



National

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All in for Atlanta

Atlanta — known as the land of the peach tree and home of the Braves (the 2021 MLB champions) — will soon be something else: the host of the first Clean Show in over 1,100 days. That streak will abruptly end on July 30 when Clean 2022 kicks off at the Georgia World Congress Center.

This will be the fourth time Atlanta emceeds the event, and the second time in seven years. When the city held the Clean Show most recently in 2015, over 11,000 attendees visited 437 exhibiting companies in close to 200,000 sq. ft. — or about the size of three-and-a-half NFL playing fields.

This year, the exhibit space has inched closely toward being sold out. In fact, this year's participants include more than 40 first-time exhibitors — a record for most new companies in any one

year in Clean Show history, according to show organizer Messe Frankfurt.

The real test, however, will be to see if the textile cleaning industry shows up. Recently, the Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR) reported that trade shows are showing signs of rebounding after a catastrophic drop due to COVID-19 cancellations.

Overall, domestic convention attendance in 2019 reached 35.3 million before plummeting down to 7.4 million in 2020. Last year, however, the numbers climbed back up to 11.5 million with momentum building late in the year so that attendance was only down 43% from 2019 during its final quarter.

Those numbers should continue to rise because the number of cancelled conventions have dropped. During

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Educational programs emphasize finding employees, customers

While the future remains uncertain, drycleaners can count on continuing to need two vital components: employees and customers.

This year's Clean Show's educational programs are aimed to help attendees find and keep staff during difficult times, and attract more customers with targeted marketing and offering new services. Overall, there will be more than 30 hours of programs throughout the four days of the Clean Show.

As the labor crisis continues to loom, the companies with the best culture will be better prepared to succeed. On Saturday morning at 8 a.m., the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute has tapped the expertise of Sean Abbas of The Threads, Inc., whose

presentation will focus on how a positive workplace culture can elevate productivity, decrease turnover, increase loyalty and impact overall employee happiness.

Later on that day, Jennifer Whitmarsh of The Route Pros will present a general session on the show floor on "Attracting and Managing the New Generation of Workforce" at 2 p.m.

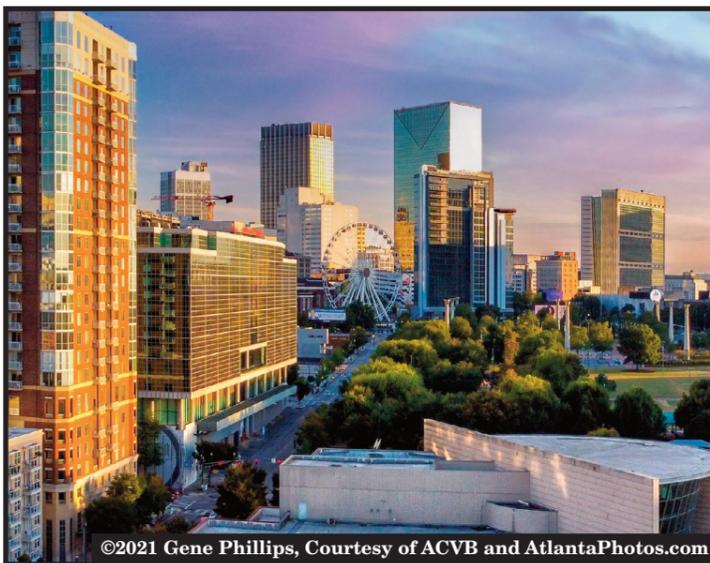
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Sean Abbas



Jennifer Whitmarsh



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A Clean Slate Awaits

The first Clean Show in over 37 months is ready to take place in Atlanta at the Georgia World Congress Center, located near the city's famous Centennial Park (left). Nobody knows what to expect in terms of this year's attendance, but the overall hope is that people will be lined up, excited and ready to go... like they were in New Orleans in June of 2019 at the last event (above).

Top Photo by Messe Frankfurt GmbH John Smith



Schedule of Events

Exhibit Hall Hours

Saturday, July 30 - 10 am to 5 pm • Sunday, July 31 - 9 am to 5 pm
Monday, August 1 - 9 am to 5 pm • Tuesday, August 2 - 9 am to 3 pm

Saturday, July 30

8 am - 9 am

Best Culture Wins

Sean Abbas, The Threads, Inc.

9 am - 10 am

Self-Service Technology is Here

Nathaniel Dubasik, Burke Cleaners

2 pm - 3 pm • General Session

Attracting & Managing the New Generation of Workforce

Jennifer Whitmarsh, The Route Pros

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

DLI-TCATA Membership Reception

DLI & TCATA Members are invited to the joint reception at the Marriott Marquis Hotel

Sunday, July 31

8 am - 10 am

12 Profit Activators Guaranteed to Create an Immediate Cash Flow Surge

Dave Coyle, Maverick Drycleaners

2 pm - 3 pm • General Session

2022 Economy —

Are We Ever Going to See Normal?

Chris Kuehl, Armada Business Intelligence

Monday, August 1

8 am - 9 am

Marketing Through Your POS

Norman Way, Puritan Cleaners

9 am - 10 am

CINET PTC

Global Best Practices Program

Peter Wennekes, CINET

2 pm to 3 pm • General Session

Human Resource Strategy

Sue Boardman and Jonathan Boehmer, Puzzle HR

Visit www.cleanshow.com for more information.



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Getting more from your time on the show floor

It has been more than three (very, very long) years since the last Clean Show was held in New Orleans in 2019, and it will be another three years before the next one takes place in Orlando in 2025, so those who attend this year will want to make every minute matter at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta. Our hope is to help you get the most of your time there, so this issue features comprehensive Clean Show coverage to prepare you for your upcoming trip.

With a packed exhibit hall of some 200,000 sq. ft. to navigate through, one way to save precious time on the show floor is to do the research beforehand. Narrow down which company's booths you want to visit in order of importance. Fortunately, we've afforded our advertisers the opportunity to detail some of the highlights attendees can expect to see and learn more about at their booths in our **Clean 2022 Sneak Preview** that begins on page 16.

Another excellent resource, by the way, is the official Clean Show website, located at www.cleanshow.com. Go to the site's "Exhibitors and Products" section where a link will take you to the live interactive exhibit hall map where you can find a complete listing of all exhibiting companies and where they will be located.

Once you see the hundreds of names on that interactive map, you may want to come up with a plan of attack. Or, you could read somebody else's. This month, Don Desrosiers offers up several tips to help make sure that you remember the **5 P's: Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance**. His column on page 10 also contains a checklist that attendees can use whenever they come to a booth with a shirt unit. The best part, though, is that he includes a quick and handy way to figure out how many shirts per hour the people are pressing at the booths... without having to stand there and count for an hour.

Speaking of counting, one number that you probably should try to memorize is 4330. In his column this month on page 14, James Peuster examines all of the ways that four-digit number relates to your pickup and delivery routes, giving drycleaners guidance on what your routes should average a week, how much money you should be using to market them and the number of pieces you should be servicing on a route

each month.

Meanwhile, a past column about "The true cost of buying new equipment at Clean" by Don Desrosiers (our April 2022 issue) has inspired a new one by guest columnist Rusty Smith from Forenta. He will divulge a formula that can help drycleaners calculate how much compressed air (i.e. utility costs) will cost you in a new press purchase (see page 32).

Another excellent read (or re-read) before you arrive in Atlanta is Peter Blake's column in our June 2022 issue on "Leveraging the Clean Show experience. It offers a lot of thoughtful advice on some of the things you can do to make sure you get the most out of your Clean Show investment. He follows that column up with a new one this month (see page 20) on "Keeping your focus after the Clean Show," a problem many cleaners may face when they return to their plants.

Attending a Clean Show can be a very exciting experience — so much so that you may feel ready to implement each and every idea that inspired you over the course of four days. However, that burning passion tends to temper some when cleaners return to the busy daily grind and become too overwhelmed to follow through. Peter has some great tips to try to prevent that from happening.

In addition to making a game plan for the show floor, we highly recommend doing the same for the educational sessions at the Clean Show. There are over 30 hours of them altogether. While we cover many of the highlights of interest to cleaners on our front page story, attendees may prefer to access and pore through the full educational schedule that is located in the "Education, Events and Meetings" section of the Clean Show site (www.cleanshow.com).

Additionally, it is worth noting that the Clean Show site's "Planning and Preparation" section is also an excellent resource, containing links to registration and hotel accommodations, the complimentary hotel shuttle schedule, and even a link to places and attractions to explore in Atlanta.

We sincerely hope this issue assists you on your journey. More importantly, we hope to see you all there. Safe travels.

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Visit us at www.nationalclothesline.com for additional coverage of the drycleaning industry including access to industry resources and links, and archives of **National Clothesline** going back to January of 2018.

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No compromises

For more than a decade, Stu Bloom worked at Deloitte Consulting of New York, offering valuable strategic advice to business clients. It was an ideal situation.

"I came out of an environment where if I needed a team, I'd select my team members — all of whom had Master's degrees — go out and do the consulting job," he recalled. "I had huge support in terms of HR and all the other resources a major firm has."

While he could help many businesses succeed, he couldn't manage to find a good drycleaner to clean his custom suits. Bloom, who was born in South Africa, graduated from Rhodes University with a B.A. in Business Administration before earning an M.B.A. in Finance from New York University.

"Basically, as a graduation present, I had various suits made in the UK, as well as shirts," he explained. "You take it to the drycleaners — you're living in New York City, not having a car — so you go to the nearest drycleaners back in the 1970s and 1980s. Of course, my suits just got absolutely destroyed."

During his search to find a better drycleaner, Stu discovered something he hadn't been looking for: an opportunity. "Ultimately, I decided that this industry, to a large extent, is very mediocre. Quality is relatively poor, and there has to be a space for a drycleaner whose sole focus is on doing things what I would call the old-fashioned way."

In 1988, he founded Rave Fabricare in Scottsdale, Arizona, ready to take the industry by storm. Instead, he felt like he had to survive one.

"I made a lot of mistakes that I would never advise my clients to ever do when I was in the consulting business. Sometimes, you just go on adrenaline and emotion," he noted.

"The early days were actually very, very difficult," added Stu, who sorely missed having a team to assist him. "You realize that there's nothing there other than yourself, and that is a really, really rude awakening."

