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Industry continues to convene post-Clean

Even with the biggest drycleaning industry event now in its rear view, a pair of associations plan to build on that momentum with important meetings scheduled in the coming months.

On the heels of Clean 2022 in Atlanta, the Southwest Drycleaners Association (SDA) and the North Carolina Association of Launderers and Cleaners (NCALC) will both host events.

First up, will be the SDA annual meeting, which will take place from Sept. 30 to Oct. 1 in Albuquerque, NM.

It will coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the famous Balloon Fiesta, held locally, which includes close to 600 hot air balloon participants annually during a nine-day event which attracts nearly one million visitors to the city.

It is one of the most photographed events in the world and it attracts balloon enthusiasts from over 50 countries.

SDA plans for attendees to

gather on Saturday morning, Oct. 1, to depart early for the balloon park.

Later that afternoon, attendees will return to the hotel for lunch and a noon Board of Directors meeting.

Then, at 1 p.m., SDA will present a seminar on "The Disruption Cycle" by Steve McKee of McKee Wallwork.

Disruption is certainly one word that quite a few cleaners can probably relate to having dealt with an often tumultuous business climate during the



Steve McKee

past couple of years. However, growth expert Steve McKee has spent about four years wading

through the waters of research findings regarding the forces of disruption. He has quite a few thoughts to share on the subject that will help attendees



BLUE SKIES ON THE HORIZON? This fall, there are already events scheduled in the wake of Clean 2022, including an SDA meeting that will coincide with the Balloon Fiesta's 50th Anniversary in Albuquerque, NM.

Photo by MarbleStreetStudio.com

recognize trouble signs in the future and how to incorporate best practices principles that

will help you cope with such changes better.

The association will also

conduct its Executive Committee Meeting on Friday, Sept. 30

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Greybull Stewardship acquires GreenEarth

Last month, equity firm Greybull Stewardship in Jackson, WY, announced that it had purchased GreenEarth Cleaning, the Kansas City, MO-based company that produces the popular alternative solvent of the same name.

It was the latest in a series of garment care company acquisitions that the firm has made through its Clean Brands company, including The

Clothes Bin textile recycling franchisor last year, as well as Martinizing Cleaners and Lapels Cleaners (who recently changed its name from

Lapels Dry Cleaning). Lapels previously purchased 1-800-DryClean, Pressed4time, Dry

Cleaning Station and Bizziebox. Now, all of those

drycleaning franchisor in the world.



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garment care companies fall under Greybull Stewardship's umbrella, making it the largest

environmentally friendly solu-

"For those in the professional garment industry, there is full acknowledgment that the industry embraces the evolving realities of environmental regulations as well as both landlord and consumer demand for environmentally friendly solu-

tions. No brand in the industry has a better reputation for environmental stewardship than GreenEarth," said Mason Myers, founder and CEO of Greybull.

"This acquisition is a natural extension of our commitment to the garment care space, and we're excited to partner with GreenEarth as they expand their presence in the industry,"

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DLI summer signature classes start this month

There are only two opportunities remaining this year to enroll in a Drycleaning and Laundry Institute signature drycleaning course, and one is about to pass by.

Those who don't sign up in time to take part in the association's summer introductory and/or advanced classes at its School of Drycleaning Technology in Maryland will have to wait until the Fall sessions for another chance.

The one-week Introduction to Drycleaning course will

meet from Aug. 8 to 12, and the two-week Advanced Drycleaning course will run from Aug. 15 to 26.



DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY
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The next installments will be Oct. 17 to 21 for the introductory course and Oct. 24 to Nov. 4 for the advanced class.

The Introduction to Drycleaning course, geared for new individuals to the industry

or with less than a year experience, examines some of the drycleaning basics: sorting loads; cleaning silk, satin and other fabrics; operating a machine; removing coffee, ink, grease and other stains from clothing; pressing pants, coats and skirts; and using tensioning equipment to improve finishing quality.

The Advanced course is for graduates of the introductory class or who have some hands-on experience and knowledge

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Sneak Peek Inside

10 The pitfalls of new purchases

You bought new equipment at Clean but you're not getting the results you expected. What went wrong?

14 Secret agent activations

Hydrogen peroxide is a very useful spotting agent that most cleaners do not use to its full potential.

22 Flatwork is good work

All you need is 100 to 250 sq. ft. of available space for a flatwork ironer that could turn out to be a big earner.

This issue went to press prior to the Clean Show. Look for our full coverage of the event in our September issue.

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Plantenga's CLEANERS

It was close to 60 years ago when route driver Henry Plantenga decided to take a different route.

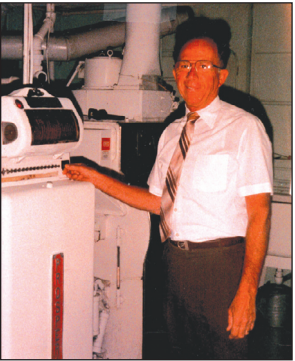
"He worked for Jim Robbins, who owned Robbins Cleaners, and he worked for him two or three years," explained LeAnn Plantenga-Glasser, Henry's daughter and the second generation of the family to own and operate the business. "Then, Jim wanted to get out of the business, so my dad decided to buy it and — it's kind of a funny story — he was going to name it Quality Cleaners, but there was another cleaners that wasn't even in the state of Michigan — they were somewhere in the midwest — and they were going to sue him for taking that name. So, he said, 'Nobody can take my name.' That's how it became Plantenga's Cleaners — not the easiest name to pronounce (it's Dutch) — but that's what he went with."

"You can't even imagine how many versions I've heard over the course of my lifetime, my favorite being the French version... *Plantagenét*," laughed Al Plantenga, LeAnn's nephew, Henry's grandson and the third generation of the family to own and operate the business.

He and LeAnn have been business partners for 15 years together, plus various family members have worked at the company since Henry bought the business in 1962.

"I know that before I was even born, when he started the business, my mom worked there. My grandma worked there. My grandpa worked there. My aunt worked there. My other aunt worked there," LeAnn noted. "It was definitely a family affair and that's what made it so special."

Though Henry (pictured below)



stellar personal service.

"You would find him often at the counter waiting on customers and he knew everybody by name," LeAnn added. "As I was growing up in high school, I had to work on the counter, and it was mandatory that we had to do the best we possibly could to know everybody's name before they walked in the door."

After high school, LeAnn graduated from college and worked in marketing for the office furniture industry for a long stint.

"I did that for eight years, and then I had babies and I was going to stay home," she recalled. That plan changed in 1996 as the family business needed her help. Suddenly, she found herself becoming a drycleaner.

With people in place who knew the nuts and bolts of operating the equipment properly, LeAnn could turn her

attention to managing cash flow, improving processes, reducing expenses and, most importantly, marketing.

As the business grew stronger, it also continued to grow geographically.

"The other thing, as far as what helped us grow, is that we were just in the Tri-Cities [Spring Lake, Grand Haven and Ferrysburg, MI], but then

that part of the business as well."

Having enough space means the business can adjust as it needs to in order to be able to serve its customers best. Currently, drycleaning demand is down and wash-dry-fold and home services continue growing.

"That's where we're trying to put our efforts because we believe that's

decade secret of success has been creating a culture of caring.

