



National

# Clothesline



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## Cleaners commiserate, recalibrate in LV

After nearly a two-year hiatus, the drycleaning industry gathered together in person last month at the California Cleaners Association's (CCA) Fabricare 2021 conference in Las Vegas.

It was a time for the industry to celebrate surviving the hostile business climate of late, and it was a time for much laughter — and more than a few tears — as the industry publicly said sad farewells to industry greats who have passed on recently: Allan Johnson III of Peerless Cleaners; Carolyn Varian of Memory Lane; and the Cowboy Cleaner himself — Kenney Slatten.

Most of all, it was a time for industry leaders to advise others how to proceed down a profitable path through the murky roads lying ahead.

Kevin Dubois, co-founder of Lapels Dry Cleaning and president of Clean Franchise Brands (which includes more than 500 stores), strongly emphasized that cleaners must track their financials closely using Quickbooks and other software to build budgets.

"The other thing is PPOH (pieces per operator hour)," he noted. "My guess is, if you look at the top 50 drycleaners in the country, I would say 48 of them probably run PPOH and track it *every week*."

"What I think happens a lot of times in entrepreneurial lives is you start with the idea of starting a business as a very strategic thinker, and then you open the doors and

gravity pulls you into the details of the operation."

Gravity seems to be pulling extra hard during the pandemic. Cleaners such as Christa Hagearty, owner of

Dependable Cleaners in MA, faced a sluggish recovery after seeing 90% of volume disappear in March of 2020. She noted during her session that Dependable relied heav-

ily on its strong employee culture — something she has consciously tried to improve for the past 25 years. The first step she took was to listen.

"From the interviews with

the employees, I figured out the cause of most of the employee conflicts because people were unflinchingly open with me," she recalled. "From early on, I said we need to teach people how to work with one another — that's part of our job because they're not learning it in schools. They're not learning it outside. We need to teach them."

Those lessons paid dividends as the employees helped guide the company successfully during tough times without any layoffs.

Jennifer Whitmarsh of the Route Pros stressed the need for cleaners to properly train employees in order to create consistency. However, too much micromanaging can cause more harm than good.

"Letting them know that they can make mistakes is important," she said.

Also important is letting customers know that you can fix their problems and solve problems. "We are in the customer service industry," she said. "We just happen to clean clothes."

One problem that Dave Coyle of Maverick Marketing has noticed is that cleaners often price the service of cleaning clothes (and other items) too low.

"The majority is always wrong... 80% of people have it wrong," he said. "If you typically set your prices, you'll do marketing based on what the competition is doing. Do not follow your

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### What happened in Vegas?



Attendees of Fabricare 2021, hosted by the California Cleaners Association (CCA) last month, shared an emotional and educational weekend that was the first drycleaning show in the country since late 2019. Many enlightening programs were presented, including one from Kevin Dubois (top photo), who encouraged cleaners to embrace entrepreneurship, and a live session of America Best Cleaners' Leadership Forum (bottom right photo) with panelists (left to right): DLI President Bobby Patel, SPOT Systems CEO Tom Beidle, Monika Manter of Balfurd, Inc., Dan Miller of Mulberry Garment Care and Chris White, ABC executive director. Time was set aside for the CCA board to honor Jim Douglas (sitting in bottom left photo). They gave the owner of Prestige Cleaners a Lifetime Achievement Award. For more on Douglas, read the profile on page 6.

## FallFest '21 seeks to build tomorrow's profits today

Next month, drycleaners can experience various live workshops, demonstrations and presentations without having to leave home or work.

FallFest EXPO 2021, hosted by the North East Fabricare Association, the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association and the South Eastern

Fabricare Association, will run from 2 to 5 p.m. EST, Dec. 1 to 3. Each day will cover a different aspect of your business.

The opening day will feature the theme "Where are we now and what do we know about tomorrow?"

Chris Kuehl of Armada Business Intelligence, will return to FallFest with a pro-

gram on "Looking at the Economic Landscape of Today and Forecasting Tomorrow."

Also that day, there will be a panel discussion of the industry's response to once-in-a-generation challenges.

Panelists will include Brian Fish of Pier Cleaners who will discuss KPIs; James Peuster of the Route Pros will look at how industry leaders have adapted; Mike Ross of AristoCraft/Minda Supply

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Companies that "rent themselves" instead of charging for results are not maximizing their growth potential.

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You can set up an incentive program that will reward employee attendance and punish absenteeism.

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Here is a good set of rules to follow if you wish to avoid running afoul of employment regulations.



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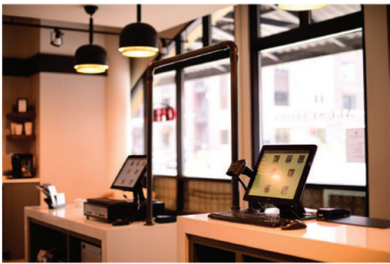
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November, 2021  
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# Fabricare '21 gamble generates a jackpot of ideas

While those who gathered last month at Fabricare 2021 may not have all agreed on the best strategic approaches for drycleaners facing an ambiguous future, it was abundantly clear by the impressive turnout that the industry has managed to unite closer together despite enduring almost a two-year public event hiatus.

It's almost hard to imagine now that the event was considered a huge gamble on the part of the California Cleaners Association when they announced plans several months ago, but even a wildcard factor like COVID-19 could not keep cleaners from coming to Las Vegas to convene. The event was packed with excited and energized attendees who reveled in camaraderie, to be sure, but they were also eager to discover new ways to strengthen their businesses in order to withstand whatever new challenges await tomorrow.

While it was hard to find a cleaner who wasn't congenial during the show, it was perhaps even harder to find a dry eye in the large Congo Room Hall at the Sahara Las Vegas Hotel when CCA took time out to honor the industry's past by paying tribute to leaders who passed away recently — Allan Johnson III, Carolyn Varian and Kenney Slatten — as well as a man who continues to set a leading example for the industry today: Jim Douglas of Prestige Cleaners in Sacramento, CA. His Lifetime Achievement Award was well earned and we encourage you to read more about his remarkable life on page 6.

People outside this industry might find it strange that it is such a giving one, but at the core of it all, it takes great care to clean and restore clothes that people care so much about. As DLI Executive Director Mary Scalco aptly summed it up during her presentation in Las Vegas. "We give as an industry, and we give to each other." She strongly believes the "big heart of the industry" will keep it going forward, as will cleaners' propensity to generously share ideas.

Fortunately, that generosity was on full display as those who attended had access to enough information to fill a few notebooks. While business owners may still be contending with a labor shortage, they are certainly not dealing with a scarcity of ideas or entrepreneurial passion.

One such entrepreneur — Kevin Dubois of Clean Franchising Brands — recalled one of the low points of the past 18 months during his program. He even asked himself: Was this the end of the drycleaning industry? "Thank goodness when I asked myself that question I didn't listen to my family and friends and people around me because they told me that this was it — especially those guys in finance," he said.

Luckily, the demise of drycleaning was greatly exaggerated, but one big question on everybody's minds at Fabricare 2021 was: Will drycleaning come all the

way back? Answers included: Yes! No! Maybe? Throughout the weekend, several industry experts offered compelling reasons for why they believe drycleaning will return to its former retail glory while other seasoned voices countered with reasons it won't. Perhaps the one thing everybody in attendance could agree on for sure, though, is that whatever drycleaning volume scenario plays out in the future, the industry is primed and ready to continue adapting to meet consumer needs, and there will be opportunities for those who stay open.

