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Full steam ahead



The Basseri family business survived a devastating fire 20 years ago and now Steamer Cleaners is facing the challenges of the pandemic head on, adapting as needed while maintaining good humor. Humor is a specialty for daughter Ariana (pictured standing between parents Shawn and Nicole). She joined the business in 2014 while also pursuing a career in entertainment that includes acting, writing and standing in front of strangers, making them laugh with embarrassing personal anecdotes after introducing herself as “Hi, I’m Ariana, and I’m a drycleaning heiress.” Their story is on page 6.

FTC eyes repeal of care label rule

The Federal Trade Commission is proposing to eliminate the care label rule, a nearly 50-year-old regulation that requires garment manufacturers and importers to attach labels with care instructions on drycleaning or washing, bleaching, drying, and ironing clothing.

The FTC said in its June 22 announcement that the rule may not be necessary to ensure that manufacturers provide care instructions, may have failed to keep up with a dynamic marketplace, and may negatively affect the development of new cleaning technologies and care symbol revisions.

In arguing that the rule may not be necessary to ensure that manufacturers provide clear, accurate care instructions on garments, FTC noted that most European Union nations and Canada have voluntary care instruction systems and manufacturers in those markets voluntarily provide cleaning instructions. The FTC also noted that market demand for care labels in the U.S. is sufficient to motivate marketers to provide them.

Despite several revisions since its inception in 1971, the FTC said the rule does not appear to have kept pace with advances in clean-

ing technology and care symbol revisions.

As an example, FTC cited wet-cleaning technology, which has been available in the marketplace for many years. Twice in the past the commission considered adding a “Professionally Wet-cleaning” instruction to the list of care procedures. It was rejected in the late 1990s because the FTC felt the wetcleaning process was not sufficiently defined and there was no appropriate test method.

More recently, in 2011, the FTC agreed that the process had been sufficiently defined, but disagreement broke out over whether a wetcleaning instruction should be included for any garment that could be cleaned as such or whether it should remain an option for the manufacturer.

The rule as it stands requires that only one cleaning process needs to be indicated in the care instructions even if other methods might be successful. Since manufacturers must have a reasonable basis for listing a care procedure, they resisted the possibility of having to test garments for multiple processes.

To date, the federal regulation still does not allow manufacturers

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Will pandemic affect the next Clean Show?

With less than a year to go until the next Clean Show is scheduled to take place, Messe Frankfurt announced in a recent webinar that attendees and exhibitors can expect one thing from them in the uncertain times ahead: they will proceed with planning a live show for next June as if it’s definitely going to take place.

“We’re committed to building on the incredible legacy the founding associations along with Riddle & Associates built,” noted Greg Jira of Messe Frankfurt who is the director of the 2021 Clean Show. “In a word, I think what you can expect is consistency.”

Messe Frankfurt’s confidence might stem from the fact that it has some experience with this sort of endeavor. The 113-year-old company hosts shows much larger in size than Clean at its own hall in Ger-

many which boasts just under 5 million sq. ft. of exhibits — compared to just under 2 million at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Those concerned about the Clean Show making drastic content or format changes, need not worry, according to Jira. Though, the company does hope to find a way to tap into more markets.

“It’s our belief that we do not change what has made the show great, and we’ve leveraged Messe Frankfurt’s global resources to help attract representation by other affiliated markets that perhaps have not been reached in the past,” he said.

For those trying to envision how an event as big as the Clean Show will work in the age of social distancing and COVID-19 concerns, that is something that Messe Frankfurt has been dealing with for many

months.

“We know that the global pandemic is wreaking havoc on our industry,” Jira said, adding that the company has had to cancel some recent events and currently have plans to host a virtual event this month.

In terms of the Clean Show, though, Jira is confident that it will be held live in Atlanta. “We are operating as if all of this in a year from now in June will be in a better place,” he said. “We believe it will be a great show, but we are fully expecting that there will be less square footage.”

Messe Frankfurt also anticipates a challenge to entice cleaners to travel to Atlanta. “We know that the attendee side is going to be tough,” Jira noted. “We have put money in the budget to do more direct marketing.”

For those who make the trip, what will the first Clean Show since the pandemic

look like? It should look better, for one thing as there are plans to upgrade the overall look of the show. For the onsite registration process, attendees can expect contactless technology and floor clings spaced 6’ apart to ensure social distancing. If needed, there could even be temperature gauges at entrances that work in a manner similar to walk-through metal detectors.

Safety will clearly be a major concern at the event as Messe Frankfurt will design the show with traffic flow patterns in mind, including one-way aisles, and revised layouts of meeting rooms. People throughout the convention center will also be tracking the numbers of those entering and exiting areas to make sure safe limits are maintained. Another promise from the company is that the Clean Show will be even cleaner

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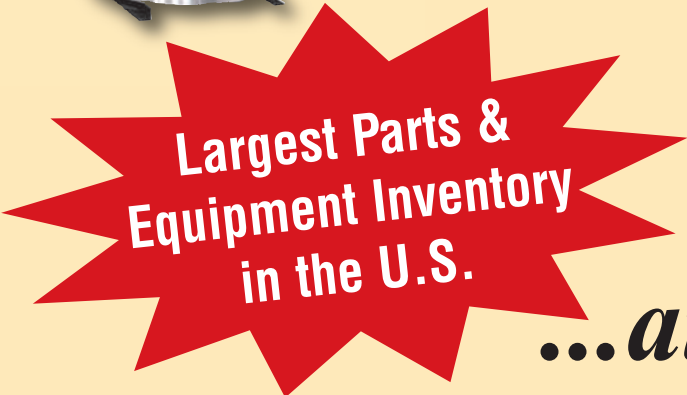
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Who cares about care labels?

Ten years ago, the Federal Trade Commission asked if there was a need for the Care Label Rule as part of its scheduled regulatory review of the rule. The review included other modifications to the rule to update it to current technologies and capabilities. Ultimately, after receiving dozens of comments from consumers, garment makers and professional cleaners and a roundtable three years later at which interested parties again offered their opinions, the FTC made no real changes. Thus the now almost 50-year-old rule remains the same as it was after the last time it was revised more than 20 years ago.

Now the FTC is back at it, this time not merely asking the question but proposing to repeal the rule altogether. Ironically, one of the reasons it gives is that the rule is out of date and does not reflect the current garment market and cleaning technologies. The opportunity to update it has been sitting in a file somewhere in the FTC, a file that contains all kinds of expert recommendations for updating and improving the rule, recommendations that fell on deaf ears where they have remained for almost 10 years. Whose fault is it that the rule is out of date?

In 2011, the National Cleaners Association and the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute offered a joint response to the FTC’s question on the a need for the rule. Their answer was a firm “yes,” noting that the rule provides significant benefit to consumers in giving guidance on garment care and that guidance also benefits the professional cleaners. It is the garment maker who has the information about the manufacture of the garment and is in the best position to recommend a care method.

If a garment fails in cleaning when that best advice is followed, it is the responsibility of the manufacturer to make good — in theory at least. And here is the problem with that theory. Enforcement of the rule has been non-existent for the past 10 years, or longer. So who cares about care labels? Not the FTC, apparently.

So now the question is do *you* care about care labels? We know of cleaners who don’t pay much attention to the labels, instead relying on their own professional expertise to determine how best to care for a garment. We hear from cleaners frustrated because they followed the care instructions with an unhappy result. And we have all heard and seen the ridiculous care labels that seem to treat it as a joke. Sometimes the care instructions are impossible; “Do not wash. Do not dryclean” is a famous one. Curiously, it is also a legal one under the FTC rules since it does not provide incorrect or misleading information, but we always wonder who wants to sell a garment that can’t be cleaned, much less buy one.