"In general, I think we are where we are today because we care about our clients. We care about our employees," LeAnn emphasized. "I think one key element that sets us apart from the largest drycleaners in West Michigan is that when there's an issue with the gar-



Al Plantenga and LeAnn Plantenga- Glasser

Plantenga's Cleaners
West Michigan Lakeshore

we expanded with a store in Allendale... and now two in the Muskegon market. So, we did have a total of six. We're down to five," she explained. "The other thing that really helped us with name recognition throughout the lake shore is that we've expanded our route significantly, even into areas that we don't have stores."

In November of 2007, Al joined the company, although he was a bit reluctant to do so. LeAnn explained, "He told me, 'I'm really not interested in coming onboard unless you're willing to sell to me in five years.' Well, then the five-year mark came around and then he's like, 'No. Stick around, stick around.'"

Fortunately, she stuck around and soon applied her marketing magic toward growing the company's restoration division.

"So, ten years ago, LeAnn started formalizing marketing for that, and we started to reach out to insurance agents and getting a lot more business because we were focussing on it," Al noted. "Then we hired a salesman in 2017. That's when it really started taking off."

While marketing had certainly helped to bring in much more volume, it could not do anything to create more space in the building, which was already maxed out at about 4,200 sq. ft.

"Since then, LeAnn has purchased a 16,000 sq. ft. facility that we are now expanding to," Al continued. "We invested heavily over the last six months on equipment and installation and this building, and I think it's going to reap some pretty large rewards."

"A portion of that 16,000 sq. ft. will be the contents side of it," LeAnn added. "This just enables Al to do something to develop the wash-dry-fold tremendously. There's a lot of VRBO and AirBnB vacation rentals in this area because of the lake and everything, so he's really going to work hard to develop

more the future of the business," LeAnn pointed out. "Basically, we're in the business of serving people to make their lives easier."

As Al noted, the local demographics of the area mean that quality will matter no matter what needs to be cleaned.

"People who wear casual wear at work — they're still going to want it pressed and looking nice because they're bigwigs and higher ups for large companies. They have to play a part," he said. "No matter what they're wearing — if it's just a Polo button-up — they still need to bring those in to me to be cleaned and pressed."

These days, LeAnn focusses on the restoration division, frequently from a home office, while Al dives into his leadership role. Unfortunately, that means they don't have as many opportunities to talk anymore.

"As I navigate my first six months of ownership, I realize how much I miss her organizational skills. She's just really intelligent and really capable," he said. "It's hard to explain all of the little subtleties that she brings to the table, but it's a lot. She's just talented beyond words."

Meanwhile, LeAnn has noticed the positive effect her nephew has had on the company.

"Al has always got a smile on his face, so I think his attitude is huge. He's always willing to go in there and he just brightens the room when he walks in," she explained. "He has this *I can do* attitude and he's a very hard worker, so he has no problem stepping in and working right alongside the employees when things fall behind schedule or whatever."

"He's engaging with all of the different aspects of the business and embracing a willingness and attitude to learn every aspect of it," she added. "It has been really awesome."

Al seems to be the perfect third-generation fit for a business whose six-

ment, we stand behind it 100%. My dad always said, 'If you don't stand behind your work, it's going to get out, especially in a small community like we live in.' We just stand behind our work and I think it speaks volumes to the integrity of our business."

When the company surpasses the 60-year mark next month, it will remain poised for success in the future despite the complications of the current labor crisis.

"Let's face it, they have factories that are starting at \$18 an hour and our starting pay is \$12," Al explained. "We try to have a culture of caring. I'm a super love-dovey kind of person and that's the environment that we have everywhere — at all of our stores and our plant. I think that helps with hiring, even though our wages are lower, because we're super flexible. I want to encourage people to enjoy life and work at the same time. So, that flexibility sets us apart from a lot of other employers."

LeAnn agreed. "We consider them family as well," she said. "We do what we can to help them in whatever their situations are — which they're super grateful for — and it just issues allegiance from them."

Al will rely on that allegiance if his plans to grow the business pay off. Lately, he's been polishing his own marketing skills by working with Maverick Drycleaners to direct his strategies towards the top 5 to 20% of clients.

Now that the business has solved its production space limitations, he wants to turn his attention next to having customers come seek them out — with mailing options available, they don't have to be limited to local work.

"I envision us being more like a boutique cleaners because we're starting to realize the constraints of space," Al said. "I think people will flock to us eventually because our quality is so good."



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Industry continues to convene post-Clean

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at 3:30 p.m. at the Albuquerque Marriott Pyramid North.
It should be noted, the block of rooms SDA reserved at the host hotel are already booked up, so those registering now will have to find alternate hotel accommodations.
The meeting and Saturday

lunch is free for attendees.
The Balloon Fiesta ticket for Oct. 1 costs \$77, which includes entrance to the park, a direct route round-trip bus ride and a grab and go breakfast.
For more information, or to register, contact SDA by calling (512) 873-8195 or visit them on-

line at www.sda-dryclean.com.
Assembling in Asheville
Not long after SDA's event, NCALC has plans for its annual convention from Oct. 14 to 16 at the Cambria Downtown Asheville in NC.
The association has scheduled its board of directors and committee meetings to begin

at 3 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 14.
Exhibits will open at 5 p.m. that evening, which will conclude with a welcome reception and dinner with exhibitors at 6 p.m.
On the following morning, there will be a networking breakfast at 7:30 a.m. and the Annual Membership Meeting

will start at 8 a.m.
The event's schedule also includes time for educational sessions that will be announced at a later date.
To register for the event, or find out more information, contact the association by calling (919) 313-4542 or visit them at ncalc.org.

Greybull Stewardship acquires GreenEarth

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he added.
Under the ownership of Greybull, GreenEarth's current management team, led by President Tim Maxwell, will seek to build upon the company's impressive track record of revenue growth with a continued emphasis on customer service, product innovation

and geographic expansion.
"This entire expansion process has confirmed to me that ownership of the GreenEarth brand is moving from multiple pairs of guiding hands that founded the company more than two decades ago to a group that understands the potential opportunities available through so

many avenues in the professional fabric care space," Maxwell said. "The entire team here at GreenEarth is excited for the opportunity to continue to bring environmentally non-toxic cleaning to our affiliates around the globe."
It was almost 24 years ago when GreenEarth Cleaning was first formed by Jim Barry,

Ron Benjamin and Jim Douglas, three drycleaners seeking a safer alternative to perc. Since 1999, the company has provided its technology to thousands of cleaners across the globe who have cleaned some 600 million pounds of clothing in that duration.
Maxwell emphasized that the company will continue to

operate as it has in the past. "The most important thing to note about this acquisition for our customers and affiliates is that GreenEarth will continue to be GreenEarth," he said. "The ownership may be different, but the direction and vision of the company and commitment to our business partners remains the same."

DLI summer signature classes start this month

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of basic stain removal and finishing. Some of the in-depth topics that will be covered include: identifying fabrics; using bleaches; troubleshooting machine problems; wetcleaning; pressing; customer service techniques; cleaning wedding gowns; and understanding the differences between various cleaning solvents.
Tuition for DLI's signature courses is \$1,595 for the intro-

ductory course and \$2,195 for the advanced; however, discounts are available based on DLI membership level. Additionally, students who take both classes concurrently pay a reduced rate of tuition — \$2,895 — prior to DLI membership discounts being applied.
In addition to its live school sessions, DLI will host a virtual stain removal course that meets seven times between the dates of Sept. 13 and Oct. 4.

Classes will be held live on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1 to 3 p.m. EST using ZOOM video conferencing. Course dates will include: Sept. 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29 and Oct. 4.
The cost is \$695 for non-members and the regular member price is \$495, prior to additional membership level discounts.
For more information or to register, visit them online at dlionline.org.