As the business's struggles continued, Stu experienced an epiphanic moment during a Sanitone seminar in Bakersfield, CA, when he sat next to an older gentleman for a few days. At the end of the event, he was stunned when the man said to him, "I have to tell you, you don't know very much about the drycleaning business."

In time, Stu took up the man's offer to visit his drycleaning plant in California. He planned to stop by during his vacation. "At this point in time, I realized that I knew absolutely nothing," he recalled. "I took a lot of the ideas, implemented them. I spent probably my entire vacation walking around his plant — just walking and working and looking and asking questions and writing things down."

As Stu tinkered with his business during the early years, he began to understand that there could be no compromises on the pursuit of quality.

"The bottom line is very simple, in

my mind. The normal procedures that a typical drycleaner might bring to their technologies, the time that they take on their garments, the way they press garments — it's not really suitable at all to high end, specialty, bespoke, made-to-measure, couture type garments," Stu noted. "And, to think that you can do both simultaneously is

With no compromises on quality and customers who are not typically preoccupied with price, Stu is quite thankful that he doesn't have to be predominantly focussed on production numbers.

"For us, every single garment is custom. Every single garment is unique. We treat every garment with the respect

geographically.

"We decided we were going to open it up nationwide and for Canada and just see what happens," Stu recalled. "The mail business started to grow and I think that really was a critical turning point for our business — not relying on locale clientele and expanding our business. So, we put in the shipping depart-



Stu Bloom

Rave Fabricare
Scottsdale, AZ

really hoodwinking one's self."

"The two are incompatible because the technical skills that it takes, the equipment that you need, the processes and procedures you would bring to bear, the detergents, the chemical agents, etc. — all vary, and you have to really decide what you want to do when you grow up," he said. "Do you want to be a regular cleaner — you come to work at nine, you leave at three, you go and play golf? Good luck. But, you will not satisfy the type of customer that I was looking for because that type of customer is a lot more fanatical in terms of their garments, and also in terms of who takes care of the garments."

While cultivating a reputation as a couture cleaner, Stu determined there would be two things he could never compromise on. "For the most part, it comes down to price and it comes down to turnaround time — on those two things, I cannot budge," he said. "I cannot sacrifice the quality of the work on the altar of speed and price. That's it, plain and simple. No shortcuts, no compromises."

No compromises means not trying to be all things for all customers.

"For me, it's impossible to operate that way. I just wasn't cut out of that cloth," Stu explained. "We want to be *something to some people*, even though those folks for whom we have meaning are relatively few. However, they do have the clothing. They do have the high end garments. They do have the resources. And, as a result, we have significant control over our pricing."

"As a drycleaner, we never coupon. We don't discount. We don't do wholesale work. There are no specials," Stu added. "We take our time to do our work. We take about a week from the time the garment comes in to the time the garment is ready."

it deserves," Stu said. "We're going to take the time."

"Pieces per hour and bar coding make the hair on my neck stand up. It is something that is so foreign to me," he continued. "If one of our pressers wants to take 15 minutes to hand iron a white linen ruffled blouse — that blouse is smooth as silk and soft as butter — then I don't care. I want that garment to be absolutely perfect because it's going to go out at \$35 or \$40 for the blouse."

"I cannot sacrifice the quality of the work on the altar of speed and price...no shortcuts, no compromises."

"If you bring it to us, we're going to knock the socks off of you, but there is a price to be paid," he added, "and, in order to develop the capabilities that we have and to retain the type of workforce that we have — highly skilled, highly loyal, many of whom have been with us anywhere from 10 to 25 years — that takes money. And, I expect my employees to be well compensated with benefits, etc, and if that requires me to raise my prices on a man's basic two-piece suit from \$60 to \$67, I wouldn't hesitate."

When Rave started in 1988, it was located in a 1,600 sq. ft. facility in a strip mall. Today, the business requires some two dozen employees who operate out of an 11,000 sq. ft. building — recently expanded and remodeled.

One reason for the growth over the years was that Stu recognized that, while he had a limited overall market, it didn't have to be quite so restricted

ment. We had to have a shipping clerk who packages everything beautifully and eventually nationwide to Canada became international."

Today, Rave's Worldwide Clean By Mail service ships to Western Europe, the Far East, Australasia and many other areas around the globe.

While the business "never runs out of work," the pandemic did manage to reduce overall volume by about a quarter.

"The saving grace was fanatical local clientele and a very, very highly distributed clientele on our team by mail throughout the entire country and outside, which sort of cushioned the impact," Stu noted.

More importantly, it made sure Rave did not have to lay off any employees. "These are folks who have been with us a long time. These are folks who look to us for their financial security," he said. "These are folks who have — maybe car loans, maybe a mortgage — they've got kids at school. You can't turn around and discard someone whose giving you their life, literally, when you just don't need them. We worked so hard over the years to develop their skills to the point that the benefit for the company is so significant that to replace the individual would nearly be impossible."

Fortunately, Rave Fabricare is back running at 100% lately and it remains precisely the type of drycleaner Stu tried to find to properly care for his custom attire all those years ago.

"As things have improved and as the pieces of the puzzle have all fitted into place, it's become a lot easier. Although, we're 35 years into this and I'm still committed to 70 hours a week. This is not a business for the faint-hearted," he laughed. "But, I pinch myself every day and I always think back to that conversation that I had back in Bakersfield all those years ago."

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All in for Atlanta

Braving the Summer Crowds

Continued from page 1
the first quarter of 2021, 91.3% of events had to be cancelled — a stark contrast to the 9.2% cancellation rate during the first quarter of this year.

Meanwhile, TSA checkpoint travel numbers surpassed two million daily ten times during the first 12 days of June, a positive sign even as fuel costs (a central component of travel) hit a record national average above \$5 per gallon last month.

On the Scene at Clean

For those making the investment to attend, the cost is \$169 per person. Visitors have a housing reservation deadline of July 7 with Connections Housing, the official house provider for Clean '22.

They offer discounted room rates for nine nearby hotels, including the Atlanta Marriott Marquis (which serves as headquarters for the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute), the Omni Hotel at CNN Center and the Renaissance Atlanta Midtown.

Room rates vary from \$191 to \$259 nightly and do not include local taxes. Call Connections Housing at (702) 675-6584 for reservations.

Attendees may view hotel options and register for the show in the "Planning and Preparation" section located at www.cleanshow.com.

Also in that section is a schedule of the complimen-



The defending MLB champion Atlanta Braves will host a three-game series with the Arizona Diamondbacks at Truist Park on July 29, 30 and 31 — lining up quite nicely with the dates of the Clean Show.

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tary hotel shuttle bus that runs to and from the convention center and various Clean Show hotels.

All the Action in Atlanta

Recently, Atlanta was ranked #4 out of 10 on *National Geographic's* "Best of the World 2022" List for travel events.

With the College Football Hall of Fame, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, the World of Coca-Cola, the Delta Flight Museum, the SkyView At-

lanta Ferris Wheel that towers nearly 20 stories over Centennial Park, and many other attractions near the convention center, visitors will have many options for fun and relaxation after show hours.

Some attendees will want to keep time open on Saturday evening, however, as DLI and the Textile Care Allied Trades Association will host a joint reception from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Marriot Marquis Hotel.

Educational programs emphasize finding employees, customers

Continued from page 1

Another general session dealing with finding employees and retaining staff will be "Human Resources Strategy," which will take place at 2 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 1.

The program will feature Sue Boardman and Jonathan Boehmer of Puzzle HR. Together, they will address a multitude of topics, including the staffing shortage, which benefits employees desire and why, policy changes that are essential to retaining employees and more.

On the other side of the equation, how can you get more revenue through the door?

mated self-service kiosks have helped him become more profitable and efficient by being able to serve more customer with less employees.

Those interested in adding commercial linen and uniform rental services will want to attend the general session at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday. It will be called "Where to Start? Tips for Entering the Commercial Laundry Industry."

It will feature a trio of experts: Monika Manter of Bal-furd Dry Cleaners, Dan Campbell of Wash Around the Clock, and Andy Thorsen of Carolina Textile Care.

They will help attendees learn the best ways to start this



For those who have yet to polish and hone their skills using their versatile point-of-sales systems, DLI has asked Norman Way of Puritan Cleaners to provide some helpful advice and tips.

On Monday morning at 8 a.m., he will present "Marketing Through Your POS." He will be joined by other drycleaners who will share ways that the powerful POS tool has been used to boost repeat purchases and additional spending.

Another DLI program focussing on upping your marketing game will take place at 8 a.m. on Sunday morning and feature Dave Coyle of Maverick Drycleaners.

He will present "12 Profit Activators Guaranteed to Create an Immediate Cash Flow Surge."

Coyle will also ask a panel of drycleaners about the success that they have had while implementing these activators for their business.

While marketing is a proven method of drawing customers' attention, so is offering a new service that may cater to their cravings for convenience.

On Monday morning at 9 a.m., Nathaniel Dubasik of Burke Cleaners will present "Self-Service Technology is Here."

He will discuss how auto-

type of transition, how the industry works and other factors that will help determine if it is the right move for your company.

One factor that will likely influence any future business strategy will be the state of the economy, which will be the topic of discussion during a general session that will be hosted on the Exhibit Hall floor at 2 p.m. on Sunday, July 31.

Chris Kuehl of Business Armada Intelligence will present "2022 Economy — Are We Ever Going to See Normal?" as he examines trends from the first half of this year, including whether or not consumers are returning to old habits, in order to predict where the economy is heading during the second half.

Other highlights of the show will include a Global Sessions panel at 3:30 p.m. on the show floor on Sunday and the CINET Professional Textile Care (PTC) Global Best Practices Program at 9 a.m. on Monday, Aug. 1.

CINET has invited the 50 best companies to participate in its Global Best Practices program by offering a presentation of various new global trends in retail textile cleaning, as well as a variety of innovative initiatives of PTC companies.

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-Mike Astorino, Fabricare Cleaners

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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

Congratulations on making it to Clean '22

It is paramount that you use your time at **The Clean Show** wisely so that it is truly an investment rather than an expenditure. To make sure of this, remember the five P's: **Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance.** (You can use this for just about anything!)