Anyway, now that FTC has started the discussion of repealing the rule, it’s your chance to be heard. Is it another example of an unnecessary government regulation that should be axed? Is it a useful and necessary rule that just needs to be updated? FTC has opened a comment period on its proposal that expires Sept. 21. To add your voice to the discussion, go to www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/07/23/2020-13919/trade-regulation-rule-on-care-labeling-of-textile-wearing-apparel-and-certain-piece-goods.

Be among the few who are trusted

America is in the midst of fighting more than one epidemic. COVID-19 has hit this country harder than anywhere else, infecting more than four million people by late July with over 140,000 deaths, according to the *New York Times*. Unfortunately, that epidemic has lead to dire economic and health crises even as our nation’s troubled race relations have reached a boiling point. America’s second epidemic, much like the first, is insidious and invisible. A deep level of distrust has spread from its citizens from coast to coast with no relief in sight.

According to a nationwide survey on the “Most Trusted Brands 2020” from market research company Morning Consult, Americans currently have more faith in Amazon and Google than scientific studies, the news media and the U.S. government — and it’s not even close. The survey compared trust in major brands, institutions and public figures by asking “How much do you trust each brand to do what is right?” Apparently, Americans trusted their primary doctors the most (50 percent), followed by the military (44 percent), the U.S. postal service (42 percent), Amazon (39 percent), Google (38 percent), teachers (35 percent) and the police (30 percent). While those numbers are hardly impressive, other categories fared much worse: scientific studies (26 percent), President Trump (20 percent), religious leaders (15 percent), capitalism (14 percent), the news media (8 percent), the government (7 percent) and Hollywood (4 percent).

Americans have trouble trusting anybody these days, and it’s not just politics and protests making us more divisive. The strategy of how to proceed during COVID has even been a hotly contested topic. However, if you want to instill trust in your staff and your customers, require masks be worn at your business even if your state does not require it. There is nothing controversial about putting safety measures in place that will protect everybody, and erring on the side of caution is the wisest way to proceed. Fortunately, most drycleaners around the country have embraced this practice, and many others — floor clings for social distancing, contactless payment, plexiglass shields, gloves, hand sanitizer, trunk delivery, etc.

All of those measures are critical right now because the more you do to ensure safety at your cleaners, the more customers will be willing to place their trust back in you. The numbers strongly suggest that American consumers don’t trust much right now, but you can make it easier for them to do so. Maybe the industry can become more trusted in the process and people can start saying they were taken to Hollywood instead of the cleaners.

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A stand-up business

Most people don't go to the drycleaners looking for love, but sometimes that's just what they find. Thirty-one years ago, Shawn Basseri worked at a drycleaning plant visited by his future wife, Nicole.

"I went in there as a customer and there was this handsome man behind the counter who was very eloquent and charming. That's how I met him," Nicole recalled. "Then, we went out eight months later, and then got engaged six months later, and married five months after that. According to him, he lost my skirt so he had to marry me. That's his story."

The courtship was slowed by Nicole's skepticism. "He had to convince me," she noted. "He was tired all the time, so I thought he was a little on the wild side. Then I realized he was tired because he was working so many hours opening up his drycleaning business."

Over the past three decades, the Basseris have built an impressive legacy. Steamer Cleaners has earned a long list of accolades: Best of LA, Los Angeles magazine, SOS Go Green Club Community Recognition award, Reader's Choice award by LA Daily News and much more.

Today, the business has one picturesque two-story location in Sherman Oaks, CA, where it has remained, even after it burned down in 2001. The family recovered then and they hope to do so today. During the pandemic, volume has dropped sharply, but the business has stayed open and kept its staff of approximately 30 busy.

"We were so lucky that we were able to stay open because drycleaning is an essential business and we've just taken every precaution," noted Ariana, the couple's oldest daughter who has joined the family fold full time.

Such precautions mean floor markings six feet apart, shields at the front counter, trunk service, thermometers, hand sanitizer, gloves and masks.

"It goes along with how we feel about taking care of our customers and our employees," Nicole added. "In fact, we take great precautions with our employees trying as much as we can to keep them separated as much as possible. We keep the tailors employed by having them make masks in their spare time so they get to stay together as well — although apart."

"We want everyone to feel comfortable," Ariana explained. "We want our employees to feel comfortable and our customers to feel that way."

One way Steamer Cleaners has always tried to differentiate itself is through technology. The company was an early adopter of Green-Earth technology in the 1990s.

Nicole spent time trying to find the right technological fit that would also be acceptable for them from an environmentally friendly standpoint. At the time, she worked at Steamer Cleaners while also serving as an executive consultant for Bayer Healthcare, a post she held for over 30 years, dealing with contracts, education and marketing.

"I came from the medical field so when all of the new [drycleaning] products and machines came out I called

the companies and asked them lots of questions," Nicole noted. "They really didn't answer my questions."

More recently, Steamer Cleaners became one of the most advanced cleaning companies in the country.

"We're the first fully automated Metalprogetti full system on the west coast," Ariana emphasized. "It was

been with Steamer Cleaners full time since 2014 and has simultaneously pursued a career in entertainment in her spare time, from acting to writing (she's written a pilot about the sexy drycleaning industry) to standing up in front of strangers and trying to make them laugh with embarrassing personal anecdotes. Her stand-up comedy routines often begin with: "Hi, I'm Ariana, and I'm a drycleaning heiress."

living room with Emmys on display. Still, she also noted that Steamer offers the personal touch to all its customers.

"My dad one time drove an order all the way to Las Vegas and turned right around to come back," she said. Another time, he helped an Orthodox Jewish customer get home during Shabbat, after the sun set on Friday when driving isn't allowed. "Dad offered to drive him and stop a block



The Basseris

Pictured from left:
Shawn, Ariana and Nicole

quite a process. The people had to come from Metalprogetti and build it."

At first, the Basseris weren't sure what the staff would think of the technology. "We now spend our energy on inspection and making sure everything looks as great as it can before it goes to the machine [for packaging]," Nicole said. "So, believe it or not, our employees even love the machine because it takes out the part they didn't enjoy doing and they can put more energy into customer service and inspection and making sure the clothes are well taken care of."

Nicole left Bayer Healthcare a little over a decade ago and there is no question in her mind that she enjoys the drycleaning industry much more. She relishes the challenge of promoting her business in her own style.

"It's so much more interesting to be in the drycleaning industry as far as the issues go and all that. They're pretty daunting with Bayer Healthcare, and the beauty of being with Steamer Cleaners is Ariana, my great partner in this," Nicole explained. "We can do anything we want as far as marketing. We can try things. We can have special promotions and we can even give away what we want to give away. If we dryclean clothes for people who are unemployed for free, we can do that because we own it."

Back in May, the Basseris began offering free drycleaning for anyone who needed to clean their best outfits before a job interview, including anyone attending a job interview virtually.

"Even if you have a job interview on Zoom during Corona... and you don't even go in real life, we'll still drycleaning your outfit for free," Ariana said.

Like her mother, Ariana has a flair for marketing, earning a B.S. in marketing and creative writing from Emerson College. She interned for the WNBA Los Angeles Sparks and Stila Cosmetics before working numerous years in marketing professionally. She's

"I like to open with that to really establish character," she said.

Her topics range from blundering the sexy whisper to having a father from Iran to taking Krav Maga self-defense training. Sometimes, though, she isn't afraid to go off script and improvise.