NEWSMAKERS

America's Best Cleaners (ABC) recently announced the addition of **Sarah Guilott-McInnis** to its team. Guilott-McInnis is a third generation drycleaner



Guilott-McInnis who has spent most of her life in a drycleaning shop. Her family owned and operated **AAA Drive-In Cleaners** for decades. It's been recognized as the Best Cleaner in Lake Charles, LA, for over 20 years.
With a strong passion for fashion, she has developed a keen eye for vintage fashions and a talent for textile restoration. She applies that passion to her professional career, becoming a DLI-certified garment care specialist and opening her own Etsy store, **Geodesica Vintage Fashions**.

Now, she is excited about her next chapter and looks forward to sharing her textile restoration expertise, training and implementation skills with ABC affiliates. **ABC Executive Director Chris White** believes Sarah will make a great addition to the team and is excited for her to share her love of fashion, experience working in all aspects of an award-winning operation, and her background in education.

She'll be available for remote and on-site engagement for cleaners and affiliates to provide customized written systems development and implementation programs to include all aspects of washroom processes, bridal, vintage and specialty garment restoration training, key person relief services and client relations training.

Also joining the ABC team recently is **Michael Erstad** who will be the organization's new production management and mechanical consultant. He has extensive experience pertaining to all facets of the dry cleaning industry.

From the boiler room to the board room, he has developed extensive knowledge throughout his career. A graduate of North Seattle College, he has held various leadership positions including general manager of Blue Sky Cleaners and



Erstad owner/operator of National Drycleaners which he led for over 25 years. Specializing in high-end garment care, he developed a strong reputation for his attention to detail and has transitioned his focus to bridal care. He owns **Seattle Wedding Dress Specialist**, Seattle's premier bridal gown service, which he operates with his two sons.

Michael's expertise in the drycleaning industry expands into the equipment sales and distribution space. He is a certified Miele technician, SystemK4 deployment specialist, and has been a start-up and systems trainer for the King County and state of Washington wetcleaning grant program deploying the Kreussler/Miele Lanadol wetcleaning system.

"I'm excited to be part of the ABC team," he said. "I have always had much respect for the way ABC supports and educates its clients. It truly is enjoyable working with people that have such a passion for seeing hard-working people succeed!"

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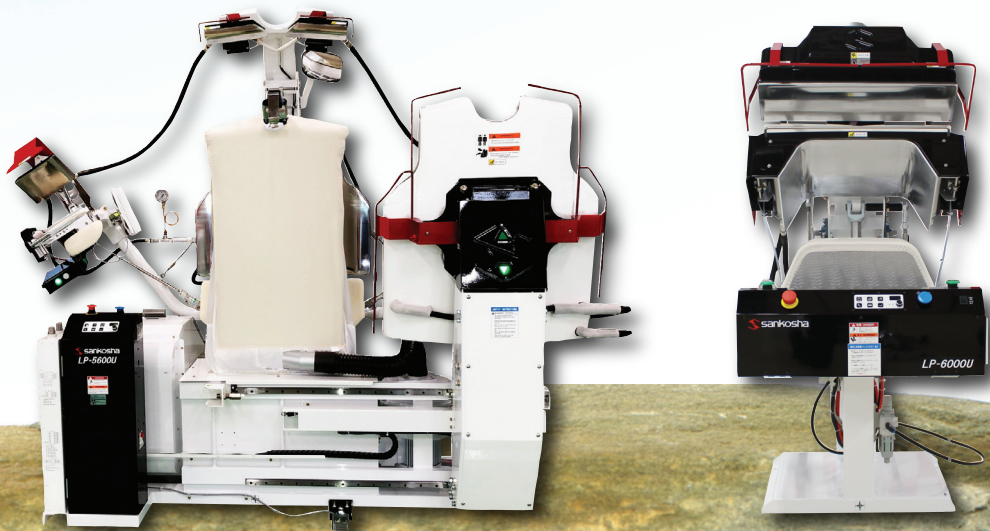
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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

Avoiding pitfalls in new equipment purchases

The results that you get from equipment always depends upon the quality of the training that the employees receive for that equipment. This is a very relevant point today because you may have just made a major purchase at the Clean Show and are eager to get it into your plant so that it may begin earning its keep. That makes perfect sense to me, but there is a potential pitfall and, worse, a killer path that can doom the best laid plans. Let's lay out a couple of examples, what usually hap-

pens and how to avoid a deadly situation. Your Cissel topper and Hoffman legger have been around since Spiro Agnew, and although Alice can still bang out 35 pants per hour when the machines are running correctly, the time has come to say goodbye. You are going to buy a double-legger at the Clean Show in Atlanta. You have done all your homework. You have called other people that own one. You have visited other plants that have one. You have gone so far as to have had conversations with the

pressers that actually use the equipment. Everything has been favorable. You talked to your dealer and his mechanic. They give a green light, too. It comes down to dollars and cents, but even that isn't going to be a deal-breaker. It's just a matter of making sure you get the best deal. Truth be told, the labor savings will pay for this machine. Your research shows that most people are getting between 55-60 pants per hour. Since you consider yourself to be a good operator, you believe you will be in that group.

The plan looks like this:

Week #	PPH	Hours Used	Labor Cost	Labor Savings
Present	35	38	\$940.50	-
1	38	34.2	\$846.45	\$94.05
2	42	31.7	\$784.58	\$155.92
3	45	29.6	\$732.60	\$207.90
4	49	27.1	\$670.73	\$269.77
5	52	25.6	\$633.60	\$306.90
6	55	24	\$594.00	\$346.50

You have broken down the labor cost and labor savings. At 35 pants per hour, Alice now works 38 hours per week to press pants at your plant. You average 1,330 pants per week. Alice makes \$20 per hour. With payroll

tax, payroll expense and worker's comp, etc., she costs you \$24.75 per hour. With the new equipment, Alice will only need to work 24 when she gets 55 pants per hour. This is a savings of (a whopping) \$346.50 per week or (4.3 weeks per month) \$1489.95 per month — plenty to cover any lease payment or amortize any loan. That's the plan and it is an excellent one. I would submit that plan to anyone that cared to ask me for such.

In the interest of being thorough, you can create a sliding scale plan so that Alice can acclimate to the new equipment. At first, she will only attain a modest improvement in productivity, but then will steadily improve and attain the goal of 55 PPH in 6 weeks.

Even with this plan, you begin saving enough money immediately to make payments on your new press. So, what is wrong with this plan? Or any plan? Equipment does not come with a built-in manager, a cattle prod, or a penalty for non-compliance. Without trying to sound like the grim reaper, here's what really happens:

"Alice, I bought you a brand new pants press in Atlanta. It is amazing!"

You hand her the brochure. "Wow! That's great boss! This clunker (*she motions to her old and worn pants press*) has seen better days. When is it coming in?"

"It'll be a couple of weeks. One of the keys to success with this new machine is going to be better productivity. We are going to be looking for 55 pants per hour — no more late days. And, in the heat of the summer, you know how you want to get out of here ASAP."

"That'll be great. I can hardly wait!"

The big day comes and the equipment is installed. I'll go with the best-case scenario and presume your dealer has not thrown you to the wolves and you have a factory representative or someone equally qualified to train your presser to a certain extent. *It is the plant manager's job to learn to use the new equipment and be an*



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Don Desrosiers

Avoiding pitfalls in new equipment purchases

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expert at it. In fact, it is the manager that should be trained, not the presser.