If you have just picked up this newspaper at the show, it is a good use of your time to get away from the hustle and bustle of the show floor for 20 minutes and read this and plan how you will best use your time over the next couple of days. You'll thank me later. But, since the show is very late in the month, most likely you will have had several weeks to plan how you will use your time.

Let's say you are shopping POS systems and shirt units and looking for some new idea to spark your sales.

1. Decide which vendors you need to visit and map them out. Try to prioritize them and then choose the most efficient way to see them all. Sometimes the "grocery store" approach doesn't always work, especially when the trade show

floor is the size of a few football fields. Save the browsing for after your important visits. This is sort of a standard trade show mantra, but it has a pitfall. When you peruse the list of exhibitors, sometimes you don't recognize the company name of the exact vendor that you want to interact with. EZ-Products, for example, might be the manufacturer of a product that you want to buy, but you're familiar with the product, not the maker, so it's easy to miss them. Companies like Sankosha or Unipress are immune to issues like that.

2. Schedule important meetings. There are some trade show meetings you absolutely have to have — contract signings, sales presentations, customer service issues. Schedule time with the appropriate people, either in their booth or over lunch or coffee. It's easy to lose track of time on the show floor, so put the meetings on your schedule, set an alarm or two, and then text the other person to let them know you're on your way. That can also be a reminder

to them. On your phone, set an alarm, not a reminder ding. You will not hear the reminder tone on the show floor. So, for all reminders during your time at the show, set alarms and label them. This is the only way to stay on track.

3. Don't worry about work. Hopefully you've worked ahead, set your email auto responder to let people know you're out, and have co-workers covering things back at the plant. You're not going to be at a gathering this large for a while, so make the most of it. There's plenty of time to answer emails later, like in your room at night. Don't hide away in a lounge to get work done. You're at the place that could end up being the most profitable and educational one of the entire year. Plus, you paid a bundle to be there. Why would you waste those opportunities?

4. Attend educational sessions. Many trade shows have educational sessions and classes. If there are any that will help you do your job better, attend them. The knowl-

edge you get in an info-packed hour could save you many hours of reading and learning from your mistakes. I know that these sessions are early in the morning and many show attendees are sleeping in after a late night, but you are missing out if you choose to miss these. Because these often occur prior to exhibition hours, they do not interfere with your show floor schedule.

5. You will get a bunch of business cards. I think that business cards are passé. I photograph them with my phone and then log them into my contact list later. The days of keeping a Rolodex or a folder of business cards are long gone.

6. Wear the most comfortable shoes you have. You're going to spend up to 8-10 hours on your feet, so take a couple pairs of comfortable shoes. Get some leather walking shoes or tennis shoes that don't look weird with your show attire. Alternate between pairs every other day.

Shirt Unit Checklist

When you get to a booth with a shirt unit, you have a checklist to go through:

First of all, how do the shirts look when pressed by a professional? This might seem like an obvious question that doesn't require an answer, but this is not so. More than once, I have seen a purported expert pressing on a shirt unit and producing very poor shirts. She was embarrassed and I was embarrassed for her. It was a lousy unit. This is not going to be the usual situation. *Usually....*

Just because the presser at the show presses terrific shirts with zero touch up, it doesn't mean that this will happen at your plant. I once had a client bring a bag of wet (high end) shirts from his plant and asked the demonstrator to press those shirts at the show rather than the ones that are routinely pressed. The client was impressed that their shirts came out very well and subsequently bought the shirt unit. But, I digress. When observing the presser at the show, rather than homing in on the quality of the pressed shirts, *focus on how the presser is working.*

- Are they frantic?
- Are they working hard? Or hardly working?

- Do they seem to be enjoying themselves?

- How many shirts are they pressing per hour? You are not going to stay there for an hour; just count the number of seconds in-between shirts.

100 seconds between shirts	= 36 PPH
90 seconds between shirts	= 40 PPH
80 seconds between shirts	= 45 PPH
70 seconds between shirts	= 51.4 PPH
60 seconds between shirts	= 60 PPH
50 seconds between shirts	= 72 PPH

You may not be one who is all about productivity but a difference of five shirts per hour is equivalent to roughly \$7,800 per year. Over ten years, that is way more than the price of the shirt unit — so do not trivialize productivity or the value of it. If anyone should be capable of productivity, it is the demonstrator at the show. That said, keep in mind that they may not be working at peak performance as they answer questions from other attendees and are interrupted.

Who is the local dealer? This is a tough one for me. I have seen some very interesting, innovative and ingenious shirt units over the years, but I hazard to recommend them because — when it comes down to brass tacks — who will service the new-fangled machine? Perhaps more importantly, where will you get parts? It seems like at every Clean Show there is an exhibitor that presents a brand-new shirt unit from an unknown company. I give them all the credit in the world. I've seen some absolutely brilliant designs, but breaking into the U.S. market to compete with mainstays such as Sankosha, Unipress and Forenta is a herculean task! That said, I remember when Sankosha was the new kid, so it isn't impossible. In 1989, I did not have anyone to give me the advice I just gave you. I was one of the first people to buy a FujiCar shirt unit. (It was introduced in Atlanta in 1987.) That isn't a misprint. That company went on to become FujiStar and YAC, but was originally FujiCar. There was virtually no dealer network or parts

Continued on page 12

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Don Desrosiers

Congratulations on making it to Clean '22

Continued from page 10
availability. Fortunately, I am mechanically inclined, resourceful and the equipment is quite durable, but if I had read what I just wrote 33 years ago, I probably would have bought something else. Through the years, I often made my own parts and went on to buy three FujiCar units. In fact, I started out as a consultant because of my expertise with these units. The importer was remarkably inept with them and he used to hire me to fix them and/or teach people how to get maximum productivity with them. But, the point is, I am not describing you. If your mechanic isn't going to be capable of keeping this unit

in tip-top shape for 10 to 15 years, there may be cause to keep looking.

☑ **What about parts availability and their cost?** If the unit that you are looking at is a next-gen of a previous model, chances are good that most of the parts have been around for a while. There surely is a new key component, but by and large, the valves, springs and hoses are not unlike those of the previous model. You also want to make sure that a key consumable is not cost-prohibitive to replace. Pads and covers come to mind. The show extends to Monday and Tuesday this time around, so the parts department for your dealer or the manufacturer will be open

on Monday. Call them from the show floor and ask for a price on a couple of parts that you think might need replacing.

☑ **Once you have narrowed the shirt units that you like to two or three, ask to make an appointment to be trained on the unit.** Don't expect to do this, unannounced, during a busy time. This is the busiest that the sales reps gets during the course of a year or two, so expecting them to give you a quality training session on a moment's notice is unreasonable. That said, they are *very interested* in getting you excited about their shirt unit, and do want to train you, they just want to train you properly. Make an ap-

pointment with the sales rep, set an alarm for 15 minutes beforehand (don't be late) and maybe even make a training film. Your appointment may be right at closing time. During your training session, don't be concerned if you aren't a shirt presser. You may hire someone that isn't a shirt presser, so being all thumbs might just be perfect. If they can turn you into a decent shirt presser in 15 minutes, this could be very promising, don't you think?

☑ **Avoid getting fixated on the purchase price.** The acquisition price is a one-time, fixed number that is spread out over time. The cost of labor, utilities, maintenance and parts — all go on forever. Any single one of

those things can dwarf the price of a unit. It makes sense for an exhibitor to discount a show-floor model because they have shipped the unit to Atlanta and if they don't sell it they will ship it back to their facility after the show — that's two trips on one truck with no sale. If they sell it to you, they save the cost of the deadhead trip back to their facility. Instead, it goes to yours, and you get it in record time. However, this is no deal if you are getting the wrong unit. Saving \$1,000 here is very shortsighted, if this is the wrong machine for you.

Do the same thing for POS systems. The features will overwhelm you. These days, systems can do more than you can imagine. Focus on employee training, ease of use and monthly user fees over acquisition costs.

As for the cosmic "new idea to spark your sales," this requires a special technique. This is what I do. It's not easy to stay on track. Start at one end of the show floor and go up and down each aisle, one side only and then back down the same aisle, but this time checking out the booths on the opposite side. At each booth, get a clue if there is something there that you need to return to. Don't stop at any booth right now. If you do, you will run out of time. It's difficult to stay focused, but it is important. If you see a booth that has something that you want to investigate, make a note of it and the booth number. Since you're doing this systematically, your notes will be in geographical order. This will be handy later when you go back to these booths. Once you have covered the entire show floor — depending on how many booths that you have to visit — you can either prioritize them, or visit them in order.

Follow these tips and this will be the best show ever!

"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 laundries 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 phone (508) 965-3163, or email to: tailwind.don@me.com. The Tailwind web site is at www.tailwindsystems.com.

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THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

The magic number of route development

4330: What does this number mean to you and how does it relate to routes?

Plant operators tend to look at reports and numbers to gauge how their business is doing. There is nothing wrong with looking at a dashboard and monitoring the numbers.

Let's look at some benchmarks that you can achieve on your routes.

• **4330:** It is what your

route should be averaging per week.

A lot of routes hit five figures weekly, but then they have to split in order to continue to be serviced in one van.

After 21 years of being in the industry, \$4,330 a week is the average a route van should be doing. This can be your first van or your 21st van.

• **4330:** This could also be the number of pieces you

service a month on a route. That's basically over 1,000 pieces a route day for the four days a week of service. I think this is a pretty good goal to shoot after.

• **4330:** This is also the number of bags you should be able to pick up in a six-month period.

While some people look at dollars, others look at piece counts or like to look at how many bags got picked up.

• **4330:** This should be the

amount of dollars you budget in a year for route development. This could go towards brochures, sales bonuses, or any other marketing strategy that you have. Routes don't always grow on their own.

When it comes to sales, **4330** takes on a new meaning. The **43** represents how many attempts in the week your driver should make; the **3** represents the amount of new starts per week; and the

0 represents the number of excuses they should bring to the table.

• **4330:** This is the amount of people who I have worked with during the past 21 years. OK. I just made this number up, but I was struggling to figure out another way to utilize **4330**.

After 21 years of being in the industry, \$4,330 a week is the average a route van should be doing.

Seriously we have had the pleasure of working with a lot of great route developers, route managers, route mentors, and the business owners that know the numbers above are genuine and easily attainable.