"One time I was performing stand-up actually down the street at a bar/restaurant, and a woman in the audience kind of heckled me," Ariana recalled. "She said, 'Wait, you guys own that cleaners? You guys burned my jacket.' And I said, 'My family's business burning must have been really hard for you.'"

No doubt, the business burning down in 2001 was hard on the family. The Basseris still don't know how it started, but at least it started after hours.

"It was horrible. We were so grateful that nobody got hurt," Ariana said. "It happened at night. Everyone's clothes burned, and everything."

Ariana recalled the great effort put into the project by her parents. "It looks different than the first time because we rebuilt, literally, from the ground up and my parents worked out of a trailer doing everyone's cleaning and filing forms with insurance."

Nicole was surprised that they didn't lose more customers during the rebuild. "The best part was that, I'd say, 95 percent of the customers came back when we reopened one year later," Nicole said. "With a transit community, we were really touched by that."

Part of that community includes many rich and famous clients. "It's so much fun getting our customers ready for the Academy Awards and the Emmys," Nicole said before asking her daughter. "Ariana, remember when I made you deliver some clothes to one of our Emmy-award winners to make sure they got their clothes on time?"

It draws a big laugh. Needless to say, it was surreal for Ariana to stand in a

away so he could walk home and his wife wouldn't know that he was driven on Shabbat."

During these days marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Basseris have noticed that high-end cleaning is down, but fluff-n-fold has proved to be strong.

"The younger people like the idea of having fluff-n-fold. It's convenient for them," Nicole said. "And, even if it's not a high end item, then so what? If we're able to serve the community and give the people what they need right now — that's what really matters to us."

"This has been an interesting time to be able to explore other avenues, such as fluff-n-fold, but I'm excited to get back to our real bread and butter, which is drycleaning," Ariana chimed in.

While the pandemic has been a tough time for all, the Basseris have tried to take some stress out of their employees' lives by making their work atmosphere as fun as possible. It's not so easy, during a pandemic, but that's where creativity comes in play.

"We have these fun teddy bears that we give to children," Ariana said. "Our tailors made these miniature bear masks that they all wear at each counter."

"So, they're all protecting everybody," Nicole laughed.

Ideas like that will have to make up for all of the things that have been lost as the result of health concerns.

"It is disappointing that we no longer have our popcorn machine in action," Ariana said.

"We miss our specialty coffee. It will be great when we can bring all that back," Nicole noted. "We can't touch anybody with the personal touch."

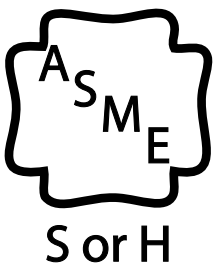
If anybody can improvise a way around that, it's Ariana. She is looking forward to a better future soon. "We're excited to come back stronger than ever," she said.

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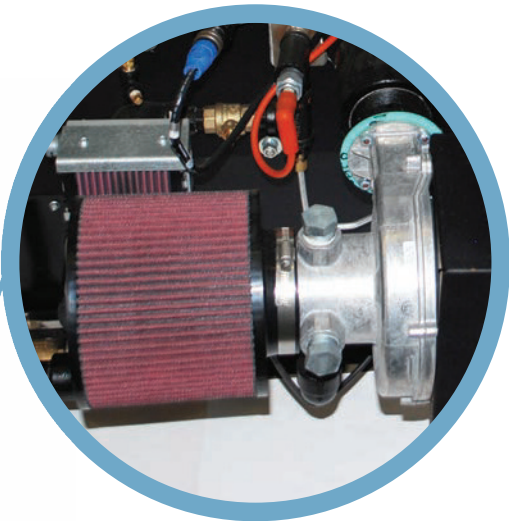
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By BRUCE GROSSMAN

Tracking the circulation of steam

So far, we have learned how to safely generate steam by controlling the water level inside a boiler and how to heat that boiler.

In this installment we will analyze the flow of steam and how the water condensed from this steam (condensate) is returned to the boiler.

You will no doubt recall from the first article that a boiler changes the state of water from a liquid to a gas called steam.

This change stores large amounts of heat energy in the steam in the form of latent heat which is later released when the steam condenses back to water doing some sort of work like heating a press or still, drying shirts on a double buck, etc. (you get the idea).

The water resulting from the steam releasing heat energy and changing back to water is called condensate. Let's examine what happens to this steam in a drycleaning/laundry operation. First at bat is the "steam delivery system."

The steam delivery system

Steam exits the boiler through a shut off valve at the top of the boiler into a large main pipe called the "steam header." The shut off valve is usually a multi-turn round handled globe type valve

which is often called the "steam header shut off valve."

You may find it surprising that steam will step along at least a brisk 80 feet per second minimum (55.5 miles/hour) through this steam header pipe. It's a good idea to open and close this steam header shut off valve once a month to keep it operating freely.

Like all boiler maintenance, do this when the boiler is not under pressure.

Branching off the top of the steam header are smaller "drops" connecting the steam header to the steam inlet of individual machines.

Each drop should have its own shut off valve between the header and the machine. Shut off valves in the drops are usually of the "90 degree or ¼ turn to shut" ball valve variety.

OK, now that we have the steam to the machine, let's see what happens to the steam in a pressurized vessel like a press head, press buck or heating coil.

Steam is cooled by contacting the metal of the vessel (I'll call the vessel the machine from now on) and changes state back to liquid water (I'll call this water condensate from now on).

This change of state, you will remember, releases large amounts of heat stored as latent heat energy.

Now, here's the problem. Steam contains almost all the heat energy and condensate almost none. So, as the condensate accumulates in the machine there is less space for steam to enter and release heat energy. (That's the reason when a steam trap is blocked the machine will not heat up or just be warm).

Some method is required to get the condensate out of the machine, allowing more steam to enter. This is accomplished using a device called a "steam trap."

Without getting into the internal workings of different types of steam traps, you will almost always see an "inverted bucket trap" sort of a cylindrically shaped device or a "thermo-static also called thermo-dynamic trap" shaped like a small rectangular block of metal or an oversized hockey puck.

These devices are located at

the lowest point of the machine and open when activated by the accumulation of condensate, allowing the pressure of the steam entering the machine to blow the condensate out of the machine into the return piping which conducts the condensate back to the return tank.

To summarize, a steam trap "traps" steam yet allows condensate to pass through and be blown through the return piping back to the return tank.

If a steam trap sticks open, the machine usually will appear to operate normally. However, steam is constantly flowing through the machine, back through the condensate return system causing an enormous waste of energy (money) at \$75 per month and up, per faulty trap.

Each faulty trap would be the same as drilling a 1/8-inch diameter hole in your steam header.

Getting the condensate back into the boiler is the job of the condensate return system and is indeed a major part of the steam system. It performs so many functions, we'll honor it with its own article in next month's issue.

Bruce Grossman is the chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing, maker of the new EZ Dose boiler compound manager and return tank level control which replaces that troublesome ball float valve in the condensate return tank. Sahara and Drop in the Bucket line of high purity separator water mister/evaporators provide a thrifty, legal method to get rid of the separator water generated by your drycleaning machine. For more information on EZtimers products, visit www.eztimers.com. Address any questions or comments for Bruce to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.

