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FTC votes to keep Care Label Rule

Last month, the Federal Care Label Rule avoided being repealed when the Federal Trade Commission voted 5-0 in favor of keeping it during a live broadcasted meeting.

The clothing tag regulation was first established in 1971 as a means to make it unfair or deceptive for manufacturers to sell clothing without providing clear and concise

instructions on how to care for garments properly.

However, in recent years the rule has been considered on the chopping block with its detractors citing that many of the care symbols are outdated and more modern methods, such as wetcleaning, remain excluded.

In July of 2011, the FTC sought comments on the sub-

ject from consumers and industry stakeholders. Out of 120 submitted comments, only two thought that care labels were not necessary.

The issue was revisited last year, after the Commission surprisingly announced its intentions to repeal the rule. Supporters responded in kind, contributing 244 comments altogether. Once again,

the vast majority of statements opposed the repeal of the care label rule.

According to FTC Chairperson Lina Kahn, "The public comments the Federal Trade Commission has received during these reviews have highlighted the many benefits that care labels provide to both clothing buyers and cleaners."

While the 50-year-old Care Label Rule has survived its most recent mid-life crisis, council members all agreed that it is desperately in need of a full makeover in the future to improve it.

In terms of when that might happen, that will likely prove difficult to pinpoint.

As Council Member Rohit

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DLI will reopen its school this Fall

Many months have passed since the COVID pandemic first forced shutdowns across the country, but the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute is now ready to reopen its School of Dry Cleaning Technology — a big sign that things might be returning more and more to a semblance of normalcy.

The association will once again host live in-person resident courses this fall, starting with its Introduction to Drycleaning course that will take place from Oct. 4 to 8. It will be followed by an installment of DLI's Advanced Drycleaning course, which will run from Oct. 11 to 22.

The one-week introductory class is designed for those new to the industry or with less than one year of experience. The curriculum includes: sorting loads for drycleaning; cleaning silk, satin and other fabrics; operating a drycleaning machine;



While the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute has kept drycleaners informed with dozens of virtual programs over the past year, the association's signature resident courses will be back soon at its School of Drycleaning Technology.

removing coffee, ink, grease and other stains from clothing; pressing pants, coats and skirts; and using tensioning equipment.

Those who graduate from the course can go on to take

the two-week advanced program designed more for those with hands-on production experience and knowledge of basic stain removal and finishing techniques.

Additional topics for that

course include: identifying fabrics; using bleaching without damaging color; wet-cleaning; pressing a variety of garments; troubleshooting problems with the drycleaning machine; using tension-

ing equipment; current industry regulations; cleaning and preserving wedding gowns; understanding the differences between solvents including perc, GreenEarth,

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A forensic garment detective



Susan McManigal, owner of French Hand Laundry, sees beauty every day with exquisite garments coming to her from museums, Hollywood stars and the annals of history... to be rejuvenated with meticulous efforts. See her story on page 6.

Photos By Bobbi Feasel



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So, Americans are indeed quite ambivalent about laundry. This has led to some habits that are proving harmful to the environment. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported in 2019, American buy an average of 68 garments a year, and they do it at a rate that is five times more than they did in the 1980s. While everyone owns treasured garments, much of our wardrobes has become disposable (although, we aren't even sure how to dispose of it properly). Some estimates suggest that we throw away 85% of our textiles into landfills (or burn them) when we don't want

Unfortunately, while watching the live meeting in July, it seemed like the Commission remains more concerned with other issues. It doesn't seem like updating the rule is a priority. This is a shame because there are many caring people out there wanting to see care labeling improve. Logically, such an action would inevitably lead to more improvement in the quality of clothing care, which would also cut down on filling up landfills with garments that still have some life left.

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Be sure to visit www.nationalclothesline.com, for additional coverage of the drycleaning industry.

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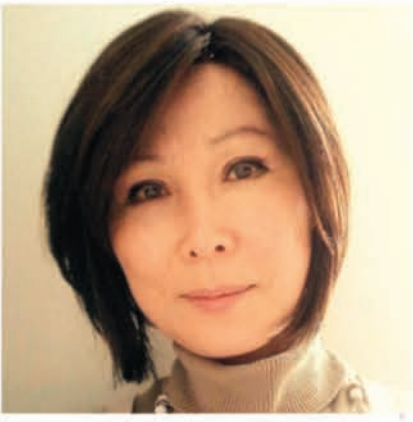


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Exquisite fashion

For more than a century, French Hand Laundry and Dry Cleaners of Pasadena, CA, has helped restore, repair and rejuvenate some fairly impressive textiles, some of which have significant historical value and almost all of which have highly sentimental value.

For owner Susan McManigal, it doesn't matter if she's working on a gown worn by actress Judy Garland in *The Wizard of Oz* or a person's regular work attire. They each receive the same intricate treatment.

"What I am most proud of is that the level of service that we offer to the customer that's coming in through the door is the same level of service that is being given to the museums, the private collectors... so that it's the same machines, the same pressers," Susan explained. "Everybody's doing exactly the same work, only there's more evaluation going to the restoration aspect."

When some of those older and more fragile garments come in, they become a complex mystery to solve. *What will it take to bring this piece back to life?*

"I guess I could say we rise to the challenges and we just do the best that we can. Just work with it. Don't fight it. I'll tell a piece of fabric, 'We're going to work together here and get you back to where you were, so hang on,'" Susan added. "I've now had so much experience. I've got a good staff that works with me, so when we get in some of these pieces, we work together. We collaborate, put everybody's skills all together so that once we get started on it, we know the path we're taking and we do the steps."

For French Hand Laundry, its own path can be traced back to 107 (or possibly 109) years ago when a couple named Marie and Albert Cotta first opened the business.

"The city of Pasadena can only tell us that we were the first company with a telephone line. That is their date that they go by, so between 1912 and 1914," Susan noted.

Albert was a World War I veteran in need of work. Marie had family in the dairy and laundry industries in the San Gabriel Valley, so they opened their own on the opposite side of town. Back then, it was called South Lake Laundry and its clients included the Wrigley family, known for their chewing gum.

Shortly after opening the business, Albert fell ill and became bedridden for the remainder of his life. Marie asked her brothers in the dairy business for help. In time, one of those brothers and his wife took over the business after Marie sold it to him. She continued to live in the apartment above the business long after she retired.

In time, Susan's mother, Virginia, worked at the business. After young Susan walked to the store from Kindergarten, she would make hangers or brush sweaters. When tall enough to see above the counter, she waited on customers. During college, she studied philosophy and law, which only amplified her interest in scrutinizing and evaluating things. These skills would prove to come in very handy one day.

When French Hand's accountant

had to undergo emergency heart surgery on the eve of payroll, Marie asked her daughter if she could oversee the financial books.

"You're invincible when you're 20. You can do anything," Susan recalled. She said yes. Fortunately, her next door neighbor was an accountant who taught her accounting skills.



frenchhandlaundry.com

Susan and Virginia bought the business in the early 1990s. Susan became fascinated by the art of restoring vintage garments, which was only elevated by having Marie, a lifelong expert, living on the premises to tutor and inspire her. It also didn't hurt that she seemed to possess a natural affinity for it.

"Whenever a dressing gown came in, I could evaluate it. I could look at it. I could tell you the history behind the pieces," she noted. "I might not be able to get the names but I can possibly tell the origin of it so I can tell what side of the family it came from. Each of these pieces are very unique and they carry with them the lineage of the family and is a contribution to the family."

As Susan's skills evolved, she began to see valuable pieces come in from museums. "We did pieces for LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art] many, many years ago... a collection of clothing for pioneers that went on exhibit... pioneer men and women," she recalled. "Then, we did a couple of pieces of Abraham Lincoln."

From there, word-of-mouth quickly spread from curator to curator — and from a local to a national level — leading to an opportunity to work on historical Hollywood costumes.

A collector of Hollywood memorabilia had inherited an extensive collection of costumes that were not in great condition. As Susan noted, however: "They had a providence behind them that was significant." At first, she was reluctant to take on such an intimidating project. Later, she decided she would try to work on some items "after hours."

The first piece was a Charlie Chaplin suit. Since then, she hasn't looked back.

"It's impossible to chronicle all of the pieces. There are so many of them," she said. "Every day is a joy of what is going to be uncovered."

One time, Turner Classic Movies put

together a show on what goes on behind the movies with segments on all of the different people who help make the stars shine — from hair and makeup artists to costume designers.

Perhaps the most difficult garment that Susan helped them restore was a garment worn by Marilyn Monroe and designed by Orry-Kelly, who used gel-

Alexander McQueen. It was called *Angels and Demons*," she said, referring to the designer's work depicting the Dark Ages in stunning fashion.