Finally **4330** is the shameless plug for the booth that we will be in at Clean 2022 in Atlanta this month, and if you desire to hit any of these numbers mentioned above, come see us.

We look forward to seeing you at the show.

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

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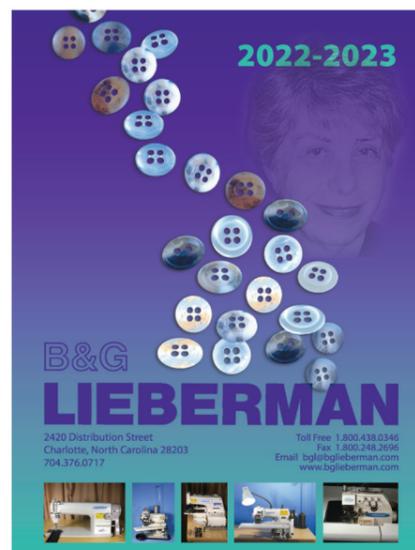
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Who's showing what

A preview of the Clean '22 exhibit

Clean 2022 at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, GA, will feature several hundreds of companies exhibiting just about everything imaginable that is needed to operate a successful drycleaning business. To help readers prepare for their visit to the show, we asked our advertisers to provide information based upon their plans. Booth numbers are subject to change. Consult the official Clean 2022 directory distributed at the show for the final listings.

A.L. Wilson Chemical Co.

Now more than ever, stain removal matters. With piececounts still down, exceeding expectations is more important than ever. You need to deliver clean, well-finished, spotless garments every time. Use Wilson stain removers to help drive piececounts back up!

www.alwilson.com

Booth 2555

Air World Pads and Covers

Air World Pads and Covers manufactures pads and covers used by drycleaners and launderers for every pressing machine in the market. Air World is the innovator in silicone pads for drycleaning and laundry and is the originator of the silicone Dream Pad for drycleaning presses and the patented Silicone Flannel for shirt units and laundry presses. Silicone Flannel is used to replace nylon flannel pads for shirt and laundry presses. Air World manufactures its own mesh net bags for laundry and dry cleaning, iron shoes, spotting brushes and commercial grade lint and pill remover.

www.airworldpads.com

Booth 3554

B&G Lieberman Co. Inc.

New Hawo Heat Seal Bagging machines and New Organix compostable non-poly garment bag rolls. New Liebersew Auto Direct Drive Sewing machines straight stich and button sewer. Super durable shirt buttons.

www.bglieberman.com

Booth 3870

See ads on pages 12 & 14

BeCreative 360

We're a team of marketing experts who also happen to have decades of dry cleaning experience under our collective belts. The result is a perfect storm of knowledge and creativity that produces supremely effective marketing materials for our clientele. Simply put, we create for your business to create more business. Your browser does not support the video tag.

Turn your customers into a marketing engine: The reputation of your business precedes you, and customers new and old will react accordingly. Yelp, Facebook, Twitter, Google... countless testimonials are floating around cyberspace, and they are affecting your ability to keep old customers coming back and to attract new customers. They comprise your brand's reputation. With BeCreative360, your business can monitor reviews from all major sites in one place, gain new reviews, manage your customer feedback, and amplify your best reviews everywhere.

www.becreative360.com

Booth 4334

See ad on page 7

Cleaners Business

Cleaner Business Systems' feature-rich Web-based software will help with control of pricing, maximizing upcharges and advertising effectively to your customers. Affordable customization services ensure that a business's work flow will have a perfect partner — no need to make changes because of typical

software limitations. Installation and training are easy with the company's knowledgeable service techs and staff. CBS solutions are used across a wide section of the drycleaning industry, including full price, valet, route services, cleaners/prepay, hotel services and more. CBS's design includes features such as a precision lot management system and integration with major assembly conveyors, making it an ideal solution for large operations, while simple features like the employee time clock, detailed reports and easy-to-operate design make it a perfect solution for any drycleaning operation.

www.cleanerbusiness.com

Booth 4032

See ad on page 3

Cleaner's Supply

Cleaner's Supply is the largest supplier of drycleaning products in America, having more than 20,000 products in stock. The company offers a variety of customprinted products such as bags, invoices, mats, hangers, garment covers, heat seals and more. For same-day shipping, place an order before 5 p.m. EST, and it will ship that day. Shipping is free on all orders over \$99.

www.cleanersupply.com

Booth 4322

See ad on page 38

Columbia/ILSA Machines

Columbia/ILSA Drycleaning Systems has provided innovation, reliability & craftsmanship to every product it makes for more than 40 years. Innovations are represented in the model lineup, which will be on display, running live at the show.

Come see America's best-selling brand of Drycleaning machines built & designed for Sensene™ solvent. Our Sensene™ machine will be running live demonstrations throughout the four-day show. Just look for the Sensene™ Headquarters Banner.

Our worldwide dealer network will be on site to assist in and explain all products. Stop by to see how we take complicated to simple. Columbia/ILSA drycleaning systems models include IPURA, Compact, Performance C Series, Vantage Series and others.

www.columbiailsa.com

Booth 3728

See ad on page 17

Drycleaning & Laundry Institute

DLI works to protect the industry every day by getting ahead of government initiatives that impact professional cleaners and marshaling the industry to share feedback. By leading the charge, DLI offers simple ways for professional cleaners to engage with their elected representatives.

www.dlionline.org

Booth 928

See ad on page 35

European Finishing Equipment (Hi-Steam)

Hi-Steam will exhibit its full line of tensioning equipment, starting with the most popular SAM-451 multi-garment finisher, the new and deluxe Turbo-440 shirt finisher, which takes up less space, uses less steam and gives a great finish with very little touch-up. Hi-Steam will also have on display the economical and highproduction finisher TURBO-JR and, for shirts and blouses, the innovative all-electric shirt finisher the Turbo-Jr(E), as well as the classic, rotating form finisher JAM-510R, and the most powerful pant topper, PAM-510P. Also on display will be a full line of vacuum and blowing boards in all sizes and shapes, accompanied by the popular line of mini-boilers (regular and automatic pump for all day pressing). Hi-Steam will also have its spotting board with ultra vacuum, two cold guns, and light above the spotting area. Demonstrations with professional pressers will show what these machines can do.

www.histeam.com

Booth 3428

See ads on pages 22 & 40

EzProducts International Inc.

EzProducts International Inc. plans to exhibit our made in the USA heat seal presses and permanent text and barcode labels. Also on display is our EzLabel Dispenser and EzLabel Off, which safely removes permanent barcode labels and residue. Additionally, we will have the original MBH Rope-Ties that eliminate tangles sleeves in the washer.

www.ezpi.us

Booth 3303

See ad on page 36



Firbimatic

Firbimatic is a leader in commercial and industrial drycleaning machine manufacturing, design and development, its success and growth driven by international markets and being at the forefront of innovative technologies. Firbimatic drycleaning machines have advanced manufacturing solutions and the company introduces revolutionary products into the USA marketplace. Firbimatic has many different commercial and industrial drycleaning machine models for a variety of solvents.

www.firbimaticusa.com

Booth 3954

Forenta

At the last Clean Show in New Orleans, we introduced a new generation of scissor and clear-buck dry-cleaning presses that featured many improvement and updates. To build on that success, we will be introducing the next generation of our legendary Large-V and Small-V laundry presses at the Atlanta Clean Show. These presses will feature many of the same updates as our dry-cleaning presses, including improvements in the control package, timing system, safety system and overall aesthetics. Although we've packed these laundry presses full of improved features, they still retain their patented multi-step head closing mechanism, which continues to be the industry gold standard due to its unique combination of speed, squeezing force and minimal air consumption. Of course, we will have our full line-up of presses on display as well - shirt units, dry-cleaning presses, puff irons, steam-air finishers, etc. We invite everyone to stop by our booth to say hello and to find out how we can help you be successful in your garment finishing operation. Forenta - your partner in excellence.

www.forentausa.com

Booth 3528

See ad on page 13

Five the clean Facts Show

1 Started in 1977 in Chicago, the World Education Congress for Laundry and Drycleaning was soon dubbed the **Clean Show**.

2 Host cities include: Atlanta (this will be the 4th time it has hosted Clean; Chicago (4); **Las Vegas (6)**; **New Orleans (6)**; Orlando (2); and Dallas (1).

3 Future Clean Shows will take place in Orlando, Florida, in August of 2025 and in Las Vegas, Nevada in July of 2027.

4 Clean 2019, the most recent show, had more than 11,000 registrants some 430 exhibiting companies occupying 224,500 net square feet at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, LA.

5 This will be the first show for Messe Frankfurt who purchased the show from its sponsoring associations who continue to help coordinate it today: Drycleaning and Laundry Institute; Textile Care Allied Trades Association; Coin Laundry Association; Association for Linen Management; and the Textile Rental Services Association of America.

Exhibit Hall Hours

Saturday, July 30 - 10 am to 5 pm

Sunday, July 31 - 9 am to 5 pm

Monday, August 1 - 9 am to 5 pm

Tuesday, August 2 - 9 am to 3 pm

For more information, visit www.cleanshow.com

Continued on page 18

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Who's showing what

A preview of the Clean '22 exhibit

Fulton Boiler Works

Fulton Boiler Works is headquartered in Pulaski, New York, and is a privately owned manufacturer of steam, hot water and thermal fluid equipment. Fulton has been selling boilers in the Dry Cleaning industry for over 70 years.

We will be showcasing our tried-and-true Classic Vertical Tubeless Boiler by displaying a 15 HP Natural Gas fired boiler. Also, to complement the steam product offering we will also have a true to life size of a VSRT-30 cutaway view. Customers can come and see the actual inner materials and thickness of the high quality of our high efficiency boilers firsthand.

