

Franchise Owner Spotlight

Nelson & Sujey Rivera

By Mike Brodarick, General Counsel



Nelson and Sujey Rivera made a big addition to their growing list of PuroClean accolades at the PuroClean International Convention in Denver, taking home the coveted Franchise of the Year Award. In just their fourth full year in operation, Nelson and Sujey are on pace to generate well over \$5.5 million across their four New Jersey offices. Their success has been accompanied by an admirable commitment

to supporting their local community, which has been recognized with the PuroClean Cares Award in the past.

The day after winning their big award in Denver, Nelson and Sujey were kind enough to sit down for a recorded interview to share some of the keys to their success. A summary of the interview is below, but be sure to use the QR code to watch the full video interview.

What was it like winning the Franchise of the Year Award?

Nelson: Winning this award was both amazing and unexpected. We've been trying to win this since day one, but I never wanted to get my hopes too high. We're extremely proud and

happy. We can't wait to get home and celebrate with our team. My brother sent them the video and they are so excited. Our team's loyalty and hard work is what makes us.

Sujey: I was overwhelmed. Looking back, I acted like I won a Grammy. Being with everyone here reminded me of our first President's Circle and what a great experience we had meeting and learning from so many amazing Franchise Owners. Learning from everyone else in the network has been a big part of our success.

How did you get started with PuroClean?

Nelson: I had already been in restoration for a while. I've been a firefighter for 17 years and started working for another restoration company on the side. Then I worked for two different PuroClean franchises. While working on storm about four years ago, Sujey investigated an SBA loan and a few weeks later we were buying a franchise.

Sujey: I remember that storm season, Nelson worked so hard managing the entire storm effort, and his boss wasn't very appreciative. We always help each other grow and see the big picture. Moving into ownership seemed like the clear next step.

What have been some of the keys to your success?

Nelson: Because of my experience with storm chasing, I knew storm would be our focus in the beginning. We brought the money earned from storm chasing back home and invested it in our local marketing efforts. That helped get us to where we are today. But we've always focused more on community engagement than traditional marketing.



Nelson & Sujey Rivera being interviewed by Mike Brodarick.

Every few months, we find ways to impact someone's life directly. That's a passion of ours.

Most of our business comes through word of mouth. We emphasize doing good work and being seen in the community as more than just a restoration company. People scroll right past advertisements on social media, but they stop and notice what we are doing in the community and become our advocates. Our happy customers become our marketers as well. Our customers are proud to give us referrals and help us grow.

How did you build your team?

Nelson: Three of our technicians started with me 12 years ago when I was working for another restoration company. We have 12 full-time employees, but we work some large losses that require 40 or 50 people. We scale up quickly when there is a surge by bringing on other firefighters, as well as the friends and families of employees. We're very family-oriented and love when our employees refer their family and friends.

Sujey: After hiring a lot of friends and family members of our current team, we also started using some of the PuroClean preferred vendors for recruiting. We hired some technicians from other restoration companies that way, and they worked well. They brought best

practices and different perspectives from their prior jobs.

Nelson: I've never put a lot of emphasis on a resume or an interview. It's hard to judge work ethic that way. We do a short interview and then put people out in the field as soon as possible. We want to see how they will react when they confront a crawl space or sewage backup. We've been extremely lucky in finding good people.

What advice would you give a brand-new PuroClean Franchise Owner?

Nelson: Visit as many other franchises as possible. When I started visiting successful franchises, I was blown away with the massive operations and processes they had in place. I also noticed the pride their employees had in coming to work in a nice building and having a place to hang out. I remembered that, and when we started growing and were able to move into a larger facility, you could see it elevated our team's professionalism.

Our community of Franchise Owners is the biggest benefit of being part of the franchise system. PuroClean Franchise Owners are a welcoming group of people. I've never seen a PuroClean Franchise Owner turn another Franchise Owner away. It will be hard to fail if you spend time learning from other Franchise Owners.



Scan this QR Code to watch the full video interview



Restoration efforts in Naples, Florida, after Hurricane Ian.



Commercial Sales Seminar, Livingston, N.J.
L-r: Sherri Spohn, George Hernandez, Sujey & Nelson Rivera, Rob Drexler



2020 first PuroClean Cares Award was presented to Nelson Rivera at the 2021 PuroClean International Convention.