

# PERFORMANCE CLEAN, INC.



## LEADING A LIFE AND COMPANY WITHOUT REGRETS OR COMPROMISE

by Christopher Cussat

PEOPLE ESTABLISH BUSINESSES FOR many reasons. Sometimes entrepreneurs are driven by financial goals, others hope to productively utilize their talents, and then there are those who simply have a calling. Much like the old saying, Performance Clean, Inc. (PCI), was literally started on hopes and prayers. In fact, the devotion to hard work, determination, and business ethics of PCI president and founder, Jackie Poulakos, is second only to her devotion to God and to her personal beliefs.

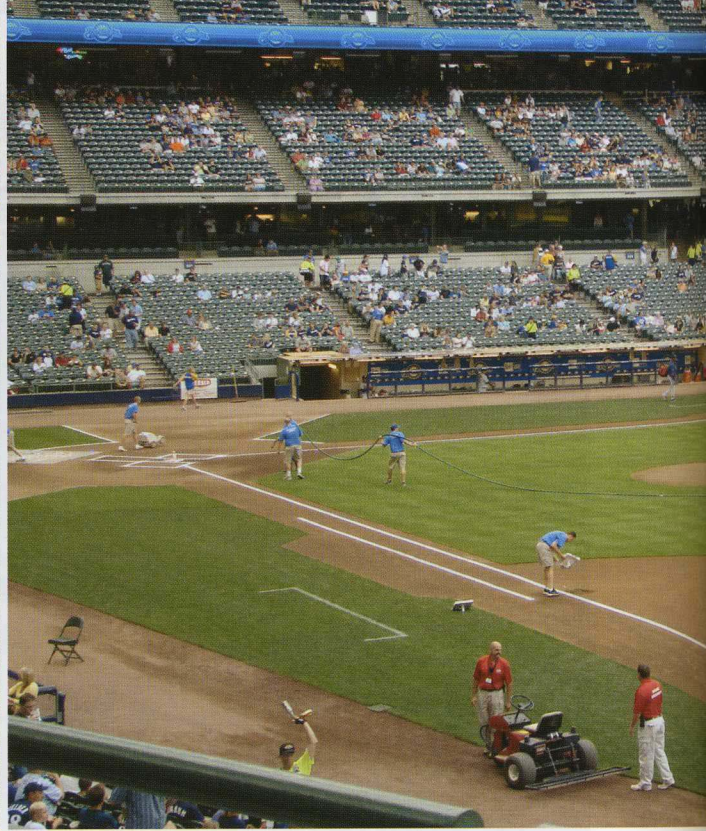
The story behind the creation of PCI is nothing short of miraculous. The company, founded in February 2001, provides commercial cleaning for public assembly facilities such as stadiums, arenas, conference halls, convention centers,

and theaters. From its humble—and almost accidental—beginnings, Milwaukee-based PCI is now a highly successful and lucrative cleaning corporation that maintains clients and facilities such as the Milwaukee Brewers' Miller Park and the Bradley Center.

According to Poulakos, while flying to New York for a job interview, she met the then-vice president of operations for Miller Park, who was in town to negotiate a cleaning agreement. Introductions turned into a conversation, and by the end of the day, the idea of PCI was born. Everything after that, Poulakos says, is a blur. She only remembers phoning her husband and saying, "I think I have a business." This stay-at-home mom, who had no business background or experi-

*Above: Cleaning supplies used by Performance Clean.*





“As you grow, you are going to have many opportunities to compromise. Don't ever change.” Jackie Poulakos, President & Founder

ence, was suddenly building PCI. Poulakos explains, “This company really did get started on a prayer, and I always give credit where credit is due—God gave it to me—I just obeyed a calling.”

It took a strong-minded, competitive and ethical businesswoman like Poulakos to grow the business, and to lead the company to where it is today. It is fair to say that Poulakos has traversed the economic spectrum, especially considering her very humble beginnings.

Growing up in Puerto Rico, Poulakos moved to Wisconsin in 1982. Her family had very little. “My mother came here with three children, one suitcase, and a letter of recommendation. She had no job and hardly spoke English,

but was determined to give her children every opportunity that she did not have—we started from absolute scratch,” Poulakos says.