On hand to answer all your questions will be our managers who include managers for the USA, our Export Sales Manager, and our Canadian Sales Manager - combined have over 80 years' experience in our field.

www.fulton.com
Booth 3438
See ad on page 31

Garment Management Systems

Formed in 2012, Garment Management Systems (GMS) was born with a vision to build revolutionary automated dry cleaning systems to the garment management industry and a focus on making them cost-effective, effortless and dependable.

www.garmentmanagement.com
Booth 1606
See ad on page 11

GreenEarth Cleaning

GreenEarth Cleaning is very much looking forward to catching up with friends old and new in person, to share the latest news about the GreenEarth difference! Formed in 1999, GreenEarth Cleaning has developed a sustainable drycleaning process for the garment care industry. With more than 6,000 points of service worldwide, affiliate members are able to use all GreenEarth intellectual property, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, licensed products and know how for cleaning with GreenEarth's proprietary liquid silicone and associated products. GreenEarth Cleaning is a gentle clean, that is kind to clothes and the planet - its optimized system eliminates waste disposal costs and saves up to 50% per load on utilities, and their associ-

ated costs. Additionally, the GreenEarth team provide expert guidance to support their affiliates in running their businesses. This includes in-plant and virtual technical support, marketing support, and landlord relations support. GreenEarth's innovative product range has led to companies in the garment manufacturing, garment retailing, real estate, insurance, and banking industries recommendation of the use of the GreenEarth System based upon its performance and its ability to eliminate environmental and health impacts.

www.greenearthcleaning.com
Booth 3454
See ad on page 23

Memories Gown Preservation

Memories Gown Preservation wholesale gown cleaning, preservation and shipping services to bridal salons, dry cleaners, tux shops and brides all across the country.

www.gownspreservations.com
Booth 4332
See ad on page 19

Miele

The professional range with a load capacity of 20 lb. to 70 lb. now comes with completely new benefits for professional use. With patented technology, e.g. the Miele honeycomb drum, these machines guarantee the maximum service life for your valuable laundry, award-winning design and intelligent operation with the Profitronic M freely programmable controls. Innovative technology also means increasingly optimized efficiency. With the development of the WetCare system we have even gone one step further. Wet cleaning of outer garments made of sensitive fibers, synthetic fabrics and high performance fibers, is an essential part of modern textile care, since the majority of all textiles can be wet cleaned nowadays. The original wet cleaning system developed by Miele, WetCare, fulfills all the requirements for outstanding cleaning results, with perfectly cared for fibers and a delightful freshness to the clean textiles. With WetCare, Miele offers a full system of perfect wet-cleaning care comprising washer-extractors, dryers and finishing equipment.

www.mieleusa.com
Booth 3544
See ad on page 24

NIE Insurance

NIE Insurance offers commercial insurance quotes for dry cleaners and laundromats in most states. It is endorsed by DLI, the Southwest Drycleaners Association and South East Fabricare Association. The primary insurance carrier utilized is National Fire and Indemnity Exchange, a reciprocal exchange formed in 1915 by the National Association of Dyers and Cleaners. The Exchange is rated "A Exceptional" by Demotech, Inc. The Exchange offers coverage for Building, Contents, Liability, Business Income, Equipment Breakdown, and Customer Garments.

Workers Compensation, Commercial Auto and other policies issued by Hartford and Travelers are also available.

www.nieinsurance.com
Booth 4109
See ad on page 5



Parker Boiler

Throughout the United States and around the world, Parker boilers are dependably furnishing steam and hot water for almost every type of service. If maintenance costs are high or your present boiler is the cause of expensive shutdowns, stop by our booth and let us prove to you how a truly superior boiler can cut your steam or hot water generating costs.

www.parkerboiler.com
Booth 3464
See ad on page 2

Realstar, USA

Realstar is an established company that has earned itself a reputation as one of the highest quality manufacturers of dry cleaning machines. Our company boasts a complete range of solutions for the most demanding of dry cleaners. You will find Realstar machines versatile, practical, and economical.

The KM Series is Realstar's most popular line of alternative solvent machines, available in 40 to 90 lb. capacities. This series offers three solvent tanks, distillation, and various filter configurations. Professional dry cleaners know they can count on Realstar technology and de-

sign to produce the finest possible cleaning results utilizing alternative solvents.

www.realstarusa.com
Booth 3238
See ad on page 30

Sanitone by Fabritec

Fabritec, the maker of Sanitone, Stamford, and Fabritec brand detergents, is excited to bring their experienced technicians to Clean '22 to help new and existing customers tackle modern cleaning problems. Our flagship shirt detergent, Platinum, has been enhanced with "Soft Touch Technology" to impart better finishing and hand on garments, meaning your customers' shirts are softer, brighter, and longer-lasting than ever! This results in return business for you with fewer reruns, claims, and lower labor costs.

www.sanitone.com
Booth 3202
See ads on pages 15 & 25

Sankosha USA, Inc.

We are expecting a vibrant Clean Show! The Saturday to Tuesday format should provide (recently) busy dry cleaners with an opportunity to peruse the booths over the weekend. We are all looking forward to getting together and taking this opportunity to improve our industry. We expect with the tight labor market that many dry cleaners will be looking at options to gain efficiency, quality and ease of use in their equipment. With that in mind Sankosha is debuting a new LP-5600U Hi-Speed Single Buck Shirt Press and an LP-6000U Hi-Speed Single Collar Cuff Press. The focus of our machinery lineup is automation and specialization; highlighting our reliable, user friendly equipment. With the following Clean Show being three years down the road in Orlando, this makes Clean '22 in Atlanta the place to be to stay in tune with the pulse of our resilient industry.

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Booth #4332

AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE



BY PETER BLAKE

Keeping your focus after the Clean Show

Last issue I spoke on the ways to leverage your Clean Show participation and how to get the most out of the events.

This issue, I want to take the next step and provide some insight into organizing your thoughts and putting some systems in place to take advantage of all you have seen and experienced in Atlanta.

If you are like me, you go to these events and you get caught up in the excitement and the positive feelings. I admit it, I get re-energized and filled with a desire to improve everything. I get that feeling I am going to come back to the home office and light the world on fire with all these great ideas, all the new programs and services I've seen. I am ready to strive forward.

Then, I get back and I'm hit with the same issues and challenges I left. I get dragged back into the same routines and bad habits.

I have all great intentions of implementing new programs

and policies, but I never seem to be able to make that jump. You know what they say, "The road to Hell is paved with good intentions."

We all do the same thing. We lose focus and energy and have trouble recapturing the momentum we started to feel.

Here are some ways to keep on track, and to keep your focus.

Educational Sessions

It is a great idea to take copious notes. Review them when you get back to the hotel. Decide what is important to you.

I think, for the most part, we all do that. Now, take it one step further. For each educational session you attend, decide on three takeaways — three key concepts that resonated with you — that you want to take back and implement.

Take those three concepts, just the headlines, not the details — and post them on a separate list combining key concepts from each program

you attend.

Then, when you have the list, think about a key staff person in those areas that would implement those ideas and write their name next to it. That will remind you to discuss the program with them at a later date.

Next, rank the ideas on a scale so you know which are the most important, the best value, and will have the greatest return.

When you get back to the plant, make it a priority to meet with those staff people you have highlighted in those areas to review the broad ideas and to get them thinking of possible implementation strategies.

That way you will have a greater likelihood of staying on top of the ideas that are most important.

Don't get overwhelmed with too many great ideas and projects. Prioritize them.

Look at what you feel will have the most impact. If you come back from Clean with a

notebook of ideas, it can be daunting to go through and you can get paralyzed by over-commitment and over-analysis.

Visiting Exhibit Booths

When you are on the show floor, you are going to see new products, services, equipment, automation devices, and much more.

DLI/TCATA reception on Saturday night from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. where you can meet your peers from all around the country.

I have a terrible memory at times, so don't be afraid to take a few pictures of people you meet and make sure you have their name badge in the picture.

For each educational session you attend, decide on three takeaways — three key concepts that resonated with you — that you want to take back and implement.

You will see the best the industry has to offer. Everyone has a cell phone now, so use it. Take pictures with a purpose. When you see a piece of equipment that you like, or an innovative service, or even some new supplies that catch your eye — document it.

Take a picture of something that will remind you why it caught your interest. Your pictures should trigger a recollection of what you found special. Take a video of someone demonstrating it.

Have a record to which you can refer.

I bet many of you are just like me and can't remember names or people. Take a picture not only of the service or equipment, but snap a picture of the salesperson you spoke with so you can go back and continue the conversation.

If you find something you are intent on investing in, after you take the picture text it to a key manager telling them something like, "I just saw a great piece of equipment to help increase efficiency.

Ask me about it when I get back." That way they will also begin to get invested in the idea and will help you start implementation.

Social Events

There is so much value to be had throughout the entire Clean Show experience including all the off-floor activity: the cocktail parties, the company dinners, etc.

Make sure you go to the

That way when you are back at work a couple weeks later and you have a question for that person, you can look back and see who it was and how to contact them.

The real key to taking advantage of the opportunities you will find at Clean or any event like this is to be organized.

You will return to your own operation and be ready to make all the changes you have envisioned. You will be ready to invest in your company, but all too often we lose that momentum and weeks go by before we start to implement the programs.

All too often, we never take the steps necessary because we either have forgotten or don't have the same drive we initially felt.

Don't let that happen to you. Document the best ideas. Work to get buy-in from your key staff.

Make sure you have proper documentation and information to get the help you need to succeed.

Conferences like this can be a great opportunity, but only if you act.

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

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WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

Cooling problems during hot weather

I'm going to interrupt the sequence of the articles on the drying cycle of the drycleaning machine to insert this, my annual article on cooling systems.

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 ambient (surrounding) temperature rises. Most of the cooling problems will rear their ugly heads during the drying segment of the drycleaning cycle. In the drycleaning machine sense, drying is all about moving heat energy. The media which moves all this heat is called a refrigerant (most machines use R22 Freon). Some of the newer models and the K4 machines use R400 Freon as refrigerants and some form of coolant (generally water or a water and glycol mixture).

It doesn't matter which Freon is used. The process itself requires a device called a *refrigeration condenser*, which changes hot, vapor-rich Freon gas back into liquid Freon, which is

constantly being recycled during the drying segment of the drycleaning cycle.

In most cases this condenser is cooled by a liquid (there are a few air-cooled condensers that are not the topic of this article). Hot, compressed Freon gas, if forced by the refrigeration compressor into the refrigeration condenser where it is cooled and condensed by water (called a coolant).

In this case, we transfer the heat from a vapor-rich, hot, compressed Freon gas to the coolant flowing through the refrigeration condenser.

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. A pump circulates water through the drycleaning machine's refrigeration condenser; over an evaporative cooling media (looks like corrugated plastic tubes), which has air forced through aiding in evaporation; 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 sump for recirculation through the drycleaning machine's refrigeration condenser.