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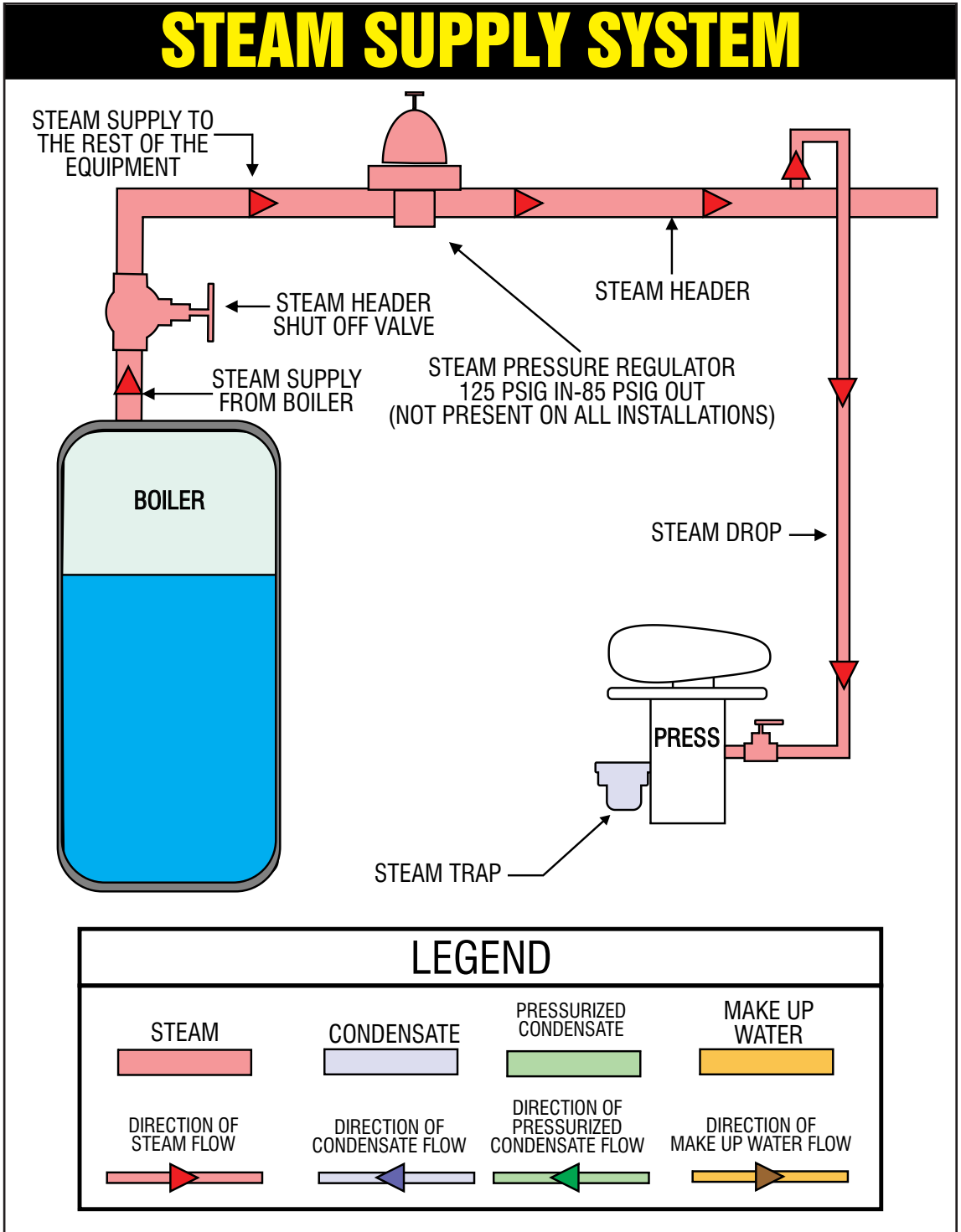
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Miele donates washers to Habitat for Humanity

Miele USA is donating a shipment of professional grade Little Giant washing machines to Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia to help celebrate the June 9 re-opening of its ReStore retail location which had been closed since March 14 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Little Giant washing machines will be available for discounted prices at the Southwest City Center Habitat ReStore, located at 2318 Washington Avenue. After being closed since March 14 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ReStore reopened on Tuesday, June 9.

The Habitat ReStore sells new and gently-used furniture, appliances, building supplies, home goods and more to the general public, with 100 percent of profits used to build and repair homes in Philadelphia.

Through its ReStore profit alone, Habitat has worked alongside homeowners and volunteers to repair 42 homes and build two new homes in Philadelphia.

“Particularly when so many families are struggling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the damaged economy, Miele is humbled to be collaborating with a long-standing community leader like Habitat for Humanity,” said Glenn Liacouras, Miele Professional Regional Director. “With US headquarters in Princeton, NJ, Miele employs hundreds of people residing in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. This community is our home and we are proud to know that proceeds will contribute to strengthening affordable housing in Philadelphia.”

Pandemic influencing planning for 2021 Clean Show in Atlanta

Continued from page 1

next year. Elevated cleaning services and hand sanitizer stations throughout the exhibit hall and facility will be part of that effort.

For exhibitors, Messe Frankfurt emphasized there will be more floor manager support, a different exhibitor portal platform and additional sponsorship opportunities. The company is also considering increasing the height of the side rails between booths as an extra precautionary measure.

In terms of getting the message out, the new show organizers promise more social media interaction and attempts to broaden the marketing reach of the show. The exhibitor package plan itself will remain unchanged from previous editions and the educational sessions will continue to be developed by the partnering associations, the Drycleaning and

Laundry Institute, the Coin Laundry Association, the Textile Care Allied Trades Association, the Association for Linen Management and the Textile Rental Services Association.

The most common question posed by exhibitors in recent times is about the refund policy, since attending a Clean Show is a major investment. Jewell Kowzan, the exhibitor contact person at Messe Frankfurt, said they will essentially use the same policy as the previous one from Clean 2019, though with one big change. Full refunds (less a \$95 admin fee) will be issued if the Clean Show is cancelled due to an inability to stage large events over health concerns.

“We want to assure people we’re in this to be a good partner and we will not be holding people dry,” Jira said. Up until the show,

Messe Frankfurt will continue to monitor public event standards and measures in the state of Georgia and within the city of Atlanta.

What happens to exhibitors if the show goes on but they would still would like to cancel? Full refunds (less the admin fee) will still be available until Oct. 15. Those who wish to cancel after that date but prior to Jan. 15, 2021, will receive a 30 percent refund.

To keep track of updates on the Clean Show or to read more about it, visit online at www.cleanshow.com.

FTC considers repeal of care labeling rules

Continued from page 1

to present a wetcleaning option on labels.

The FTC also suggested that the rule itself may negatively affect market innovation. As an example, FTC said the lack of a wetcleaning instruction may have hindered development of professional wetcleaning and discouraged greater use of that technology. The development of other new cleaning technologies could be similar hindered by the rule.

Allowing that the care label rule may be unnecessary and out of date, the FTC now seeks comments whether to repeal the rule in its entirety.

The commission said it will consider whether the rule’s costs are offset by countervailing benefits to consumers or the market; consumer demand is already sufficient to require labeling of at least the garments consumers care about; and Section 5 of the FTC Act could adequately protect consumers in labeling those garments absent the Rule.

In considering this third issue, the Commission is interested in views as to what type of agency guidance, if any, would assist manufacturers in complying with Section 5 of the FTC Act absent. (Section 5 of the FTC Act prohibits “unfair methods of competition.”)

The FTC is inviting comment on these questions and any others issues commenters think are important to consider in deciding whether to repeal the rule.

Comments can be based on the costs, benefits, and market effects of repealing the rule as proposed, in particularly the cost on small businesses. Comments opposing the proposed repeal should explain the reasons why the rule is still needed and, if appropriate, suggest specific alternatives, FTC said.

