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### Industry stars gather to brainstorm



John DiJulius speaks to an industry gathering of more than 100 persons at last month's Brainstorming and the Five Stars conference at the Sonesta Resort in St. Maarten.

The annual midwinter getaway sponsored by the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute and the National Cleaners Association, known as Brainstorming with the Five Stars, proved to be timely this year. While much of the nation was frozen solid in an Arctic blast, the 100-and-some industry members who headed to St. Maarten for the Jan. 17-20 conference enjoyed warm sunshine and sandy beaches mixed with friendly networking and insightful speakers

It was the eighth gathering in what has become an annual event that began in Puerto Rico in 2012 when the two associations first combined what had been separate winter conferences — NCA with its Brainstorming event and DLI with its Five Stars conference.

The social aspect of the winter conference got underway with a cocktail reception on Thursday evening at the Sonesta Ocean Point Resort, a boutique, all-inclusive resort where all rooms have an ocean view.

The business portion of the program opened on Friday morning, the first of three morning sessions where speakers imparted their specialized knowledge with Saturday and Sunday morning sessions following before attendees had to return to the twin realities of business as usual and life in a wintry climate.

Speakers included Jeff Tippett, on persuasive communications, John DiJulius on customer service, and Arthur Greeno, who explained the secret to Chick fil-A's success

in building a business based largely on minimum wage workers.

DiJulius spoke about a customer service revolution and the need to become a brand that customers can't live without.

"You are in the customer perception business," he said. "Do not ask customers what they want. Give them something they can't live without."

He recalled the words of Henry Ford who said, "If I had asked people what they want, they would have said faster horses."

### A new look for Clean Show sessions

There will be a new look for the educational sessions at the Clean Show this year with 29 sessions in all scheduled for the June 20-23 event in New Orleans.

As in the past, the co-sponsoring associations will offer programs in the mornings geared to the interests of their members. But this year's show will also feature a series of general sessions in the afternoons with topics of broader interest appealing to all attendees.

All programs will be at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. The morning sessions will be in designated conference rooms at the center; the afternoon general sessions will take place in the exhibit hall.

The first such program will be on Thursday afternoon, leading off with the topic of Social Media Marketing and Measurement at 2 p.m. followed by the Workplace Risks

of Legalized Marijuana at 3:30.

The Friday afternoon sessions will include Helpful Business Apps with Beth Z Your Nerdy Best Friend followed by Competing in Tough Job Market: Importance of Screening and Training.

On Saturday, attendees may be interested in Where to Start? Tips for Entering the Commercial Laundry Industry or #NotHere: Sexual Harassment Prevention.

No general sessions are planned for Sunday, the final day of the show which closes at 3 p.m.

As always, all registered attendees can attend any of the show's programs.

Drycleaners are likely to be particularly interested in the programs being planned by the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute on Thursday, Friday and Saturday mornings.

DLI will kick off its programs at 8:30 on Thursday morning with the topic No Bad Days: Positive Attitude Is Everything. The program is slated to run until 9:30 so attendees will have time to join the grand entrance into the exhibit hall when it opens following the 10 a.m. ribbon cutting.

Two programs are planned by DLI for Friday morning. First up will be First Impressions are Everything Even with Websites, a one-hour program beginning at 8 a.m. Next up on the DLI slate will be Next Generation Marketing another one-hour program beginning at 9 a.m.

Two more DLI programs will follow on Saturday beginning with Customer Service: Being Good is Not Enough at 8 a.m. and followed by Tips for Entering the Wash-Dry-Fold Market at 9 a.m.

Other show sponsors will be offering

morning programs, too. The Coin Laundry Association will be discussing Laundries Connecting Communities on Friday. An Interactive Idea Exchange and Laundromat Lifecycles will be CLA's Friday topics.

Wash-Dry-Fold 2.0: What's next for full-service laundry will head the association's Saturday program followed by Preparing to Buy (or Sell) Your Next Laundromat.

CLA is the only association planning Sunday morning sessions which include Introduction to Laundromats for Investors and Top 10 Secrets First-Time Laundromat Owners Must Know.

The Textile Rental Services Association lineup includes Commercial Contracts: Hot Topics, Updates and Litigation on Thursday; Labor Law and Compliance: Hot Issues and Trends and Top OSHA Violations

Continued on page 8

#### **Sneak Peek**

**6** The right way

Levi Rottenberg's company does thousands of shirts and he hopes not to lose any of them, including his own.



#### **20** Not a contractor?

Calling employees contractors to save a few bucks can end up costing thousands, Frank Kollman warns.



#### **24**Rewarding loyalty

Rewarding your best and most loyal customers costs far less than finding new ones, Larry Siegel emphasizes.



#### 34 It's a pain to train

When the trainer lacks training on shirt pressing, training a new presser becomes a real pain, Don Desrosiers observes.





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#### What you don't know can certainly hurt

People, especially business owners, like to save money and fix as many problems as they can by themselves. This is a wise strategy provided those same people realize when they are in over their head. Many of us have been known to overestimate our personal knowledge on a subject matter, which rarely ever leads to a positive result. In fact, it can often lead to an accident.

When it comes to our own bodies, we defer to the professionals. There aren't many self-dentistry or self-surgical books out there because people seem to generally like living and prefer to stay that way. But, sometimes in the pursuit of saving a buck, we can throw caution out the window when it comes to fixing a heavy piece of equipment that could crush the human body like a peanut shell, or one that is full of sharp and serrated edges that will happily test the efficacy of your last Tetanus shot, or one that contains water hot enough to boil us in seconds, or one that has enough electricity running through it to knock out an elephant, or contains chemicals that can be harmful on contact... well, you get the idea.

Just as many of your customers have come running to you frantically because they set a stain or accidentally caused damage to a dryclean-only garment by throwing it in their washing machine, some do-it-yourselfers who have not been properly trained on how to work with complex equipment will eventually come running to the lobby of the nearest urgent care facility or hospital.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics from the U.S. Department of Labor, there were a total of 5,147 fatal work injuries in 2017 (as well as 2.8 million non-fatal work injuries). The culprit causes represent a wide spectrum: transportation incidents; falls, slips and trips; violence and other injuries by persons or animals; contact with objects and equipment; exposure to harmful substances or environments; and fires and explosions. Any and all of these occupational injuries can take place in a drycleaning plant at any given time.

If you want to minimize such accidents, you must recognize that what you don't know might really hurt you. This month, columnist Bruce Grossman (see page 12) offers some sage advice on a responsible approach to testing for electrical issues in your production area. Some of that advice is to "leave it to a professional" if the power of the machine you are testing is over 230 Volts. Yes, some issues are best left for those with years of experience. However, for all others, make sure you have a keen understanding of the potential hazards that await you before you break out your toolbox. After all, knowledge is the one tool that can protect you the most from harm when working with malfunctioning machinery.

#### Pushing up the cost of labor

Upward pressure on the cost of labor is a real thing, coming from statutory increases in minimum wages and falling unemployment levels that reduce the pool of potential employees. Are you feeling it yet?

Eighteen states began the new year with higher minimum wages. That includes eight states — Alaska, Florida, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, South Dakota, and Vermont — that automatically increased their rates based on the cost of living, and ten states — Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Rhode Island and Washington that increased their rates due to previously approved legislation or ballot initiatives.

Still to come are rate increases during the 2019 calendar year in the District of Columbia, Delaware, Michigan, and Oregon.

And it doesn't stop there. Some states have adopted laws that require annual increases. California leads the way in this regard with scheduled annual increases that will bring the current \$12 an hour to \$15 an hour beginning in 2022. Businesses with 25 or fewer employees get a break of sorts; they won't hit the \$15 mark until 2023.

All this while the federally mandated minimum wage remains at \$7.25 an hour where it has been since 2009. If you are in one of the states that doesn't set a minimum higher than the federal, be aware that there are advocates for legislation that would have the rest of the country "catch up" to California with a \$15 federal minimum by 2024.

While drycleaners generally pay above minimum wage, steady and in some cases steep increases in the minimum can have a lifting effect on all wages. Somebody earning \$5 above the minimum could expect to continue to receive \$5 above the minimum when the minimum goes up.

In a price-sensitive, labor-intensive business like drycleaning, wage increases are game-changers. Think about that as you ponder your price increases. Consider your cost of labor per piece and plan your price increases accordingly. The government is already planning your labor cost increases. You will have to move up just to stay even.

#### Contents

#### **News & Features**

- 6 True collar worker Executive Wholesale Laundry cleans millions of shirts annually in Farmingdale, NY
- 34 Tailwind Manager of the Year Keith Martin has helped transform Classic Cleaners in Arkansas

#### Regions

- $18 \, {}^{Midwest}_{association: \, MWDLI}$  and DLI partner together to form new
- **22** West Route development workshop comes to Napa this month; Minimum wages will keep increasing in California
- **32** Midatlantic DLI releases its 2019 schedule of resident courses for introductory and advanced drycleaning

#### **Departments**

#### Columns

- 12 Bruce Grossman When troubleshooting electrical issues, keep these safety guidelines in mind
- 16 Dan Eisen Understanding the pH factor of acids and alkalines can lead to better color and fabric safety
- **20** Frank Kollman You may not know the difference between a contractor and employee, but the IRS does
- 24 Larry Siegel Loyalty programs are an excellent way to entice your customers to keep coming back
- **30** James Peuster When making business decisions, consider all the potential factors involved
- **34 Don Desrosiers** Shirt pressing is a specialty, so training your pressers requires more time and care

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## The right way

sale Laundry of Farmingdale, NY, about a dozen years ago, it's safe to say he didn't want to lose too many shirts. After all, most of the business was devoted to laundering them. However, he was more afraid of losing his own shirt... along with everything he owned.