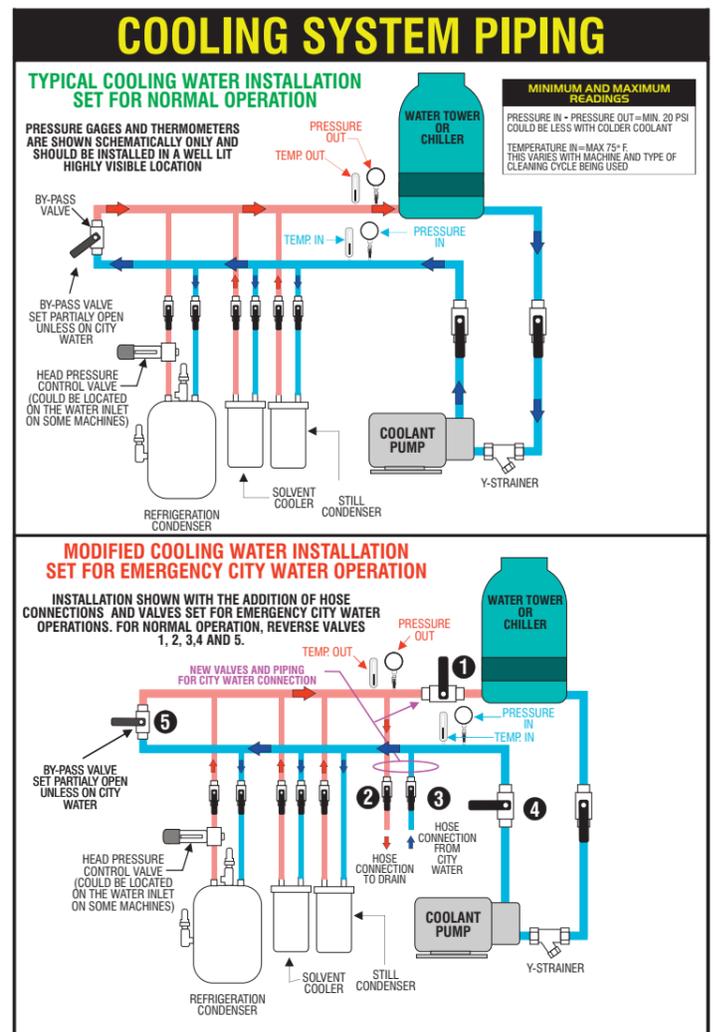
3. Chiller. Water or a mixture of water and glycol (this mixture is called a brine) is circulated by a pump through the drycleaning machine's refrigeration condenser; cooled by a separate refrigeration system; recirculated through the drycleaning machine's refrigeration condenser.

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. The amount of coolant moving through the condenser.

B. Heat Transfer Efficiency. The ability of the condenser to move heat to the coolant.

Each of the above 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. The pump must supply enough pressure as well as a sufficient flow 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 the still condenser and solvent cooler); in the case of water towers and chillers also 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 the drycleaning machine inlet and outlet pressure and temperature readings when it is working correctly, for future reference. Let's look at what the thermometers and pressure gages can tell us about the condition of the coolant system.

The following are some possible scenarios for different combinations 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 build-up

Continued on page 24

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Bruce Grossman

Cooling problems during hot weather

Continued from page 22

– a build-up of scale inside the piping 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 or a faulty chiller

refrigeration system.

B. Faulty pump operation.

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

A. Heavy scale build-up — a build-up of scale inside the piping 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.

Now, back to the drycleaning machine operation. Problems with the cooling system are most

likely to appear during the dry cycle. To be more specific, towards the end of the dry cycle, when the drycleaning machine goes into cool down mode.

The heat exchanger coil transfers much of the heat from the Freon to the air stream during the drying

tion condenser. However, during the cool down mode, solenoids and/or dampers shift, and nearly the entire heat load is now dumped into the refrigeration condenser.

This type of problem is indicated by the refrigeration compressor going into a

Most of the time, this would cause an error message on the programmer screen and require a manual reset of the refrigeration high pressure safety switch. This condition is almost always caused by either a clogged Y strainer or excessive scaling inside the refrigeration condenser.

On most drycleaning machines, there is a refrigeration head pressure adjusting valve which controls the refrigeration head pressure by varying the coolant flow to the refrigeration condenser. This valve is adjusted to give sufficient refrigeration head pressure for efficient refrigeration system operation. When scale builds up in the refrigeration condenser past the point where the normal adjustment of the head pressure adjusting valve can compensate for, many drycleaners simply open the valve wider in the *very mistaken* belief they have actually fixed something.

What they have done is “kicked the can down the road” and will pay a lot of extra money in solvent and energy for the privilege.

The accompanying illustrations (see page 22) show schematics for typical cooling water installations on systems using a water tower or chiller.

The top illustration is what is most commonly found; the bottom is an installation with the **addition of valves 1,2,3** which are used when city water hook-up is included in the installation. This city water hook-up provides not only an emergency back-up for continuing operations when there is a failure in the normal cooling system, but is a convenient access for connecting a descaling pump.

Bruce Grossman is the Chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing. EZtimers manufactures machines that make your machines run better. For those needing to replace Zero-Waste or Galaxy misters, see our SAHARA model. For those with boiler problems, check out our EZ-Level and EZ-Dose machines. For more information on EZtimers products, visit www.eztimers.com. Please address any questions or comments for Bruce to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.

Problems with the cooling system are most likely to appear during the dry cycle — more specifically, when the machine goes into cool down mode.

mode, and only a small portion of the heat load is dumped into the refrigeration

high pressure condition and tripping the refrigeration high pressure safety switch.




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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

Understanding wetcleaning chemistry

There are many cleaners who have problems doing wetcleaning or using wetcleaning chemicals because they do not understand the products that they are using.

There are some wetcleaning chemicals that are incompatible with others. The result is that the garment may have rings or discolorations.

Some wetcleaning chemicals — although labeled as safe and mild — may not react well with silks and other fabrics.

Other wetcleaning chemicals may remove color, break down spandex and affect glued-on beading. If the chemicals have a high pH, the soil may be removed but so will the color. For that reason, it is important to use all wetcleaning chemicals that are not only safe but also compatible.

For example, some cleaners may use a spray spotter or lubricant that will break down when wetcleaned with another manufacturer's

product. Your chemical representative can give the information needed to achieve safe and consistent wetcleaning.

Types of Detergents

- **Anionic.** If the cleaning surfactant is anionic in nature, it means that the detergent has a negative charge.

This detergent is effective for cleaning most fabrics and removing the necessary soil. This detergent, however, is not compatible with cationic detergents and cationic softeners which are commonly used for silks and wools.

If it is used with cationic products they will counteract each other, resulting in rings and loss of cleaning effectiveness.

It does not mean that you cannot pre-spot wools and silks but you should use pre-spotters that are compatible.

- **Cationic.** The cationic surfactant used for cleaning has a positive charge.

This type of detergent is good for silk and wool because it coats the fiber. It prevents the wool from

shrinking because it keeps the fiber lubricated.

As we previously explained if you use an anionic detergent for spotting, it will break down when in contact with this cationic detergent.

Some wetcleaning chemicals — although labeled as safe and mild — may not react well with silks and other fabrics.

This detergent should not be used on glued-on trimmings or pigment print.

It can loosen the adhesive binder used. It also tends to remain in the fabric and will produce rings and swales if used for cleaning quilted fabrics.

This detergent is usually acid in nature which means it also has dye setting properties and is not considered an aggressive cleaner.

- **Nonionic.** This cleaning surfactant has a neutral charge and is compatible with any detergent.

It is also effective as a grease remover. This non-ionic detergent can be a base for tannin, protein and grease remover pre-spotters.

It is used as a softening agent for wools and silks.

Acids are found in tannin formulas and cationic detergents for cleaning wools and silks.

- **Alkalis.** These are chemicals that release hydroxyl ions in the presence of water.

- **Citrus Degreasers.** This is a pre-spotter used for removing dry side stains such as grease, oil, ink, lipstick, paint, etc.

This type of pre-spotter is made up of oil from citrus products and is a nonionic surfactant. It can affect pigment print, glued-on beading and spandex.

It can be damaging to some dyes on silks, acetates and cottons. It should be tested before use.

pH

The pH of water is 7 and is considered neutral. When chemicals fall under this range it is termed an acid.

When the pH is above 7, it is termed an alkali.

The strength of the chemical involved can be significant if the pH changes.

For example, if the pH of an alkali is 8 and another chemical has a pH of 9, it means that the chemical in the 9 range can be 10 times as strong. The same condition occurs with acids.

- **Acids.** These are chemicals that release hydrogen ions in the presence of water.

Alkali increases the cleaning action of any detergent or pre-spotter.

The stronger the alkali, the more soils and stains it can remove but it can also make it potentially more dangerous.

If you mix an alkali with a citrus-based degreaser, it can make it much stronger but with more safety factors to the fiber and dye.

When using citrus degreasers it is safer to use products with only a slight alkalinity.

Summary

If you used one set of wetcleaning chemicals from the same company you can be assured of complete compatibility.

The chemical company can supply you with necessary safety data for doing effective wetcleaning.

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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Garment Alerts

from the International Independent Garment Analysis Service by Dan Eisen

1) A few cleaners are having problems with Tommy Bahama shirts.

Print and solid-colored shirts are losing color when drycleaned. Some print shirts have labels that say "Guaranteed to Fade," which is certainly an indication of poor dye fastness.

Laboratory tests have shown that wetcleaning poses less problems to the color.

2) Some high fashions may pose problems to the look of the garment. Gian Franco Ferre is a high-styled white gown with a stiff pleated collar which stands up. Loss of sizing occurs when the gown is drycleaned, causing the collar to become limp and lose its original look. An extremely short run will reduce the incidence of the problem.



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BUILDING VALUE



BY KERMIT ENGH

How close are you to your Freedom Point?

If you are like most business owners, your desire for freedom is hard-wired into your psyche. You could get a job with a fancy title, a lucrative salary and comprehensive benefits, but the desire to call your own plays has led you to the road less traveled. I was there, and my mother was proud of my executive position and the world travels that came along with it. But after three corporate layoffs, my desire to control my own destiny was paramount. That was 30 years ago on June 1.