For more information, see www.ftc.gov/news-events/press-releases/2020/06/ftc-seeks-public-comment-proposed-repeal-care-labeling-rule.

The FTC last sought input on the rule in 2011 as part of a regular 10-year review of its regulations. That led to a roundtable with interested parties in 2014, but no conclusions were published and the issue has been largely dormant until now.



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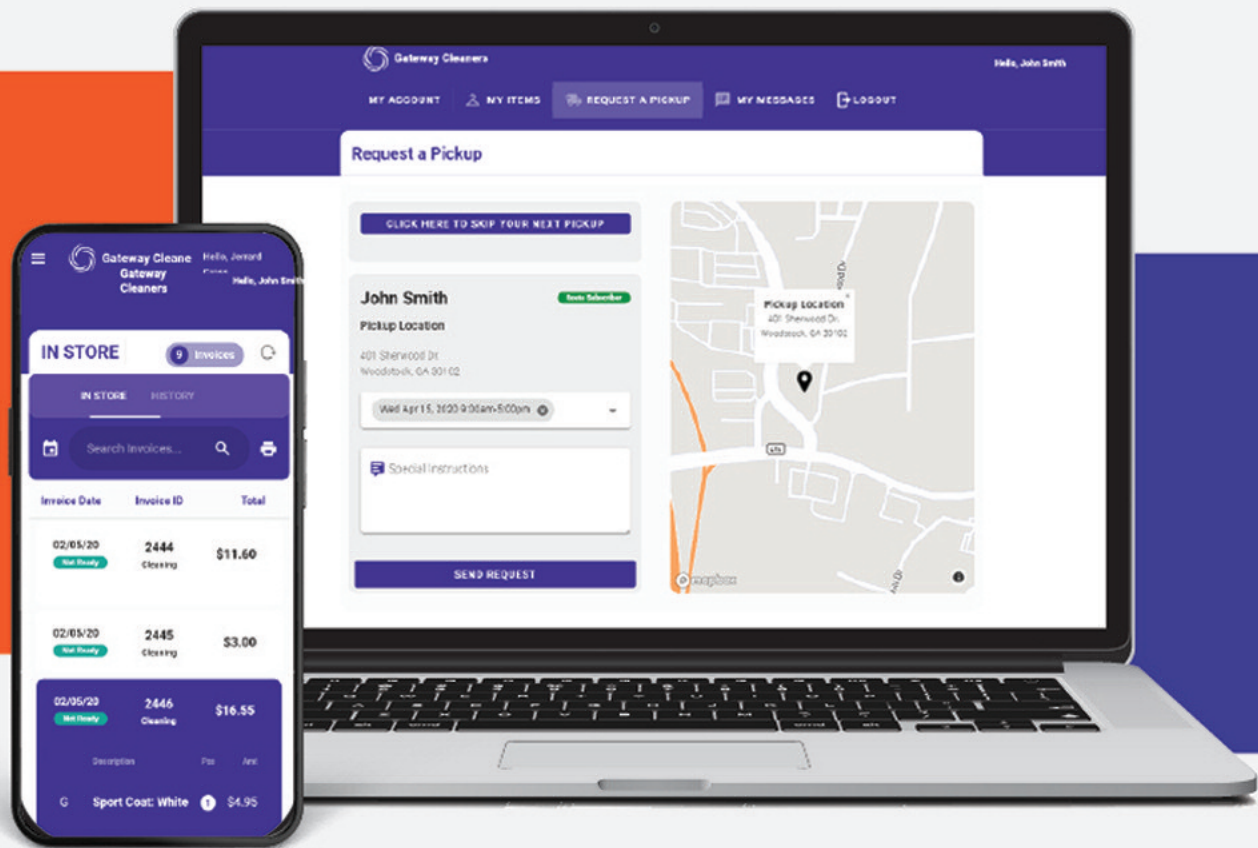
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BY JAMES PEUSTER

THE ROUTE PRO

So many questions, so few answers

What can anyone say right about 2020? I mean, no one could have ever said this may be the most challenging, confusing, concerning, discouraging year we have faced since 1968.

Our industry is down like everyone else, but the “new normal” hasn’t been created. I have been on the phone so much talking with clients, owners, drivers, managers and other industry leaders as we all seek out the answers to questions like — *What’s next? What works? What are you doing?* — and so on and so on.

SPOT POS systems have been producing reports based on sales numbers. Jeff Schapiro of Cleaners Supply held a webinar attended by the most participants I have seen ever for a drycleaning zoom meeting. The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute continually shares whatever info they can get about PPP loans and whatever piece of marketing worked for someone else.

There is one thing for sure — we feel busier than ever as owners, mainly due to the chaos and uncertainty.

So... what can I write about

this month that isn’t about doom and gloom?

Seriously, things I see on forums and other resources seems to be more negative in nature. Sometimes I feel like

lead and ship. To lead is to do what exactly it means: be with your team and get out there with them.

A popular definition is this: to cause (a person or animal)

through this.

Some retail and route managers have raised their game so much, their efforts have greatly affected the percentages. Many owners and man-

live. If your stores are not supportive of routes, your chances of survival decrease. We see this way too often; make sure everyone is on the same page.

Step Three is analyzing re-

The best thing you can do as an owner is be the light of hope within your company. It lets your staff know that we will persevere through this and be stronger than ever.

some owners migrate to that looking for answers that are right in front of them, yet their own negativity prevents them from making the decisions that will help them through this.

Here’s the magic pill or potion you are looking for — it’s time to step up your leadership role.

The best thing you can do as an owner is be the light of hope within your company. It’s not as easy as it sounds, but it eases the pain and lets your staff know that we (notice the key word “we”) are going to persevere through this and be stronger than ever.

The key to leadership is two key words ingrained within —

to go with one by holding them by the hand, a halter, a rope, etc., while moving forward.

Wow, if every owner or manager were to go “with” each employee, then the end result is moving forward. The “ship” is your company and it takes a leader to steer in the right direction. When a storm hits, the captain must call the crew together to survive, then you go to Plan B to reach your destination.

Covid has created the ultimate scenario for the strong to survive, then to thrive. However, it will take leadership to get it done. We have seen many great leaders born

agers are out in the field driving routes and working hard on retention and sales.

While the piece counts go down, getting more out of your staff members must be on the rise. Your and their future depends on it.

The key to route growth and efficiency depends on you or a manager who can be the driving force behind it. If you rely on orphaned drivers to build your routes as well as your future, you may be waiting a long time for growth to occur.

The challenge is that while trying to save money, you may fall short on saving your business. It takes a leader to make the decisions needed as well as take action to move forward. The other option is that you may have to move on, and that’s not the future you want to take.

Step One is decide what you need to do now to grow. We all know that stores are down more than routes. While you work hard with all the administrative decisions and info provided, taking your foot off the accelerator will slow you down more. Then you have to find or develop your staff to develop your business.

Step Two is to collaborate and grow as a team. Team building ultimately leads to business building. Without it, your staff is fragmented, making decisions that hurt your chances to grow or even sur-

sults and finding creative ways to motivate your team. Accountability doesn’t have to be destructive; it’s mainly instructive. Combining the two will create the ultimate opportunity for developing your staff. Being in a leadership position is not being the “boss” just bossing people around.

Finally, collaborating with your team and getting their input only creates solutions to the issues and problems out there. The more involved your staff is the more they will take ownership of the company.

Again, doing it by yourself doesn’t work — we see that way too often. Surrounding yourself with staff members who want to be part of growth is the perfect solution to the problems we are facing.

The bottom line is still the bottom line. Many of you are probably saying you can’t afford it right now.