"It was hand-woven fabric that had this most beautiful, angelic cherub faces, and one of them is looking up and the other one is looking down. The back of the jacket was cut in such a way

Susan McManigal

atin sequins to produce a glistening shine.

"You couldn't put any moisture to it, otherwise it would dissolve. It was in very, very frail condition. We spend a lot of time and we did redo the mesh work — the under piece," she said. "Anyway, we brought it back to life and it's still on tour. It's from *Some Like It Hot*."

During the restoration process, Susan discovered an unusual mystery: there was a heart on the back of the dress that had been covered up. What was *that* all about? Delving deeper, she discovered what had happened.

"We come to find out, Marilyn Monroe always showed a piece of skin. It was very minute. It wasn't very large. It wouldn't show on camera, but that was a little piece of hers... that she wanted to show flesh," she explained. "This is all the history you get to learn with it. During the time she was wearing that dress, she was in a false pregnancy with Joe DiMaggio, so her weight was fluctuating and she actually had to have a model step in for all of their promo posters to wear the dress — because she couldn't fit into it. So, that woman did not want anything exposed, so they had to cover up the heart so it wouldn't show."

"That is how deeply you look at something to evaluate it, to understand the providence because it's telling you a story," she continued. "It's a living organism and it's telling you where it's been and what it's going to allow you to do."

While numerous wearable pop culture artifacts make their way into French Hand Laundry's doors, many of Susan's favorites over the years feature fashion in its finest form. Sometimes, such items even arrive out of the blue in the form of a call from customs telling her that they have a box for her from Paris.

"It was one of the later collections of

that it all made it hang like it had wings. It's impossible to explain, but it was the most exquisite piece of fashion, and the execution of it was amazing," she added.

Such pieces are treated like they are in an operating room and that the French Hand team will do everything they can to save it.

Sometimes, though, the "patient" can date back to the late 1800s. Susan enjoys working on young girl sampler and lingerie dresses — not to be confused with modern day ladies lingerie. Both styles of dress were a way for young girls to socially showcase their well-honed sewing skills.

"They were doing samplers in the 1800s. They take a piece of fabric and they would embroider or cross-stitch the alphabet, and then they would do the numbers, and then they would embroider their name and the date," Susan noted. "The lingerie dresses were amazing. There were long dresses so they were filled with pin-tucking, and there are laces, and some of them were laces that may have been brought over with the families when they migrated into the United States."

While Susan enjoys the time she spends as a garment forensic detective, she is quite happy to be seeing more customers face-to-face again.

"Right now, we're kind of going crazy. We're running the treadmill," she said. "Even customers we haven't seen for a year, when they come in, it's like your family, like you're reuniting."

After surviving what hopefully was the most difficult part of the pandemic, French Hand Laundry remained open the entire time and never had to let go of any employees.

"I'm very fortunate we have a clientele that is very supportive and I'm not going to say we weren't affected by it. Everyone was affected by it," Susan added. "I'm just thankful that we all stayed healthy and we were able to keep our doors open."

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KEEP IT LEGAL

BY FRANK KOLLMAN

Making a checklist for your business

I read a book a few years ago called *The Checklist Manifesto: How to Get Things Right* by Atul Gawande. Gawande is a surgeon with connections to Harvard and the World Health Organization. He pointed out that checklists are a main reason why flying is so safe and why medical mistakes at hospitals are declining. Personally, I have checklists for many aspects of my personal and professional life. The more routine tasks become, the more you need checklists to make sure you do not, mistakenly, believe you have already performed a

critical task. For example, when you close the store at the end of the day, you probably do not want to leave machinery on, fail to set the security alarm, or leave the day's receipts on the front counter. Making a checklist will ensure that all critical tasks are

performed, and, if you are a pilot, it just might save the lives of hundreds of people. Instead of a regular column, I am going to do a Checklist for your business. While not as critical as a checklist in an operating room, cockpit or public restroom, it may save you trou-

- ble down the road:
- ☐ Do I have checklists for all the procedures that must be performed daily, weekly and monthly at my business?
 - ☐ Do I have an up-to-date employment application?
 - ☐ Do I have an up-to-date employee handbook/manual?
 - ☐ Do I have all the required government notices posted?
 - ☐ Have my supervisors been trained in the employment law? Have they been trained in how to direct, evaluate and discipline employees?

- ☐ Do I have a successionship plan if I die or become disabled?
- ☐ Are my insurance policies and requirement up-to-date?
- ☐ Am I paying my hourly employees correctly under the Fair Labor Standard Act?
- ☐ Am I paying my salaried employees correctly under the Fair Labor Standard Act?
- ☐ Am I holding regular meetings with my employees to discuss the business, solicit ideas and keep them involved and motivated?
- ☐ Do I have an accountant I can trust?
- ☐ Do I have a lawyer I can trust?
- ☐ Are there any state or local employment laws applicable to my business?
- ☐ What OSHA and EPA requirements apply to my business, and am I in compliance?
- ☐ Do I belong to a trade association that updates me regularly on developments in the industry?
- ☐ Are my computer systems safe?
- ☐ Are my hiring procedures effective and legal?
- ☐ Are my business and personnel records up-to-date?
- ☐ Do I have I-9s for all my employees in a separate file?
- ☐ How do I handle employee complaints?
- ☐ How do I handle customer complaints?
- ☐ Do I keep medical records separate from an employee's personnel file?
- ☐ Should I conduct training for my employees on workplace demeanor and harassment?
- ☐ Do I have a will?
- ☐ Who are my key employees and what am I doing to retain them?
- ☐ Are my business licenses up-to-date?

While there are certainly additional items that I have not listed, that's the beauty of a checklist. You can always add to it as necessary. If you can check all of these off, you are in the elite group of prepared businesses.

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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A portrait of Jay Song, a man with dark hair, wearing a white shirt and a striped tie, smiling.

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A portrait of Eric Lee, a man with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, smiling.

ERIC LEE
Customer Service Manager

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ALLSTAR

A portrait of Michelle Lee, a woman with short brown hair, wearing a black cardigan over a white top, smiling.

MICHELLE LEE
Parts Specialist

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FTC votes to keep Care Label Rule

Continued from page 1
Chopra noted during the discussion on the Care Label Rule, “Of all the things that the federal government would prioritize during the

pandemic, I am still puzzled that the removal of required laundry labels somehow made the list.”
“I support updating the rules, but repealing this rule

altogether created immediate panic among small businesses in the laundry and drycleaning sector,” Chopra continued. “Local laundry establishments were already on

the brink of collapse as the need for professional care plummeted with Americans working at home and cancelling special events. Repealing the rule would

simply shift more risk and liability from the clothing manufacturers, mostly located overseas, to small drycleaning shops owned by families.”

DLI will reopen its school this Fall

Continued from page 1
SOLVONK4 and hydrocarbon; and designing a plant with effective work flow.
While the environment of DLI’s School of Dry Cleaning Technology is conducive for hands-on learning, Brian Johnson, DLI’s director of education and training, believes there are other fringe benefits to being there live.
“I am always amazed

when students tell me about all the books and movies they brought to kill the time while they’re not in the class. They usually never touch that stuff,” he said.
“Students from just about every course I’ve taught in 20-plus years have always grouped together and gone out on the town after class. The camaraderie among the students is one of my favorite

parts about instructing courses at DLI.”
In addition to the live resident courses, DLI will resume its virtual training sessions throughout August.
Each Wednesday of the month, the association will host a live program online at 1 p.m. EST. The topics and dates for August’s programs include: “Shoe Repair” with Jim Hardy of Harrell’s Clean-

ers on Aug. 4; “Sustainability” with Diana Vollmer of Ascend Consulting on Aug. 11; “Packaging Your Services into Subscriptions and Memberships” with Dave Coyle of Maverick Drycleaners on Aug. 18; and “Where to Find Scroll-Stopping Social Media Content” with Peter Blake, *National Clothesline* columnist, on Aug. 25.
DLI will continue to host

its weekly Peer-to-Peer Member Zoom meetings every Tuesday in August at 11:30 a.m. EST.
“Members learn how other cleaning business professionals are adapting to the current business climate, share ideas, get answers to questions, and even just vent,” noted DLI CEO Mary Scalco.
For more information, visit www.DLIonline.org.