Looking back, it was not an easy ordeal, especially since his professional experience consisted of administrating private schools in Brooklyn, NY, including Bnos Zion of Bobov and Yeshiva Beth Hillel of Krasna. He enjoyed the position almost too much because it was never just a job for him.

"When somebody is employed as an employee, there's a certain freeness of knowing, 'I go in at 9 and I clock in at 9 and I clock out at 5 and I'm done for the day and this is my job and that's it.' As an employer, your phone is under your pillow at night," he recalled. "Even though you're sleeping, you're dreaming about it. Your mind is on it. You've got to cover the banks. You've got to do payroll.

"There's a reason that people like being an employee and not an employer. But, when I ran these private schools I was getting paid like an employee. I was an employee, but still my responsibility was so crazy I never had any rest. I was under so much stress. I said to myself one day, 'If I'm already going through something like this, why not buy into a business and be a business owner?'

After researching different options, Levi bought the business in 2007 (right before the Recession hit, naturally). It has been around for over 30 years altogether, but he wasn't sure it would be around for another day at the time.

"I was underwater right at the beginning. Thank God, I was able to swim. It was really touch and go but I made it through it," he explained. "I put a mortgage on whatever I could. Everything had a lien from the bank and I knew — I knew — that if I didn't make it I'd I'm losing everything in my life. I had to make it work. It was a struggle.'

with so much money, you have to make the labor." it work one way or another," he continued. "You just can't give up."

ecoming unionized at the time certainly added to the struggles, but Levi had one thing going for him: the 10,000-sq.-ft. facility had room to grow.

"I can tell you that when I took over the place, it was only occupying twothirds of its space; the other one-third was just storage," he said. "We have at least doubled the business and we are bursting out of our seams and now considering building to get even more space."

"We're using every inch, every centimeter of space available," he added. "Now, there's some good news to us, as well. I'm in the midst of purchasing the property. We were tenants. We are in the middle of buying out the landlord, so a lot of good stuff is happening."

While Executive Wholesale Laundry

hen Levi Rottenberg opted to services fire restoration work, laundry purchase Executive Whole- by the pound and a considerable amount of flatwork from caterers, the crux of their work continues to be shirts provided from about 250 drycleaning company clients. The company employs about 60 overall and handles around 75,000 shirts a week, according to Levi. That adds up to almost four million shirts annually.

"We're the biggest and largest shirt wholesaler in the entire region. If I wouldn't be afraid, I would say worldwide," Levi said. "The sky's the limit right now of how many stores we can buttons to replace the cracked or missing buttons, there are a few different qualities of buttons. We can get buttons cheaper, but we find that the cheaper buttons don't last too long so we buy a better button."

n an attempt to keep his customer base, Levi tries to give his clients whatever they want. After all, he has to please them and, in turn, they have to please their customers.

"Many shirt and laundry wholesalers don't do many folded shirts. We have folding machines working many not kept up with the inflation and rising costs of other services over the

"Tell me any other item in your entire life that in 30 years went up so little!" he exclaimed.

Making matters more frustrating, Levi feels shirts are still the most scrutinized cleaning item by consumers even though it tends to be the cheapest one charged.

espite all of the difficulties of the wholesale work, Levi remains optimistic for the future. Per-



# Levi Rottenberg

pick up. We have eight trucks on the road servicing Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island, Manhattan...'

It takes a fleet of trucks to handle the pickup and delivery, as well as a production facility filled with a lot of running machinery.

"I don't think there's another shirt wholesaler that operates eight doublebuck units for approximately 18 hours a day. Eight double-buck shirt units. We just installed eight brand new ones of Unipress — the Lightning machine, the latest model," he noted.

It wasn't a cheap investment for the company, but Levi certainly believes it was worth it because of significant sav-

"Definitely, after 2 1/2 years those "I'm just saying, once you're in it machines will have paid off through

> evi is well aware that he has to save money wherever he can, because most of the time he has to be willing to pay more in other areas to achieve superior quality. That's why he has an inspector doing touch-up and buttons at every shirt unit and is willing to pay more on utilities.

> "Others stinge on hot water," he explained. "We keep on making sure the hot water temperature is high enough. So, that alone, before anything else, cleans the shirt properly. We put in brand new water heaters — the tankless water heaters — that give off a much better temperature."

> "We buy Diamond Chemical. We find that even though it's expensive, we tried anything and everything and this is the one that we feel really does the job. They come and check to make sure that everything is working fine," he added. "We try to do everything the right way, even buttons. When we buy

hours every single day because we do provide the service of folding," he said. "If you are a drycleaners and you have any specific instructions that you want done with your shirts, different than any other drycleaners, we'll do that."

Remaining on the forefront of technology has allowed Executive Wholesale Laundry to be flexible to cater to clients and it's something that has been with the business for a long time. The company even used barcoding before Levi purchased it.

"We're really the first ones who started this — putting barcodes on every single shirt," Levi said. "Therefore, just like FedEx and UPS track their packaging during the entire route, we track our shirts during the entire process, which eliminates the headache of losing or misplacing or mixing up orders and so on and so forth

ltimately, Levi sees shirt wholesaling as a "penny business" and he actively price shops supplies and materials to try to save anywhere he can.

"At the volume I do, I watch all my pennies," he said. "If I buy hangers every single month I'll price out again that month to see who wants to get me a better deal."

Part of the reason he has to do that frequently is because he has to keep shirt prices down for clients.

"I'm probably one of the most expensive wholesalers, but my latest price is \$1.25. I get \$1.35 on some," he noted. "Guess what? I'm trying to increase my price a nickel on January 1st. You know what I'm getting? I'm getting hit over the head by a bat from most of my customers for that nickel raise."

Historically speaking, that price has

haps that's because his son Moshe has joined the company and can help deal with the many issues that crop up on a daily basis. The key is to remain focussed on the right things.

"The only way to survive today, literally, is not to compete on price and to work hard and keep the quality in everything that you do in your plant... the best quality only," he said. "Compete with quality. You've got to compete with quality, but not with price. You've got to put your full self in. You cannot ever, ever think of running your business absentee."

Fortunately, Levi has learned to enjoy the industry and all its aspects.

"I like the challenge. Sometimes I dread the day — there are depressing days out there — there are days when the driver gets into an accident on the same day a machine breaks down and then the customer decides to curse you out," he noted. "It's always on one day that three or four of these things happen, but in every industry you have that. You have it in your personal life. You have it in your business life. You just have to face reality."

When reality seems too much, the next step is to ask for help. Despite being in a competitive industry, Levi keeps his door open to everybody for tours or advice.

"My place is open for show," he emphasized. "I let people come. I don't care who they are. I don't care what they do. I don't care if they will do the same thing and copy. I couldn't care less. I'm proud and happy. I've been there, done that, so why shouldn't somebody else be able to get the same services without having to go through what I went through until I found out that this is the best of this and that is the best of that."

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~Thayne Albrecht, Manager, Blue Ribbon Cleaners









#### A new look for Clean Show sessions

**Obituary** 

#### Continued from page 1

on Friday; and Certification: Hygienically Clean, Clean Green, Certified Professional Laundry Manager on Saturday.

The Association of Linen Management, yet another show spon-

sor, will present Customer Migration on Thursday; Selling with Solutions for a Long Term Customer and New Textile Technologies for Infection Prevention on Friday; Consistent Benchmarks for Competitive Analysis on Saturday.

All of these programs plus ad-

mission to the exhibit hall all four days of the show are available for a single registration price of \$149. Members of any of the co-sponsoring association receive a registration discount: \$119. Those rates are good through June 10, after which the price goes to \$169.

Registration can be completed hotels. online at the Clean Show website, www.cleanshow.com. Also available on the site is information for making reservations at the area hotels. The Clean Show has arranged special discounted rates and amenities at 23 New Orleans

Also, the sponsoring associations have designated headquarters hotels. For DLI members, the headquarters is the Hotel Monteleone, located in the French quarter about a mile from the exhibit hall.

#### One day wetcleaning seminar coming to Unipress in March

A free all-day wetcleaning seminar will take place at Unipress headquarters in Tampa, FL, on Saturday, March 2.

Hands-on training will be provided by instructors and presenters from several companies. All attendees will get hands-on experience in sorting for wetcleaning, spotting and fabrics and finishing.

On behalf of Seitz Chemicals, presenters will be Joon Han, Ken Chambless and Larry Wolff. Jeff Quail and Frank Briercheck from Poseidon will lead sessions and Liz Davies, finishing expert for Unipress, will also be teaching.

Other sponsors include Laundry Pro of Florida and Fabriclean

The program will take place at Unipress, located at 3501 Queen Palm Dr. in Tampa.

A continental breakfast and full lunch will be provided. There is no cost to attend but space is limited, so preregistration is required.

To register, visit www.unipresscorp.com/semreg.html. For more information call (813) 598-2587 or (813) 300-7148.

Bernard Milch of Laundrylux Bernard Milch, the founder of damage to the laundry room Laundrylux of Inwood NY, died

He was born in Kosova, Poland, and survived the Holocaust but lost most of his family and his home in Poland. He arrived in the United States in 1948 with \$8 in his pocket and began working as a mechanic, a trade he learned after the war in a Jewish displaced person camp in U.S. occupied Germany.

peacefully on Jan. 6 at the age of

In 1956, he was hired to assess

aboard the Swedish American Line's M/S Stockholm after it collided with the Italian steamship Andrea Doria in the Atlantic Ocean, near Nantucket Island.