This is where the best laid plans all go to hell in a hand-basket. The harsh reality is that there is no one in the plant really very good at running the new equipment and there is no one to orchestrate the excellent training plans that have been designed. In real life, this is what is likely to happen:

• **The manager doesn't get training.** How can the manager supervise, correct, criticize, commend, oversee, reprimand or retrain an employee at a job station at which he/she has zero knowledge and zero experience? It is not possible.

It makes much more sense for the presser to be on a two-hour smoke break while the plant manager learns the job inside out than for the presser to learn the job while the manager remains oblivious.

• **The manager does not supervise.** This is almost the same thing. The presser forgets key steps and is never corrected.

Skipping these steps adversely affects the quality of the finished product and/or the pieces per hour productivity. If productivity is affected, then the savings you're relying on go out the window.

• **Alice confides that the new machine is nice, but "if you go fast, it doesn't do a good quality job."** Ping! She has just plunked your vulnerable nerve! You never considered quality was at stake. You did your home-

the same is true, only worse. The learning curve can be steep and a presser can easily get poorer productivity than what they achieved with the old equipment. Ideally, the new unit sits alongside the old one while the manager

pressers were thrown to the wolves and left to figure out the equipment. The manager was too embarrassed to try to operate a new-fangled shirt press himself for fear of looking like a fool. His solution? Retreat to his office and curl up like a cocktail shrimp hoping the employees will "figure it out." What, pray tell, would they figure out? How to work faster so they could work fewer hours and get paid less? Press a better shirt so that their absent, tucked-away-in-his-office manager would not even notice?

The pressers went through the motions and filled in the time between weekends. To add insult to injury, the purchase of this equipment was made with the sole intention of saving \$100,000 per year in labor and it never happened because the employees were never trained properly. The manager never learned the job.

If I somehow have failed to convince you that the manager *must* be trained, and *trained first*, consider this: We can presume that the manager is more likely to be a long-term employee than your average shirt presser. Yes, I know. You all have lifers in the plant, but generally speaking, the revolving door is in the press room. Even if you train the pressers properly and they do

well, if and when they leave, who will train their replacement? This is the manager's responsibility. By sheer repetition, the manager may have been a good supervisor when the new equipment was in place, but it is time to move on. The manager must be qualified to supervise, correct, criticize, commend, oversee, reprimand or retrain an employee and they can only do that if they know the job.

Next month, I'll begin coverage of the Clean Show in Atlanta. I plan to bring the show to you with movies of the shirt units, as well as new and exciting products for shirt laundries and drycleaners. Stay tuned.

"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 13131 Elissa Lane, Central, LA, 70818, by cell phone (508) 965-3163, or email to: tailwind.don@me.com. The Tailwind web site is at www.tailwindsystems.com.

What is wrong with this plan or any plan? Equipment does not come with a built-in manager, a cattle prod or a penalty for non-compliance.

work, but maybe those other cleaners don't care about quality like you do!

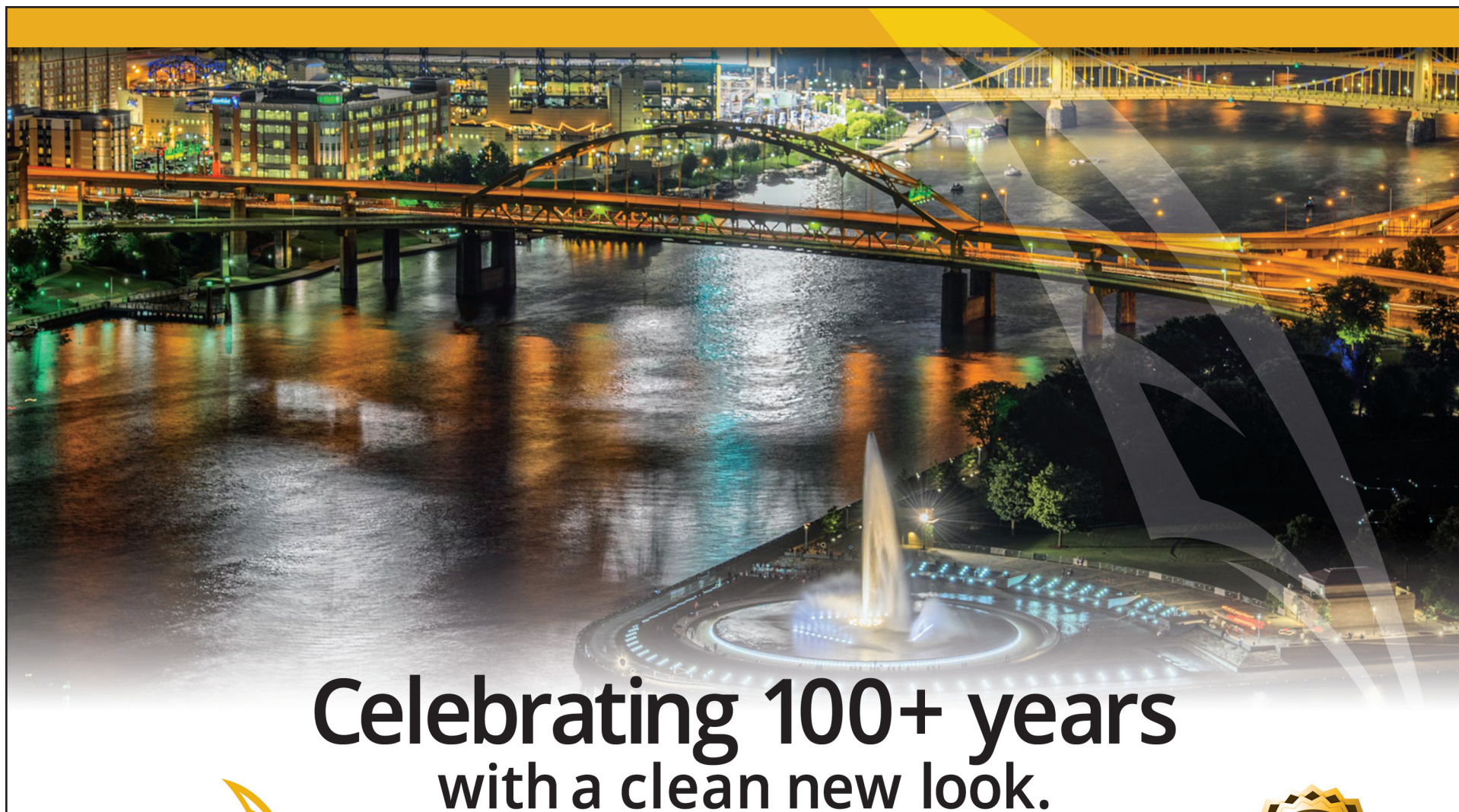
We may not really know what is going on here. Perhaps Alice did some math and realized that you are going to save a bunch of labor dollars, but they are going to come out of her pocket. Is there a quality issue? If your manager cannot press perfect pants on the machine, was he/she trained? Was the manager trained by the presser? Yikes! This has become very ugly, very quickly. The short of it is this: Make 100% sure that your new equipment has qualified operators, right from the start, and make sure that the person in charge knows how to use the equipment better than anyone.

If you buy a new shirt unit,

spends a week or two getting very good at it. Then, and only then, the manager trains the shirt presser on the new shirt unit. Since this is often out of the question, utilizing a weekend to learn the unit may be the only alternative.