SPOT Business Systems acquires Fabricare SYS

SPOT Business Systems of Salt Lake City, UT, acquired Fabricare Systems, LLC, an Acworth, Georgia-based provider of the Fabricare Manager software solution for drycleaners.
Fabricare Systems will now become part of SPOT Business Systems. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.
Employees from both companies will now form a combined team that will focus on providing full technical support services for both SPOT and Fabricare software solutions. Both will operate under one roof with a mission to focus on a customer-centric approach, scalability, flexibility, customizability and ease of use.
Fabricare’s leadership team has agreed to serve in an advisory capacity for a limited pe-

riod following the acquisition. SPOT remains committed to providing a smooth transition for Fabricare employees.
“We are excited to have the Fabricare team join our team at SPOT. Our companies share a culture of innovation and service, and through our combined efforts, we can create synergies that benefit customers and the company alike,” noted Tom Beidle, CEO, Personal Services, for SPOT. “Fabricare employees will continue to play a vital role on the team — particularly in the area of customer support of the Fabricare Manager platform, as well as in our ongoing efforts to innovate and better serve all of our customers.”
For more information, visit www.spotpos.com.

Fabricare 2021 show fast approaching

Drycleaners hoping to take part in the first major in-person tabletop exhibit and educational conference in a very long time may want to consider registering as soon as possible. The event itself is almost here already.
It will be hosted by the California Cleaners Association at the Sahara Las Vegas from Oct. 2 to 3.
A full schedule of the weekend’s educational programs, meetings and social gatherings is available on the official website located at www.fabricareshow.com.

The site is also a good place to register. The cost of the show is \$199 per attendee, and the event is open to all cleaners.
Space is expected to fill up quickly so those who want to go are advised to sign up as soon as possible.
Attendees can also take advantage of the official Fabricare 2021 site to make hotel reservations at the host hotel, the Sahara Las Vegas. The current rate is \$114 plus tax nightly for a room with either a king or two double beds in the Marra tower.



Obituary Allan P. Johnson III

At the age of 11, Allan P. Johnson III managed a full staff for his own paper route. By the time he passed on at the age of 83 this last May, Allan P. Johnson he had become a “peerless” drycleaner in Texas and a leader of the drycleaning industry on a national level.
Born in Newport News, VA, in 1938, Johnson became such an enterprising young man out of need. After all, he had to help put food on the table for his mother Margaret and his two siblings.
Later in life, he graduated with a business degree from Virginia Tech and entered the U.S. Air Force in 1961. During that period of his life, he met the 60-year love of his life, Susan Dyer Johnson, attained the rank of Captain, became a commercially-rated pilot and earned his MBA from Eastern New Mexico University.
After an honorable discharge in 1967, he returned to the newspaper industry and spent several years working his way up the ladder for the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, the *San Antonio Express-News* and as president of Harte Hanks Metro Group. He retired at 42, wealthy and ready to travel.
In the 1980s, Johnson unretired and purchased Peerless Cleaners, which had eight locations at the time. He expanded it to 18 locations over the years. He also served the drycleaning industry as president for both SDA and DLI.
Allan and Susan have four children, Allan, Michael, Douglas and Patrick, plus ten grandchildren and twin great granddaughters. He is also survived by his brother and sister, Mickey and Margaret, and Susan’s brother, Hugh, and her sister, Catherine.



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BUILDING VALUE



BY KERMIT ENGH

How to get rich in 3 difficult steps

In May, like so many of us, my wife and I escaped for a very much-needed vacation. The airports were getting back to having people, and the planes were packed. Much to my disappointment, I still could not enjoy my favorite air travel activity — getting a shoe shine. To use my travel time wisely, I took along a book I had not read for a long time. It was the classic, *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert Kiyosaki. The biggest takeaway from this book is a shift in the mindset about life, income and wealth, or building value. Becoming wealthy may not be your primary goal, but if it is, there is a reasonably predictable way to get rich in America.

Step 1: Ignore Your Parents

Parents around the world typically encourage their kids to get educated so they can get a “good job.” This may mean becoming a doctor or lawyer, although neither tends to be a path to significant wealth. High-paying professions provide an excellent income stream, but two insidious forces undermine the professional’s ability to create significant wealth: tax and spending. I related personally to this first

step. Some who know me will recall that I have been a victim of three corporate layoffs in my life. The last was as director of marketing services for a prestigious hospital in Omaha, NE. My parents were so proud when I accepted that position. After that layoff, it led me to the decision to control my own destiny and purchase our first business. It just happened to be a cleaners. Building a successful business took several years, and about that same amount of time for my parents to express that same level of pride. I have always been a believer in working hard and I feel fortunate that my wife and I have passed this down to our children (though sometimes I think they want to ignore me).

Tax. It is difficult to become wealthy on the basis of salary alone. Since income is taxed at the highest possible rate, you are left with not much more than 50 cents on the dollar. As many of those reading this have done, personally owning the real estate you operate in provides income not subject to normal withholding taxes.

Spending. The other problem with having a high income is that it creates a “wealth effect” that triggers spending.

Thomas J. Stanley, the famous author of the research-driven classic, *The Millionaire Next Door*, points out that some professionals — in particular, lawyers — spend a large portion of their income to give the impression they are successful. In other words, when you spend \$500,000 a year, you buy a Range Rover or send your kids to an elite private school at least in part because you want people to think you are wealthy. There is a balance to looking successful and creating an image which is difficult to maintain.

A great friend of mine who has been very successful still drives an old Volvo. I had this conversation with my daughters many years ago when they were in high school after one of their friends received a brand new BMW for their birthday. I promised I would never encumber them with providing them a nice car to drive. They could earn it.

Step 2: Start Something

Most wealth in America is created through owning a business. Recently, Mass Mutual looked at the proportion of business owners who make up a number of wealth cohorts.

They found that 17% of people with between \$100,000 and \$500,000 to invest were business owners.

Keep in mind that there are about 8 million employer-based companies in the U.S., meaning that the incidence rate of business ownership (the natural rate at which you find business owners in the general population) is about 3%. Said another way, if you grabbed 100 people with investable assets of between \$300,000 and \$800,000, 17 of them would be business owners, meaning you’re over five times more likely to find a business owner in the \$300,000 to \$800,000 wealth segment than you are to find an employee in the same segment.

The trend becomes more pronounced the higher up the wealth ladder you go. If you look at wealthy investors with between \$800,000 and \$1,500,000 in investable assets, you’ll see the proportion of business owners in this segment goes up dramatically to 27%.

The Very Rich. Among investors with between \$1.5 million and \$10 million in investable assets, the proportion of business owner jumps up to 52%. As for those investors with \$10 to \$50 million sloshing around in their bank accounts, 67% are business owners. Finally, for investors with \$50 million more in investable assets, 86% are business owners. Simply put, if you meet someone who is very rich, it’s highly likely they are (or were) a business owner.

Step 3: Get Liquid

The next step for you as a business owner is to focus on improving the value of your business so that you can sell it for a premium or operate very profitably. Just being a successful entrepreneur is typically not enough to become rich. You have to find a way to take the equity you have locked up in your business and turn it into liquid assets. When it comes to selling your business, the three most common options are:

- **Acquisition:** This is the headline-popping way some entrepreneurs choose to trade their shares for cash. When Facebook acquired WhatsApp for \$19 billion, funders Brian Acton and Jan Koum got very rich.

- **Re-capitalization:** A minority or majority “re-cap” occurs when you sell a stake in your company (often to a private equity firm) yet continue to run your business as both a manager and part owner, with a chunk of your wealth in liquid assets outside of your business. This has happened a few times in our industry with various results.

- **Management Buyout:** In an MBO, you invite your management team (or a family member) to buy you out over time, usually with a mixture of some cash from the profits of your business as well as debt that the managers take on. There are other, less common ways to turn your equity into cash (e.g. an IPO), but the key is turning the illiquid wealth in your business into diversified liquid wealth. The best part about selling a business is that the wealth created is taxed at a very low rate compared to employment income, so you get to keep the most of what you make. I cannot stress enough, consult with your tax expert before this type of transaction. The difference can be extreme.

You might argue it is better to keep all of your wealth tied up in your business as it grows, but that can be a risky proposition — just ask the folks you read about that were the darlings of *Success* magazine who are not on any lists today. If you keep your money locked up in your business, it also means you may not be able to enjoy the benefits of wealth. You can’t use illiquid stock in a private company to buy an around-the-world plane ticket or a ski chalet in Aspen. You have to get liquid first.

There are many good reasons to build a business. For you, wealth creation may not be as important as making an amazing product or leading a great team. But, if money is what you’re after, there is no better way to get rich than to start and sell a successful business.

In the upcoming months, we will dive into the eight drivers of creating value in your business, with the goal of building value. If you would like to get a head start in reviewing these drivers, I invite you to get your Value Builders Score by visiting: <https://mfmbusinesscoaching.com/value-builder-assessment-score>.

Until next time, enjoy building value.

