunbridge Wells and soon after Tonbridge Grammar joined the fold.

What motivated you to set up Ridge Crest Cleaning?

For years I wanted to run my own company and manage my own destiny. I had an opportunity to sell a shareholding in the last company I worked for and put £50,000 into setting up Ridge Crest Cleaning in 2004. I wanted to make schools, offices and other

business premises cleaner and fresher places for people to work in, with minimal impact on the environment while delivering that much-needed personal service.

What was your business breakthrough?

We pioneered the UK's first environmentally friendly cleaning contract, in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council, in 2005. We then adopted a similar approach to secure cleaning contracts at Wimbledon greyhound stadium, four Riva bingo halls, three Asda distribution depots and an Asda recycling depot.

What's the secret of your fast-growing success?

It's partly due to our passionate commitment to personal service. Our clients know that if something needs sorting out quickly, they can speak directly to me. In addition, our overheads are low and 70 per cent of our costs are wages. Since the business was established, our profits have rocketed, with sales growth of more than 2,200 per cent. Annual turnover has increased from £93,000 in 2004/2005 to £2.15m in 2007/2008.

What are your plans for the future?

We aim to develop our position within the education sector and build on our 'best value through partnership' approach. We launched Ridge Crest Cleaning Wales in 2008 with Ryan Jones, the Wales rugby captain,

as chief executive. It aims to become carbon neutral by 2010 and has started an audit to offset its carbon footprint.

What do you sponsor in Kent and why?

We made a substantial donation to the Gift for Learning campaign to complete the new-build of Tonbridge Grammar School and supported Skinnners School's Eco-Schools award-winning project. At Hamstreet School, near Ashford, we sponsored the installation of solar panels for their swimming pool and initiated rugby coaching.

How do you relax?

My overriding passion is rugby. So when I'm not watching Ospreys or Wales, I'm supporting the local teams I sponsor. I also part-own a two year old racehorse, Sapphire Prince, and three yearlings from the USA. They are with highly successful Kent-based trainer John Best.



Ridge Crest Cleaning Ltd
New Aylesford Business Centre
High Street, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7AX
Tel: 01622 717414
ian@ridgecrestcleaning.com
www.ridgecrestcleaning.com