What is **not** an alternative is throwing shirt pressers that have used an Ajax Classic since gasoline cost less than a dollar a gallon and throwing them on a new-fangled blown-sleeve unit and expecting them to love it. They will hate the machine, they will hate you and they will hate their job.

I base this last paragraph on real-life experience. A manager I greatly respected was suddenly in a situation where all his shirt equipment was replaced with units he had zero experience with. The



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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

Using hydrogen peroxide for spotting

One of the most useful spotting agents around is hydrogen peroxide.

Most cleaners do not use it to its full potential.

One of the problems that they encounter is that they do not activate it properly, or they use concentrations not suitable for the stain removal process that they are doing.

Hydrogen peroxide is simply water with an extra oxygen (H_2O_2). The extra oxygen is capable of combining with staining matter or fabric producing a chemical change.

The fact that oxygen is added to the fabric makes hydrogen peroxide an **oxidizing agent**. Hydrogen peroxide can be obtained in various strengths:

- (1) **3%, 10 volume** (medicine);
- (2) **6%, 20 volume** (hair bleach);
- (3) **30%, 100 volume** (commercial use).

The recommended strength for bleaching is **3% or 6%**.

Hydrogen peroxide can be used to remove many different types of staining, which is not possible with other bleaches. It is effective in removing oxidized tannin, protein, blood, dye and mustard stains.

Peroxide is also effective in neutralizing some discolorations caused by titanium sulphate. The advantages over chlorine-based bleaches is that it can be used on wool and silk.

Remember to test dyes and fabrics before using peroxide since peroxide is a bleach and can produce discolorations.

Activation

There are different ways of using peroxide and each way produces a different effectiveness.

For example, I can heat peroxide with ammonia and not obtain the same stain removal as when I ex-

pose it to light and air. Trial by error will determine the success.

(A) **Heat.** Every 10 degrees rise in temperature can double the chemical action. A light feather of steam activates and accelerates the bleaching process.

Hydrogen peroxide can be used to remove many different types of staining, which is not possible with other bleaches.

(B) **Alkali.** Hydrogen peroxide is accelerated by alkali. Ammonia or addition of protein formula increases the chemical action. This must be used with caution on wool and silk.

(C) **Peracetic acid.** Hydrogen peroxide — when combined with acetic acid — forms peracetic acid. This can be used to bleach certain fabrics that ammo-

nia cannot be used on. Hydrogen peroxide plus acetic acid is also used to reduce the discoloration formed when potassium permanganate bleach is used.

(D) **Hydrogen peroxide plus sunlight.** When water is combined with the ultraviolet rays of sunlight, it

forms hydrogen peroxide.

When peroxide is exposed to sunlight, a high degree of oxidation can be obtained, making stain removal more effective. Hydrogen peroxide — when exposed to sunlight — should be applied in a **3% strength** and the time period should be carefully controlled. Overexposure by peroxide to sunlight can result in oxidation, yellowing and loss of fluorescent dyes. This method has been used in my analysis lab for many years in order to remove many difficult stains.

(E) **Hydrogen peroxide plus enzymes.** Hydrogen peroxide is decomposed by enzymes and will decompose enzyme-related staining. We know that the enzymes in blood will cause peroxide to foam, and the blood, as well as the peroxide, decomposes.

When brushing your teeth, the enzymes in saliva will foam peroxide-based toothpaste. We also know that strong peroxide on your skin turns white from combining with the enzymes on your body. When peroxide is added to some enzyme-based spotting agents, it is a highly effective way of removing many protein based staining.

(F) **Sodium percarbonate and sodium perborate.** They are powder bleaches and both release hydrogen peroxide. The advantage of using this for spot bleaching is that they are concentrated and will provide more localized bleaching

and remain in the fabric longer. The area is dampened and the powder is applied with moisture using a paste. When heated, the bleaching is more concentrated and often more effective.

(G) **Air and light.** Peroxide is highly effective when applied and left exposed to air and light for a period of time. This method is used with a **6% concentration of peroxide**. Apply the peroxide and re-apply every half hour. Flush after use.

Bath Bleaching

Hydrogen peroxide can be used for bath bleaching in a form of sodium perborate, sodium percarbonate or just liquid hydrogen peroxide.

Six percent hydrogen peroxide can be added to warm water in a bucket or tub in the ratio of **two ounces per gallon of water**.

Peroxide bleaching is effective when a near neutral water solution is desired such as for wools and silks. Peroxide bleaching is used for a short time period (one hour). Sodium perborate or percarbonate can be added to warm water in the ratio of **two ounces per gallon of water**. This is used as an overnight bleaching. When bath bleaching, a neutral detergent should be added so better penetration of the bleach can be obtained.

Testing for Peroxide

When peroxide remains on the spotting board, it decomposes from exposure to light and heat.

To test if your peroxide is effective, apply a few drops on a towel and add titanium sulphate or strip- per to a sample.

If the sample turns **orange**, the peroxide is strong and effective. **Yellow** means it is weaker and *no change in color* means your peroxide is spent.

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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BUILDING VALUE

BY KERMIT ENGH

Making your business succeed without you

Some owners focus on growing their profits, while others are obsessed with sales goals. Have you ever considered making it your primary goal to set up your business so that it can thrive and grow without you? These are some of the principles we have discussed in the past twelve articles regarding Value Building. The goals have been to increase the value of the business if you decide you are not ready to exit or have a more valuable business to exit from.

A business that is not dependent on its owner is the ultimate asset to own. It allows you complete control over your time so that you can choose the projects you get involved in and the vacations you take. When it comes to getting out, a business independent of its owner is worth a lot more than an owner-dependent company. Here are FIVE ways to set up your business to succeed without you.

1. Give Them a Stake in the Outcome. Jack Stack, the au-

thor of *The Great Game of Business* and *A Stake in the Outcome*, authored the book on creating an ownership culture inside your company: you are transparent about your financial results, and you allow employees to participate in your financial success. This results in employees who act like owners when you're not around.

This is an extremely difficult idea for many to accept. *Share real numbers with my employees?* I am not saying you must give

everyone an ownership stake, but share the numbers in a way that everyone can see the results of their effort. How can an employee have a good sense of how they are doing without the numbers involved in their position? The very easiest of numbers is the posting of hourly/daily PPOH. For managers and supervisors, you should also include labor numbers, supply costs, utilities, and **revenue**. How can you expect them to manage in the dark?

2. Get Them to Walk in Your Shoes. If you are not comfortable opening the books to your employees, consider a simple management technique where you respond to every question your staff brings you with the same answer, "If you owned the company, what would you do?" This a technique I have used for years.

By forcing your employees to walk in your shoes, you get them thinking about the question as you would, and it builds the habit of starting to think like an owner. In time, they will do what you would have done. Or, it is a teaching opportunity so in the future, they know what you would have done. Remarkably effective. Pretty soon, employees are able to solve their own problems.

3. Vet Your Offerings. Identify the products and services which require your personal involvement in either making, delivering, or selling them. Make a list of everything you sell and score each on a scale of 0 to 10 on how easy they are to teach an employee to handle. Assign a 10 to offerings that are easy to teach employees and give a lower score to anything that requires your personal attention. Commit to stopping to sell the lowest scoring product or service on your list. Repeat this exercise every quarter. In time you sell what can be taught and deliver a consistent service offering. The alternative is having poorly trained services which will disappoint your clients.

4. Create Automatic Customers. Are you the company's best salesperson? If so, you will need to fire yourself as your company's rainmaker to get it to run without you.