I have said it before and I’ll say it again: you can’t afford not to do it. 2021’s theme will probably be “either grow or go.”

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 information, call (816) 739-2066 or visit www.theroutepro.com.

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COMET CLEANERS in Dallas, TX, purchased a Union HP860 and a Union HP-860-C with solvent heating through Gulf States Laundry Machinery. Pictured from left are Young Park, the operator, Aleya Noor, general manager, and Matt A. Lipman of Union Drycleaning Products.



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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

Retaining that moisture retention

The first line of defense against poor quality is proper moisture retention, and then retaining that!

You probably have a blown-sleeve shirt unit. Twenty years ago, they were the anomaly, but this is no longer true. Sleeveless have gone the way of videotapes... and moisture retention around 30 to 40 percent.

Oddly enough, blown sleeves need significantly more retained moisture than hard-pressed sleeves; at least 50 percent, 60 percent in many cases. But your defense against poor quality doesn't stop there.

Keeping the dampness in is a critical, oft overlooked, step.

You will recognize the image in Photo 1. Wet shirts are often laid out in a laundry basket and casually "covered" as you see in the photo.

This way to cover shirts is not adequate. Add to that the haphazard coverage, allowing fabric to be exposed, quality here is at risk, if not doomed.

Even if the canvas flaps were not damaged, these covers allow for air movement under them and therefore the fabric is liable to dry unless you have "rock star" productivity.

Many of you probably do not use the canvas and simply opt for poly bag covers like you see in Photo 2. But without carefully tucking the poly in

between the shirts and the side of the basket, the quality of your pressing will surely suffer when the shirts have dry spots.

The reality is that keeping your shirt damp is the first line of defense against poor quality and it's really easy to do this.

A long time ago, the man who taught me how to press shirts also taught me how to do this. It may sound like overkill, but in fact, it's so easy and is guaranteed to keep your shirts wet. Why not do it right?

Compact the shirts, and then cover with plastic tightly, tucking in the plastic in between the shirts and the basket sides. Then, take a few net bags and tuck them around the



Photo 2. Opting for poly bag covers as seen here but without carefully tucking the poly in between the shirts and the side of the basket, will cause pressing quality to suffer.



Photo 1. Wet shirts are often laid out in a laundry basket and casually "covered."



Photo 3. Compacting the shirts and covering them with plastic tightly, then tucking a few net bags around the perimeter will keep the shirts wet for a long time.

perimeter as you can see in Photo 3.

It's not truly an air-tight

seal, but because this method does not allow for air movement, the shirts will remain wet for a very long time. When you do this, you will notice beads of moisture collecting under the plastic. This proves that the all-important moisture is not allowed to escape.

Keeping shirts uniformly wet will prevent those bizarre wrinkled areas that you may not have been able to understand in the past.

"If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you always got."

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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Newhouse Specialty marks 75 years

When World War II ended in May of 1945, Ernie Newhouse closed his drycleaning plant, which was outside the gates of Camp Roberts in Southern California.

Throughout the war years, Ernie had cleaned and pressed thousands and thousands of officers uniforms together with clothes for the surrounding population.

He often worked so late that he would fall asleep on the pile of clothes waiting to be processed. He would take a “spit bath” in the morning and Marguerite, his wife would bring him breakfast. He would start over the next day and perhaps go home that evening. But with the war over, the base was shutting down.

Newhouse had a background in the cleaning industry, having worked for a drycleaning equipment company before owning a plant. In the 1930s he had made and sold a primitive press clamp, an item that clamped the hem or cuff of a pair of pants or capris to a press to be steamed and

stretched back to size. (They are hardly used any more).

As result of having his own drycleaning plant, he had some ideas for other tools that would help in drycleaning shops. He started Newhouse Company in his garage to produce them.

At that time, drycleaning consisted of very large drycleaning companies that cleaned the clothes, then sent them to drop off stores or shops that pressed them. Some were company-owned shops but most were independent.

The first item Ernie offered was the Number 1 Counter Rack. It was attached at the end of the counter in the shop call office for hanging a customers order while a customer paid his bill. Before this, each shop operator had to make his own rack out of plumbing material or what ever.

Most orders were bagged in paper, as poly garment bags were not introduced to the market until the 1960s. Distributors sold

the No. 1 Counter Rack like hot cakes and that put Ernie in business.

In the following years, Newhouse exhibited at state and national drycleaning shows, adding new products to the line. Many of them were ideas brought to him by other cleaners. One of those was Fred Stein from Indiana who had made some items himself. He brought those and ideas for others for Ernie to make and sell to the market.

Stein became a friend and team member at the shows where they sold the various products, many of which are still offered in the Newhouse line. Some products were dropped due to changes in clothing style or lack of demand. Newhouse added many products to the company line, including scales for on-premise laundries in hotel and motels.

Looking back through the company’s old catalogs, one or two of the old items are amusing, such as the spotting machine.

It looked like a daddy long-leg spider. Each metal leg had a tube attached that when pressed down on fabric would dispense a specific spotting agent. This saved reaching for a specific bottle, but the product died an early death.

In the early 1960s Newhouse introduced the Jacobson Magic Teflon Iron Shoe to the world and for many years sold it exclusively before manufacturing its own Miracle Iron Shoe

In 1967, Cy Alford, a relative of Ernie’s wife, Marguerite, joined Newhouse as a partner and then took over the company in 1968 when Ernie died. After 45 years, Cy turned over the ownership and reins to his stepson Daniel Borrero, who is preparing the company for the future. It is still a family business, serving both the laundry and drycleaning industries.

To see the current product line of the Santa Ana, CA, company, visit www.newhousespecialty.com.



Ernie Newhouse (at left) is shown talking to customers at a trade show in 1965. Looking at the camera is Fred Stein.



Pictured in the Newhouse booth at the Las Vegas Clean Show in 2017 are, from right, Gloria Alford, Cy Alford, Carl Alford (Cy’s grandson), Daniel Borrero, and Ana Serna (Daniel’s wife).

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Milt & Edie's Drycleaning & Tailoring Center
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“

DLI is doing a great job connecting cleaners and offering **webinars** and **weekly Zoom meetings** to help us navigate these crazy and **challenging times**.

”

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During COVID-19 DLI membership means more. DLI is helping us navigate these challenging times and offers a form of **group therapy**. The **weekly Zoom meetings, webinars, and live demonstrations** allow us to **interact** with other cleaners to **exchange ideas**. I cannot say enough **good things** about the value of DLI membership.

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As a new member the access to **online training and conference calls** with experienced cleaners has been invaluable. **The quick response, hands-on problem-solving and idea sharing** DLI has provided **is world-class**.

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Drycleaning Connection
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KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

Political speech in the workplace

This article is not about the weather, which would be a much easier topic. Then again, many people have strong feelings about climate change, so even discussing the weather has its risks.

In any event, my topic this month is politics in the workplace.

As we all know from television, social media, the Internet, and other sources of information and misinformation, America is something of a “house divided,” as Abraham Lincoln called it before the Civil War.

Even recommendations on dealing with Covid-19 have become political and people are taking sides.

Personally, I have stopped using Facebook because (1) people I generally like and respect are saying stupid things, and (2) I do not want to say stupid things myself, whether intentionally or not, in response to other people’s posts. Plus, I feel like I am being manipulated by Facebook while it also exploits me for profit.

What do you do when poli-

tics invades the workplace? What do you do when three employees are arguing over their pins, tee shirts, masks, or other articles of clothing that

the First Amendment and guarantees of free speech do not apply to private employers. They apply to governments, so you do not have to

pretend as evidence of discrimination based on race, sex, age, color, religion, national origin, disability, and so on could be used by current and former

“But I Kneel for the National Anthem.” You are probably safe allowing American flags, provided you do not allow Confederate flags.