Discovering that the washing machines functioned after being submerged in sea water, he made inquiries to the Swedish manufacturer and purchased a "Wascator" washer for testing and technical investigation, later obtaining the sales and marketing rights for North America.



He was determined to adapt the machines for the growing coinlaundry and institutional markets, convinced that commercial frontloading washers in larger sizes than "top loaders" could revolutionize the industry as the Baby Boom expanded.

He called his new company "Wascomat," in partial tribute to his favorite lunch spot, the Automat. Wascator Company in Sweden soon became a core holding of the Scandanavian industrial giant, Electrolux, and the Milch family has been its longest continuous partner.

Milch grew the business, now called Laundrylux and run by his son and grandson almost 70 years since founding.

In 1980, he was honored by the King of Sweden for his contribution to Swedish-American business when he was knighted with "Nordstjerneorden", the Order of the North Star, the highest honor given to a non-Swedish born civil-

Milch retired as CEO in 2007. His company, Bermil Industries Corp., which distributed the Wascomat and Electrolux brands of commercial and professional laundry equipment in North America, unified its equipment offerings under the Laundrylux trade name for purposes of marketing, advertising and communications in 2010.

"Laundrylux is what it is today because my grandfather had such drive and determination," said Cody Milch, president of Laundrylux. "He was a visionary who saw possibilities at a time when conventional wisdom said he was crazy trying to sell a more expensive machine from Scandinavia. Ignoring the skeptics, he risked all his savings, worked incredibly hard, and became the quintessential American success story."

He and hise wife were generous philanthropists. Among the many institutions they supported are Mt. Sinai Hospital, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (founders), Yeshiva University and Technion-Israel Institute of Technology.

He is survived by his wife, Lusia; his children, Neal and David; and his grandchildren, Cody, Julia and Jason.

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## NEWSMAKERS



Graduates of the October Introduction to Drycleaning course at DLI are pictured with Brian Johnson, DLI director of education & analysis in front row at left. With him, from left are Raquel Cortes, Vogue Cleaners & Shirt Laundry, Elko, NV; Genesis Grandberry, Lyons Cleaners, Memphis, TN; Amani Bouhdid, Gestion BC Plus, Inc., Blainville, Quebec, Canada; Julie Buntjer, B & J Laundromat, LLC, New Ulm, MN; and Meydi Santos, Super Cleaners, Bethesda, MD. In back are Melissa Hilbert, Citadelle French Cleaners, San Juan, PR; Chris Haddad, Sudbury Steam Cleaners, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada; Michael Roitenbarg, Homelight Management, Spring Valley, NY; Connor Petersen, Fayes Laundry & Dry Cleaners, Layton, UT; and Bruce Buntjer, B & J Laundromat, LLC, New Ulm, MN.



Graduates of the recent Advanced Drycleaning course at DLI included, in front from left, Janet Lineham, La Nuova Drycleaners, Inglewood, New Zealand; Amani Bouhdid, Gestion BC Plus, Inc., Blainville, Quebec; Raquel Cortes, Vogue Cleaners & Shirt Laundry, Elko, NV; Courtney Kraemer, Jones Cleaning Center, Fresno, CA; and Amber Kraemer, Jones Cleaning Center, Fresno, CA. In back are Connor Petersen, Fayes Laundry & Dry Cleaners, Layton, UT; Shelly Anderson, Regency Cleaners, Tyler, TX; Michael Roitenbarg, Homelight Management, Spring Valley, NY; Brian Johnson, DLI director of education and analysis; and Rajev S. Kumar, Wasmaatic, Pune, India. Not pictured is Whittni Hudgins, Holiday Cleaners, LLC, Demopolis, AL.

Unipress Corporation Service Manager Peter Haggerty has retired after more than 35 years with the company.

He was an integral part of the growth and success of Unipress over the years and will be sorely missed, the company said.

In addition to his role as service manager, he was a familiar face at hundreds of trade shows over the years. His depth of knowledge made him an immense asset in the research and development of new products, as well.

He is looking forward to spending his retirement traveling in his motorhome with his wife, Ann.

Unipress also announced that **Chris Wright** will take over as the new service manager.

He brings a wealth of industry experience to the role, starting his career as a serviceman and installer for a Unipress distributor followed by several years with a major manufacturer of industrial cleaning equipment.

Since joining Unipress, Wright has traveled the country visiting Unipress distributors and customers. He is eager to live up to the standards that his predecessor created for the Unipress service department.

Wright can be reached at (813) 623-3731 or cwright@unipress-corp.com.



Peter Hagerty (left) is retiring as service manager for Unipress after more than 35 years with the company. He is pictured with Chris Wright, who will take over as the new service manager for the company.

Hydrofinity, formerly known as Xeros, has announced a partnership with Eastern Laundry Systems, Inc, (ELS) in Taunton, MA, to service Hydrofinity's commercial laundry customers in nine states across the East Coast, including New York, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Hydrofinity customers will benefit from the service of ELS, a large full-service distributor of commercial laundry equipment, parts and chemistry to both the on-premise laundry and laundromat markets.

Hydrofinity's near-waterless laundry systems allow laundries to save water, energy and detergent on every wash load enabling a reduction of energy usage in laundry operations by up to 50 percent and water usage by up to 80 percent.

**Faultless Starch/Bon Ami** is rebranding itself as **Faultless Brands**, a move to unify its entire portfolio of products, the company said.

The company was founded by the Beaham family in 1887 with the acquisition of Faultless Spray Starch. In 1971, Bon Ami Powder Cleanser, created in 1886, was acquired and the two companies' names were merged.

Today, the organization also owns Niagara Starch, Magic Sizing, Kleen King, Steel Glo, Trapp Fragrances and Garden Weasel.

The move follows a year of changes for the company that included the hiring of CEO **Sean Williams**, CMO **Rob Persaud** and Vice President of Operations **Randy Mackey**.

"Faultless Brands has a rich heritage with quality products that have stood the test of time and we're excited to build on that legacy into the future," said Williams.

"This name change is one important piece signaling the unification of our operations, portfolio and go-to-market approach across the fabric, fragrance and home care categories," said Persaud. "Our organization is excited for its cultural and strategic transformation to better meet evolving needs of our consumers while driving innovation and growth."

**UniMac** has appointed **Dynamic Sales and Service** (DSS) as its distributor in the Pacific Northwest.

Based in Kirkland, WA, DSS has served the commercial laundry needs of the Pacific Northwest since 1990 while also meeting the needs of drycleaners and vended laundry partners and providing laundry services for multi-housing developments, military facilities and colleges.

To learn more about UniMac, visit www.unimac.com. For more information about DSS, visit dynamicss.com.



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~ **Steven Toltz**President of Dependable Cleaners

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## WRENCH WORKS



#### By Bruce Grossman

## Using meters for electrical testing

going to be devoted to using the VOM, often called a multimeter or voltohm-milliamp meter.

I will be taking you through test procedures on many of the common components encountered in drycleaning plant op-

Before we start getting down into the weeds with the fun stuff, here's a note about electricity and how to get along with it safely.

I know the following rules seem a bit intimidating, but don't let them scare you. They're more or less common

bleshooting electrical stuff is quite safe.

- Never assume that the power to the area you are working on is shut off and never trust the labeling in the circuit breaker panel to be correct. Have someone operate the circuit breaker and watch panel lights or some other indicator to confirm that the power is indeed off if the test your running requires a power off condition.
- circuit to flow through in order to injure you. It's when your body becomes this path be-

This series of articles is sense, and if followed, trouttween a voltage source and ground that the damage is done, and it's quite easy to prevent your body from becoming this path.

- First make sure the floor of the area in which you are going to be standing while running tests is not damp or wet. A rubber or plastic mat like those a presser would stand on is a good insulator to place on wet or damp floors when running tests.
- Try to observe the "one • Electricity needs a path or hand rule;" meaning use only one hand for testing. Never lean up against the machine or grasp anything metal with the

other hand while testing. This prevents using your body as path for electricity to ground.

- Make sure the settings on your meter are correct for the test you'll be running and that the meter leads are not broken or have areas bare of insulation. Pay attention to the maximum allowable limits which are printed on the front of the meter you're using for the
- If the power to the machine your testing is over 230 Volts, leave it to a professional.
- Lighting is important. Be sure you can clearly see the area in which you're working.

Now the we've covered some safety tips let's get down to the nitty gritty of electrical

What's electricity? Broadly speaking, electricity is the flow of that part of atoms called electrons, through a material called a conductor (a piece of wire or metal is a conductor).

This flow is counter-intuitive and is actually from a point of lower voltage to one of higher voltage. The path this electron flow takes is called an electrical circuit.

There are three main factors that control the flow of these electrons through a circuit. In this article I'll be covering what these three factors are: voltage, resistance and current.

Voltage not surprisingly, is measured in *volts*; resistance is measured in *ohms*; the measurement for current is amperes, commonly referred to as amps. We'll start with the *volt*.

Volt. Voltage is a measurement of the difference of electrical potential between two objects. An easy way to visualize voltage is by comparing it with a bucket of water.

Let's take a water-filled bucket with a hose attached to the bottom and raise it to some height (object 1), and the other end of the hose at ground level (object 2).

As you raise the bucket with water higher off the ground, you're increasing the potential energy of the water in the bucket and it will flow faster through the hose because of this energy increase.

Voltage is analogous to the difference in height between the two buckets. As the voltage increases and if you keep the size of the hose the same, the flow of electrons, just like the flow of water through the hose, will increase.

**Ohm.** The ohm is a unit of resistance. Once again let's use the bucket analogy to better understand this measurement.

Suppose the water is flowing at a rate determined by the height of the bucket and you began squeezing the hose shut. As the diameter of the hose decreased, the resistance to the flow of water increases, which slows the flow through the

Electron flow is similar in that with a given voltage, increasing the resistance decreases the flow of electrons and the measure of this resistance is called the ohm.