One way to do this is to create a recurring revenue business model where customers buy from you automatically. Consider creating a service contract with your customers that offers to fulfill one of their ongoing needs on a regular basis. Many have created W-D-F subscription programs; others have added additional home care services. When you think about it, your route delivery services fit this bill. The past two years have nudged all of us to move in this direction.

5. Write an Instruction Manual for Your Business. Finally, make sure your company comes with instructions

Continued on page 18



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Kermit Engh

Making your business succeed without you

Continued from page 16

included. Write an employee manual, or what MBA-types call Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These are a set of rules employees can follow for repetitive tasks in your company. This will ensure employees have a rulebook they can follow when you are not around, and, when an employee leaves, you can quickly swap them out with a replacement to take on duties of the job.

You-proofing your business has enormous benefits. It will allow you to create a valuable company and have a life. Your business will be free to scale up because it is no longer dependent on you, its bottleneck. Best of all, it will be worth a lot more to a buyer whenever you are ready to sell. This is close to looking at your business as a franchise that a buyer would purchase.

A Tweak That Can Add Value Immediately

If you are trying to figure out what your business might be worth, it is helpful to consider what acquirers are paying for companies like yours these days. A little internet research will probably reveal that a business like yours trades for a multiple of your pre-tax profit, which is Sellers Discretionary Earnings (SDE) for a small business, and Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) for a slightly larger business.

Obsessing Over Your Multiple

This multiple can transfix entrepreneurs. Many owners want to know their multiple

and how they can jack it up. After all, if your business has \$500,000 in profit and it trades for four times profit, it is worth \$2 million; if the same business trades for eight times profit, it is worth \$4 million.

Obviously, your multiple will have a profound impact on the haul you take from the sale of your business, but there is another number worthy of your consideration as well: the number your multiple is multiplying.

How Profitability Is Open to Interpretation

Most entrepreneurs think of profit as an objective measure, calculated by an accountant, but when it comes to the sale of your business, profit is far from objective. Your profit will go through a set of “adjustments” designed to estimate how profitable your business will be under a new owner.

This process of adjusting or re-casting the earnings — and how you defend these adjustments to an acquirer — is where you can dramatically spike your company’s value.

Let us take a simple example to illustrate. Imagine you run a company with \$3 million in revenue and you pay yourself a salary of \$200,000 a year. Further, let us assume you could get a competent manager to run your business as a division of an acquirer for \$100,000 per year. You could safely make the case to an acquirer that, under their ownership, your business would generate an extra \$100,000 in profit. If they are paying you five times profit for your business, that one adjustment has the potential to earn you an extra \$500,000.

You should be able to make a case for several adjustments that will boost your profit and, by extension, the value of your business. This is more art than science, and you need to be prepared to defend your case for each adjustment. It is im-

You-proofing your business will allow you to create a valuable company and have a life. Your business will be free to scale up.

portant that you make a good case for how profitable your business will be in the hands of an acquirer. If you are running any expenses that a prospective buyer would not have, I recommend you isolate them somewhere on your P&L to simplify the process. Some of the most common adjustments relate to rent (common if you own the building your company operates from and your company is paying higher-than-market rent), start-up costs, one-off lawsuits or insurance claims, and one-time professional services fees.

Your multiple is important, but the subjective art of adjusting your EBITDA is where a lot of extra money can be made when selling your business.

Will This Be the Year You Drive Up the Value?

If you have resolved to make your company more valuable in 2022, you may

want to think hard about how your customers pay. If you have a transaction business model where customers pay once for what they buy, expect your company’s value to be a single-digit multiple of your EBITDA. By contrast, if you have a recurring revenue model where customers subscribe and pay on an ongoing basis, you can expect your valuation to be a multiple of your revenue.

Buyers pay a pretty penny for companies with recurring revenue because they can clearly see how your company will make money long after you exit. Not sure how to create recurring revenue? Before you look at these four models and say to yourself, “This will not work in our industry,” be aware that has been said in every industry. Most are familiar with the subscription model. Here are four additional models to consider:

1. Products That Run Out.

If you have a product that people run out of, consider offering it on subscription. The retailing giant Target sells subscriptions to diapers for busy parents who do not have the time (or interest) in running to the store to re-stock on Pampers. Dollar Shave Club, which was acquired by Unilever in 2016 for five times revenue, sells razor blades on subscription. The Honest Company sells dish detergent and safe household cleaning products to environmentally conscious consumers, and more than 80% of their sales come from subscriptions.

2. Membership Websites. If you are a consultant and offer specialized advice, consider

whether customers might pay access to a premium membership website where you offer your knowledge to subscribers only. Today there are membership websites for people who want to know about anything from search engine marketing to running a restaurant.

3. Services Contracts. If you bill by the hour or the project, consider moving to a fixed monthly fee for your service. That is what the marketing agency GoBrandGo! did to steady cash flow and create a more predictable service business.

4. Piggyback Services. Ask yourself what your “one-off” customers buy after they buy what you sell. For example, if you make a company a new website, chances are they are going to need somewhere to host their site. While your initial website design may be a one-off service, you could offer to host it for your customer on subscription. If you offer interior design, chances are your customers are going to want to keep their home looking like the day you presented your design, so they might be in the market for a regular cleaning service.

5. Rentals. If you offer something expensive that customers only need occasionally, consider renting access to it for those who subscribe. ZipCar subscribers can have access to a car when they need it without forking over the cash to buy a hunk of steel. WeWork subscribers can have access to the company’s co-working space without buying a building or committing to a long-term lease.

You do not have to be a software company to create customers who pay you automatically each month. There is simply no faster way to improve the value of your business this year than to add some recurring revenue.

Until next time, continue building value.

Kermit Engh has been an owner/operator in the drycleaning industry for over 30 years and has been a Methods for Management member for over 25 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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The image shows a man with a beard and bald head, wearing a red polo shirt with a small logo on the chest. He is holding a white gift certificate from BeCreative360. The certificate has a gold star graphic and text that reads: "Our gift to you... BeCreative360 As a thank you for your continued DLI membership, BeCreative360 would like to gift you this certificate of \$50 OFF Services. Must be redeemed within 12 months of DLI membership. To redeem, please email Kate@BeCreative360.com and get started today! \$50 OFF \$5,000 DLI DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL".



The screenshot shows the BeCreative360 website. The header has the logo and navigation links: What We Create, SPOT Marketing, Reputation Management, About Us, Contact, and Support / Login. The main content area features a grid of photos showing various people and scenes. Below the grid is an "ABOUT US" section with a paragraph: "Hello there, we're BeCreative360. 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." To the right of the grid is a contact form with fields for Name, US +1 Mobile Phone, Chat with, and Message, and a Send button.