The First Amendment and guarantees of free speech do not apply to private employers. They apply to governments, so you do not have to tolerate political speech in the workplace.

say, respectively, “Black Lives Matter,” “Blue Lives Matter,” and “All Lives Matter”? What is your company’s policy on displaying Confederate flags, Trump or Biden pins, pride rainbows, or “I Like Ike” buttons?

Recently, my wife told me that some radical group is trying to make Hawaiian shirts its symbol, making my Tommy Bahama collection (three shirts) possibly inflammatory. Should your company policy be no Hawaiian shirts on Hawaiian shirt day?

Let me begin by stating that

tolerate political speech in the workplace.

In fact, you have a constitutional right, sort of, to take a stand on any of the issues of the day, communicate them to your employees, and dare them to disagree. Of course, that may be the verbal equivalent of sending employees and customers home, dousing the place with gasoline, and setting it on fire.

Even your right to state your position to your employees on political issues, however, has its limits. Any views you state that could be inter-

employees to bolster their claims of discrimination.

Espousing your Christian views of business ethics is fine, until someone claims that you are criticizing their closely held religious beliefs. I suspect that a court will be asked eventually whether an employer’s views on looting during protesting is evidence of racial discrimination.

Am I saying that there should be a complete ban on political discussion or displays in the workplace, a zero-tolerance policy so to speak?

Not really, because a complete ban on political discussion in the workplace has practical limitations, including in these strange times identifying what topics are political and what topics are not.

In most cases, the best approach is to tell employees who get into political arguments to stop unless they can do so in a way that does not harm their work relationship or prevent them from doing their work. It may get to the point that you have to tell both employees to stop at the risk of disciplinary action. But stopping them from talking, or controlling every aspect of their conversations, is a foolhardy endeavor.

Political slogans displayed or worn proudly are another story. You can prohibit them, provided you do not discriminate among slogans, symbols, or political paraphernalia.

While discriminating between “good” slogans and “bad” slogans may be lawful when analyzed by a lawyer, it could be a morale killer to do so. I would rather see you ban employees from wearing “I Love My Labrador Retriever” than have to decide if “Kiss Me, I’m Irish” is the same as “Proudly Pro-Life” or “Proud Palestinian” in terms of acceptable workplace speech.

It becomes even more problematic when a tee shirt says “I Love America,” followed by

A good starting point is that anything written and expressing a political point of view cannot be displayed. If someone complains about a bumper sticker on a car in the parking lot, deal with that as best you can.

The best approach is to apply common sense, but even common sense is hard to find these days. Tell your employees who insist on their free speech rights that you cannot have employees fighting over issues raised by the words they display on their clothes and cars. Work time is for work, not campaigning.

Because I am a lawyer, I have to give you one exception to the general rule of no political slogans. Pro-union buttons and slogans enjoy some protection under the National Labor Relations Act. If employees start wearing such buttons and slogans, get legal advice right away on your response, and not merely your response to the wearing of buttons.

If you do not currently have a problem with political slogans and discussions in the workplace, I do not recommend making a big deal about adopting a policy against them. If someone decides to test the waters, maybe that’s the time to consider such a policy.

If you do not need a rule right now, it may be better to wait until you do. But when you do, try as hard as you can to apply commonsense and compassion. “Proud to be Management” tee shirts and Covid masks are now on sale.

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.

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AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE



BY PETER BLAKE

Lessons learned from the pandemic

Slowly, most of the country is starting to re-open and begin the process of returning to life with a little more routine and normalcy. While each region and state may be doing things differently and with different timetables, people are trying to get back to business from restaurants, to stores, to entertainment venues — people are looking to revive their lifestyles. The goals of many small businesses, including dry-

cleaners, are the same: cut through the noise, let customers know they are open for business, and develop practices that will bring the customers back. Are you ready to re-open? Have you made significant changes in your business and your brand? Throughout these challenging times we have learned some valuable lessons about how the world is going to move forward and through those lessons we can position

ourselves for success. Here is my first lesson:
#1: Communication is critical
I have said it before in each of my previous articles, but this is a fundamental that cannot be stressed enough. Update your digital presence and make sure you are in tune with your customers and your target market. As people return to work, to the community, and life, it is critical to communicate

safety precautions and contactless options like drive-up service, free pick-up and delivery, and curbside service while creatively and strategically rolling out new services. When making business choices or evaluating what companies to do business with consumers, head right for their smart phones, apps, and computers. If you have not updated your information, claimed your google location, and monitored the information on

all your platforms, you are falling behind. You need to keep monitoring your info and your reputation. Update your website and social media platforms with the new policies and procedures you have implemented to help keep your staff and your customers safe. Make sure you have high-quality signs in your call offices. Make sure your customers can see you are committed to their safety.

There have been many diverse studies on the effectiveness of some of these safety measures, and there is a wide variety of what is required in different areas.

I urge you, however, to err on the side of caution. Demonstrate a commitment to safety. The safer and more serious you are taking these issues, the more apt customers are to feel comfortable entrusting you and your staff.

There is a hesitancy to push this information due to “information overload,” but it is critical you have policies and procedures listed to help demonstrate your commitment to your community’s safety.

This leads me to Lesson Number 2:


#2: No one is alone; communities are coming together

There has been an outpouring of support for buying local, so small businesses like drycleaners and launderers need to embrace that trend and establish themselves as cornerstones of the community. We are just now beginning to understand that customers have an extraordinarily strong desire in doing businesses with local companies and brands that share their values and concerns. That statement is truer today than ever before.



By shaping our messaging, signage, and our activities, we can highlight just how invested we are in the success and safety of the communities we are a part of.

I am deeply humbled as I hear the stories of Industry members coming to the aid of people and organizations that need help. From cleaning donated facemasks for local hospitals, to free cleaning of First Responders garments, free cleaning for local shelters, food donations, members of our industry have stepped up and continue to do so.

Continued on page 22



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Peter Blake

Lessons learned from the pandemic

Continued from page 20

Years ago, Safety-Kleen had a promotion for the industry: “Caring for the Fabric of Life.” I do not think there is a more fitting motto for our industry.

You all are in the business of keeping your communities safe and clean.

Get involved, and your activities will translate to more support as things continue to re-open.

I am starting a new section of our association websites dedicated to our members who are supporting their communities.

I need to hear from you. Send me information on how you are participating and “Caring for the Fabric of Life”

and I will add you and your services to the list. Now here is my third lesson.

#3: The power of gratitude

Sometimes it takes incredible hardship for us to realize how important people and services are to our everyday lives.

Take this time to say thank you to your customers and your staff and show them that you care. A little gratitude goes a long way.

I am on weekly conference calls with our members hearing ideas and stories from across the country. One of the most consistent messages I hear is how powerful a simple

thank-you has been.

A few companies have taken the time to handwrite a personal thank you message for their best customers expressing how much they care, and how much they thank them for their loyalty.

Those messages more often than not have resulted in even higher sales the following weeks.

I have seen members hosting customer appreciation events like free lunches with hot dogs grilled in front of the store.

I know some members who have assembled “welcome back gifts” for their customers that have included incentives and specials, lint rollers, face-

masks, hand sanitizer, and a host of other small gifts.

Now is the time to stand out and make an impression. Use this time to reconnect on personal levels. Finally, here is my last lesson.

#4: Your biggest asset is a strong team

You are only as good as your personnel. You need to keep investing in their professional development and continue to foster their company pride.