Those companies will also need to create or cultivate a strong employee culture if they don't want to be perennially plagued with retention issues. As Christa Hagearty of Dependable Cleaners pointed out during her time at the podium, employee engagement is not really a destination, but a journey that evolves over time. To date, she has spent more than a quarter of a century at Dependable trying to decrease employee conflicts, increase positive employee communication, improve training programs, negotiate better health insurance rates, and so on — all in the pursuit of creating healthier and happier employees (which also happens to lead to more productive and loyal ones).

Drycleaners looking to jumpstart a company culture overnight might be disappointed to hear that, but any company can start with the simple things. DLI President Bobby Patel stressed showing appreciation to your employees — not just with money, but with respect. "It's very hard work and you've got to value it," he said during America's Best Cleaners' Leadership Forum at Fabricare 2021. "Also, you cannot micromanage them. That doesn't work. Let them be free — like Tom [Beidle] said — let them make mistakes."

Perhaps the best way to keep employees happy is to help them meet personal goals. During the ABC panel, Monika Manter of Balfurd, Inc. noted that she realized many team members had dysfunctional personal lives that bled over into their professional ones and it negatively affected the business. With the use of a dream manager, the company now assists employees in improving their personal lives and achieving life goals. Ironically, such efforts can eventually result in losing a few good employees, but there is a bright side even then: they might end up being customers. "We just want them to better themselves," Manter said. "It's been a really powerful program for our company."

On that note, Fabricare 2021, was a really powerful program for the industry, but it will hardly be the last. FallFest EXPO 2021 is just around the corner, taking place virtually from Dec. 1 to 3 this year. We're looking forward to hearing the next batch of ideas from inventive minds.

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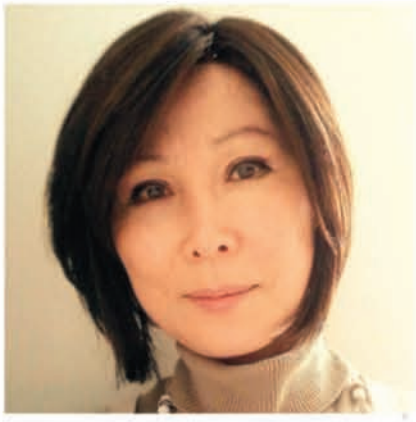


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# A tale of two cleaners

The early years of Jim Douglas's life almost sound like they're straight out of a classic Charles Dickens' novel. He grew up in a prison in New Mexico, literally, because his father was the assistant warden.

"Because I never knew any different, the prisoners were good friends," he recalled. "I'm sure that my dad didn't let me associate with anyone who wasn't."

Way out in the desert and fairly isolated in farm country, the school Jim attended was a bit on the small side. "I would do well and when I graduated from first grade, I would move from one row to another row over and I was then in second grade," he laughed.

Unfortunately, Jim's life became much less stable when a tragic car accident during a family vacation trip left him an orphan at the age of eight. He spent his formative years living with various uncles and aunts, including Tim and Jo Patterson in Memphis, TN. Jo was an educator who launched the Cooperative Leadership for Urban Education (CLUE) program, one of the country's first for gifted students.

He also spent time in Arizona with Byron and Esther Lewis, who owned Gila Bend Laundry and Linen and provided Jim with an introduction to the business of cleaning clothes.

"He [Byron] owned a pretty good sized laundry, linen and drycleaning business. He was the kind of man who — if you're living in his house — you've got to earn your way."

His unusual upbringing has had a profound effect on Jim, who picked up a hard work ethic and the ability to adapt to just about anything.

"When you're alone in life — and I truly was — you find out that you're responsible for yourself," he explained. "You want to learn all you can."

After high school, Jim attended Washburn University in Topeka, KS. However, his plans changed when a tornado touched down in the capital city, destroying large portions of it including the Washburn campus. Left with little choice, Jim moved back to Arizona where he resumed his studies at Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff.

After he graduated, he had a job lined up at Honeywell in Tempe, but first he took a detour to California to visit his uncle Salwin Swanson, owner of Swanson's Cleaners of Sacramento, CA. Salwin was an industry visionary who, upon first seeing LAX's brand new luggage carousels, adapted a similar system that could sort clothes for his cleaning business.

In 1970, Jim started at Swanson's as a driver. He worked his way up to manage the division. In time, his role expanded to managing the company's central plant that, at one time, was over 100,000 sq. ft. and was fed by over 115 stores. Jim continued to fine tune the logistics of the production process until the large company could offer same day service at many locations, some as far as 40 miles away.

"You didn't have any room for error," Jim said. "We were doing a million dollars in service work. We would

maybe be missing one piece over an entire week."

After almost three decades, it was time for something different. By that time, Jim had met his wife, Jane, through the industry (she had her own plant not far out of Sacramento) and Jim was no longer truly alone. In

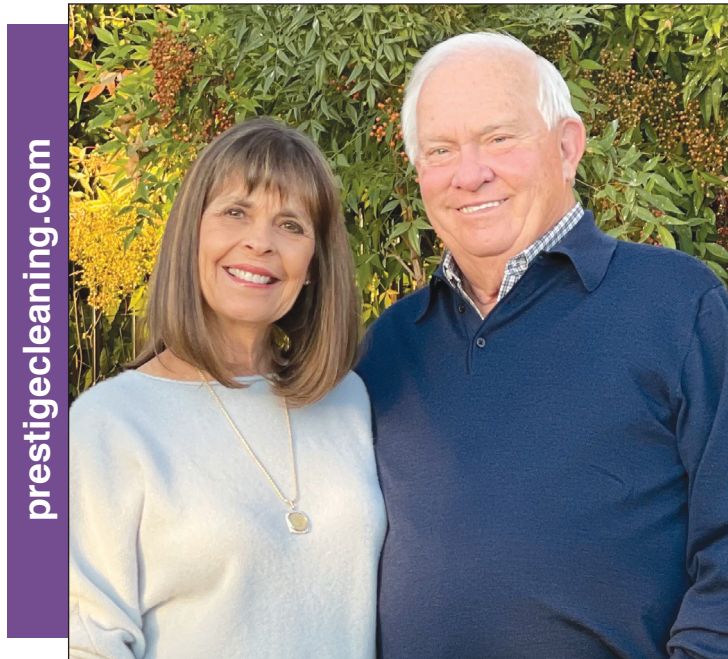
utes, but each one also had negativity."

When silicone came along, however, Jim believed it would ultimately make a difference. He was confident enough in its potential to join Barry and Benjamin in the business venture.

"I'll tell you... the three of us — each person brought something else to the table. That has been the success of

down during such harsh economic circumstances.

"During Covid, we were able to bring just about two-thirds of the people back — and many collected unemployment and worked part-time — so we were very fortunate to retain our staff members," she said. "They really are like family to us."



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## Jim & Jane Douglas

Prestige Cleaners  
Sacramento, CA

1998, Jim and Jane parted ways with Swanson's and started a brand new plant in Sacramento they called Prestige Cleaners. However, they turned limitations into large business.

"We had a non-compete [contract] on a retail level," Jim recalled. "We were a young business at that time but we started doing hotels and home delivery. Right now, we do almost 90 hotels a day and three large casinos."

During those early days, the couple was not afraid to expand their scope. "We were providing service for all of the northern California businesses for leather cleaning and wedding gown preservation," Jane said. "At the same time, Jim started the Prestige Preservation Program with a group of people, as well. We were juggling a lot of balls at that time, that's for sure."