**Ampere.** An ampere is a measurement of the volume of electrons flowing through a circuit in a conductor. This volume is controlled by both the values of the voltage across the circuit and the resistance to the flow through the circuit.

Now that you have the definitions of the measurements, have a look at the accompanying illustration of the meter to get the layout and types of measurements available.

Bruce Grossman is the chief of **R&D** for EZtimers Manufacturing, maker of the EZ Level return tank water level control that replaces the troublesome ball float valve in the return tank. Also, the Sahara and Drop in the Bucket line of high purity separator water mister/evaporators and the Tattler steam trap tester, an accurate and easy-to-use device are part ther product line. For more information on EZtimers products, visit www.eztimers.com. Address questions or comments to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.

This is the range of settings for measuring resistance in ohms . The symbol for OHMS is  $\subseteq \supseteq$ . There can be NO VOLTAGE at the points you are measuring or you'll blow a fuse inside the meter. Before taking a measurement Always test the meter leads by touching them together and making sure the reading is either 0 or very low.

This is the range of settings for measuring current in AMPERES DC. DC stands for direct current and the symbol for AMPERES DC is A ........ The meter shown cannot measure AMPERES AC. Almost all current measurements you'll be taking will be in AMPERES AC made with a different type of meter.



This is the range of settings for measuring VOLTS DC. The symbol for VOLTS DC is using this range since most of the voltage measurements you'll be taking will be in volts AC.

This is the range of settings for measuring VOLTS AC. The symbol for VOLTS AC is

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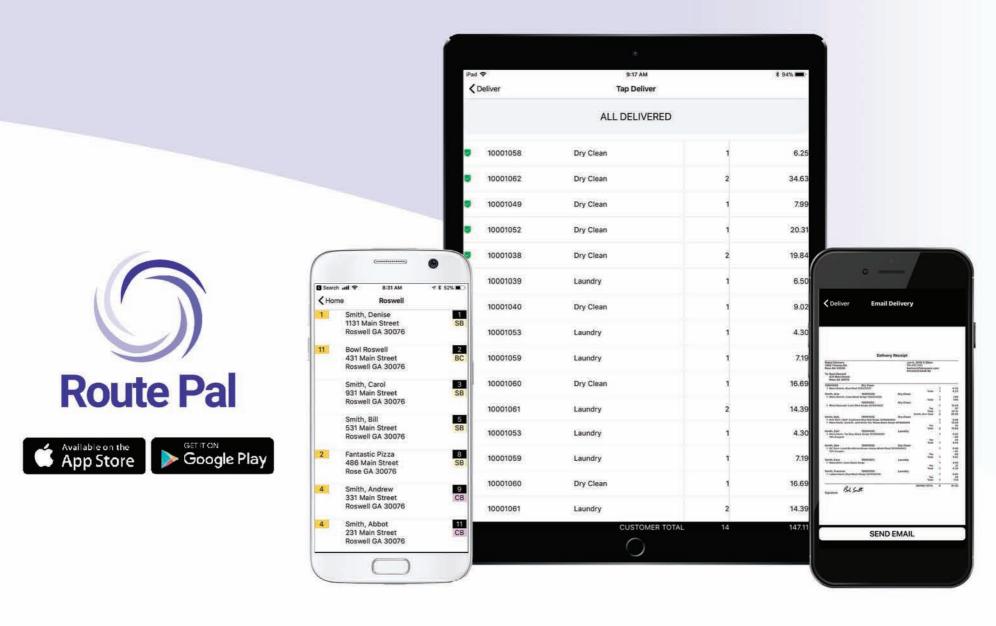
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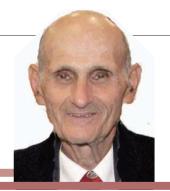
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## THE SPOTTING BOARD



#### BY DAN EISEN

## Understanding the pH factor

alkaline in nature is determined by a scale referred to

A neutral pH is 7. An acid pH is under 7 and the stronger the acid is the lower the pH number is.

An alkali has a pH higher than 7 and the stronger the alkali the higher the pH number. Many spotting formulas and even oily-type spotting agents have a pH.

The acid or alkaline pH is important to know because the safety of the fabric and color depend on it.

#### **Neutralizing**

Acids and alkali neutralize each other. The chemical reaction of an acid and alkali produce salt and water. Many chemicals have to be neutralized while others do not.

It is also important to note that you cannot neutralize a chemical without rinsing first. If an acid and alkali are combined without rinsing it accelerates the chemical reaction rapidly, possibly causing damage to the fabric.

#### Color change

Many fabrics, due to the dyeing

hether a chemical is acid or processes, are sensitive to acids or alkalis. Wool and silk are sensitive to alkalis. A wool or silk will yellow or discolor when in contact with an alkaline based agent.

> Cellulose fabrics such as cotton, linen and rayon are usually sensitive to acids.

#### Procedure to neutralize color change

- 1. Rinse affected area with water.
- 2. Apply neutralizing agent. Acid to neutralize alkali and alkali to neutralize
  - 3. Heat.
  - 4. Flush.

#### Neutralizing in wetcleaning

The wetcleaning process for shirts utilizes a high pH of alkaline-based agents. These include alkali mixed with alkaline-based oxygen bleaches such as sodium perborate and sodium percar-

Alkali is necessary to remove the heavy soil and staining on shirt fabrics. If these agents are not properly neutralized, the result is yellowing when the fabric is pressed.

sour. It is important that the laundry sour be formulated properly. If too much sour remains in the fabric, the result can be odor and deterioration of

The laundry technician is responsible for providing the proper amounts to be used. Due to problems with some laundering sours, some drycleaners use less alkaline products and extra rinses to remove chemicals.

#### Wetcleaning pH

When wetcleaning wools, silks and fabrics with delicate colors, the wetcleaning pH is slightly acid. Acids help stabilize dye and keeps dye from bleed-

Remember, if a dye is bad to wetcleaning, an acid might help deter bleeding but does not entirely prevent

#### pH of bleaches

Hydrogen peroxide is neutral in nature. When ammonia is used with it and the peroxide is accelerated, the combination of ammonia and peroxide can cause color problems.

Sodium perborate and sodium per-The neutralizing agent is called a carbonate are alkine in nature and must www.garmentanalysis.com.

be neutralized with an acid. Usually acetic acid is used to neutralize the bleach in bath bleaching.

Chlorine bleach is alkaline in nature. Acids will neutralize the pH and accelerate the bleach so it does not remain in the fabric.

#### Reducing bleaches

All reducing bleaches are acid in nature and need only be rinsed to remove from a fabric.

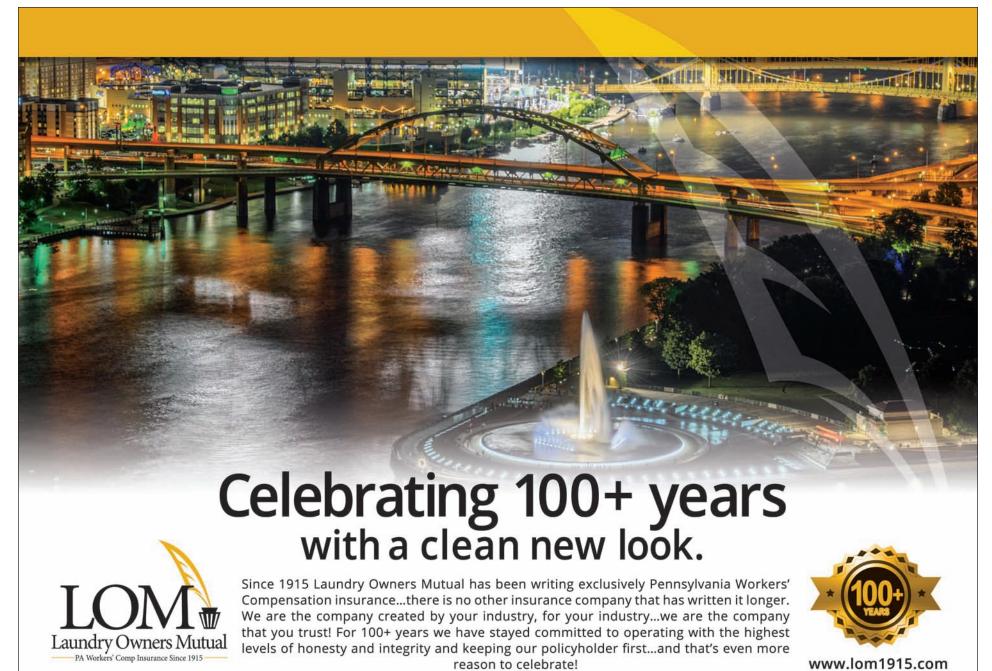
#### Rust remover (hydrofluoric acid)

This is the strongest acid on the spotting board. This acid does not rinse out from a fabric, even after thorough flushing.

If this acid is left in the fabric, it can weaken it and cause serious burns to the wearer.

After flushing, the acid should be neutralized with a protein formula and flushed again.