All of the things I have talked about in this article from communication, community involvement, and gratitude, extend to your team as well. You need them to em-

brace these ideals and help you to reach out to your customer base.

Do not take them for granted, especially now. You need to show them you care for them as well.

One way is to arrange employee appreciation events. That can range from buying lunches to just working in the trenches with them. An iced-down towel or a cold milk shake on a hot humid day can go a long way to showing your employees you understand their challenges.

These do not have to be huge grand gestures, but small personal ways of saying thank you, and small efforts to try and make their job as comfortable as possible will go a long way to helping keep morale high and help your employees stay invested in your success.

When times get difficult, we often start taking it out on those closest to us. We often do not see their world and without even realizing it, we begin to take people for granted. Take time out of your day just to talk to your team. Listen to them, and you may find ways you can help each other.

I wish I could tell you this will all be ending soon. The great unknown is how long we will have to endure these hardships.

It would be infinitely easier if we had a timetable, a date where we knew this would be behind us, but the truth of the matter is, we do not have that luxury.

We need to keep adapting, planning, and being vigilant to keep up our guard and do the best we can to keep moving forward.

All indications are that the industry is continuing the same slow steady climb back to prior success, but it is not going to be as quickly as we wish. It is a long road back to recovery.

I am here for you — and if I can help you strengthen your business in any way, please reach out. Let me know what steps you have taken to adapt your business, and please let me know how you are being active in your community. You may be featured on our new “Caring for the Fabric of Life” webpage!

I wish you the best of luck as you begin a new chapter in your business.





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Peter Blake serves as executive director of the North East Fabricare Association, the Southeastern Fabricare Association, the MidAtlantic Association of Cleaners and the California Cleaners Association. He can be reached by email at peteblke@aol.com or by phone at (617) 791-0128.

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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

Know and use the tools of spotting

This may be a good time for you to review the principles and basics of spotting.

It has been my experience after teaching for 35 years that most cleaners and spotters, even the experienced ones, lack the knowledge of spotting basics or don't practice them. More problems and lack of stain removal occur from not properly practicing basic spotting techniques.

The following article will deal with basic spotting. I would recommend that plant owners read the following lesson and go over the principles with staff. I would also recommend that if you are an experienced spotter that you review the material as well.

Proper use of spotting tools

The spotter has at hand the tools to aid in proper stain removal. All too often these tools are not used properly or not used at all. Improper use of the tools will result in a lower percentage of stain removal and sometimes damage.

The steam gun. The steam gun is the most important tool

for wetside stain removal. It can aid in stain removal by the heat and force of the steam it generates.

Before using the steam gun

or pedal pressure to emit a small amount of steam vapor. This is effective for heating and accelerating chemicals. Every 18°F rise in temperature will

board run the risk of residue backup if the vacuum tip is not cleaned out.

The towel is also used for feathering. The process of

cate fabric, angle the brush so only the outside bristles contact the fabric.

Spatula. The spatula or bone can be made of a plastic

The steam gun should be held at least six inches from the fabric when flushing wetside stains on a light colored fabric or a delicate fabric to prevent setting the stain and possible damage to a delicate fabric.

on a fabric, aim it on the floor first to remove residue and pressure buildup in the gun.

The steam gun should be held at least six inches from the fabric when flushing wetside stains on a light colored fabric or a delicate fabric. This will prevent setting the stain and possible damage to a delicate fabric.

On dark, rough garments the steam gun can be held close to the fabric so the force and pressure of the steam will remove the stains from the fabric.

Heating stains. The steam gun can be regulated by a knob

double the chemical action.

Another way to use the heat of the steam gun is to press the steam pedal and direct the steam on the floor, then quickly release the steam pedal and aim the steam gun close to the fabric which still has steam vapor coming from the gun.

Towel. When flushing stains, always flush it into a towel. This serves several purposes. It keeps the wet area more localized and the spotter can see if the dye in the fabric is fugitive by examining dye transfer on the towel.

Spotters who flush into the vacuum part of the spotting

feathering is used to remove rings from wetside spotting. Use the steam gun to break up the ring and then use the towel to wipe the center of the ring outward so the wet area blends into the dry area.

Spotting brush. The spotter should have several brushes and use them properly. A black and a white brush is a must.

The black brush is traditionally used for dryside spotting while the white brush is used for wetside spotting.

The reason is that some paint removers and dryside spotting agents when mixed with water will become potentially dangerous to the dyes on fabrics.

A padded silk brush is necessary for delicate fabrics. If you don't have a silk brush, wrap a towel around a bristle brush to create a padded area.

Some spotting brushes can be purchased with stiff nylon bristles while softer hair bristled brushes create a safer means of applying mechanical action.

Brushes are used on a fabric only after a lubricant is applied to the fabric.

Tamping in an up and down motion is the safest way of applying mechanical action. This is used for breaking up most wet and dryside stains. When brushing, always brush in one direction.

If you are brushing a deli-

or metal compound. This requires caution when in use. It should be used on the round part and extreme caution must be exercised on silks, polyesters and other delicate fabrics. Excessive rubbing can cause color loss or leave marks on the fabric.

The spatula can also be used to apply chemicals. The tip of the spatula can hold just the right amount of a powdered chemical. When the spatula is dipped into a liquid it holds enough liquid so it can be applied to a stain much like an eye drop.

Water gun. A water gun is very useful for flushing stains that may set or those that may spread. It can also be used to spray around a ring to aid in feathering.

Air. The steam gun usually has an air attachment. This is important for drying a wet area to tell if the stain is removed. It is also used to aid in feathering a wet area.

Watch for future articles dealing with the basics of spotting. My manual "The Art of Spotting" can be a helpful tool for training purposes.

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 at www.garmentanalysis.com.

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EPA eyes perc. EPA released its draft risk evaluation for perc, continuing a review process that began several years ago.

Crisis marketing. Stay in touch with your customers and be ready for the reopening of business, advises association executive Peter Blake.

An essential service. Drycleaners' services have been deemed essential during the shutdown. Pickup and delivery is essential to provide that service.

Steps for reopening. Frank Kollman offers practical and legal considerations for cleaners as they plan for a full reopening of business.

Cleaning by hand. Even if the label says "Do Not Dryclean or Wash," you can still clean it, says Dan Eisen.

SDA plans to meet. The Southwest Drycleaners Association is planning to host a membership meeting and seminar in July — emphasis on the word planning. Nothing is set in stone in the Covid Age.

Online gatherings. With coronavirus restrictions on travel and group gatherings, industry groups are opting to hold meetings online.

Complete table of contents of this issue [here](#).

View the flipbook version [here](#).

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Seeking recovery – and forgiveness

After a brutal month of April that saw business off as much 80 percent from a year ago, drycleaners were witnessing a recovery of sorts in May in which business "improved" to a level of 65 to 70 percent off year ago figures as people began slowly emerging from a virtual lockdown in the face of the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

Government ordered shutdowns of business that were beginning to loosen in May didn't effect most cleaners directly since they were generally deemed essential and allowed to remain open. But being open did not equate to having business. [More...](#)

We'll meet again

Scores like this seem to be from a distant past, but it was just one year ago this month that the industry gathered for the Clean Show in New Orleans. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the cancellation of many industry gatherings, including regional trade shows planned by the Southwest Drycleaners Association in Ft. Worth in April and the South Eastern Fabricare Association show planned for this month in Kissimmee FL. It remains to be seen if other regional trade shows will be able to go on as planned. The Clean Show is still on track for next June in Atlanta. As the old song goes, "We'll meet again some sunny day."

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