Despite the difficulties, Jane noted one strength of the company that has been with it since the start.

"It always comes back to our staff. We have an amazing group of people who — when we split from Swanson's — we were able to retain. Most of the employees were extremely loyal to Jim," she said. "Probably about 75 to 80% of those people are still with us."

"It really comes down to how your staff is treated... how they see themselves in the business," Jim noted. "They are the key for the future. Develop your staff."

Back in 1998, Prestige Cleaners wasn't the only big new project on Jim's plate. That year, Jim joined Ron Benjamin and Jim Barry in forming GreenEarth Cleaning, bringing with him the kind of technical assistance that comes from years of running a huge operation.

"The great thing about Swanson's was I was able to test all of the new solvents that came along," Jim said. "Because of our size, we had the ability to do that. Each one had its own attrib-

GreenEarth. That, and the commitment to the industry," Jim said.

During that first year, the company took a slow, measured approach to expanding despite a high demand.

Jim personally traveled to 26 plants to oversee the quality and safety standards, treating each one with the same precision and care he used when he made Prestige the alpha and beta test site for GreenEarth solvent.

"When you have a partner like General Electric — or like Procter & Gamble — they put pretty big demands on you going forward," he emphasized.

Since then, GreenEarth has continued to go forward in the drycleaning industry in impressive fashion. Today, the company has over 1,250 affiliates located in over 40 countries around the world.

After being in business a little over two decades, Prestige Cleaners started off 2020 strong with about 35 employees. Then, of course, the pandemic arrived... and stayed.

According to Jane, downtown Sacramento — which is home to the city's convention center as well as many large hotels and office buildings — has only recently awakened after a long nap.

"The hotel business is starting to pick up again downtown," she said, relieved. "Our Performing Arts Center and our convention center were remodeled during this time and they're just opening up again. We just finished a four-week run of doing the costumes for *Hamilton* that was in town."

"We have always provided that type of costume cleaning for the traveling shows that come in — and for our local theaters," she continued. "Of course, all of that stopped, but those are all starting up again."

While she certainly appreciates volume going up, Jane seemed most relieved that Prestige Cleaners managed to keep its overall employee turnover

Last month, the drycleaning industry took a deep breath. For those who attended Fabricare 2021 in Las Vegas, it was a time to socialize face to face and celebrate surviving the trials and tribulations of recent times. For Jim, it was a time to be surprised.

As DLI President Bobby Patel noted during the event (with CCA board members gathered near him): "The reason we are all gathered on the stage is we want to honor a legend in our industry — somebody who all of you know who has done very well for the industry, unselfishly."

Over the years, Jim has won several industry awards, including DLI's Meritorious Green Fields Award given for providing a lasting environmental contribution, but he admitted this Lifetime Achievement Award was a surprise.

"I just simply want to say thank you to everyone in this room, and to the industry," he said upon receiving his latest honor to a standing ovation. "This is a tough industry and it's so important that you're so successful at it. My heart goes out to everyone here... and I had *no idea* you were doing this... so thank you."

A few weeks later, with time to reflect back on the industry gathering in Nevada, Jim firmly believes there are reasons for cleaners to be optimistic for the future. He was pleased to see several "younger and open-minded" association members attending the event.

"They're learning from the mistakes we made in the past. They're listening to what we have learned," he explained. "This is no longer buying a business and running it like it used to be. Now, you have to be an entrepreneur. You have to be able to understand your numbers. And, you have to be able to belong to an association — whether it's local or national, or whatever it is — but you have to be a part of something that is more than your own business."





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\*\*\*MRI Global Independent Test Report Sept. 2020



# Cleaners commiserate, recalibrate in LV

*Continued from page 1*  
competition on anything they do. Discard the 80%.”  
Instead, Coyle urged cleaners to closely track their top 15% of clients or less — sort of the 80/20 rule on



**John Rothrock** (pictured above), owner of Yale Cleaners in Tulsa, OK, delivered his session in a suit comprised of 16,587 buttons that he wears to promote his company's button insurance. “There is so much noise on social media,” he said. “It’s hard to get your message out there, so what do you do?” The flashy blue suit catches attention and gets the message noticed, but marketing is hype if you don’t live up to your promises, he added.

steroids. By leveraging them with irresistible offers, you can target those who can afford your services more frequently.

### White Hats and Widgets

Like Coyle, John Rothrock, CEO of Yale Cleaners in Tulsa, OK, spoke of the importance of narrowing focus. Yale was founded in 1944 and grew to include 22 stores over time, but the business lacked specific direction.

“You simply cannot and should not be a company that cleans everything for everyone. Every great company today knows their purpose, knows their widget [the one thing they do better than anyone else] and consistently delivers upon it,” Rothrock explained.

For Yale, there was not a defined widget. “We became a company that was willing to do anything for anyone. We were lost and going broke fast,” he added.

In the late 1970s, Rothrock’s uncle and father began transforming the company, rebranding Yale as the guys in the white cowboy hat.

Ultimately, though, the company’s widget has been offering same day service. They have done it for 32 years, though recently have crowd-sourced same-day delivery by a third party.

Not only does the delivery cost get passed on to customers, Rothrock noted, having another company offer the delivery service cuts back on overhead costs (vans, insurance, driver’s salary, etc.). For those who find it hard to believe that people will pay for drycleaning delivery (Yale offers the first delivery for free and charges \$10 for the first 10 miles after that) — the company’s new Yale Plus program has enrolled 4,000 people in its first 14 months. Only 178 have unsubscribed.

“If you’re going to be successful, your operation must offer something different, something unique,” Rothrock said. “You’ve got to deliver an honest promise and follow through and deliver on it.”

### Leaders, Past and Present

That advice was echoed by many industry leaders at the event, who likely learned it from leaders before them. During the events, CCA paused and paid homage to many such longtime industry legends.

Jim Douglas of Prestige Cleaners in Sacramento, was given a Lifetime Achievement Award for spending several decades serving the industry and sharing technical information unselfishly with others.

After his presentation ended and the tears dried, more began to flow as CCA honored Johnson, Varian and

Slatten, whose presence still loomed when DLI CEO Mary Scalco began her presentation. “It is because of people like that, and now people in this room, that the industry is going to come back like it has never come back before,” she said. “If there’s anything Covid did, it brought out the best of people... and it certainly brought out the best in this industry.”

The best businesses were able to shift production, increase prices, cut costs and overall improve. Customers also changed. They crave convenience even more.

“I think the future of the industry is unbelievably bright,” Scalco added.

### A Panel of Professionals

Another highlight of Fabricare ’21 was the first live in-person offering of the Leadership Forum by America’s Best Cleaners, which celebrated its 20th anniversary over the weekend.

Moderator Chris White was joined on stage by Dan Miller of Mulberry Garment Care, Monika Manter of Balfurd, Inc., DLI President Bobby Patel and SPOT Systems CEO Tom Beidle.

While Manter believes that drycleaning will continue to be a big part of Balfurd’s business, she has noticed that the mix of work is changing. She intends to change with it.

“For our business, what we’re trying to look at is how can we be profitable with this new mix... what we need to charge for those pieces and what pieces we want to do, and not want to do,” she said.

Beidle stressed the importance of developing a recurring revenue system and to utilize your POS system to its full capabilities.

“Data can drive such great business decisions,” he said.

For Patel, he fears many cleaners won’t raise their prices. “They should be ready. I don’t think a lot of them are,” he said. “The successful ones will raise them.”