Dan Eisen, former chief garment analyst for the National Cleaners Association, can be reached at (772) 340-0909 or (772) 579-5044, by e-mail at cleandan@comcast.net or through his website is



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Bob Hamila (Lighthouse Cleaners | Palm Beach Gardens, FL)

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Stephanie Barrero (Door2Door Drycleaners | Bluffton, SC)

I've been waiting for a solvent alternative to PERC. I look for companies that have a proven track record of longevity. What's important to me is to partner with a company that believes in constant innovation, technology advances and unparalleled support. I have always found this with SEITZ, which gave me the confidence to embrace and convert to their new solvent. It is performing fabulously and will allow me to make the necessary changes to continue to improve my service and

Bill Wright (Royal Fine Cleaners | Northport, AL)

For as long as I've been in dry cleaning, I've been using Seitz products. From their spotting chemicals to dry cleaning detergents, all performed beyond my expectations. So when it came time to make the switch from Perc to an environmentally friendly solvent, I turned to SEITZ. Their answer was <code>intense</code>®. It's cleaning and grease cutting ability made my transition from Perc very easy. I'm glad I chose SEITZ. Thank you for another quality product!

Julian Bulsara (Prestige Cleaners | Lauderhill, FL)

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## **MIDWEST**



SUPERIOR CLEANERS in Findlay, OH, purchased a Unipress are Skip Wilke of Hudson, Jeremy and Richard Palmer of Su-

#### **DLI** assumes administration of Midwest association

The Midwest Drycleaning and Laundry Association has been integrated into the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, a decision announced at MWDLA's last annual convention.

The group has reorganized and will let DLI take over its administrative duties. It is now called the Midwest Drycleaning and Laundry Institute and will serve cleaners in Indiana, Kentucky and a new, modern website located at www.mwdli.org.

Other things will not change. The association's current advisory board will continue to support and promote itself and the drycleaning industry "with commitment and enthusiasm in the coming year," according to President John Mertes.

Currently, MWDLI is working on plans for its 2019 convention which will be held in Cincinnati, OH, from Aug. 1 to 4 of this year. They also plan to keep offering ers game night and golf outings, in addition to training classes and seminars.

After all, the association's primary objective will be to help DLI steer, direct and promote member activities, with a focus on education and training for its membership, which includes drycleaning and laundry professionals in the states of Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio.

The advisory council that will assist DLI with the direction of the association will be comprised of many familiar former MWDLA officers and other members including: John Mertes of Ziker Cleaners in Mishawaka, IN; Robin Kramer of Michael's Laundry in Notre Dame, IN; James Belt of Fabric Care Center in Indianapolis, IN; Greg and Jeff Schwegman of Sunshine Cleaners in Silver Grove, KY; Tim Day of Classic Cleaners in Indianapolis, IN; Dru Shields of EnviroForensics of Indianapolis, IN; Perry Carrico of Rainbow Cleaners in Danville, KY; Mike Fothergill of Holiday Cleaners in Louisville, KY; Jeff Dunn of Machinex in Cincinnati, OH; Jim Gault of Gault's Plaza Cleaners & Laundromat in Mt. Vernon, OH; Jeff Jordan of Fabritec International in Florence, KY; Ray Kroner of Kroner Dry Cleaners in Cincinnati, OH; and Rick Armstrong, former executive director of MWDLA.

Armstrong took the reins as executive director of the Indiana Drycleaners and Launderers Association back in 1998 following the tragic accidental death of thenpresident Rex Beddies who was working on one of his race cars when it fell on him.

In the December 2018 edition of Clean Briefs, the newsletter for MWDLA, he recalled some of his favorite memories of the association over the years.

When Armstrong served as a istrict director for MWDLA he liked to make personal visits to members and non-members alike. One visit definitely stood out.

"Reflecting back I remember visiting Classic Cleaners in Indianapolis and talking to Steve Arnold's dad, Carl, about how he went out to get customers door to door. He proudly dressed up in a tuxedo and top hat to visit people and get them as new customers. Who would do that today?" he wrote.

He also recalled with pride several legislative victories for the industry and expanding the association to include Kentucky and

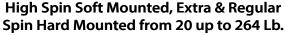
"There are many friendships and acquaintances we have gained over the years," he added. "We will cherish forever our CLAE, IFI Board and DLI Board activity, the MWDLA, IDLA, INDLA, and NCALC participation.



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## KEEP IT LEGAL



#### BY FRANK KOLLMAN

## A contractor or regular employee?

unning a business would be so much easier without employees. Employees can sue their employers for a variety of reasons, especially after being fired. Disabled employees must be accommodated; employees must be paid minimum wage and overtime; and in some jurisdictions, they have to be given paid or unpaid benefits.

Employees can unionize, which carries with it even more headaches. Employers must pay matching FICA taxes for employees, pay worker's compensation premiums, and contribute a percentage of their wages for unemployment in-

unning a business surance. The problems emwould be so much easier without employees. feature of this column.

> So why can't employers just use independent contractors? When the windows need to be cleaned, we don't have to hire an employee. We call a window washing service. When the parking lot needs a new surface, we call an asphalt company. There is no need to hire a group of employees to pave the lot, obtain I-9's and W-4's, process employment applications, make payroll deductions, and so on and so forth. So, why do we need to hire pressers and counter help as employees?

> > The answer is that just be-

cause an individual is called an independent contractor, it does not mean that the government will treat that individual as an independent contractor. And if the government concludes that an independent contractor is really an employee, the consequences and penalties can be more devastating than if the employee had been "hired" in the first place. The benefits, if an employer guesses wrong, can disappear in an instant and be replaced with labor nightmares.

Many drycleaners use individuals on a part-time basis to perform tasks like window washing, driving, and custodial services. Many of those same drycleaners pay those people a flat rate for their work, treating them like independent contractors rather than employees.

In most cases, these arrangements have existed for years, and both the company and worker are happy with the arrangement. But what happens when the worker is "fired," and he spends the next few days visiting the IRS, the EEOC, the Department of Labor, and any other agency that will listen to him? For this reason, employers should understand the rules the courts have crafted for deciding whether a person is an independent contractor or an employee.

The basic question courts ask in deciding these cases is whether the person is in business for himself or for an employer. John the plumber is clearly in business for himself, but is John the driver in business for himself when he drives for one company — namely yours.

In each case, courts look at five main factors to determine employee or independent contractor status.

The first factor is the degree of control exercised over the work by the employer. If the company sets hours and workdays, employee status is suggested. If the person controls when he works, and he works for other companies on a regular basis, independent contractor status is more likely.

The second factor is the relative investment between the worker and company.

John the plumber owns his tools, truck, supplies, etc. A typical employee, however, has nothing more than the clothes on his back as an investment. How many pressers carry their own presses from job to job? Does the person who cuts the lawn own the lawn mower?

The third factor, the employer's ability to control the individual's profit and loss, normally involves determining whether the worker initiative controls income.

If a person is truly an independent businessperson, he will figure ways to cut his own costs, increase his work, and maximize his income opportunities. An employee normally takes the work (or the overtime) given him by the company, and how much he works depends on the available work at that company alone. The independent contractor usually gets paid by the job, not by the

Skill and initiative is the fourth factor. Drycleaners do not need full-time plumbers, but they need pressers. While the argument can be made that pressers are more skilled than plumbers, the fourth factor really concerns whether the skill and initiative is beyond that of a normal employee.

Most courts decide the fourth factor by asking the question: "Is this the kind of work normally done by employees of this company, or is this the kind of work normally done by outside contractors?"

If there are employees doing the same work as the independent contractor, it is almost impossible to prove that he is not truly an employee.

The fifth factor is "permanency." In other words, if John the window washer has come by every other day for 20 years at 2 p.m., he looks more like an employee.

In the drycleaning business, if it could be shown that pressers rarely stayed more than a couple of days before moving on to the next plant like itinerant farm workers, a court might be convinced to consider certain pressers independent contractors.

If you do not use independent contractors, I suggest you keep it that way. The savings rarely outweigh the risks.

If you have independent contractors, however, and you do not feel comfortable that you would do well in court based on the five-factor test described above, consult an experienced labor attorney for advice.

One serious consequence of being wrong about employee status is that the IRS can treat the flat rate paid as "net pay." The IRS will then look to you to make up the difference in gross pay, plus pay any matching FICA. Ouch.

In closing, the use of independent contractors should be done with a clear understanding of the five factors and the potential risks. As they say, if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Frank Kollman is a partner in the law firm of Kollman & Saucier, PA, in Baltimore, MD. He can be reached by phone at (410) 727-4300 or fax (410) 727-4391. His firm's web site can be found at www.kollmanlaw.com. It has articles, sample policies, news and other information on employee/employer relations.



CRYSTAL CLEANERS of El Cajon, CA, installed a Columbia/ILSA C550VGKS cleaning machine running Sensene solvent. Pictured are the owners, are Jon and Jan Martin, with Chris Hogard (center), the installer.

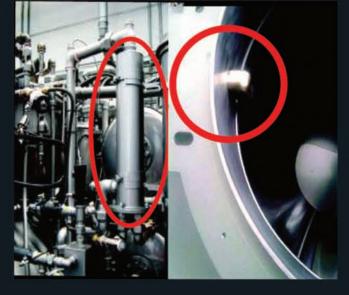


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LEWIS CLEANERS in Temecula, CA, installed a triple puff iron from Forenta. Justin Lewis, the third generation owner of the family business that has been in operation since 1936, is pictured.

#### **CCA** hosts workshop on route development this month

As customers seem to visit retail stores less frequently, successful businesses are finding ways to go to the customers, and certainly, pickup and delivery routes are more popular than ever in the drycleaning industry.

Those seeking to develop their delivery routes will have a chance to gain new knowledge at the California Cleaners Association's two-day route development workshop set to take place this month.

The program will take place in Napa, CA, on Friday and Saturday, Feb. 22 and 23.

It is geared for plant owners, managers and all sales staff. James Peuster of The Route Pros will draw from his years of industry experience to share some of the essential strategies on developing routes to help them grow.

Some of those core strategies will include: how to get and keep your staff motivated; how to hold your team accountable; ten things to increase sales; and effective marketing materials and tools.

