



Continuing Clean '22 Coverage

Preparing drycleaners for the future

Those who attended economist Chris Kuehl's economic forecast at Clean 2022 in Atlanta had to first learn a lesson on black swans — major events that tend to wreak havoc with the economy.

"These black swan events are things that we knew were going to happen, but didn't know when, we didn't know how and we don't know what the actual outcome was going to be," Kuehl explained. "So, you have these periodic events that throw all of the predictions off, and the last one that we had was, of course, the Ukraine invasion. But, before that, we had Covid, and now that we've gone through a couple of years of dealing with the pandemic, we know that almost everything we did in

2020 was wrong, and most all of it backfired as a result."

Between supply chain disruptions, rising inflation and higher interest rates, concerns that a recession may be coming have been building; however, Kuehl cautioned that the information the media presents is often incomplete. Such was the case when the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) numbers recently decreased for a second straight quarter. "When they look at the things that create recessions, that is one of 26 variables that they look at, so there are 25 other things they're looking at besides the fact that the GDP went down for two straight quarters," he said. "There are other things that contradict that assessment. For example, when



During Clean 2022, Dave Coyle (far left) of Maverick Drycleaners led a panel discussion on marketing with (left to right, Chheavy Lema, Al Plantenga, Chris Lema, Sassan Rahimzadeh, Eldon Cerda and Will Drook.

you're heading into a recession, generally, people start laying

people off — they lay off in large numbers because you're

getting a lot of pressure that you

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Number of cleaners continues to decline

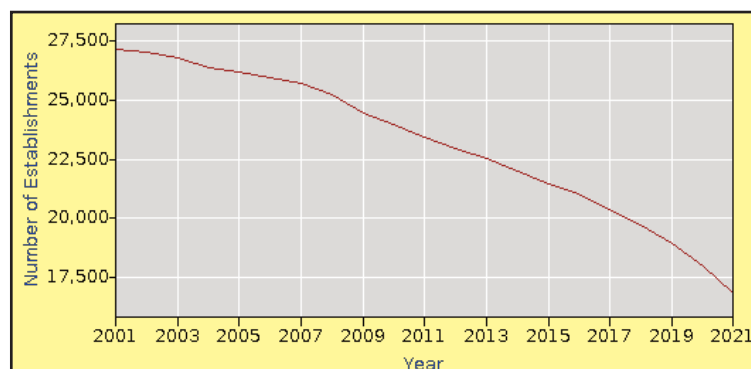
According to statistics recently released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the drycleaning industry has steadily declined from 27,204 establishment during the first quarter of 2001 to 16,497 during the first quarter of 2022.

Overall, that represents a 40% drop in the number of drycleaners during the 21st century. Those numbers prompted articles in *Business Insider* and *Bloomberg Businessweek*, who noted that the industry has been declining by a pace of about 2% annually since 2001, though it jumped up to a

rate of 6% annually from the last quarter of 2019 until the first quarter of this year.

While the pandemic stepped up the pace of the drop with lockdowns and telecommuting, there have been no shortage of other obstacles in the last two decades for cleaners, including the 2008 recession, the overall increase of casual wear, the rise of government regulations on equipment and solvents and a hostile business climate cluttered with supply problems, inflation and labor shortage issues.

However, *Business Insider's*



Graph from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages through May 2021.
Number of establishments in Private NAICS 81232 Drycleaning and laundry services (except coin-operated laundries) in the U.S.

headline — "The dry-cleaning industry is slowly dying" — seems a bit overblown with

much of the industry consolidating and improving operations. Also, the number of coin-

operated laundries have actually increased since the start of the pandemic. BLS noted there were 9,548 establishments in the first quarter of 2020 and 9,710 in the first quarter of 2022.

Also according to the latest data from BLS (May 2021), there were 79,230 employed under "Drycleaning and Laundry Services" who made a mean hourly wage of \$13.29. The top five states with the most laundry and drycleaning workers at that time were: California, 12,340; Texas, 11,920; Florida, 11,740; New York, 10,970; and Ohio, 6,210.

Industry plans several major events in next few months

Following the success of this year's Clean Show, various industry associations hope to build on that momentum with several events on the horizon, including a comprehensive Wash Dry Fold (WDF) Workshop that takes place from Nov. 15 to 17 at the Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort and Conference Center.

The event, which will be co-hosted by the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) and the Coin Laundry Association (CLA), is an excellent primer

for those contemplating adding WDF services.



Following social receptions on Tuesday evening, attendees will begin with breakfast at 7 a.m. on Wednesday, followed by a keynote presentation on "The Future of WDF."

In addition to various sponsor demos scheduled through-

out the day, there will be time for sponsored breakout sessions in-between the main programs, which, on day one, will include "Top Marketing and Advertising Strategies for Explosive Growth," "Best Folding and Packaging Techniques" (with live demos) and "Training Employees and Drivers for Maximum Efficiency and Productivity."

The first day of the workshop will conclude with a networking cocktail reception

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Sneak Peek Inside

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Hi-tech and high fashion

Combining her background in art, social media and hi-tech, Rechelle Balanzat created Juliette Cleaners.

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Two associations to merge

Recently, members of WSDLA and SDA voted to combine the associations taking place on Jan. 1.

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Clean '22 comparisons

Don Desrosiers continues part two of his three-part series on shirt equipment highlights at the recent Clean Show.

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DLI offers monkeypox tips

DLI has given cleaners instructions on proper clothes cleaning methods for items that may be contaminated.