Meanwhile, Miller emphasized that his company has positioned itself as invaluablely helpful to clients — a status that comes with a bit of influence — something he’d like to see the industry exert more of in the future.

“We [the industry] tend to think of ourselves as small fish and that the world happens to us, as though we don’t have control, as though we can’t influence the world or our customers,” he said. “I don’t believe that’s necessarily true. I think you can influence people.”

“I think we can do that with our marketing,” he added. “We can say, ‘Guess what? You might look a little better in a sports coat than in a hoodie.’”

## Getting Steamed?

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## Build tomorrow’s profits at FallFest

*Continued from page 1*  
will talk about managing supply chain disruptions; and SPOT Business Systems will examine how the industry is rebounding.

On Thursday, the theme will be “Building Your Team for Productivity, Performance and Profits.”

Highlights of the day will include “Attracting and Managing the New Generation of Workforce” by Jennifer Whitmarsh of the Route Pros and “Taking Advantage of High Yield Marketing Approaches” by Kelby Sankey of Morellis Cleaners and Peter Blake, executive director of NEFA.

There will also be time devoted for vendor breakout rooms where attendees can choose which ones to visit.

On Friday, the final day, the emphasis will be on “Forming a Culture of Success.”

One expert on the topic is Sean Abbas, a business coach from Threads, Inc., a software company he co-founded to help organizations review employees on culture. His

presentation will be called “The Best Culture Wins.”

Another program planned that day is “Understanding the



**Sean Abbas**

Opportunities the Future Holds.” The event will conclude with an EXPO recap and a closing session on using FallFest resources.

The cost to attend is only \$199 per member plant and \$249 per non-member plant until the early bird Nov. 19 deadline. After that date, the cost will go up to \$249 per member plant and \$299 per non-member plant.

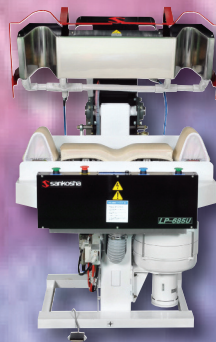
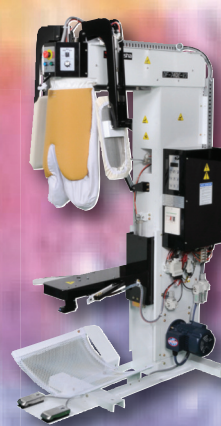
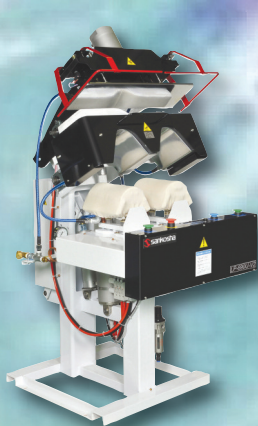
The cost includes access to the entire schedule of events, as well as access to all session recordings for three months following the event.

For more information on FallFest ’21, contact Leslie Schaeffer at (215) 830-8495 or [Leslie@pdclean.org](mailto:Leslie@pdclean.org); or Peter Blake at (617) 791-0128 or [Peter@SEFA.org](mailto:Peter@SEFA.org).





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# THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

## Takeaways from 20 years in the industry

It was Thursday, Nov. 1, when I took my first steps into Mayfair Cleaners in Kansas City.

Fast forward 20 years to over 300 plant visits, 2,000 driver ride-alongs and over a million bags picked up (plus or minus a few thousand).

I have had the privilege and honor of being in the drycleaning industry this long and I look forward to another 20 years of lessons learned and takeaways.

Every year seemed to start

out with a new challenge, and every year the industry pressed on.

So, without further ado, here are my Top 20 Takeaways for this great industry (in no particular order):

**1. It's harder than running a restaurant.** Hiring is way easier for any restaurant compared to ours.

**2. Your best customers complain less.** They know the expectations and usually show their appreciation.

**3. Your worst customers think they are your best customers.** I can remember Kermit Engh and I discussing this at great length.

**4. Convenience has always been king.** It has evolved from multiple stores to pickup and delivery.

**5. You can never stop learning "one more thing."**

**6. The evolution of the Point of Sales** has been the biggest influence in the past 20 years.

**If someone developed a lipstick or pen sensor, they would make a fortune in the industry.**

**7. Those without middle managers rarely grow.** The business can only get as big as the owner can handle.

**8. Those without a strategic sales and marketing plan never grow profitably.**

**9. Most people who buy into the industry fail** if they don't get involved with other groups and /or learn off of others outside their organization.

**10. The Clean Show wows me every single time.**

**11. We need for the Clean Show 2022 to happen.**

**12. Raising prices raises many owners' blood pressures,** but customers never really say a word.

**13. Al Robson taught so many** how to run it like a business, and they still do 17 years later.

**14. If someone developed a lipstick or ink pen sensor,** they would make a fortune in the industry.

**15. No one loves this industry more than Mark Albrecht.**

**16. Greg Myers from Southside Cleaners in Lakeland, FL,** did more for the industry than he gets credit for.

**17. It's a tough industry with great owners** who know how to pivot when the going gets rough.

**18. It's a great industry with a lot of great people.** Last year was proof positive that the industry bonded together.

**19. The industry truly mourns** when they lose one of their own.

**20. Sid Tuchman was one of the most important** and influential people the industry has ever had.

I am sure I could come up with 200 more takeaways as I reflect on conversations with Ed Delicio to Chris White and my short interaction with Rex Carrigan.

The one constant that holds true in our industry is the desire by many to get better in operations as well as customer service.

As long as that is instilled into the culture of your company, you will thrive in the next 20 years.

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](http://www.theroutepro.com).



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# WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

## Stop wasting steam — and money

**Y**our boiler's humble blowdown valves may be costing you big money. When these valves leak, superheated boiler water you've already burned a lot of expensive fuel to generate, is flashing off as steam and venting to the atmosphere.

About the only time anyone pays attention to these rugged valves is when they either can't be opened or won't shut properly. It's a mistake to think if they just open or close, all is well. This is a very costly misconception.

The very nature of what these valves are exposed to during their operation — debris, grit, and sandy detritus come shooting across the valve disk and seat at velocities exceeding 60 mph — is roughly equivalent to being sand-blasted.

It's not surprising then, after years of use, they lose their ability to seal properly and slowly begin to leak.

### Finding Faulty Blowdown Valves

Fortunately, it's a simple process to determine the condition of these valves by performing simple temperature measurements with that ever-handy laser thermometer.

The following test procedure will provide a fairly accurate predictor of valve condition: Place a large black iron pipe fitting like a one-inch tee on the floor of the boiler room that stays dry and isn't near direct heating from the boiler's burners — preferably near the blowdown valves.

We are going to use this fitting to measure the ambient temperature of the boiler room and compare it to the temperature measured near the outlet of the blowdown valve.

First, measure the temperature of the area about two feet downstream of the blowdown valve under test. Next, measure the temperature of the one-

inch tee on the floor of the boiler room. There should be less than a 30°F difference in temperature between the two points. If there is more, it's likely an indication the blowdown valve is leaking.