The program will run from 10

a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Saturday, with the last hour devoted to an open discussion for attendees' questions.



**James Peuster** 

The cost to attend is \$179 for members and \$279 for non-members. However, discounts are available for those who send multiple attendees from the same plant. CCA recommends signing up as soon as possible since space

For more information or to register, call the association at (916) 239-4070 or visit them online at www.calcleaners.com.

#### Minimum wage begins first of five increases in **California**

When Jan. 1 of this year rolled around, the state of California enacted its first of five incremental minimum wage increases that will go up annually until Jan. 1 of 2023.

The bump is expected to affect over 2.5 million minimum wage workers in the state, or about 15.9 percent of the state's workforce.

This year's increase means that businesses with 25 employees or fewer must pay a minimum rate of \$11 an hour while businesses with more than 26 employees will be at \$12 an hour.

Later this year, the city of Los Angeles will move its minimum wage up from \$13.25 to \$14.25 on July 1 for larger businesses and from \$12 to \$13.25 for smaller

Next year, another \$1 an hour minimum wage raise will take place statewide, which means as of Jan. 1, 2020, the minimum wage will be \$12 for those with 25 or fewer employees and \$13 for those with more than 25.

The same trend will continue for the following three years. For those with fewer than 25 employees, the minimum will rise to \$13 an hour on Jan. 1, 2021, then to \$14 an hour on Jan. 1, 2022, and finally to \$15 an hour on Jan. 1, 2023.

Larger businesses with more than 25 people on their staff will see the minimum wage go up to \$14 an hour on Jan. 1 of 2021, then to \$15 an hour on Jan. 1, 2022.

Some employees will be exempt from this year's minimum wage bump, including outside salespersons and individuals who are a parent, spouse or child of the employer.







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- · High-temp cover
- All Sizes Available





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## MARKETINGMAN



#### BY LARRY SIEGEL

## How to keep 'em coming back

tion and advertising work perfectly, bring in new customers every day who love your service, quality and pricing so much that they became "regulars" who never leave, you could skip the rest of this article.

Well, fantasyland is closed so you'll have to continue reading about how loyalty programs can keep existing customers coming back.

According to the Harvard Business Review, depending upon the industry, "acquiring

from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one."

Not only that, how much more do you think it costs trying to get back an existing customer who leaves? Since cus-

fall your marketing, promo- a new customer is anywhere tomers are the lifeblood of your business, keeping them happy — a.k.a. "loyal" — is a great investment of your time and resources.

> In some sense, everything you do in your business — CSR training, quality control,

plant maintenance, etc. — contributes to customer retention, but building loyalty involves a value component, a reward for continuing patronage.

Yes, this is a "spend money to make more money" situation because special events don't plan themselves and direct mail pieces don't have wings. Just keep in mind the following:

- Your generosity will be highly rewarded, usually in multiples of what you're spending.
- Not everyone you send a reward to actually takes advantage of it (there are members of my family who have never used a coupon).
- And most important, the "perceived" value of a reward may be more than the "actual" value. For example, sending a customer who spent \$250 throughout the year a \$10 "Season's Greetings" loyalty postcard is a "real gift" to them but just about a 5 percent reward, once you add in design, printing and postage costs per

A great way to start getting into "loyalty mode," if you aren't doing something already, is to create a special event. The easiest theme that can be uniquely yours is a combination "Anniversary/ Customer Appreciation" celebration.

Whether it's a day, week or month-long event, build it around a specific date that is convenient for you and your staff to handle (if a customer tells you they remember your business opened in August but you're celebrating in November, explain the logistical aspect, take their photo and post on Instagram as your "Most Loyal Customer").

Also, for milestone anniversaries with "0" or "5" at the end of the number of years, you may want to make a bigger deal out of the event, perhaps getting your local chamber of commerce and government representatives involved.

Do everything you can to make this event fun and rewarding for all your customers, and, since this should be an annual occurrence, keep track of what you do so you are consistent over the years. Use in-store signage, social media, e-mail blasts and direct mail to announce your big event and what will be going on: refreshments; give-aways of branded merchandise and other prizes, such as gift baskets of products from neighboring businesses; meet-andgreet with owners; tours of the plant; and, of course, drawings.

For drawings, you can email an entry form in addition to having forms at the counter (it's best to include "no purchase necessary" somewhere

Customers are the lifeblood of your business, so keeping them loyal is a great investment of your time and resources.

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#### Larry Siegel

### How to keep 'em coming back

Continued from page 24 on it).

If you're planning a longer event, pull winners daily for smaller amounts and "grand prizes" on the culminating

If you want to be really generous, send a post-event "Everyone is a winner!" e-mail to all your customers that they can bring in or show on their mobile device for \$5 or \$10 off or a 10 percent discount.

Tap the power of social media for your loyalty event, too. Take lots of photos of customers having a good time and winning gift certificates and prizes, then post on your Facebook page and on Instagram.

When you're not around, train your staff to take photos of customers. Encourage your customers to take photos with want to do it in-house, there their CSR and post on Instagram and Facebook.

Another thing: identify your cleaners in the photos make sure you and your staff are wearing shirts with your logo on them and try to get signage with your business name in the picture!

The simplest loyalty perk is giving customers gift certificates for their birthdays. (If you didn't ask people their birthday month the first time they came in, create a simple form to capture the pertinent information at the counter.)

I recommend mailing an actual birthday card during the month of their birthday who doesn't open a birthday card! — or some other direct mail piece... and, if you don't are plenty of outside resources available.

I like direct mail over e-mail as it is tangible and has longevity: a gift certificate sitting on a counter or attached to the fridge is a constant reminder of how great you are. Sure, e-mailing is cheaper, but e-mails are easily forgotten as they roll down a timeline, thus defeating the purpose of the promotion!

To offer your customers a loyalty reward based on sales, your POS system is your best friend. After you decide how frequently you want to reward your loyal customers, you'll be able to filter and generate mailing lists based on specific sales volume levels attained within specified time frames.

Eniov this \$10.00 Birthday Gift Certificate with our thanks for hoosing Hilltop Cleaners for all your cleaning needs. WWW.HILLTOPCLEANERS.COM

A simple loyalty perk is giving customers gift certificates for their birthdays. Mail an actual birthday card during the month of their birthday. Who doesn't open a birthday card?

You should have a minimum sales amount so you don't reward infrequent customers, then establish different rewards per sales volume.

Of course, to simply see if this type of loyalty program works for you, just set the minimum and send out one reward to qualifying customers; and, if you're only going to do one reward per year, good timing choices are your anniversary, as mentioned previously, Thanksgiving, or the holiday

Speaking of rewards, I'm a fan of "dollars off" without a minimum since these are your best customers — that's why they qualified for the reward and minimums won't be an issue for them!

If you want to do a percentage, go with 50 percent off since you're trying to create a "WOW" factor.

You should probably write "Please bring in entire certificate" on the piece to keep people from getting cute by photographing the certificate and trying to use from their mobile device multiple times (it happens!).

It's good to track redemption to see the effectiveness of your loyalty rewards, so put a barcode/QR code on the pieces to track on your POS, or go old-school by collecting at the counter when redeemed, then counting them. Keep track over time, too, to see if the number of qualifying loyalty customers goes up along with rates of redemption.

Once you start loyalty programs, customers will notice if you stop them. Since you're in this business for the long haul, hopefully you'll be replacing one program for another; explaining that you're "planning a new surprise" will usually satisfy an inquiring customer.

Loyalty programs keep customers happy and happy customers keep coming back! Loyal customers are also the ones who become your "Referral Ambassadors" who tell everyone they meet, "You won't believe what I got in the mail today from my cleaner!"

Do you have a loyalty piece you would like Larry Siegel to review? Email a PDF to larrysiegel@charter.net. To help plan a loyalty program, improve branding, or update signage, call Larry Siegel at (818) 241-3042.





#### PERFECT CLEANERS WETCLEANS FOR GREATER PROFIT

Since the installation of new Poseidon Textile Care System Wetcleaning Machines and Dryers, Perfect Cleaners, in Detroit, has tripled processing throughput, lowered utility costs, and realized an 8 percent increase in sales volume. Owner Gary Heflin, a dry cleaner of 28 years, has transformed his business from predominately dry cleaning to mostly wetcleaning. Wetcleaning, he maintains, is a more cost-effective, environmentally friendly and productive way to process garments of all types and fabrics.

#### Boosting Productivity to Make Room for More Accounts

"The Poseidon system allowed us to significantly improve productivity so I could seek out new accounts," said Heflin. "Wetcleaning is so much better and faster than dry cleaning. It uses less water and natural gas and we can wetclean pretty much anything, including suits, uniforms, overcoats, wools, silks and wedding gowns."

#### Choosing Poseidon

Perfect Cleaners worked with Jeff Quail and Mike "Stucky" Szczotka, of Eagle Star Equipment, in Troy, Mich., to select, install and program its new Poseidon wetcleaning equipment, including two 40- and four 90-pound capacity soft-mount wetcleaning machines, and four 85-pound capacity dryers. The highly programmable Poseidon system offers flexibility and ease-of-use. The wetcleaning machines are set up with 18 different programs for specific item types, including gowns, comforters, napkins, darks, spa sheets, chef coats, shirts, and more. "Soaps and conditioners are automatically injected," said Heflin, "and one wetcleaning machine has steam injection for cleaning chef and lab coats. This eliminates prescrubbing labor and time," he said. "The quality is excellent and my customers have

noticed a positive change." Operators simply enter a program number, load the wetcleaning machine and press start. The machine automatically does the rest by combining the right chemicals, water temperatures,

Wetcleaning

is so much better

and faster than dry

cleaning. It uses less

water and natural gas and

much anything,"

Gary Heflin Owner Perfect Cleaners

great quality."

we can wetclean pretty

water levels, mechanical action, g-force, baths and cycle times.