Kermit Engh has been an owner/operator in the drycleaning industry for over 28 years, a member of Methods for Management member for over 24 years, the president of the Association of Wedding Gown Specialists for 17 years, a member of DLI and LCI, and winner of numerous industry awards including a 2016 CINET Internationale Sustainability Award. MfM is certified as a Value Builders coach and as a 5 Steps to Freedom coach. These platforms provide proven processes to address the three primary areas business owners deal with: Time, Team and Money. Contact him directly by email at kengh@mfmi.com.

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RICHARD A.



"...SMRT brings dry cleaning and delivering a great experience to customers into the 21st century. For decades, our industry was underserved and with SMRT on the scene, we are equipped with the finest software to run a world-class organization..."

GREG M.



"The customer support is hands down the best. From the demo to the instillation and now use, the support team at SMRT have been there. This system compared to my last POS is 1000% better. Easier to operate, staff and customer friendly."

SAMI K.



"The text program was much better than the competition. The training and introduction offered was and turned out to be excellent. The software puts the delivery company in charge. In my eyes this makes things easier and also helps allow more profit. SMRT seems to have everything you can think of for your dry cleaning business."

JON K.



"...the software is so user friendly and powerful that my entire business runs on it. It is the complete CRM software, front to back. Not only is it easy for me to manage my business, but it is also even easier for my customers. They can do all the scheduling, communication on their own."

AMANDA E.



"We are very happy we made the switch to SMRT. It is a simple easy platform to use and training employees. Assembly has been much more efficient and contacting the customers is very easy through the software. I like that it is browser based so I can login in whenever and where ever I need to. Set up is super easy and I am able to install myself instead of calling support."

WAYNE E.



"I can't believe we are running this system for over 4 years. Would be lost without it."

MICHAEL B.



"I used a legacy system (the largest in the industry) for 13 years before switching to this "upstart" back in 2017. The difference was immediate, obvious, and impactful for our operation. And that was back when they were an upstart, and the software was still in its relative infancy. They are now one of the dominant players in the market, and for good reason. The absolute best thing about this software, IMO, is the way customer communications are handled. It's partly an email client, part text interface, and part slack, all tied into one, flawlessly."

WILL W.



"There isn't just one feature I like but multiple. To name a few: user interface, the pickup/delivery module and notification/communication center."

THAYNE A.



"...from the change over to the delivery for my business the SMRT Systems is [by far] the best at teaching employees how to work the system. My customers swear that the texting to let customers no the there Dryclean orders are done is [easily] the best in our industry! So glad we went with SMRT!"

JOE F.



"...SMRT allows you to follow real time the daily ins and outs of your business. I am able to physically leave my facility and check in remotely. This was a huge step in me being able to devote time with my family, and giving me back control over my business."

JORDAN W.



"SMRT Systems makes our diverse dry cleaning business simple to manage from one screen. Easy to setup and implement this is a no brainer for anyone needing a POS in our industry."

MAJOR B.



"The extra communciation features for my team and our customers. The ease of use. The delivery and route optimization features to help build and organize our growing Pickup and Delivery system. Has incorporated into our marketing efforts beautifully."

RIAL S.



"I am very pleased with how the software is performing and the functionality. It has made communication with our customers more robust and streamlined. Issues I have posed to the company have been listened to and actual changes have taken place based on recommendations. I have Implemented around 15 different software products on a large scale in my career and I would have to say this was one of the best experiences so far."

JAMIE M.



"SMRT is easy to use. The training was very helpful as the training staff was here all week to get us switched over from our old software and up and rolling. We can access customer support very easily. I love the route management. It is far superior to other dry cleaning software systems."

DANIEL C.



"Having the ability to seamlessly run all facets of our operations under one user interface and the program is a game-changer. Not only does SMRT run our A/R, inventory, lot management, delivery routes, customer promotions, communications, etc. It quite frankly is the easiest to use and train, which is priceless in our industry."

KEVIN L.



"It seems in this day and age, most software has bells and whistles, some of which do the same thing, only its a step by step process to get to results. SMRT is quick about it!"

ALONSO C.



"Our internal company communications, automation with management reporting, billing and customer resolutions have been the biggest benefits with the software implementation. What took several emails, manual phone calls and meetings with our management are now easily reported across all communicaitons channels and have reduced the time to resolve day to day processes."

BRUCE G.



"...we love how easy the software is to use, the route app is terrific, communication through text and email has significantly cut down on phone calls, estimates are responded to very quickly and our customers love it. The reports are endless, we have hundreds of KPIs to help us with sales and marketing."

CHARLES D.



"...we love how easy the software is to use, the route app is terrific, communication through text and email has significantly cut down on phone calls, estimates are responded to very quickly and our customers love it. The reports are endless, we have hundreds of KPIs to help us with sales and marketing."

JASON Y.



"My overall experience with SMRT has been fantastic! They are a great partner to have in the industry."

JONNI M.



"My overall experience with SMRT has been great. The customer support and complete openness to look for and create new functions has made our everyday use easier. The ability to track garments, contact customers, track drivers, and option to make just about any kind of data report we request has been a life saver."

BILL W.



"The developers are always working to make the system work better. It already works great , but if there is something that you would like for it to do you can request it and it will probably get done. I also like that it is so easy to use. New associates can be up to speed in just a few days."

LAURIE C.



"We have improved garment tracking and communication internally and with customers. We are able to be really transparent. The customer interface is great. The team is great to work with! Our systems and processes are getting streamlined in a way we've been dreaming about for years, but had roadblocks with previous software."

DENISE T.



"The migration to SMRT was validated and praised by both our multi-generation of employees and customers. The ease of learning, navigating, and customer interaction has elevated our service and won the confidence and respect from all. Reporting and data analysis continues to become even more sophisticated. Unlike many services where support diminishes after the honeymoon stage, the SMRT support team continues to be very responsive with great attitudes long after conversion."

ROSS L.



Our previous Compassmax software was not adequately addressing our needs and we are overall quite happy with how well we have been able to improve the management of our business with a system that is easier to use .

ERIC D.



When we switched to SMRT we didn't have a route at all and now it is growing weekly. With the clients being able to setup a pickup/delivery right from their cell phone.

MATT F.



Brings current tech to the dry cleaning industry that has had archaic software for decades.

PETER L.



We have had nothing but a great experience with SMRT, from the hardware & staff. Support is very quick to respond. My prior system support was not as responsive and created frustration when we needed an issue/question addressed.

JIM G.



SMRT is intuitive and has a clean look. The developers are continuously updating the platform and Support is quick and usually succinct.

ROBERT S.



I love the customer communication. Route tracking is top notch. Assembly conveyor is very reliable, cost effective and efficient. Customer billing is very simple to customize.

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AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE



BY PETER BLAKE

It's time to use your time wisely

The landscape of the industry has changed a lot over the past 15 months, and we need to learn from it, look at what lies ahead, and make a plan to take advantage of the opportunities in front of us.

If you are like me, you are celebrating a return to life as we used to know it. We are going out again, socializing, seeing friends. With this return will come more opportunities for you to grow your business.

While many of us are used to a slow down over the summer months, I am confident that will not be the case this year as we have already suffered the typical losses. What you have now for volume will be your new baseline and you will start to grow from here.

The people who have used you in the most recent past will continue with their usage patterns, and volume will slowly build from here. The question will be: Are you ready for that growth? How are you preparing?

Over the course of my last several articles, we have explored the different components of piecing together a plan for moving forward. We have discussed marketing, hiring, management, the permanent changes within the industry, and new lines of business. Now is the time to put it all together and formulate your plan to move forward.

Most businesses are slower than they want to be, so you have a little luxury of time to make sure you are well prepared as your business grows. Do not plan for where you are now, but plan for where you expect to be or want to be in two to three months.

Take this opportunity to prepare your staff and to build your team. Don't be complacent that you have all the help you will need — or more importantly — that they know all they need to know as we approach busier times.

We often make the mistake of waiting for changes to happen, and then reacting and adapting to them on the fly. This is your chance to change that paradigm. Education is one of the biggest needs within the industry, and one of the components

that is often overlooked until you find yourself falling behind.

How much training do you provide? How do you train your new team members? Have you explored cross training? Employee versatility can be a team's strongest asset. Having team members that know, understand, and respect all aspects of the business can pay huge dividends.

In the past, this training would be costly and time consuming, but with all the technology changes — and learning from how we adapted through the pandemic — this valuable education is available in a multitude of methods for very reasonable costs. You need to take advantage of all these tools to help you and your staff be prepared.

There have been webinar series offered by your local associations like NEFA, SEFA and MAC. DLI has been hosting weekly webinars and Peer-to-Peer calls once a week for over a year now. These are incredible opportunities that you should take advantage of. Many of these programs were for members and non-members alike.