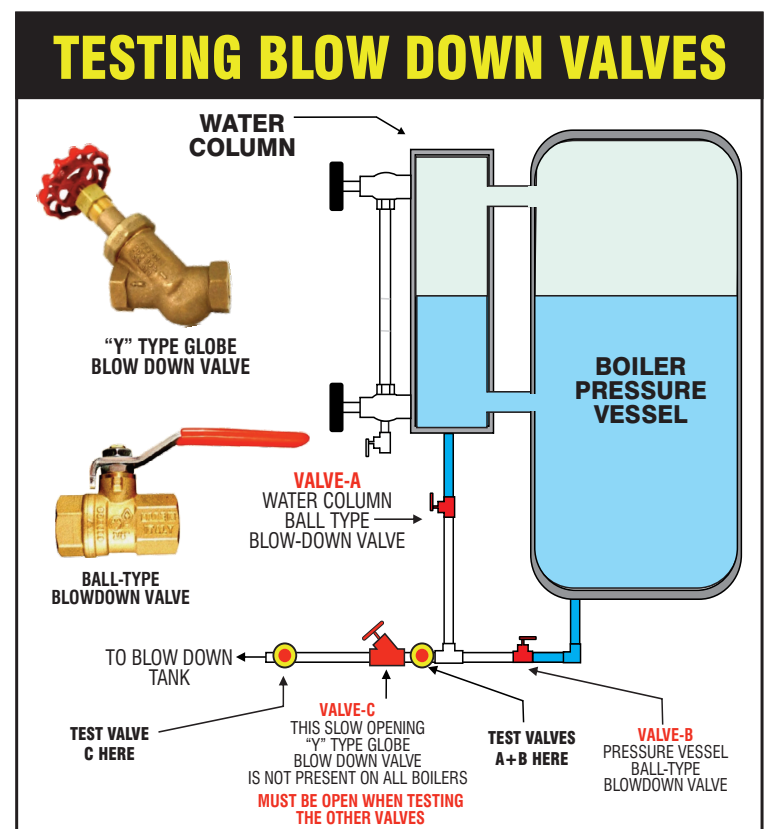
### What to do About a Leaky Blowdown Valve

Some of the "Y" type globe blowdown valves have replaceable disks and seats. My experience has been that while it's relatively easy to replace the disks, replacing the seats in this type of valve is far more challenging.

Limited damage to the seat may sometimes be overcome by using a new Teflon disk. This is worth trying since replacing this type of valve is often an expensive job.

If the blowdown valve is a ball type, to my knowledge, it is unrepairable.

So, pray the pipefitter who installed the boiler located a union or two enabling an easy valve



replacement.

Peruse the paragraphs below for the proper technique in using the laser thermometer.

### Using the Laser Thermometer

The following paragraphs explain the best techniques to obtain accurate results.

1. The surface of the target **should NOT** be a highly reflective color like silver or white or have a highly polished finish like chrome or stainless.

If it does, take a black Sharpie marker and blacken an area about the size of a quarter. Use this blackened area as the target spot on the surface to be tested.

2. The laser pointer is normally used to select the target area and illuminate the center of the sensed area. Since the sensor itself measures all of the infrared energy entering the lens, it becomes progressively more accurate the closer you place the sensor to the target area.

When using the laser thermometer to run these tests, be sure to position the lens of the thermometer slightly above the surface of the area being measured.

Don't just aim it and use the laser pointer to take the temperature.

### A Note on Boiler Valves

Valves used on boilers

should be rated at the next higher level of the maximum-rated boiler operating pressure.

For example, if the rated operating pressure (usually found on the nameplate attached to the boiler) is 150 PSI, then the valve would be steam-rated for at least 200 PSI. This rating usually appears on the body of the valve after the SWP abbreviation for "steam working pressure" (you won't find these valves at Home Depot or Lowe's).

**IMPORTANT:** The numbers following the abbreviation WOG stand for the pressure-rated for use with water-oil-gas and is **NOT** the rating for steam service.

Bruce Grossman is the chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing, the manufacturer of the new EZ DOSE boiler compound manager and return tank level control which replaces that troublesome ball float in the condensate return tank and automatically adds the correct amount of boiler compound to the return tank preventing oxygen corrosion and scaling. Our SAHARA and DIB-M high purity separator water mister/evaporators provide a thrifty, legal method to get rid of the separator water generated by your drycleaning machine. See our ad in this issue and for further information on the EZtimers products or visit [www.eztimers.com](http://www.eztimers.com). Address any questions or comments to [bruce@eztimers.com](mailto:bruce@eztimers.com) or call (702) 376-6693.

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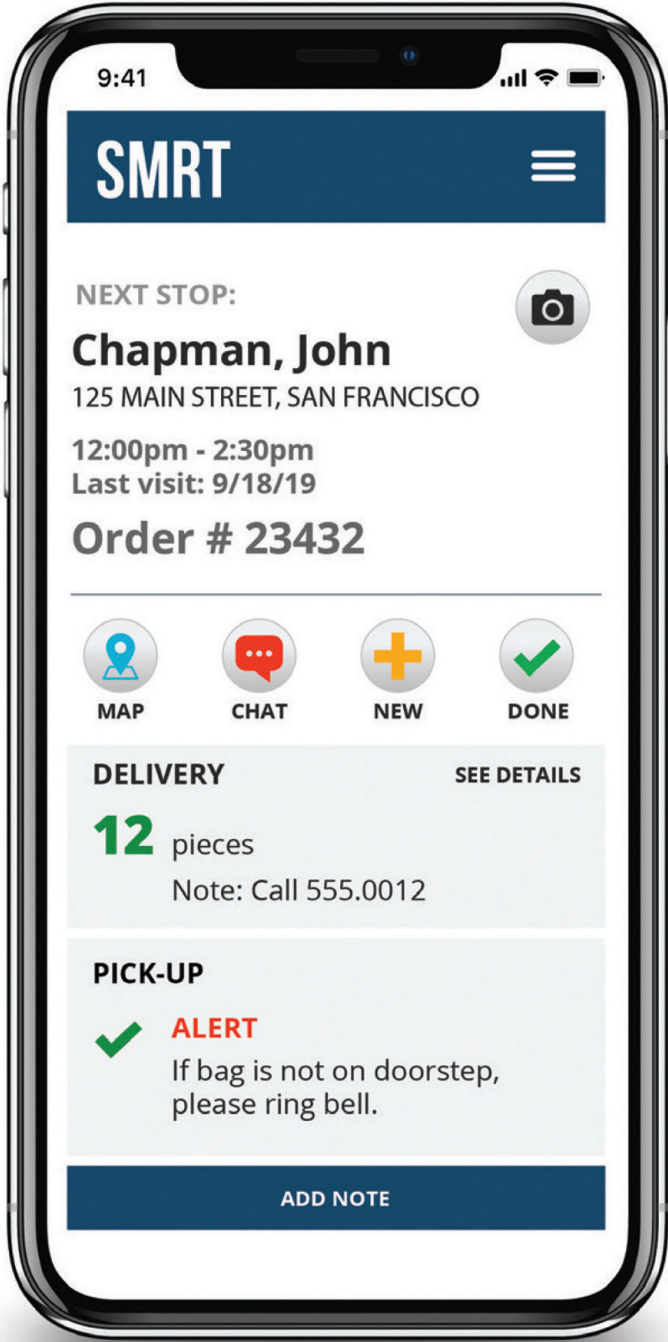






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DAMN DRY-CLEANING SOFTWARE  
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Danny Mooore  
Sunshine Cleaners



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**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."

**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."

**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."

**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 communications channels and have reduced the time to resolve day to day processes."

**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."

**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!"

**JASON Y.**

★★★★★

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

**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."

**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."

**MAJOR B.**

★★★★★

"The extra communication 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."