The Poseidon Dryers, which are engineered to safely and quickly dry wetcleaned items with no shrinkage, according to Quail, offer moisturesensing technology, onthe-fly adjustments and a flexible control. "They program the dryers to fit the wetcleaning machines by item type," said Heflin. "We have no

problems with shrinkage, items come out slightly damp, and finish work takes less time. As soon as the dryer stops, we lay out the garments, which are finished and pressed in 15 percent less time. Before we had the Poseidon Dryers, we had to hang-dry casino drapes. Now they are quickly dried in the Poseidon Dryer, which greatly improves our production," said Heflin.

While it takes 60 minutes to dry clean one load, it takes just 35-40 minutes to wetclean and dry the same size load, according to Heflin.

"This allows us to finish our work a couple of hours sooner in the day and turn off the boiler whi a ton of money on gas and labor."

Perfect Cleaners, which did very little wetcleaning before, now wetcleans 60 percent of incoming items. Heflin expects that number to grow. "I really wish I had the machines years ago. Poseidon gives you

everything a drycleaner would want without the costs. Wetcleaning has enhanced our whole operation and allowed us to do a whole lot more in less time with

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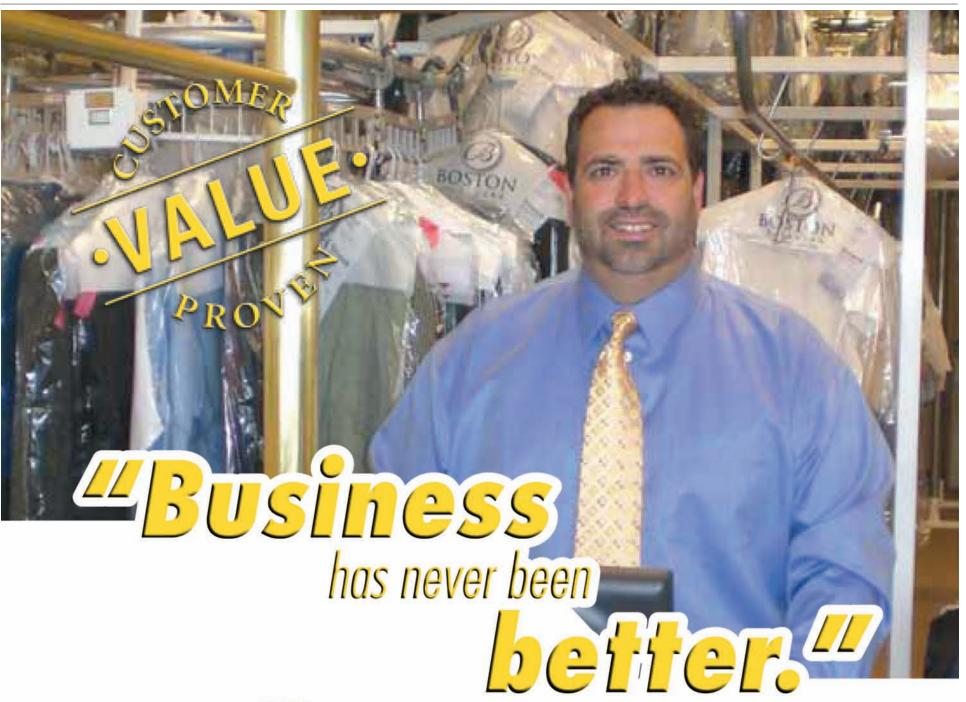
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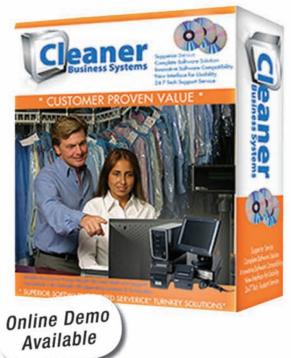


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## THE ROUTE PRO



### BY JAMES PEUSTER

## The balancing act of decision making

balancing act of the three primary factors that impact the overall decision to be made and the corresponding politics associated with the stakeholders of each factor or faction.

If the output of any given decision is increased productivity and profitabil-

ith every decision comes the ity, then think of the decision-making

process in your business as a triangle. Each side is labeled with one of the three corresponding factors that influence the output of any decision. On that triangle label: • Financials/costs.

• Time/deadlines.



CULPEPPER CLEANERS in San Antonio, TX, installed a Union HXL-8032 tandem unit for Ktex. Pictured from left are Jess Culpepper, owner, Matt A. Lipman of Union Dry Cleaning Products, Mickey Riley of R. R. Street, Mickey Walker, owner, and Ethan Culpepper, manager.

• Quality/expectations.

In an ideal decision-making process, productivity would allow an individual to weigh all three factors equally and draw upon the best of each. The best being:

- The obvious elements that comprise that factor.
- The individuals who own that fac-
- The committees, experts, vendors, personnel assets, equipment, technology, etc., associated with a factor.
- The ideal output from a factor to be incorporated into the final product of a decision.

In reality, one of these three sides most often will be in a state of jeopardy.

With this model in mind, now you can make an educated judgment as to which side is least important if you must negotiate away or down any one factor. You can now work, as a safety measure, a side that may be overlooked in an otherwise hastily executed decision.

This model aids in controlled conversations with colleagues, employees, superiors, clients and vendors to ensure all sides are considered in the discussion of an impending decision and in the execution of productivity.

For example, if someone has a tight deliverable window for a decision, you might need to discuss the quality decrease that may occur or the need for additional revenue or assets to ensure that the deadline is met and no quality declines are experienced.

To increase productivity tactically, ensure that when tasked with a decision, if any of these three critical factors is outside of your sphere of experience or knowledge, you access those assets and involve them at the earliest possible time.

Don't put off the obvious in decision making. The longer you wait the more pressure will be placed on the three forces.

James Peuster is a consultant who specializes in route development, management and maintenance. He offers onsite consulting as well as ongoing coaching across the country. He also has cost groups to monitor route efficiency. For more information, call him at (816) 739-2066 or visit his website www.theroutepro.com.





Paula Kostick Owner, Classic Drycleaners

"My company, Classic Drycleaners, completed a one million dollar plant renovation in 2017. Our goal was to purchase and install the best equipment we could while staying within our budget. We chose QuickSort as our automated assembly system after much research and plant visits to se not only QuickSort, but two other well-known assembly systems. I highly recommend this system to be reliable, employee friendly, and affordable."





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## MIDATLANTIC



HERSHEY LAUNDRY in Palmyra, PA, purchased a Unipress Hurricane HS-2 double buck shirt unit through PAC Industries. Pictured from left are Joe Leo of PAC, Dawn Bates, manager of Hershey Laundry, and Bill Kahan of Unipress.

## DLI plans introductory, advanced cleaning classes

The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute's School of Dry Cleaning Technology has always been considered one of the best resources for industry education, and 2019 plans to continue that long tradition that dates all the way back to 1927.

This year, the association will host four installments of its signature Introduction to Drycleaning and three of its Advanced Drycleaning courses.

The first opportunity is coming up quickly: Feb. 25 to March 1

The Drycleaning and Laundry for the introductory course and stitute's School of Dry Cleaning March 4 to 15 for the advanced class.

The basic course is a primer for those brand new to the industry or with less than a year of experience.

Some of the fundamentals covered will include: sorting loads, operating a drycleaning machine, using tensioning equipment to improve finishing quality, cleaning silk, stain and other fabrics, removing coffee, ink, grease and other stains from clothing, and

pressing pants, coats and skirts.

The class meets at the DLI's School of Dry Cleaning Technology in Laurel, MD, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Tuition ranges in price from free for Premier Members (who receive five free in-person class registrations per year) to \$1,149 each for non-members. Regular DLI members pay \$1,195 for the first registration and \$1,095 each for two or more from the same member company.

Those who complete the introductory course may want to move on to the advanced class, designed for more experienced individuals who already have hands-on experience or knowledge of the basics.

The advanced class is twice as long as its predecessor, meeting for ten days in two consecutive weeks, also from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Topics will be more in-depth, focussing on everything from identifying cotton, silk, polyester and other fabrics to using bleaches without damaging color to wetcleaning wools, silks and more.

Also on the docket will be pressing blouses, dresses, ties, pleated garments and more, maintaining and changing filters, troubleshooting problems with the drycleaning machine, current regulations in the drycleaning industry, customer service techniques, getting clean, white laundry, cleaning and preserving wedding gowns, pressing laundered shirts, designing an efficient production workflow and understanding the differences between solvents including perc, GreenEarth, hydrocarbon and Solvon K4.

The cost to register for the tenday advanced course is also free for Premier members. Non-members pay \$2,049 each and regular DLI members pay \$1,695 each or \$1,495 for two or more from the same member company.

The course fees cover classroom instruction, lunch, a notebook and other materials. Breakfast, dinner and lodging expenses are not covered by the registration fees.

Those who cannot attend the February and March courses will have other opportunities throughout the year.

Both courses will run together in the summer as the introductory course meets from July 15 to 19 and the advanced meets from July 22 to Aug. 2.

Later in the year, both will be in session from Oct. 21 to 25 and Oct. 28 to Nov. 8, respectively.

There is one addition introductory class scheduled to take place by itself from Aug. 19 to 23, as well.

For more information on any of DLI's upcoming educational classes or to register, contact them by calling (800) 638-2627 or visit them online at www.dlionline.org.



