

NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

PRIVATE COMPANY 10-25 EMPLOYEES

Imperial Cleaning Systems Inc. is a commercial cleaning company. Robert Sherrill started the company five years ago and serves as CEO.

If you had to take a three-month sabbatical from work, how would you spend it? I've recently become a fan of continued education. I would spend my three-month sabbatical tucked in a corner or on a plane reading articles, books and listening to podcasts.

What is the biggest misconception about what you do, and how would you set the record straight? The biggest misconception is that janitors aren't successful and are the low men on the totem pole. Janitors, for decades, have always been viewed as "less than," but I think this honor proves that the janitorial industry is one to be reckoned with. I would set the record straight by continuing to be a giant in the industry and show that labels and titles are nothing without hard work, tenacity and ambition.

Who is or was your mentor, and what's the best advice they gave you? My mentor is Pat Conroy. ... The best advice he ever gave me was, "Experience is what you get when you don't get what you want." ... To me, it means that the best lessons come when things don't go as planned.

Other than yourself, which CEO in Nashville has the most fun, and why? Tina Hodges [of Advance Financial]. As CEO of a large corporation, she never sweats and always wears a smile. Her demeanor, spirit, excitement and persistence remain the same regardless of the highs and lows.

Tell us about the best career/business decision you ever made. To take a chance on me. I'm not a traditional entrepreneur, and my journey to this career has been anything but conventional. Entrepreneurship is difficult, but it's one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. Taking the first step without seeing the staircase is rooted in faith and has pushed me to diversify my offerings.



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