Programs like this have enabled us to avail ourselves to a whole new concept for our industry: Effective Education On-Demand. Most of these programs have all been recorded and archived so they can be used over and over again. I know some of the programs I hosted over a year ago on social media marketing are still being re-watched today. If you have been too busy to see the programs live, take a look at the archives for some of the recordings and catch up on what you have missed. Don't miss out on these valuable tools.

This goes for the DLI programs as well as some of the other programs our industry has been fortunate enough to have available. Also, America's Best Cleaners hosted a terrific series on leadership that was recorded. I know Kreussler, the Route Pros and some of the POS companies have all done live training they have archived, as well.

DLI has moved some of its residence course to a virtual platform. NEFA, PDCA and SEFA hold joint virtual

events every six months that allow for you to invite your entire staff to participate for a small plant fee.

We have all seen what a nightmare it is to find good, qualified employees to join your staff, but once you get them in the door and want to keep them — you need to train them properly and give them the tools to succeed.

What Lies Ahead

You need to take this time to evaluate what programs and opportunities are coming up, what you can participate in, and what you can make available to your team members. For plant owners and key managers, CCA is hosting a great in-person event in Las Vegas in October. Visit calcleaners.org for all the details.

This is a great way for you to meet with peers from around the country and to learn some innovative ways to approach the problems we are all facing. The registration fee is very reasonable, and it is open to all cleaners

regardless of membership.

NEFA, SEFA and PDCA are again holding a virtual conference this November.

This will be a great opportunity to provide quality education for all owners, managers and multiple members of your staff. The program will feature topics that reach all aspects of the cleaning process including technical operating tips, marketing and business management. Again, the program is available to all cleaners, not just members.

DLI, its affiliates, and many of the consultants in the industry will continue to have webinars, workshops, conference calls and Zoom meetings to keep you up to date on all the industry happenings. I can't stress enough how important it is to stay connected to your peers within the industry, and to stay up to date with all the changes and issues we face.

DLI will also be returning to hosting resident classes to help train your technical em-

ployees. They will also continue to develop models that feature hands-on live instruction with a combination of virtual components.

None of these are either/or scenarios — they are *all of the above*.

Never underestimate the power of professional training. Not only will your team members be better prepared to face the challenges of tomorrow, but they will know that you value their professional growth.

Investing in your employees continuing education is a key motivator to retaining team members. If they feel valued and supported, they are 10 times more likely to stay and be invested.

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



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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

Don't be penny wise, dollar foolish

Have you ever heard the expression *penny wise and dollar foolish*? It's so easy to get caught up in that vortex while in the shirt business. This month, I present to you a few examples.

A long time ago, I stopped scrubbing collars on shirts. My rationale was pretty simple: Why would I want to throw labor at a problem when I was already buying chemicals that I believed should take care of that problem? If shirts are dirty, collars are probably the part of the shirt that are most obviously in need of cleaning. If my chemicals clean every part of the shirt except the collars, what good are they?

I met a cleaner years ago who believed that scrubbing collars was a waste of time, too. A local vendor set him up with a detergent booster of some type that injected three ounces of this liquid into every load. He was thrilled that this product cost a mere \$19.95 per gallon.

I looked at it a little differently: 128 ounces for \$20. That's almost 16 cents per ounce, 48 cents per load. This, at a time when his total chemical cost per load was about a dollar. It was completely nonsensical to me to need to raise the total cost for chemicals 45% in order to accomplish what the basic chemical formula was supposed to do in the first place.

Believe me, I understand the basic thought process: *For 20 bucks, I get rid of the nuisance of having to rewash shirts that have ring around the collar.* Assuming that the product works perfectly (and I suspect that it does), it isn't a \$20 expense. At 2,500

shirts per week, that is typically 25 wash loads per week at 45 cents per load. This comes to around \$600 per year. While this, admittedly, isn't a heap of cash, I believe it is a waste. One may look at it as a low price to fix a big problem, but I look at it as paying twice to do the same thing.

Use chemicals that do the job right the first time. Challenge your chemical rep to get your shirts clean. If you have to change to a more expensive product, it is unlikely your cost will go up 45% and you will cut down on rewashes. Nobody should be scrubbing collars.

Avoiding Costly Mistakes

Washing in cold water, however, will keep your chemicals from working. You can challenge your chemical rep all you want, but you have to do your part. You must have hot water to wash shirts effectively.

There are two big mistakes that you can make here. Your goal may be to save on water heating costs, but your savings go out the window if you use more chemicals than you need to or if you have numerous rewashes. The two mistakes? Trusting the temperature readings on the washer is one. For some reason, these temperature readings are notoriously inaccurate. I have seen them off by over 30°. Enzymes, for instance, work between 120° and 140°. The enzymes are killed off over 140° and do nothing below 120°. This is a delicate spread. Use a laser trap tester to read the temperature through the glass on the washer. (They are better at that than they are at testing traps, by the way.)

Secondly, you can err by setting your desired wash temperature at the water heater. Let's say that you set it at 130° in order to get at least 120° at the washer. It is unclear what your wash temperature will be. Here's why: If the water travels through pipe for a distance, what is the temperature drop through that distance? The distance can easily be 100' of, perhaps, uninsulated pipe. How much has the temperature dropped? And, what is the recovery time on the water heater?

Assuming that the temperature drop to the washer is not significant, how much does the water temperature drop when hot water is spewed onto cold shirts in a cold stainless steel drum? Is your water still above 120°, or whatever the detergent's manufacturer's suggested minimum water temperature is? Get this fixed before challenging your chemical rep to get your shirts clean.

Factors You Can Control

In order to get shirts clean, you need four things: time, temperature, chemical action and mechanical action.

The chemical rep can be held accountable for time (the formulas that he/she has programmed), as well as the chemical action, but the water temperature is your responsibility. And, mechanical action is within your realm, too. Washing shirts loose will not yield good mechanical action. Neither will overloading the washer.

When I walk into a plant, I can tell by looking at the finished shirts if the shirts are being washed loose. It is that noticeable to the trained eye. I guess

that shirts are washed loosely to save the expense of nets or rope ties and the labor to use them. If you use more chemical to compensate for a deficiency in mechanical action, you are being penny wise and dollar foolish.

If you are getting clean shirts with your chemical formula and are washing loosely, you may want to disagree, but hold on. There is a real possibility that you are using more chemical than you need.

If you begin using rope ties, the investment will soon be recouped by reducing your chemical usage. The capital investment in rope ties is finite; the chemical cost goes on forever. And, as for overloading the washer, no matter how you wash shirts or what chemicals you use, you are defeating their function when you overload the washer. This cannot be over-emphasized.

Overloading robs you of the needed mechanical action, lowers the water temperature and cuts down on the amount of water in the tub because the shirts displace the space intended for water.

And, then there is pressing with 80 pounds of steam. This is done by some to avoid raising the boiler pressure and installing a regulator for the drycleaning equipment.

Although this may seem to be a sensible work-around, it is a very expensive one. Pressing shirts with 80 pounds of steam yields one of two things, both which cost you more in the long run than running your boiler at a higher pressure.

First, assuming that you have a high priority on making sure

the shirts are completely dry (and you should), production will be poor. This is a tough problem to fix once you have accepted it for an extended period of time. Your pressers become very good at pressing slowly. Once you've fixed the steam pressure issue, it is a challenge to get them to press at a faster rate. This faster rate will yield shirts that are just as dry as when you were pressing with 80 pounds of steam, but getting your pressers to work at a faster rate so that they can work less hours and take home less money can be quite the management challenge.

Avoid this problem by making sure you press with the manufacturer's suggested minimum steam pressure. It will save you buckets of money. Alternately, you can have good production but, instead, you have shirts coming off the presses not completely dry. This is suicide. The shirts will look OK (maybe) when they come off the press because the fabric that actually touched the steam chests will be completely dry, but soon those dry fibers will act as a wick and suck the moisture to the surface part of the fabric. This results in a very poor quality press that you may not see, but your customers will. And, speaking of customers, nothing feels grosser to a customer than to put on a shirt that has wetness left in the collar. It will only happen if the shirt is selected to wear shortly after coming out of your shop, but that did happen to me once. It didn't feel very nice.