However, having a company may not be enough to facilitate the freedom you imagined. Just because you are the boss, it does not mean you are liberated from demanding customers or needy employees undermining your freedom — especially in these times when it is nearly impossible to find new employees who actually want to work.

For that level of independence, you may need to sell your business and create a pool of cash that can generate the kind of income you need to fund the lifestyle you want. Selling your business may seem far off into the future, but if exiting your business now would give you the financial resources to do whatever you want, it may be worth considering sooner than later.

Figuring Out Your Freedom Point in Six Simple Steps

This has been the focus of the past dozen or so articles. Increase the value of your business to either be able to exit, or

have a better business allowing for a future exit. Not only are you potentially past the point of not having to work, you may be risking the freedom you have earned by hanging onto your business too long.

is based on a study that illustrates you can safely withdraw 4% of your nest egg in retirement without running out of cash.

According to Investopedia: The Four Percent Rule was cre-

ated using data on stock and bond returns over the 50-year period from 1926 to 1976. Before the early 1990s, experts generally considered 5% to be a safe amount for retirees to withdraw each year. Sceptical of whether this amount was sufficient, financial advisor William Bengen conducted an exhaustive study of historical returns in 1994, focusing heavily on the severe market downturns of the 1930s and early 1970s. Bengen concluded that, even during untenable markets, no historical case existed in which a four percent annual withdrawal exhausted a retirement portfolio in less than 33 years. The Four Percent Rule is more of a rule of thumb and depends on a few factors, like your asset mix, the state of the market when you begin drawing on your nest egg, inflation, and the length of retirement you need to finance.

Step 1: Estimate the income you will need to fund your freedom.

Step 2: Multiply by thirty-three. This is a subjective thing. You may aspire to live in a cabin in the woods or jet set from one exotic island to the next. The goal is to calculate the income level at which you will feel free without restraint, so err on the high side and you can always scale things back later. You have likely heard of the **Four Percent Rule**, which

Step 3: Calculate your wealth outside of your business. Get an estimate of value for your company. Estimate the cost of selling your company. Now estimate how close you are to the Freedom Point by assessing how much wealth you have created outside of your business. Do not include your primary residence in this calculation, because you will have to live somewhere after you sell your company. Include anything else that could be sold easily, such as stocks, bonds, commercial real estate, etc.

Step 4: Get an estimate of value for your company. Estimate the cost of selling your company. Now estimate how close you are to the Freedom Point by assessing how much wealth you have created outside of your business. Once you have calculated your assets outside of your business, deduct any debt you have on those assets. Let's imagine you want \$100,000 of income a year, which means you need to accumulate \$3,300,000 (\$100,000 x 33) of wealth outside of your primary residence, and you've accumulated \$400,000 outside of your business. To reach the Freedom Point, you would need to net \$2,900,000 (\$3,300,000 minus

\$400,000) from the sale of your business. Therefore, you need to estimate what the shares in your business might be worth to a buyer. While you may have heard a valuation rule of thumb in our industry, it is best to check with a professional.

Step 5: Estimate the cost of selling your company. There are a number of expenses to consider when selling your business. For example, you will need to pay tax on the proceeds of your sale. You may hire an intermediary (business broker or M&A professional) to sell your company, and they generally work on commission. You'll also need to pay a lawyer to paper your agreement.

Step 6: Calculate your Freedom Point. When you hand over the keys to your business, you will have to do so free and clear of any long-term debt. Therefore, you need to add the amount required to pay back any business loans to the total funds you need to accumulate to reach your Freedom Point.

Take the wealth you have outside of your company (estimated in **Step 3**) and combine it with the after-tax proceeds you expect to gain from the sale of your company while subtracting any long-term debt you need to pay back (estimated in **Step 5**). When they add up to a number greater than the nest egg, you'll need to fund a carefree retirement (estimated in **Step 2**), you've reached the Freedom Point.

At a Methods for Management Bureau meeting during

Continued on page 30

Think of it this way: Every day you retain ownership in your business beyond the Freedom Point, you are risking your freedom.

ated using data on stock and bond returns over the 50-year period from 1926 to 1976. Before the early 1990s, experts generally considered 5% to be a safe amount for retirees to withdraw each year. Sceptical of whether this amount was sufficient, financial advisor William Bengen conducted an exhaustive study of historical returns in 1994, focusing heavily on the severe market downturns of the 1930s and early 1970s. Bengen concluded that, even during untenable markets, no historical case existed in which a four percent annual withdrawal exhausted a retirement portfolio in less than 33 years. The Four Percent Rule is more of a rule of thumb and depends on a few factors, like your asset mix, the state of the market when you begin drawing on your nest egg, inflation, and the length of retirement you need to finance.

Your goal is to calculate the point where you will feel free of worry about money, so my

NEWSMAKERS

America's Best Cleaners (ABC) hosted their first Live Accelerator meeting for 2022 in Seattle, WA, in early May.

Affiliates gathered for a tour of Helena's Cleaner's new state-of-the-art facility designed by ABC's Chris White and Ed D'Ellicio.

Will Waterstraat, managing partner for the company, said, "We were honored to have ABC and affiliates tour our new facility. The insight and knowledge provided was invaluable. Chris's guidance throughout the process was second to none."

Later, ABC affiliates and partners enjoyed dinner at Seattle's Salty's restaurant on Alki Beach, where Executive Director Chris White presented affiliates with their annual certification awards.

Then, Will Waterstraat of Helena's (left) passed the Golden Iron to Norman Way (right), vice president of Puritan Cleaners, as Chris White watches. The passing of the Golden Iron symbolizes that the next Live



Accelerator meeting will take place where Puritan Cleaners resides in Richmond, VA. The meeting will run from Sept. 21 to 23.

On the following day, ABC affiliates Mary Mills of Sir Galloway Cleaners, Robert Strong of Country Club Cleaners, and Dianne Lee of The Press DC took turns offering their insights on diversification, sharing how they were able to expand their business plans to offer different services and achieve success during the pandemic.

As Executive Director Chris White noted, "The question wasn't if you should diversify, but to what degree diversification best fits the owner's goals, the market needs and the ability to build successful new businesses or service offerings that will provide sustainability in the mid- and long-term."

"It's easy to talk in hypotheticals, but the power comes from learning directly from your peers to understand their analysis, development and implementation and execution of their ideas," he continued. "These affiliates shared real world challenges and successes to aid their fellow affiliates in making smart business choices."

Other guest speakers who appeared during the event included Kevin Walter of Tasty Catering in Chicago, who discussed empowering team members by sharing company goals and critical KPI's.

The event concluded with ABC's "Hot Seat" program where affiliates formally present business ideas or challenges and obtain direct feedback in a very focussed format.



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Kermit Engh

How close are you to your Freedom Point?

Continued from page 28
 the past year, a member indicated that his financial advisor told him, "You don't have to work any longer if you don't want to." I asked him, "How did that make you feel?"

When your business makes up most of your net worth and selling it would garner enough money to live carefree for the rest of your life, there is no financial reason to continue owning your business.

You may enjoy the challenge, the social interactions, and the creative process of building a business, but looking strictly at the numbers, keeping it may be unnecessarily risky.

Think of it this way: Every

day you retain ownership in your business beyond the Freedom Point, you are risking your freedom. If your business were to falter beyond the Freedom Point, you would jeopardize everything for which you have worked.

What Options Do You Have at the Freedom Point?

When you have crested the Freedom Point and want to diversify (but not necessarily retire), you have a few options.

Option one could be to sell a **minority stake**. A very good friend of mine did this a couple of years ago to provide "Golden Handcuffs" for his key manager. Both are better off.

Option two could be to sell a **majority stake**. This option

may not reduce your workload, but it diversifies your personal wealth.

Finally, **option three** could be an **earn-out**. When you sell your company, you will likely have to agree to a transition period of sorts.

One of the most popular is called an earn-out, where you agree to continue to run your company as a division of your acquirer's business for some time. Your earn-out period may be as little as a year or as long as seven, but the average is three years.

Therefore, if you are past the Freedom Point and can see yourself wanting to step down in the next three to five years, an earn-out may be worth con-

sidering.

Building a successful business can be inherently rewarding, but when your personal balance sheet gets out of whack and you have reached

If the pandemic has impacted your thinking about the future, you are not alone.

the Freedom Point, it may be worth considering the risk you are shouldering and the options you have for sharing

some of it.

If the coronavirus pandemic has taught us anything, it is that nothing is for sure and a thriving business one day can turn into a struggling company overnight.

The speed at which COVID-19 shut down the economy has had a profound impact on the psyche of most business owners, which we measured by analyzing owners who recently completed the Value Builder questionnaire, a survey designed to assess a company's readiness to sell.

Our analysis compared the attitudes and intentions of business owners over the eight months leading up to the announcement of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, with their counterparts completing the questionnaire in the eight-month window after the pandemic began.

If the pandemic has impacted your thinking about the future, you are not alone. Once you crest the Freedom Point, it is worth asking yourself why you are continuing to shoulder all the risk.

Lastly, I want to reach back to the Short List Builder exercise from a previous article.

I have personal experience with this, as my partner and I sold a business in the past month to a person on our short list. This was accomplished without a broker or fee.

Our attorney indicated this was the smoothest transaction he had ever been involved with. The moral of story is be prepared.

See you at the Clean Show. If we have not met, please introduce yourself. I would enjoy meeting you and hearing your story. Until then, keep Building Value.

If you are curious as to how well your company is performing in the Value Drivers we have been discussing, go to: mfmbusinesscoaching.com to get your free Value Builders Score.

Kermit Engh has been an owner/operator in the drycleaning industry for over 29 years and has been a Methods for Management member for over 24 years. His positions as managing partner of MfM and as a Certified Value Builders Coach allow him to share his extensive background in strategic planning, finance, process improvement, packaging and 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@mfmi.com.




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How will new equipment affect utility costs?

Calculating the cost of compressed air

By Rusty Smith

Sometimes we read an article that instantly provokes us to dig deeper. Don Desrosiers' recent article "The true cost of buying new equipment," [National Clothesline April 2022] was one of those moments for me.

Don's article focused on expenses that are sometimes overlooked when purchasing equipment — padding cost, maintenance cost and the cost of replacement parts.