**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."

**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."

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BY KERMIT ENGH

# BUILDING VALUE

## Maximize your potential growth

**A**s promised, this next module for building value in your business is not as long or “technical” as last month. This month we will talk about the growth potential for your business.

As a business owner, you’re likely proud of the results you’ve achieved in the past. The value of your business, your future growth and the rate of that growth is critical. Can your business be scaled up? That’s why your growth potential is one of eight factors that drive the value of your business.

One metric that acquirers may use to evaluate your growth potential is your revenue per employee. This was one of the KPIs we looked at several months ago. Alphabet (Google’s parent company) generates around \$1.3 million in revenue per employee. Compare that to the advertising agency WPP Group, whose average when it comes to revenue per employee is around \$100,000.

For every dollar of revenue, WPP needs more than ten times the employees that Alphabet does. It takes time to recruit, train, and motivate people — which is why WPP has grown more slowly and suffers much lower valuations when compared to a heavy company with less people. Measuring your revenue per employee is just one of many ways an investor may evaluate how quickly they are likely to grow your company.

### Stop Selling Your Time

If your goal is to build a more valuable company, stop selling your time. Billing by the hour or day means customers are renting your time rather than buying a result, which means that your business model lacks leverage. To grow, you need to either work harder or hire more people. Since it can take months to ramp up new employees, fast growth is just about impossible. As mentioned, one of the factors acquirers look for in businesses is your company’s growth potential. They want to know how fast they could grow your business, and nothing diminishes your growth potential more than selling your time. Billing by the hour can also drag down your customer’s satisfaction with your business because customers dislike the feeling of being nickel and dimed. They know you’re incentivized to lengthen the time a project takes, while they want a solution in the shortest time. This misalignment leads to unhappy customers, which can destroy the value of your business. Peddling time also invites competition. You allow customers to compare you to others offering the same service. This can lead to downward pricing pressure and lower margins as you become commoditized.

### How to Stop Selling Time

Carrie and Dave Kerpen started Likeable Media, a so-

cial media agency, in 2006. Facebook was emerging as a dominant platform, and marketers were trying to figure out how to monetize users of their platform. The Kerpens sold their time but quickly realized the limitations of such a model. They realized customers didn’t want to buy their time. Instead, Likeable customers wanted to buy so-

would take more time. Instead, they suggested customers buy more credits if they needed more content.

The Kerpens’ innovative billing approach also created recurring revenue because the CCS relied on annual contracts renewed each year. The CCS also transformed Likeable’s cash flow because customers paid for credits

## I challenge you to list your current services and the current markets you serve.

cial content. Marketers wanted a video they could post to their Facebook feed, or a blog post they could publish on their site.

The Kerpens switched from an hourly billing model to the Content Credit System. They assigned each piece of content several credits. For example, a tweet might be one credit, a written blog post might be 10, and a video might cost 20. Customers signed up for an annual allotment of credits they could roll over month to month. The Content Credit System (CCS) transformed Likeable Media. Customers no longer bought time. They were happy to pay for tangible output rather than scrutinize an hourly bill. The credits also made it easier for Likeable’s account managers to upsell. They no longer needed to justify why a particular project

upfront. More importantly, the CCS enabled the Kerpens to stop selling their time and build a team. By 2020, Likeable had more than 50 full-time employees, catching the attention of 10Pearls, a digital strategy company which acquired them for 8.5 times EBITDA, a healthy premium over a typical marketing agency. The bottom line? If your goal is to grow a more valuable company, stop selling your time and start selling results to your customers.

Now, how could these principles be used in the garment care industry? During the past 20 months, many operators innovated with new services, especially wash-dry-fold. Then, a few moved to the subscription model of a fixed monthly fee based on the level of service. Could the model of selling “points” be

used to allow the customer to use as they wish and when they wish? This could also be applied to household items, outdoor items, or actually any service. Revenue is received upfront, helping with cash-flow. As learned from our friends in the commercial laundry industry, the additional benefit is realized from under-wash or unused points.

Another matrix to consider is the Ansoff Matrix, a method of reviewing your existing service offerings. Picture a line chart with existing services in the bottom left corner. Along the lower line place New Products/Services you could offer to existing clients. On the vertical line add New Markets for your existing Products/Services. Out in the top right quadrant would be new Products/Services to new markets. Think of a lemonade stand at the end of the driveway — existing product with existing customers. Now, go to the beach with the same lemonade, existing product but new market. Next would be adding iced tea to the mix at the driveway — new product at existing market. Now the stretch: add iced tea to the beach location — new product, new market. I challenge you to list your current services and the current markets you serve. Create a list of *profitable* new services you could offer and the new markets you could utilize. Plot them in the four quadrants. Now list all obstacles to implementation. By analyzing all this information, you may discover new opportunities for the future.

The critical takeaway is the value of your business is determined less by what you have done in the past and more by what you will likely do in the future. Now, make it happen. 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 for more than 24 years. His current position as managing partner and as a Certified Value Builders coach allows him to share his extensive background in strategic planning, finance, process involvement, packaging & branding, employee training programs, profitability, cost analysis, acquisition analysis and succession planning. To find out more about how Kermit can help you maximize the value of your business, contact him at [kengh@mfm.com](mailto:kengh@mfm.com) or online at [mfmbusinesscoaching.com](http://mfmbusinesscoaching.com).



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# SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

## Giving a pay raise that you can take back

Being a man with a business mind and, at the same time being fascinated with the way that other industries operate (and all the while being a huge Red Sox fan), I sometimes find it puzzling why baseball players command such high salaries. Studying this over the years, I have learned that it is a good investment for ball club owners to pay huge salaries to players.

Frankly, no one would ever pay a player if there wasn't a tangible ROI (Return on Investment). True, in some markets, ROI is impossible because there are not enough customers. Still, whatever the salary, an ROI is expected. It would frustrate me greatly when a player having a banner year asks for a raise, gets it and then performs poorly. Don't you think that pay should be performance-based?

It will not likely ever be such in professional baseball, but can we make it that

way in our shirt laundry? I think so. I came up with a strategy that I call "How to give a pay raise that you can take back." Certain states, like California, can only dream about things like this, sadly. And, union shops rarely have flexibility to pay based on merit, but many plants can benefit from these ideas.

### Willie, a Model Employee

I remember a very hard working young man in my employ years ago. I'll call him Willie. Back then, my company was somewhere in between one shift and two. That means that I did not have the volume to have two eight-hour shifts, or even an eight and a four. And, my staff wasn't interested in splitting 10 hour days 50/50 with another group. Therefore, the only solution was to work the staff that I had. That's a euphemism for long hours and overtime wages.

All the while, we had to build sales to the point that

we could run two shifts, or at least a shift and a half. Anyhow, Willie was a workhorse. For months, he was at his press station every single minute that my plant was operating. This meant

fore or since.

So, what did I get for it? He started calling in sick on Thursdays. "Who's dumber than me?" I thought. To say that I was disappointed is the quintessential under-

tivator. If it was, indeed, a raise that I could undo, not giving it would be just as bad as getting the increase was good. The penalty would fit the crime, so to speak. If doing something is

## Willie was truly a model employee... I don't think I had ever given such a high raise before. What did I get for it? He started calling in sick on Thursdays.

he worked two 14-hour days, a 10-hour day, and a pair of short eight-hour days. He never complained. He never missed a day. He played well with others. He was truly a model employee.