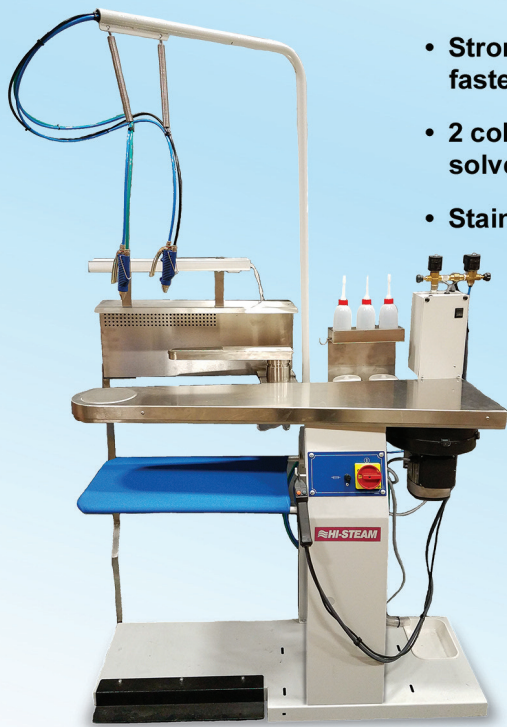
Sewing buttons by hand is something small laundries seem to do. I admit that stocking the usual variety of buttons and buying a \$2,000 button sewing machine is not a fun thing to do, but sewing buttons by hand takes ten times longer. Labor is expensive and goes on forever. A good quality sewing machine is a one-time purchase. Always remember to look at the big picture before making any business decision.

"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 40 Winchester Ln, Suite #5, Fall River, MA 02721, by cell (508) 965-3163, or email at tailwind.don@me.com. The Tailwind web site is www.tailwind-systems.com.

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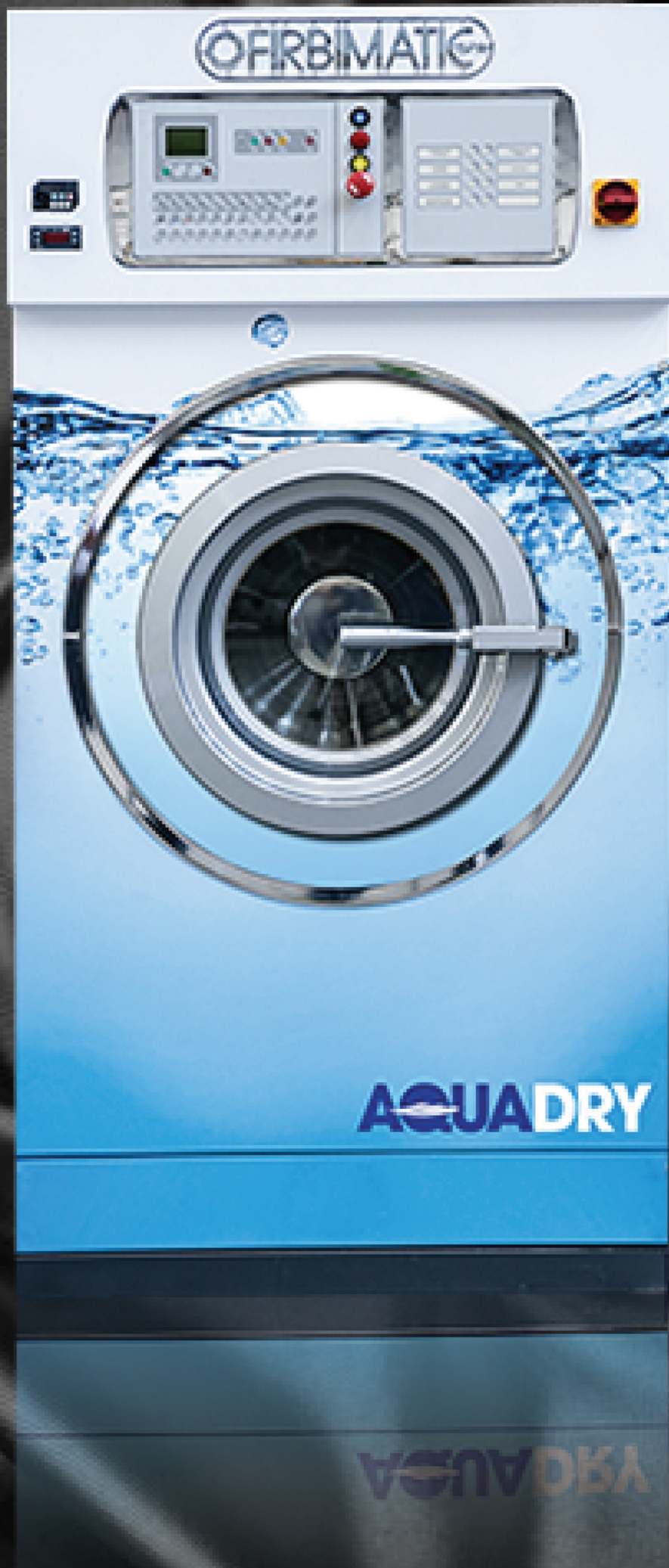
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BY DAN EISEN

Proper chemistry for wetcleaning

I travel around to different plants and find that most of them are not using the best wetcleaning chemicals for obtaining optimum results. The cleaners usually say that their wetcleaning procedures are OK, but in reality they are not as good as they could be.

If your silks, wools and rayons are not coming out as soft as in drycleaning, then you are not using your wetcleaning chemicals to their full potential. Some cleaners operate their wetcleaning programs using the same formulations for cottons, silks, wools, polyesters and rayons. This does not give you the best feel possible or protection against shrinkage. A cotton or linen requires a little body and feel while silks and wools require softness, sheen and luster. The point of this article is to impress upon you that the wetcleaning programs you use can work better. The most sophisticated wetcleaning equipment can be of no benefit to you if the proper chemistry is not used.

White Cotton Fabric Test

I have done extensive tests for many years on detergents that are used for wetcleaning. I've worked with most major

chemical companies and have used their products effectively.

1. Cationic. Chemically, these detergents have a positive ionic charge that does the cleaning. These detergents have both good and bad properties. On shrinkage protection they are probably the best detergents to use. They tend to coat the fiber such as wool making the scale slippery and thus preventing the wool scale from tangling and matting.

These detergents tend to stay with the fabric even after rinsing. This detergent is so good that I always have used it for wetcleaning angora sweaters rather than drycleaning. They will also add to the hand, feel and luster on silks and rayons. They are formulated either neutral or slightly acid to prevent dye bleeding.

The negative side to using this detergent is that they are not powerful cleaning agents which is OK since its main use is for silks, wools and rayons. It should not be used for glued-on trimmings since it tends to soften the adhesive. In pre-spotting, avoid using anionic detergents which are anionic in nature and will break down and form rings when in contact with

the cationic nature of the detergent.

2. Anionic. These are better cleaning agents than cationic detergents. They have a negative ionic charge and are not compatible with cationic cleaning detergents. Manufacturers have attempted to use this cleaning detergent as a universal one for cleaning all fabrics including silk, wool, rayon and cotton. They have been formulated slightly acid which stabilizes the dye on all fabrics.

They incorporate softening agents which aid in its cleaning and feel for silks and wool. I have no objection to the use of this detergent but I feel that the use of cationic detergents tend to do a better job in softening wool and silk and preventing shrinkage on wool.

3. Nonionic. These detergents are incorporated with other detergents because they have a neutral ionic charge. They are also effective pre-spotting agents for removal of grease and oil. The purpose of nonionic detergents is to aid in grease and oil removal but is not effective for soil. It can be programmed to inject into the wetcleaning machine when needed for denims, cottons and other

fabrics impregnated with oils and greases. If the garments do not have oil and grease staining, it does not have to be used.

4. Sizing agents. This is an additional product added to the wetcleaning program to give fabrics feel, body and hand. These agents are not starch, which only gives stiffness. A fabric properly starched has feel and body which makes it easier to press and feels better to the customer. This additive should only be used for cottons, linens and some rayons but not for silk and wool.

5. Softening agents. These are used to add to the softness and feel of wools, silks and some rayons. They not only enhance the feel but give the fabric more sheen and luster. When used for wools and silks, the fabrics will come out as soft as if it has been drycleaned. The chemical make-up of softening agents may be cationic or nonionic in nature. If you are using anionic cleaning agents, do not use cationic softening agents. If you are using nonionic softening agents, it can be added to any detergent. The softening agents are usually added in the rinse cycle of the wetcleaning program.

6. Fabric finish. Some manufacturers produce a finishing agent that gives a fabric additional luster and sheen. This, too, is used in the rinse cycle.