The fact that he barely touched on utility costs, other than saying that you should not ignore it, made me realize how often they can be overlooked.

Being in the press manufacturing business, my thoughts immediately focussed on a utility cost that is critical to any garment press — the cost of compressed air.

To be fair, the term "compressed air" does not show up as a line item on a monthly electric bill. So, it is understandable why a cleaner might ignore the fact that a certain press uses more compressed air than another press. However, by ignoring this basic truth, it is impossible to evaluate the true cost of ownership when deciding which press to

purchase.

What if it was possible, using information that is readily available, to estimate the amount of compressed air a press uses each month, and then convert that usage to a monthly electricity cost? And, what if, after seeing all of the press options at the Clean Show, you used this information to help determine the most cost-effective press to purchase?

There is truly no excuse for not doing the due diligence before making large capital expenditures.

We both know the answer to these questions — it means more profit for your business. Fortunately for our readers, the Forenta engineering department has introduced a formula that does just that: It quantifies the amount of money that will be spent on electricity due to the compressed air usage of a particular press.

Best of all, it doesn't matter which press manufacturer you are looking at. To use the formula and make a comparison, you will simply need the following information:

1. Free air per cycle. This information is shown on the press's specification sheet and is expressed in cubic feet. Every manufacturer publishes this information.

2. Your cost for electricity. This information is shown on your monthly electric bill and is expressed in cost per kilowatt-hour.

This cost will vary depending on the region of the country in which you are located, as will the layout of the monthly electric bill.

3. The number of cycles per minute that you will be using the press. This is an estimate based on your particular business volume. In this case, an estimate is OK at this point since you are comparing both models at the same production rate.

4. Your production schedule. This is an estimate for the number of hours in your production day, the number of production days in the week, and the number of production weeks in a year. Each drycleaning plant will be slightly different.

Compressed Air Cost Comparison

	Example Press A	Example Press B
Free Air per cycle (in cubic feet)*	0.31	1.75
Convert Free Air per cycle to electricity used	x 0.0035 = 0.001085	x 0.0035 = 0.006125
Cost of Electricity** (in dollars per kilowatt hour)	x 0.100 = 0.000109	x 0.100 = 0.000613
Cycles per Min. in Operation	x 1 = 0.000109	x 1 = 0.000613
Convert Minutes to Hours	x 60 = 0.006510	x 60 = 0.036750
Hours Per Day in Operation	x 8 = 0.05208	x 8 = 0.29400
Days Per Week in Operation	x 5 = 0.2604	x 5 = 1.4700
Weeks Per Year in Operation	x 50	x 50
Yearly Electricity Cost to operate this piece of equipment	= \$13.02	= \$73.50

*This information can be found on the equipment spec sheet.
**This information can be found on your monthly electric bill.

Given this information, one can simply plug in the numbers into the formula (see the graphic on the top right of page).

As you can see from the example, all of the variables make a difference in the yearly cost of electricity.

As you can also see, there is the possibility of saving hundreds of dollars over the life of a press simply by choosing the equipment that uses less compressed air.

By now, I am sure you are asking yourself, "Since the performance of different presses is very similar, how can there be such a difference in air consumption between presses?"

Without getting too technical in this article, the fact is that every manufacturer uses a little different head closing system on their laundry presses. Some use a simple lever system, some use a toggle linkage system, and one uses a crowbar leverage system.

Each of these systems uses a different amount of compressed air due to the mechanics behind the mechanism.

Comparing the three head closing systems would be a great case study in a Physics 101 class, but, this is not a technical article, per se.

So, to help explain it in layman's terms, consider a simple playground scenario. If little Johnny and little Timmy are seesawing together and they both weigh the same, everything is equal and smooth as long as they remain the same distance away from the center pivot point.

However, if Johnny wants to

have some fun and strand Timmy up in the air, he has a couple of choices. If possible, he can move further away from the pivot point. By doing so, he would use no more weight (force, or utility cost, if you will), he simply takes advantage of leverage.

His other option is to get a friend to sit with him, thus adding weight (force, or utility cost, if you will).

With either option, the performance is the same: he is stranding Timmy up in the air. However, the weight (force, or utility cost, if you will) needed to accomplish this, is very different. Thus, each head closing system requires a different amount of force/utility cost due to the mechanics of the system.

Enough with the boring technical stuff. All you really want to know is how to put more money into your pocket. I hope this article helps you do just that! With today's technology, the information you need to perform a good comparison is at your fingertips, from an equipment specification sheet to the price you pay for electricity on a utility bill.

There is truly no excuse for not doing the due diligence before making large capital expenditures. As my father said to me and my brothers many times when we were young, "Boys, ignorance is no excuse!"

Rusty Smith is the president and CEO of Forenta, designer and manufacturer of a wide range of garment products. The company is headquartered in Morristown, TN.

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KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

Fixing employee issues can create new ones

When I first started practicing law, the term “human resources” was not used to describe the *Personnel Department*. The word “personnel” was derived from a French military term for the bodies of persons engaged in service, in contrast to the equipment, which it called “material.” HR seems better than a military term for soldiers. In a business setting, there are products, machinery, offices, supplies, and other essential inanimate objects necessary to the operation, and there are people — the personnel.

The transition to calling the personnel department human resources was not necessary to understand the difference between employees and those inanimate objects, but an attempt to describe those employees in a warmer, less industrial way. That’s why some companies employ *associates* or *co-workers*. The word *employee* is too impersonal.

Other examples of words that have got out of fashion are “stewardess or steward” (flight attendant), “clicker” (remote), and “Kentucky Fried Chicken” (KFC). With respect to KFC, somehow the thinking is that reminding people they sell fried chicken will discourage them from eating there.

I am also reminded of comedian George Carlin’s routine on the difference between aggressive football (the Personnel Department) and pastoral baseball (the HR Department) when I think of the difference between Personnel and HR. As Carlin noted, in football you wear a helmet; in baseball you wear a cap. In football you receive a penalty; in baseball you make an error. HR is like baseball’s docile seventh inning stretch, while personnel is like football’s two-minute warning.

While the language has softened, the law has not. It is now outright dangerous to be more involved in human re-

sources than personnel management. The minute you try to get to the cause of a performance problem, you may find that it involves the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, or the various civil rights laws. Instead of making it attractive to salvage employees with performance problems, these laws make it dangerous to try. To take the language change into account, you can no longer tell an employee to “fix” or “eliminate” the issues affecting performance. You must now “engage in an interactive process” to determine if the issues (e.g., disability) can be “accommodated.” Current employment laws seem to create an incentive to treat performance issues clinically, rather than sympathetically.

“You were late, I don’t care why, and if it happens again, you’ll be fired” may be safer than asking why the employee was late. Disciplining an employee by saying: “You cannot say things like

that in the workplace” is certainly safer than “is something wrong with you or are you crazy?”

The more involved you become in the employee’s problems, the greater the obligation to address them. I am very much in favor of treating employees with dignity, respect, and sympathy. I believe the laws that make these practices difficult are well-intentioned and theoretically good. But, they cause unintended consequences. In fact, they make the most bizarre behaviors by employees potentially more protected. Courts are far too willing to find that the behavior puts you on notice of a medical condition or mental illness you might need to address. Therefore, do not be too quick to dive into performance problems like a human resource manager, instead of like a clinical personnel director. Ignorance can be bliss, and if a poor employee continues to perform poorly, it may be best to

cut him loose rather than attempt HR rehabilitation. A great employee who is slipping could be an exception, but once you trigger the ADA or FMLA, you must see it through.

Perhaps the best advice is to stay on top of performance problems. By the time a performance problem reaches the stage where you can no longer tolerate it, it may be too late to save the employee without involving those pesky employment laws. And remember, good employees resent poor employees, especially if nothing is done about poor performance. Act, but reluctantly get involved in the underlying causes.

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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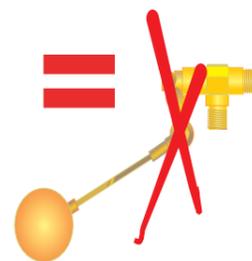
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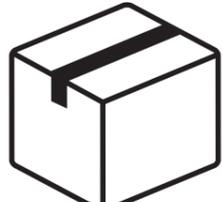
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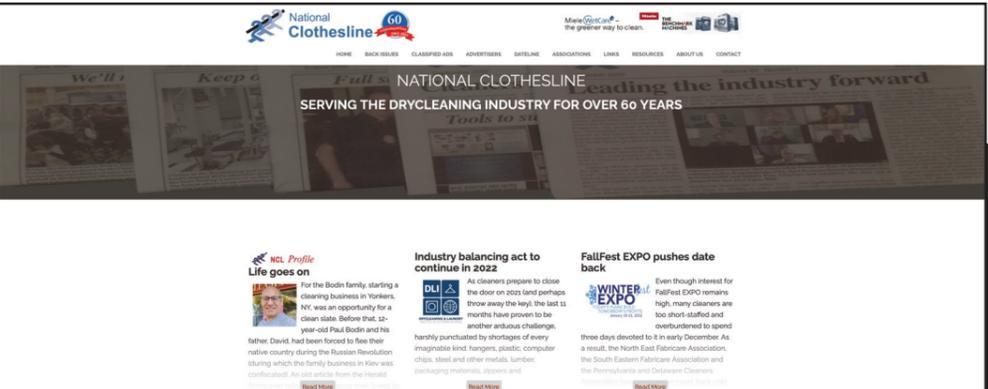
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NCL Profile
 Life goes on For the Bodin family starting a cleaning business in Yorkers, NY was an opportunity for a clean table. Before that, 12-year-old Paul Bodin and his father, David, had been forced to flee their native country during the Russian Revolution starting when the family business in Haly was confiscated. An old article from the August 2011 issue.

Industry balancing act to continue in 2022
 As cleaners prepare to close the door on 2021 (and perhaps throw away the key), the last six months have proven to be another arduous challenge, heavily punctuated by shortages of every imaginable kind: hinges, plastic, computer chips, steel and other metals, lumber, packaging materials, stickers and...

FallFest EXPO pushes date back
 Even though interest for FallFest EXPO remains high, many cleaners are too short-staffed and overburdened to spend three days devoted to it in early December. As a result, the North East Fabricare Association, the South Eastern Fabricare Association and the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners...

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