Eventually, Poulakos went on to study music and Spanish education at Mount Mary College. She also studied cello at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. “I can play just about anything and everything,” Poulakos adds. In fact, music is still an important part of her life. She is a member of the worship team at her church and uses her talents to write and sing music.

Perhaps the dedication it requires to master musical instruments naturally feeds Poulakos's dedication to her company. As she explains, PCI's success can be attrib-

uted to factors like hands-on executive management, and maintaining a strong culture of personalization for both employees and clients alike. “I always say that no matter how big we get, we are a small company in big buildings.” She continues, “I don't ever want to lose sight of the fact that each employee is our most important employee.”

“Another huge part of our success,” adds Poulakos, “is that we have the best clients. I don't like calling them clients because they're our partners and we will always see them as such. Each partner is also our most important partner.”

In addition to these strong commitments, Poulakos feels that a company should grow only when it is ready. Ac-



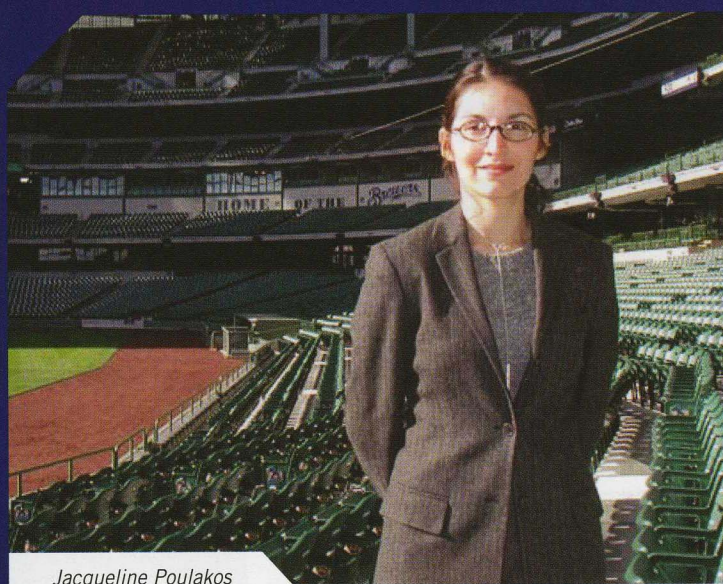
PERFORMANCE CLEAN, INC. AT A GLANCE

LOCATION: Milwaukee, WI

AREA OF SPECIALTY: Commercial cleaning for public assembly facilities (stadiums, arenas, convention centers, theaters, etc.)

AVERAGE ANNUAL SALES: \$4.1 million

EMPLOYEES: 300+



Jacqueline Poulakos

Far left: Cleaning supplies used by Performance Clean.  
Left: Milwaukee Brewers Stadium, Miller Park, Milwaukee, WI.

cordingly, for about a year, PCI stepped away from acquiring new business contracts. "Our company was growing so fast that we weren't able to adjust with our changes, so we halted growth and instead refocused on our clients and on strengthening our infrastructure." After this year of "strength training" PCI is now ready to service new clients in the best possible way. Poulakos notes, "I want PCI to be not only all that it can be, but all that it was intended to be."

Poulakos has excellent advice not only for running a business, but for living your life as well. "My goal is to lead a life of no regrets or compromise. I always put everything through that filter. If something has the potential of compromising our values in any way, we walk away. I think it's important for people to have a plan and stick with it. As you grow, you are going to have many opportunities to compromise. Don't ever change." HEQ

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## WE THANK OUR CUSTOMERS AND SUPPLIERS FOR BEING PART OF OUR WINNING TEAM.

We appreciate your business and look forward to continued partnerships in the years ahead. The success and recognition we have enjoyed would not be possible without you!

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*"At Performance Clean, our investment in attracting, training and retaining the best people pays dividends in our ability to deliver the best service available in the cleaning industry - bar none."*

Jacqueline Poulakos  
President and Founder

**PERFORMANCE Clean, Inc.**

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