Detergent Additives

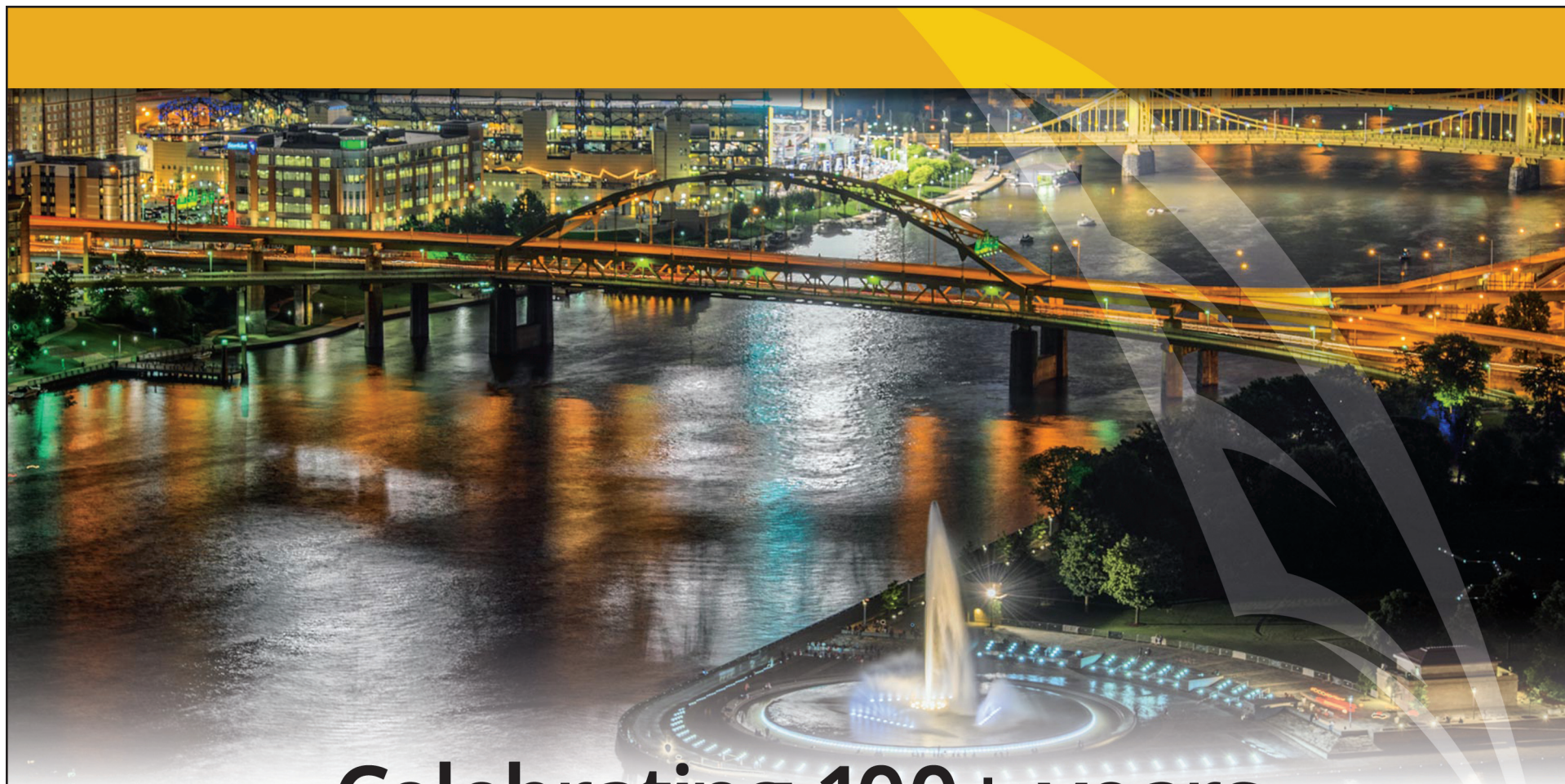
1. Enzymes. They remove stains and some food grease and oil. They are compatible with most detergents, even those that are slightly acid or alkaline based. They are effective in temperatures up to 140°F.

2. Oxygen bleach. They are either sodium perborate or sodium percarbonate. They remove oxidized stains and enhance a fabric's whiteness. In low water temperatures, they are usually safe to the colors of cottons, linens and synthetics.

3. Acids. These are used to stabilize dyes and add to softness of fabric.

4. Alkalis. These are used to enhance the cleaning action of any detergent.

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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WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

Hot weather cooling problems

With summer upon us your drycleaning machine’s cooling system will be under greater stress. It doesn’t matter if you are using a water tower, chiller, or city water for cooling. Conditions that weren’t an issue during the cooler months may become problems as the surrounding (ambient) temperature rises. Most of these hot weather problems will appear during the drying segment of the drycleaning cycle and are caused by faulty cooling.

Drying, when used in drycleaning, is all about moving heat energy from one location to another. The media moving this heat is called a “refrigerant,” a fluid that absorbs heat when changing state from a liquid to a gas (evaporating) and releases heat when changing its state from a gas to a liquid (condensing).

This cycle of evaporation and condensation is referred to as the “refrigeration cycle” and takes place within coils found in different locations within the drycleaning machine. In drycleaning machinery, the refrigerant used is almost always a Freon of some sort. Liquid refrigerant, upon entering a coil referred to as an “evaporator” rapidly changes state into a gas thereby absorbing heat and cooling the air passing through the coil. The hot, compressed refrigerant gas is forced under pressure by the “refrigeration compressor” into another type

of coil called a refrigeration “condenser” where it is cooled by a liquid called a “coolant,” usually water. This cooling, as well as the high pressure placed upon the system by the refrigeration compressor, causes the refrigerant to turn back into a liquid for reuse; the cycle repeats itself throughout the drying process.

Problems with the cooling system are most likely to appear towards the end of the dry cycle when the drycleaning machine goes into cool down mode. During the drying mode, the heat exchanger coil is transferring much of the heat from the refrigerant back into the air stream and only a small portion of the heat load is being dumped into the refrigeration condenser. Near the end of the dry cycle, during the cool down mode, solenoids and/or dampers dump almost the entire heat load into the refrigeration condenser.

The extra heat load overloads the capacity of the refrigeration condenser to properly cool and condense the refrigerant. This type of problem is indicated by the refrigeration compressor entering a high-pressure condition which trips the refrigeration high pressure safety switch. On most machines, this causes an error message on the programmer screen and requires a manual reset of the refrigeration high-pressure safety switch.

This condition is almost al-

ways caused by either a clogged inlet Y strainer or excessive scaling inside the refrigeration condenser. On most drycleaning refrigeration systems, there is a pressure-sensing coolant flow valve called a “modulating” valve controlling the refrigeration compressor’s outlet pressure by varying the flow of coolant through the refrigeration condenser. This valve is adjusted

sump for recirculation through the drycleaning machines refrigeration condenser.

3. Chiller. Water or a mixture of water and glycol (this mixture is called a brine) is circulated by a pump through the drycleaning machine’s refrigeration condenser, cooled by a separate refrigeration system, recirculated through the drycleaning machines refrigeration condenser.

Problems with the cooling system are most likely to appear towards the end of the dry cycle.

to give proper refrigeration head pressure for efficient refrigeration system operation.

When scale builds up in the refrigeration system past the point where the *normal* adjustment of the head pressure adjusting valve can no longer compensate for the flow of coolant through the refrigeration condenser, many drycleaners simply adjust the valve wider in the very mistaken belief they have fixed something. What they have actually done is “kicked the can down the road” until the refrigeration high pressure safety switch trips continuously and in the process will pay lots of extra money in solvent and energy costs as well as possibly damaging the refrigeration compressor for the privilege. Maintaining the proper heat transfer between the hot, high-pressure refrigerant gas and the flow of coolant through the condenser is usually where the problems occur during hot weather operations.

Three Methods of Supplying Coolant to the Refrigerated Condenser

1. City Water. Water from the city main is forced through the drycleaning machine’s refrigeration condenser propelled by existing city water pressure. The exiting water is then sent down the drain.

2. Water Tower. Water is circulated by a pump through the drycleaning machine’s refrigeration condenser, over an evaporative cooling media (looks like corrugated plastic cubes) which has air forced through it to aid in evaporation, then into a sump where the suction inlet of the pump is connected. The evaporation of the water from the surface of the media cools the remaining water which drops into the

No matter what method is used for cooling and circulating the coolant through the refrigeration condenser, the efficiency of the process is dependent on two factors:

A. Coolant Flow. Volume of coolant moving through the condenser.

B. Heat Exchange Efficiency. The ability of the condenser coil to exchange heat from the hot refrigerant to the coolant. Each of these factors can be easily monitored using pressure and temperature as indicators of what is going on in the coolant system. A pressure gauge and thermometer at the inlet and outlet of the coolant system located near the drycleaning machine are vital for monitoring the cooling system performance.