One day, during a moment of unprecedented generosity, I called him to my office and, after basically giving him a very positive performance review, I gave him a one dollar per hour raise. This was a very large increase. I don't think I had ever given such a raise be-

statement. I guess that Willie was satisfied with his pay prior to his raise and now saw that he could work four days and make the same pay as when he worked five days. I never saw this coming. I was floored.

His absenteeism led to his termination, but I felt like I had ruined a perfectly good employee. I wanted to undo it all, but that wasn't going to happen. What I needed to do was to come up with a way to give a raise that I can take back.

We try to come up with ways that protect us from experiences like the one that I had. Often, piece work seems to be the obvious path to follow. This is not always the right way to go. This is because shirt pressing is not manufacturing. If my job is to make shirts and I can go twice as fast, I'll make twice the money in the same amount of time because the number of shirts that I can make is (virtually) limitless. When my job is to press shirts, if I go twice as fast, I'll either make half as much money (in the case of hourly wages) or simply be finished earlier for the same pay if "piece pay" is the rule. The wonderment may set in: "Why should I break my back to work so fast?" When pressing shirts, the number of shirts is finite. You don't know exactly what that number is, but pressing faster isn't going to make more shirts in need of pressing appear.

Piece work, however, does work better when there are two equal shirt units. In that case, two pressers may vie for the lion's share of the available shirts.

I wanted to dangle a carrot that was a sufficient mo-

worth, say, 50 cents per hour, then not doing the same thing should be worth negative 50 cents per hour. I eventually came up with something that worked almost perfectly.

### Along Came Paul

Paul was a shirt presser who had worked for me for at least a couple of years. He was great. When he was running the body press, I had no need to worry about productivity or quality. He was always on the mark. Well, almost. When he wasn't in due to "illness" I suffered.

There were times during my growth that he had to be replaced by me at the press station. While it is always good to keep in practice, pressing shirts caused other administrative tasks to take a back seat. This was rarely convenient. The thing about Paul was that when he was in, I would rate him a 10 on a scale of 1 to 10; when he was out, he was a zero.

Although his absence wasn't usual, it also wasn't an annual occurrence. I'd guess it was something that happened one to three times per month.

Interestingly, he is the one who urged me to implement an attendance policy. He shared with me the policy of a major local employer for whom he once worked. During a 12-month period, three missed days, an oral warning; three more, a written one, three more lead to an automatic one-week suspension and three more were the last three.

The attendance policy was good, but it wasn't going to fix Paul's alcoholism. That's why every few Mondays, Paul would call me with remorse already in his voice, minutes before his shift was

Continued on page 22

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Don Desrosiers

Giving a pay raise that you can take back

Continued from page 20 to start.

The key was that when Paul was in, he was really great, not just average.

Then came my brain-storm. At the time, Paul made \$6.10 per hour (This

perked up. “Paul, here’s the deal. I will keep your base pay at \$6.10 per hour, but if you arrive on time, work your full shift 7 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and work every day that you are scheduled, you

The thing about Paul was that, when he was in I would rate him a ten on a scale from one to ten; when he was out, he was a 0.

was in the 1990s but is still very relevant). He was one of my top wage earners. He was worth more, in spite of that key flaw. I called him into my office one day and said “Paul, how would you like to make \$7 per hour?” His eyes lit up and his ears

will receive a bonus of 90 cents times the number of hours that you work.” That is, 40 hours times 90 cents, or \$36. This makes his effective hourly rate \$7.

The deal was that if he missed a day, came in late or left early (the last two

were never an issue), there was no bonus.

The cost for that missed day became very clear:

- 40 hours times \$6.10 per hour = \$244;
- Less 25% for tax withholding = \$61;
- Net pay before bonus plan was put into effect = \$183.

With the bonus plan in place:

- 40 hours times \$6.10 per hour = \$244;
- 90 cent per hour bonus = \$280;
- Less 25% for tax withholding = \$70;
- Net pay with bonus plan = \$210.

So, his take-home was \$27 more. That doesn’t sound like a whole lot (for one thing, this was 30 years ago), but this may have dou-

bled his discretionary income. I assure you, it meant a lot to him.

But, how much would it cost him to take a day off? It cost me plenty in the way of productivity and quality and who knows what else. He got me in the wallet; I wanted to get him right back in the same place.

With bonus plan in place, here are the totals:

- 32 hours times \$6.10 per hour = \$195.20;
- 90 cent per hour bonus = no bonus;
- Less 25% for tax withholding = \$48.80;
- Net pay with bonus plan = \$146.40.

The day off cost him \$63.60. Ouch! No bonus and a lost day’s pay. Whatever his absence actually cost me is perhaps intangible, but

that \$63.60 meant more to him than whatever loss I incurred.

He worked for me many more years. He only missed two more days.

“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.

Hosting a different type of zoom meeting

When SMRT Systems hosted its second annual SMRT Lab last month at the Autobahn Country Club in Joliet, IL, all of the proper safety protocols had to be followed.

In this case, though, face masks had to take a backseat to crash helmets. After all, attendees from across the country met in order to get behind the steering

wheel of a high-octane sportscar and experience a thrilling ride.

Not surprisingly, many affiliates enjoyed the opportunity to take part in a much more exciting outdoor “zoom meeting.”

Instead of office chairs or Lazy-Boys, they had a variety of sleek supercars to choose from, including a Ferrari 488 GTB, a Lamborghini Huracán LP610-4, a

McLaren 570S, a Mercedes AMG GT R, a Porsche 911 GT3, a Corvette C8 Z51, a Ford Mustang Shelby GT500 and a Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat, among other exotic automobiles.

The event was hosted by a company called Xtreme Xperience, which has claimed to help over a quarter of a million people cross “drive an exotic car” off

from their bucket lists since first opening in 2012.

To prepare the the attendees for driving at such fast velocities, Xtreme Xperience provided each of the more than 90 participants with a safety class that lasted close to a half hour.

Then, students soon put that knowledge to the test on the track, which was 1.46 miles long with a

total of nine turns and a 1,235 ft. straightaway — designed that way intentionally so drivers can maximize the driving potential of their vehicles.

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SMRT Systems hosted its 2nd annual SMRT Lab at the Autobahn Country Club in Joliet, IL, last month, drawing in cleaners from across the country to the event (top photo). The reason for such high attendance is not much of a mystery: they wanted the opportunity to get behind the wheel of high-octane sportscars, including a green Mercedes AMG GT R (pictured prominently in the bottom photo).





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# KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

## Follow these labor rules for guidance

I thought a good selection of Labor and Employment Law Rules of Thumb would be a good autumn topic. Since I started practicing employment law in 1977, the same questions come up all the time.

**Rule:** To be exempt from overtime, in almost every case, the employee must be paid a salary. Only in specific circumstances can that salaried employee be docked for time off. If improper docking occurs, the overtime exemption could be lost.

**Rule:** The payment of a salary does not necessarily mean that an employee is exempt from overtime. The employee must also perform the kind of work that the Department of Labor states qualifies the employee for an exemption, such as executive, administrative, or professional.

**Rule:** Non-exempt employees must be paid for all hours worked, **whether approved or not.** If the employee is permitted to work, the employee must be paid for the work, including over-

time.

**Rule:** If a so-called independent contractor is performing the work of other employees, he is probably not an independent contractor.

**Rule:** Employees hired to do after-work activities unrelated to their regular jobs are not independent contractors. They may be subject to withholding, matching FICA, etc.

**Rule:** If you must ask if someone is an employee or independent contractor, that person is probably an employee.

**Rule:** When disciplining an employee, especially discharge, never say "sorry," or make any statements that suggest or imply the decision is not supported and justified.