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- Brian Harrell
Vice President
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KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

The bystander role in sexual harrassment

A major U.S. city, as part of its employee training on sexual harassment prevention, intends to include a module for “bystanders.” In other words, this city wants employees who observe other employees being harassed to make complaints, even if the actual recipients of harassment do not. This is especially troubling because the very definition of sexual harassment uses the word “unwelcome.” A person who is fine with behavior that other employees might not tolerate is not a legal victim of harassment. If a bystander, however, thinks another employee should be offended, the new

training policy will result in complaints, investigations and workplace animosity. In the past, I’ve told my clients to warn employees accused of sexual harassment not to retaliate against the person making a complaint. I am not sure what advice should be given about a busy body who complains when all the participants are fine with the behavior. Bystander complaints will certainly add to a deterioration of workplace morale. That said, I’ve given seminars where I’ve advised companies not to rely on the “unwelcome” standard to stop sexual discriminatory behavior. For example, do we really want to cultivate a

workplace where profanity and sexual innuendo predominate, even if everyone is comfortable with it? Do we want employees touching each other’s private parts, even if they all view it as harmless locker room conduct? First, what if one or more of the “willingly participating” employees actually hate the behavior, but later claim they didn’t complain because they were afraid of retaliation? Moreover, employees can change their minds, especially if the severity of the behavior increases. Vulgarity tends to increase if left unregulated. Second, do you want the workplace to get more raucous and undisciplined? Your

customers may be offended, and losing their patronage is a possibility. There is a fine line between friendly employees that your customers like and employees who cross the line with too much familiarity. Third, do you want to foster employees of the same race using “funny” racial slurs against each other, employees of the same sex using offensive sexual terms about their own sex or the opposite sex, or employees making fun of disabled or elderly employees because “well, they laugh at my comments, too”? I’m reminded of a case involving filmmaker John Waters. He was accused of obscenity with respect to his

first film, *Pink Flamingos*. He later said that watching the movie in a theater at 10 p.m. was different than watching it in a courtroom at 10 a.m. He said that in a courtroom, even he found his own movie obscene. Imagine an employee testifying in a courtroom in a disability discrimination case that everyone called a crippled employee “Hopalong.” Believe me, it sounds awful in the workplace, but 20 times more awful in a courtroom. Similarly, I tell clients that if they can convince 12 strangers an employee deserved to be fired, there is no reason to call me. Workplace behavior can sound worse with a judge in the room, so you want to discourage workplace behavior that could potentially be evidence in later, workplace-related litigation. I recommend rather than give bystander training on harassment, you should stop behavior in the workplace, unwelcome or not, that would appear to be harassment if presented in a courtroom by a competent labor lawyer. I am not recommending pounding all the fun and jokes out of the workplace, just stopping certain behaviors. Most employers will know it when they see it. For example, touching another person (unless to take them out of harm’s way) should be discouraged, if not banned outright. Touching butts and private parts — your own or others — should be prohibited. Certain words, like racial and ethnic slurs, misogynistic words, vulgar talk, and (dang it, you know which words I mean) should also be stopped. There is no reason to subject your business to allegations such as “I’m a woman, and everyone uses the ‘b’ word to describe women.” Tolerating unwelcome or not unwelcome bad behavior is evidence of discriminatory intent. Moderation is the key. A stray sexual comment now and again, or a very funny joke, should not result in overreaction in the workplace. But, if you’d be concerned to hear that behavior described in court a year from now, put an end to it and tell your folks to tone it down and get back to work.

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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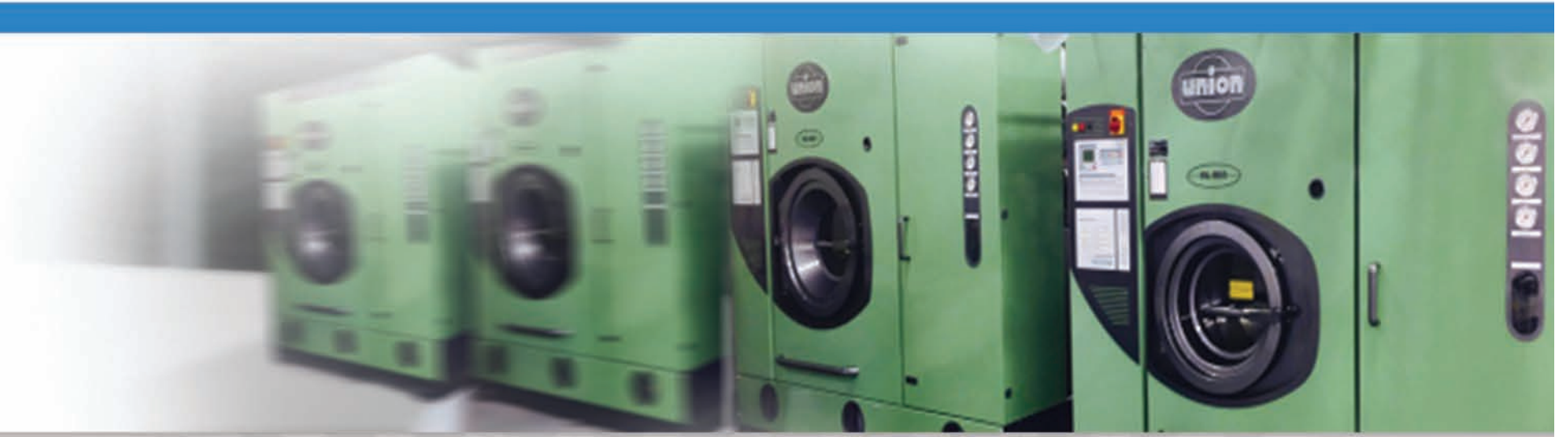
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Ironing Automation Key to Success

Why every drycleaner needs a flatwork ironer

By Stucky Szczotka
There's a huge opportunity out there for drycleaners and textile care companies to capture big business from both existing and new residential and commercial customers. All it takes is a flatwork ironer. I've seen big gains in revenue and profits thanks to this one piece of equipment. My recommendation? If you've got enough bit of free space, put one in!

Many drycleaners around the country are capturing additional residential business by providing laundering and drycleaning services of household textiles and clothing. Moreover, they're pursuing commercial opportunities with vacation rentals, catering companies, military bases, etc., by providing laundered towels and bed and table linens.

The problem lies in the fact that it is simply too time-consuming and costly to properly finish flatwork bed and table linens using a hot-head press. In order to really launch production and quality — using very little labor — you've got to invest in a flatwork ironer.

When you do, you'll be able to confidently promote and maximize business within these sectors while enjoying a quick return on investment.

Installation requirements

A 20-inch flatwork ironer

with an integrated folder — like models offered through Poseidon Textile Care Systems — requires 200 to 250 sq. ft. of space, utilizes natural gas and takes two people to operate. If you've got the space, I find it's the perfect size for most fabri-

only takes 20 seconds to iron and fold a king sheet or duvet straight out of the washer.

Owner John Harris maintains the ironer has been a "game-changer" for business.

Similarly, Peerless Cleaners in Fort Wayne, IN, replaced an

The problem lies in the fact that it is too time-consuming and costly to properly finish flatwork bed and table linens using a hot-head press.

care operations. It quickly irons pillowcases, bed sheets, duvets, drapes, round and rectangular table tops, as well as napkins, in a fraction of the time of a hot-head press.

It processes damp linen straight from the washer at speeds ranging between 24- and 50-feet per minute, and performs the first primary fold automatically. Also, since linens bypass the dryer before being fed into the ironer, production time is increased and dryer bottlenecks are eliminated.

A company I work with — Royalty Cleaners in Royal Oak, MI — recently installed one. Using a hot-head press, it previously took 5 to 15 minutes to finish one sheet and 20 minutes to press a duvet. Now it

older ironer with a new 20-inch flatwork ironer with integrated folder. With the old ironer, all the folding was done by hand, which took a lot of time. Now, the new ironer's integrated folder automatically pre-folds linens for significant time and labor savings.

"When items come out of the ironer, all we need to do is perform another flip," said President Steve Grashoff.