Let’s take a look at what the pressure gauge can tell us about the condition of the coolant system. The pump must supply enough pressure as well as flow in sufficient quantity to push coolant through the components that require cooling on the drycleaning machine (on most machines this would include not only the refrigeration condenser but also the still condenser and solvent cooler) and in the case of water towers and chillers, sufficient pressure to lift the water back to the tower or chiller sump which is often located on the roof.

Unfortunately, there is no hard-fast rule for what the pressure readings should be. The best method for obtaining the “numbers” is to note for future reference the inlet and outlet pressure and temperature readings when the drycleaning machine is working properly. The following are some possible scenarios for a different combination of qualitative data:

1. Inlet pressure high/outlet pressure low:

A. Check for blockage inlet flow path — A clogged Y strainer between the pump and the drycleaning machine.

B. Heavy scale accumulation — A build-up of scale inside the piping and or condenser of the drycleaning machine.

2. Inlet and outlet pressure rapidly changing:

A. Low coolant level in the pumping system.

3. Low inlet/high outlet pressure:

A. Open bypass valve on pumping system.

4. Low inlet/low outlet pressure:

A. Pump off.

B. Clogged inlet strainer.

5. High inlet temperature/high outlet temperature:

A. Water tower fan not working/chiller refrigeration system faulty.

B. Pump off.

6. Slightly higher than normal inlet temperature/high outlet temperature:

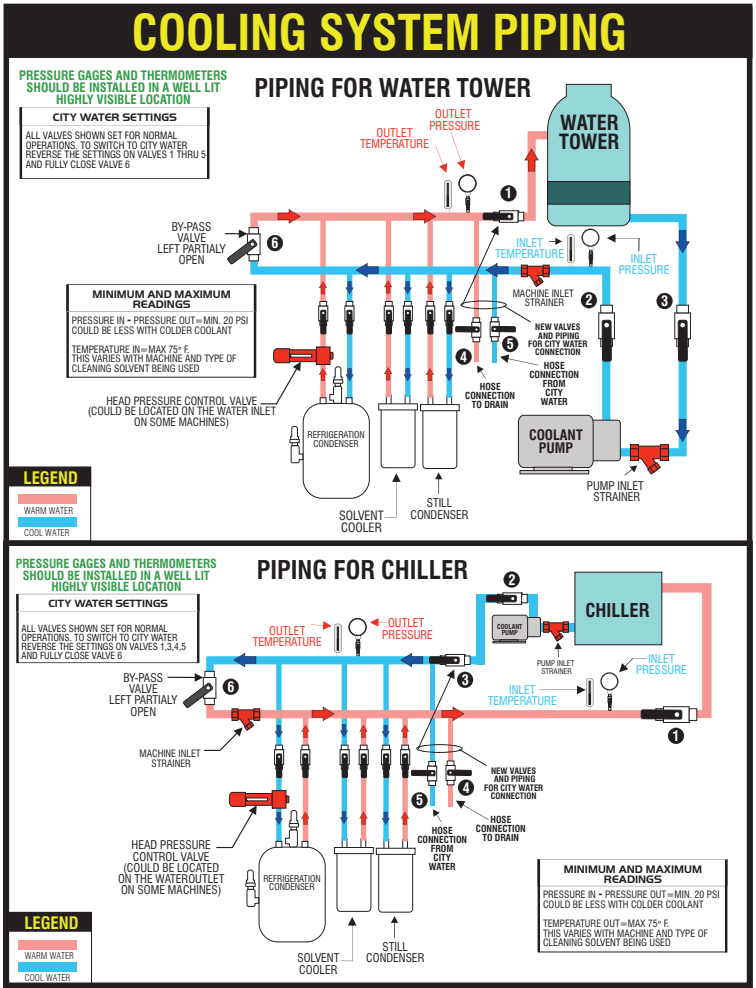
A. Heavy scale accumulation — A build-up of scale inside the piping and or condenser of the drycleaning machine.

B. Excessive heat source—still boil over or steam sweep valve open; steam supply valve to steam boost coil or carbon adsorber stuck open.

The accompanying illustration shows a schematic for a typical cooling water installation for use with a water tower or chiller WITH THE ADDITION OF VALVES 1, 4, 5 which are used when city water hook-up is included in the installation.

This city water hook-up provides an emergency back-up for continuing operations when there is a failure in the normal cooling system (it will not help if excessive internal scaling is the cause of the problem).

Bruce Grossman is the chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing, the manufacturer of the Tattler steam trap tester; Drop In The Bucket and Sahara line of high purity separator water mister/evaporators and the new EZ Level line of return tank level and temperature controllers. See our ad in this issue and for further information on the EZtimers product line or visit www.eztimers.com. Address any questions or comments to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.





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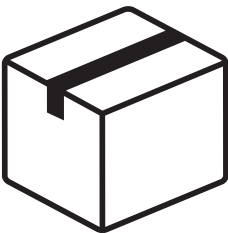
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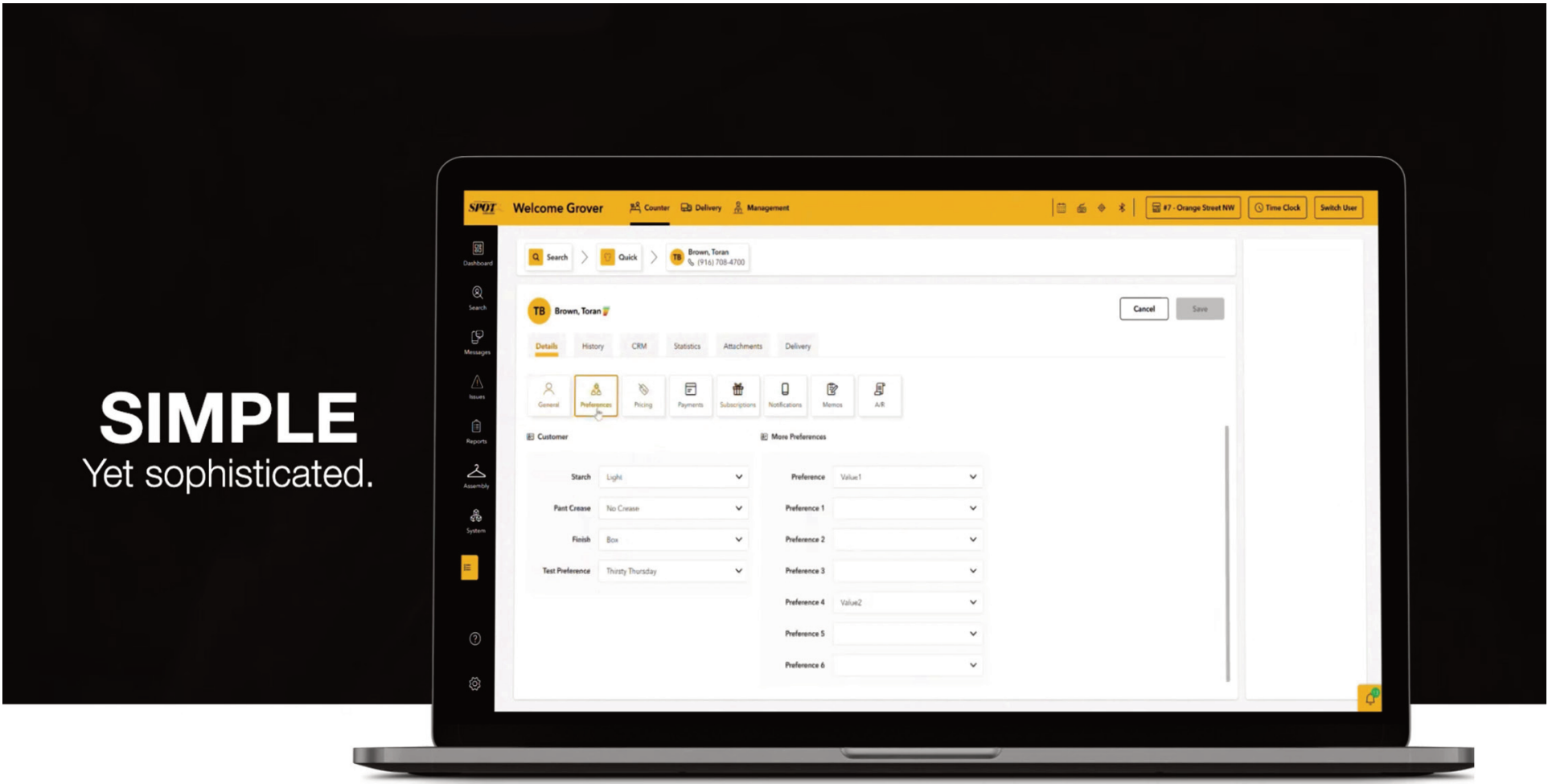


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