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## SHIRT TALES



#### BY DON DESROSIERS

## The pain of training shirt pressers

takes a while to train a presser.

Pressing shirts is more of a specialty than other items. So much so that we sometimes overpay a shirt presser just be-

▶ hirts are a pain because it pants — still on the hanger over a puffer and you're done. Try that with shirts. It will yield poor results.

> I remember the manager of a competitor telling me about 15 years ago that it took her

hold on to the shirt presser.

I have been to many plants and am told that the person pressing pants (or some other garment type) is a brand new employee — first day or second day. I can't immediately

usually does not require 100 percent of a trainer's time. That is, a trainer will show a newbie how to press a pair of pants or a sweater in an hour or less. Then the trainer can return to their own station.

The trainee may not be per-

fect, but if they are merely

slow, shear repetition will

make them faster. If the quality

is substandard, it is unlikely that re-doing a drycleaning piece will take longer than pressing it in the first place.

Also, the new employee doesn't have a negative impact. If a new employee is being trained by your best pants presser who usually presses 36 pants per hour, but can't today because he/she is training the newcomer, you get a doublewhammy: no 36 pants per hour plus entry-level productivity from the new presser.

This probably doesn't happen. What is more likely is an introductory training session, followed by intermittent fol-

Continued on page 35

#### If a presser does an inferior press job on a shirt, the touch up necessary may take longer than it took to press the shirt in the first place.

cause we have found someone that is good and we want to keep them on the staff.

If a presser does an inferior press job on a shirt, the touch up necessary may take longer than it took to press the shirt (correctly or incorrectly) in the first place. This is important and contributes heavily to the making shirts a royal pain.

Conversely, when an inspector finds a pressing defect on, say, a pair of pants, the touch-up necessary to bring the garment from unacceptable to acceptable often takes mere seconds. A quick pass with the all-steam iron or dancing the

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one year of working with a new employee before she felt like that employee could hold her own on a shirt press. She was actually much more blunt: "I gotta carry them for a year before they're any good to

I'm not sure that I agree with that, but they did have old clunky equipment that is very hard to train on.

It isn't so difficult with the newer equipment. But when a drycleaner has three drycleaning pressers and one shirt presser, who is most expendable? Hard to say, I suppose, but I guess that you'd rather

tell. I admit that the smaller the plant, the more evident this would be, but the fact is that drycleaning pressers can often cover each other.

The shirt presser is on her own. If several pressers in the drycleaning department are contributing to the total output of the department, a new presser — or a weak one will not slow down the others.

In some shirt departments, the total output is only as fast as the slowest presser. I don't think that this is ever true in the drycleaning arena.

Also, if a new drycleaning presser needs to be trained, it

#### Manager of the Year



Keith Martin, Tailwind System's Manager of the Year, recieving his award from Don Desrosiers.

By Don Desrosiers

Keith Martin, owner of Classic Cleaners in Bentonville, AR, is the 2019 Tailwind Systems Manager of the Year.

I met Keith at the Clean Show in Las Vegas two and a half years ago. I have since worked with him many times. There has been quite a transformation at his plant.

Keith, a former merchant marine, bought Classic Cleaners a little more than three years ago. Every single thing about the business has changed during this time.

When someone buys a business of any kind, you presume that it is running at least well enough, if not running well. Keith's plant ran with ten plant employees, all getting overtime pay, every week.

When you buy a business like this, you may not like overtime, but you do not immediately think that you will eliminate this overtime all at once, even if that is your wish. The employees may be loving it, living on it like a drug while you remain oblivious to any other way. If someone presses 10 pants per hour, you may well think that this is the norm. If the employee says that 40 pants per hour is possible but only with bad quality, you quickly rule out that sort of production, so low productivity and overtime prevail. Along with negative cash flow.

So Keith needed to shift his loyalties from a business that he wanted to believe was viable to a system — Tailwind — that he has come to believe is the key to labor savings and profitability.

When I first started working with Keith, he not only had all of those employees, but he also worked in the plant himself! Every day.

Now he has six part-time employees and he never needs to work in the plant. What a huge difference! He has reduced labor hours by over 100 per week! There is no overtime.

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Please join me in congratulating Keith Martin as the Tailwind Systems 2019 Manager of the Year. He can be reached at Jkmrasta@ya-



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#### Don Desrosiers

## The pain of training shirt pressers

Continued from page 34 low-ups. Speed will come with

practice, supposedly.

Conversely, in the shirt department, it takes a concerted effort to train a presser. An introductory training session will not make the grade lest we plan to accept poor quality.

If a new employee is allowed to "learn as they go" the resulting quality will likely be very poor. Worse still, is the allimportant fact that touch-up time will exceed the original press time.

This is the most distressing fact about training a shirt presser. If you doubt this, look at it this way: If you are doing 90 shirts per hour, you are producing a shirt in 45 seconds. If the press job is unacceptable, how often can you take that shirt and make it "perfect" or acceptable in 45 seconds or less in the touch-up area?

To make all this even more distasteful, picture a two-person unit with a new presser and an experienced one. Does the experienced presser make up for the deficiencies of the new employee? Or does the inexperienced presser slow down the new one? You already know the answer.

I think that a key reason for all of these training issues is that in many plants the managers can't train because they aren't capable of pressing. Many times, I ask the manager to press. Usually I ask this so that I can evaluate the supervisor's ability to train, figuring that the first step to assuring that they can train is assuring that they know the job in the first place.

Some of them are not only incapable of training or pressing but actually look down upon the chore and the people that are paid to do it.

This is bad for a cornucopia of reasons, not the least of which is the wedge that it cements between employee and employer. You surely lose control over the employee if you are incapable of doing his or her job.

When you see a substandard press job, you can not tell the difference between equipment errors and operator errors. You don't know if this defect can be prevented by follow-up training or not.

Frankly, you take the presser's word for it. That is like a bookkeeper auditing himself. With the manager's inability to train, you breed laisez-faire quality and worse, declining quality standards. Raising the quality standards is completely out of the question. How much does that suck?

So, in the final analysis, when we find an employee who doesn't need much training, which is extremely imporable to train her anyway, we pay him/her too much. We do this to keep him/her around.

By itself, that isn't such a

tant because we may not be bad thing. A presser that can't them around and you want to press is worse than a singer that can't sing or a dancer that can't dance. If you have a good quality employee, you want

keep them. But is the presser "good" for the right reasons? Is the presser "good" because she doesn't miss work, gets

along with others? Or is she "good" because she operates the equipment properly and does a good job and gives you good production?

> Don Desrosiers has been in the drycleaning and shirt laundering business since 1978. He is a work-flow engineer and a management consultant who provides services to shirt launderers and drycleaners through Tailwind Systems. He is a member of the Society of Professional Consultants and winner of DLI's **Commitment to Professionalism** award. He can be reached at 186 Narrow Ave., Westport, MA 02790 or at his office by fax (508) 636-8839; by cell (508) 965-3163; or e-mail at tailwindsystems@charter.net. The **Tailwind** web site is www.tailwindsystems.com.

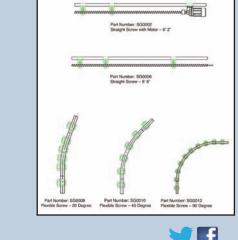


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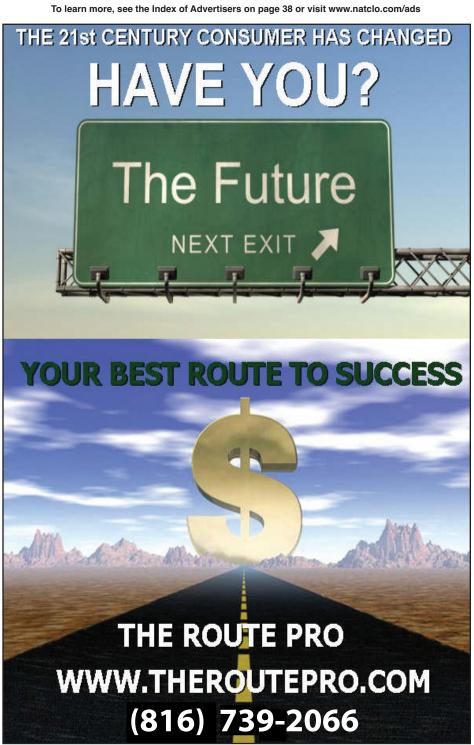
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### **Index of Advertisers**

A.L. Wilson	8
Air World Press Pads	23
B & G Lieberman	24
Clean Show	9
Cleaner Business System	29
Cleaner's Supply	38
Collarite	36
Columbia/ILSA	7
Diamond Cleaners	
Computer	
Dryclean101.com	37
Ehrenreich & Associates	38
European Finishing20,	28
EZ Timers	34
EZProducts	36
Fabricare Manager14,	15
Firbimatic	21

Forenta13
Frankford Machinery3
Garment Management30
Iowa Techniques10
Itsumi25
Laundry Owners Mutual16
Mosena Enterprises38
Mustang Enterprises9
Newhouse Specialties38
NIE Insurance5
North American Bancard33
Pariser Industries36
Parker Boiler39
Patriot Business Advisors 38
Permac Parts Depot38
Pony USA19

February 2019

Poseidon
Textile Care System26
PROS Parts38
Realstar32
Renzacci USA18
Route Pro36
Sankosha11, 35
Seitz
The Fresher Company.17
Sonozaire38
Steiner-Atlantic3
Tailwind Systems12
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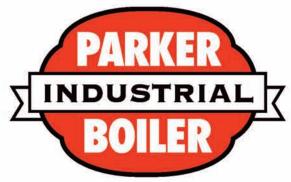
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