**Rule:** Nothing goes in an employee's personnel file that the employee has not seen; the employee should also be given a copy of whatever goes into the file.

**Rule:** Under the National Labor Relations Act, non-supervisory employees can discuss their salaries and other working conditions

with other employees. Disciplining such employees for violating a non-disclosure rule is illegal.

**Rule:** There are no secrets in the workplace. As Benjamin Franklin said: "Three can keep a secret, if two of them are dead."

**Rule:** It is better to deal with employee performance problems immediately than wait until you have reached the boiling point. Poor employees hurt morale and have a negative effect on the productivity of other employees.

**Rule:** OSHA (or the State Agency enforcing federal safety regulations) cannot enter your workplace without a warrant. If an OSHA compliance officer shows up to inspect, insist on knowing why, and if you do not want the officer to inspect that day, insist on a warrant.

**Rule:** Words matter. Choose them carefully, especially when writing HR documents. Do not write like a lawyer. State the facts simply and directly.

**Rule:** Make sure you have posted all the posters required by the federal, state, and local government. They are available on the Internet.

**Rule:** Never act in anger. Suspend an employee for misconduct when angry; make the decision on termination after you have gathered all the facts and calmed down.

**Rule:** If you promote a great employee to be a supervisor without training on how to manage employees, you may end up losing a good employee and gaining a bad supervisor.

**Rule:** Communicate with employees about the business. Ask their opinions. Put rumors to bed before they get out of control. Anxious employees are potentially hostile employees.

**Rule:** Be consistent when disciplining employees. If you make an exception, have a non-discriminatory reason for the exception.

**Rule:** No good deed goes unpunished. As Mark Twain said: "You can pick up a

starving dog and make him prosperous, and he will not bite you. That is the principal difference between a dog and an employee."

**Rule:** You cannot automatically conclude that an employee with a disability (temporary or permanent) cannot be accommodated. Instead, you must engage in the "interactive process" with the employee and ask how the disability might be accommodated. Only after the interactive process can an employer conclude that the accommodation is unreasonable.

**Rule:** In the absence of a rule, use commonsense. In the absence of commonsense, ask someone to create a rule.

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](http://www.kollmanlaw.com). It has articles, sample policies, news and other information on employee/employer relations.

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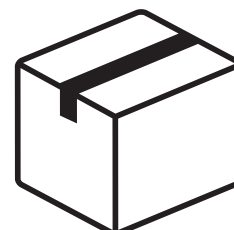
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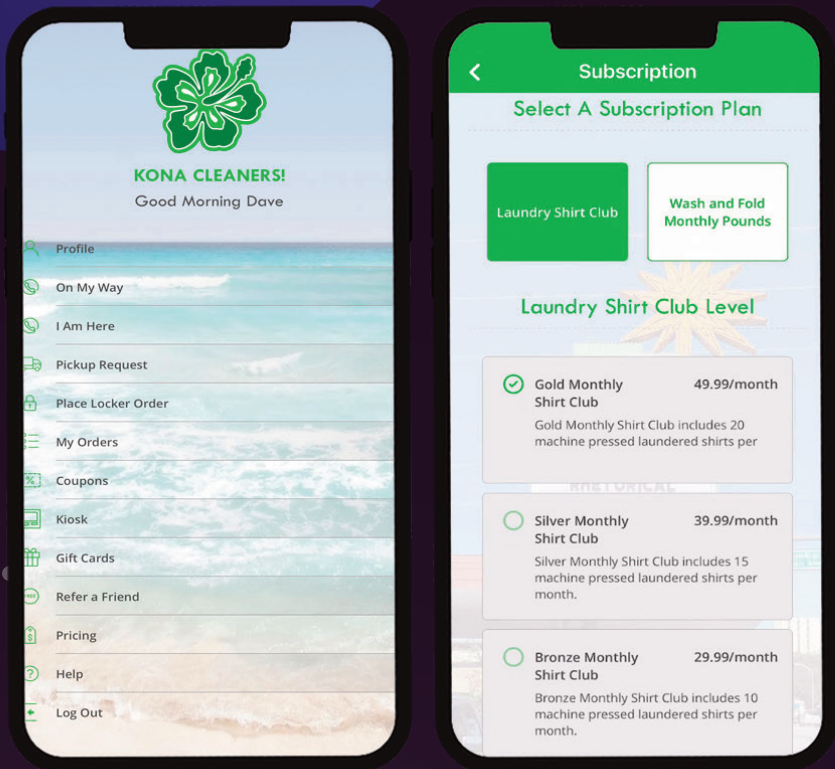




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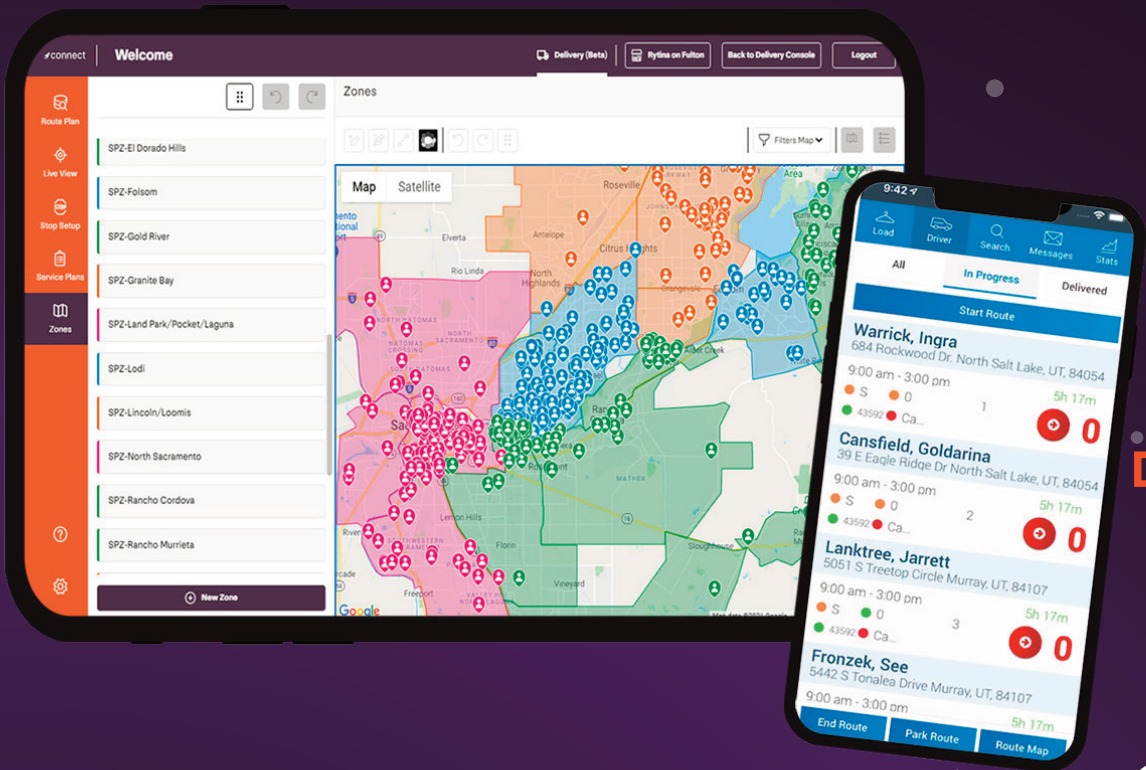
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