If all of this sounds great, but your plant lacks the 200 sq. ft. of space necessary, you can still get great productivity from a smaller 13-inch ironer without the folder. That option requires 100 to 125 sq. ft. of space, but you'll need to fold large table linens before feeding them into the ironer. The good news is that either option



GOT SOME SPARE SPACE? A drycleaning plant with 100 to 250 sq. ft of open space should consider filling it with a flatwork ironer (two variations of which can be seen above), which not only saves space economically, it can generate new revenues of profitability.

is basically "plug and play."

Labor, operation and maintenance

When ready to invest, get the ironer from a reputable distributor who will train your staff in operation and maintenance. Look for a model that is easy to maintain and offers a waxless design, because applying wax correctly is a difficult process. A waxless ironer is simple to install, operate and maintain.

In terms of operation, a 20-inch ironer requires two people to feed large tablecloths, sheets and duvets, and one operator to run pillowcases, napkins and chair covers on multiple lanes. And, because it's powered by natural gas, this can be done after the plant shuts down. At Royalty Cleaners, John Harris processes flatwork with another person on Sundays.

The ease of use and speed makes a flatwork ironer more effective and profitable than using a hot-head press.

Finish quality

The quality is also superior, which is critical, since residential, vacation rental and catering customers want beautifully ironed, crisp table and bed linens — and drycleaners are demanding a high price for these services.

Steve Grashoff of Peerless Cleaners maintains there's no way they could have serviced

food and beverage accounts with his old ironer because of lack of quality. With the new ironer, however, they've branched out to new revenue streams within the commercial sector, including restaurants and catering companies.

"Now we can — and are — picking up accounts all over the place," he noted.

Bottom line and ROI

When compared to a hot-head press, a flatwork ironer wins out in every category, including quality, but what about bottom-line profits and return-on-investment (ROI)?

Flatwork ironers are not cheap, but if installed, promoted and used to even half potential, most businesses realize an ROI in just a few months. This is because it's so much easier to offer ironing services.

You'll quickly become comfortable promoting those services in whatever sector you pursue. Your flatwork business might even become your most profitable revenue stream.

Michael "Stucky" Szczotka, owner of Eagle Star Equipment in Troy, MI, is a textile care, drycleaning and wetcleaning expert with more than 45 years of hands-on industry operations experience. He is a frequent contributor to industry journals and associations.

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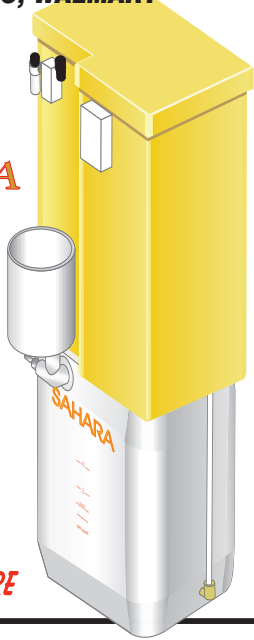
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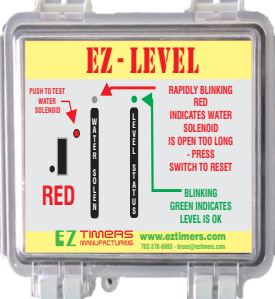
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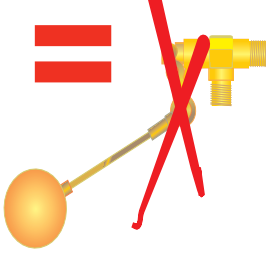
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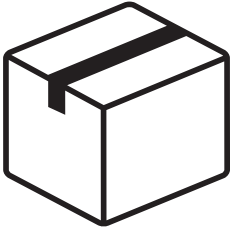
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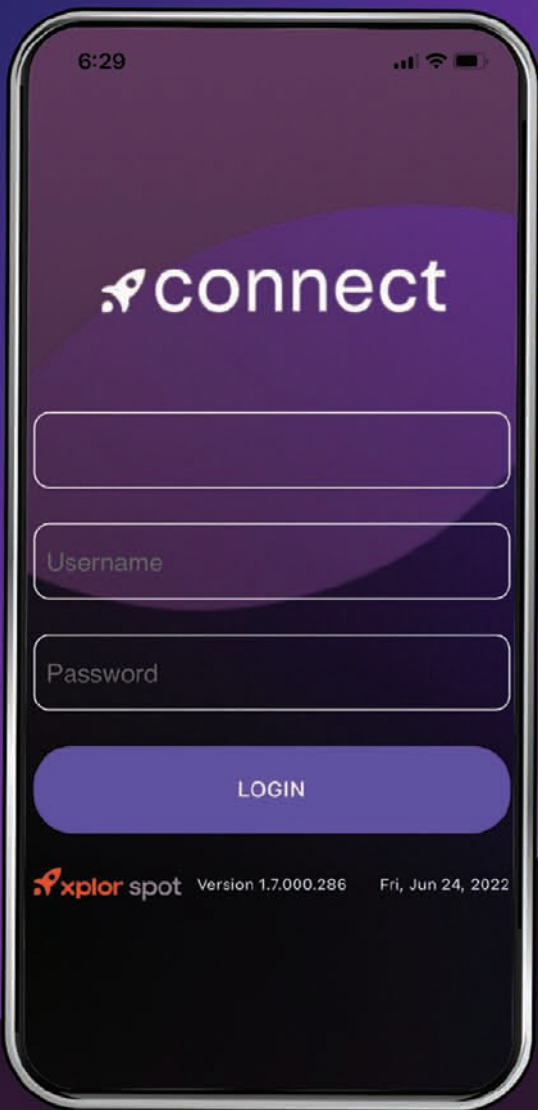
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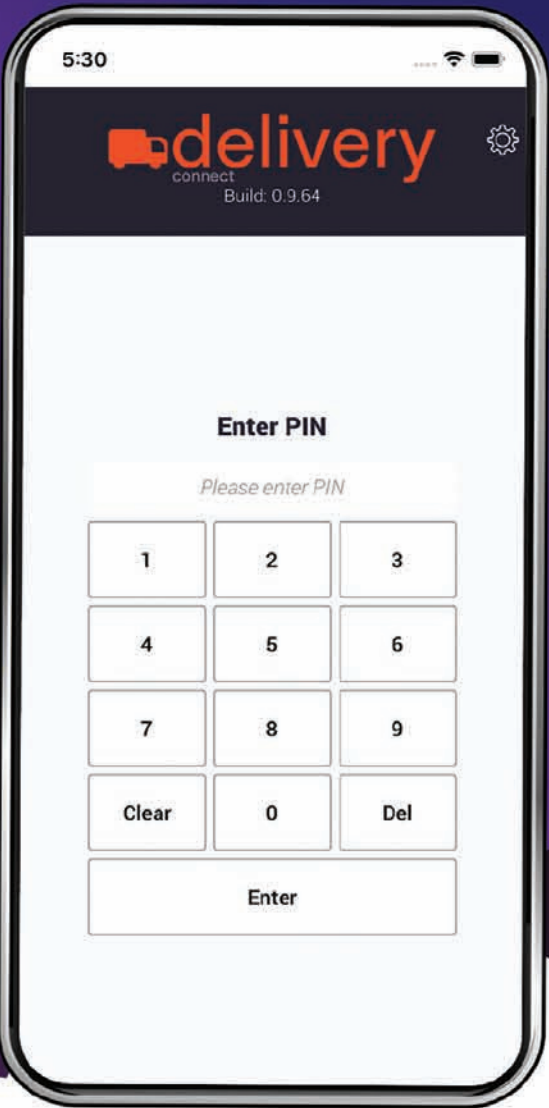
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