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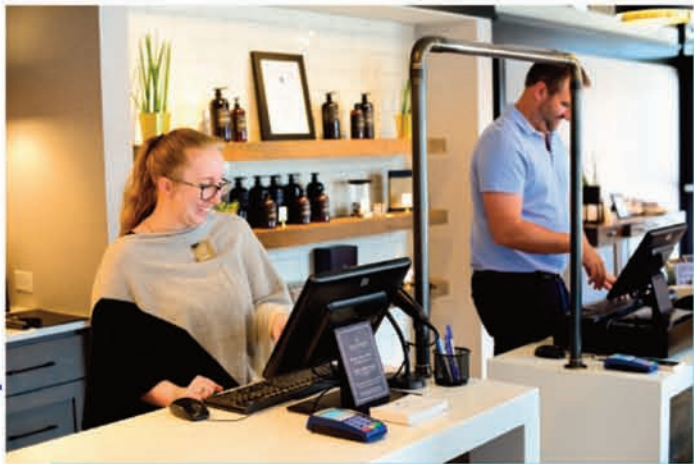
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Industry declines in size, but not in drive

The 21st Century has proved to be a difficult one for the drycleaning industry. In fact, the industry has shrunk in size about 40% since the first quarter of 2001. At that time, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) counted 27,204 drycleaning and laundry services establishments (not including coin-operate laundries) in the country. However, during the first quarter of 2022, that number has decreased down to 16,497.

Over the past two decades, there has been a slow and steady 2% annual drop most of the time, with the pandemic putting the foot down on the accelerator and increasing the annual decline to nearly 6%. When *Bloomberg* reported on those numbers last month, the headline summed up the situation as: “The dry-cleaning industry is slowly dying.”

Admittedly, a 40% drop of the number of establishments in a little over two decades is an astonishing figure. While such a long trend of decline suggests reasons for drycleaners to be concerned, the numbers simply don’t tell the whole story.

They don’t include an asterisk that makes note of how several operators with numerous locations have consolidated their own stores in efforts to reduce operating costs and improve profitability. Many other long-time operators opted for retirement. The numbers also don’t point out that a large percentage of the 16,497 establishments still operating are much better business operations than they were just a few years ago.

Afterall, much of the industry had to undergo an entrepreneurial evolution during the pandemic, making hard decisions and adapting their businesses specifically to keep pace with the changing wants and needs of their customers. The cleaners who are still among the counted seem particularly driven and determined to improve every aspect of their plants. These are not the actions of a “dying” industry. Anybody who has attended a recent industry gathering such as Clean 2022 can tell you that there are still a large number of successful drycleaners who still care greatly about the future of the industry.

That is the reason why we are continuing with additional Clean 2022 coverage this month (see front page) on additional educational sessions presented at the Georgia World Congress Center by Chris Kuehl, Dave Coyle, Norman Way and Jennifer Whitmarsh. They simply contained too much important information for those who couldn’t attend the Clean Show to miss. Speaking of the show, columnist Don Desrosiers continues the second of his three-part series on all of the significant shirt equipment upgrades he

witnessed firsthand in Atlanta. His column also includes QR codes linked to videos featuring the latest and greatest machines being put to the test (see page 14).

In terms of tests, our resident spotting expert Dan Eisen discusses some he held at his Independent Garment Analysis labs concerning oxidation on various stains in his column on page 18. He analyzes all of the various factors that contribute to oxidation — including time, heat, fabrics, chemicals and the drycleaning and pressing processes. Read how to avoid oxidizing stains by following his tried-and-proven methods.

Also this month’s issue, there’s another chance to advance your knowledge on the solvent flow in your drycleaning machine’s heart — its solvent pump — as Bruce Grossman guides you on an inner tour of all the potential problems caused by pump fouling and how to check your pump performance (see page 12) to make sure you are getting proper flow.

While it’s easy sometimes to get caught up in the complicated and demanding production side of the business, drycleaners should not do so at the expense of guiding the business according to plan — assuming you have one. Kermit Engh writes about a second Silver Bullet for your business: a strategic plan, something that far too many business owners lack. Go to page 16 for ideas on how to begin devising your plan.

Hopefully, part of that plan will be to avoid leaving money on the table, something Peter Blake covers on page 22. His column focusses on the Employment Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) and how a large number of small businesses have not taken full advantage of it — even those who have already filed. After all, there may have been significant changes to the program that you haven’t read about.

Lastly, we hope it doesn’t need to be said but here it is anyway: professional drycleaning and laundry absolutely, positively is not dying. It is *improving*, which is a good thing because there will always be customers who need or want the services of a professional drycleaner/laundrer and that simply isn’t going to change.

This month’s profile (see page 6), Rechelle Balanzat, the owner of Juliette Cleaners of New York, perhaps said it best. “There are two things that drive our industry — until we live in a nudist colony or until we decide to wear dirty underwear, which I just don’t see happening.”

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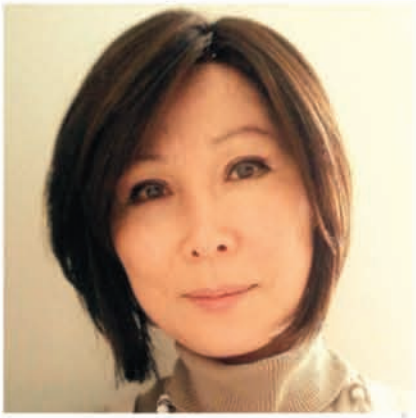


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JULIETTE

Fire and drive

Long before her drycleaning company Juliette successfully combined high tech with high fashion, Rechelle Balanzat had an epiphany. She was working for KCAP Financial of New York at the time.

"I was so young, and I worked in finance and I thought the sky's the limit," she recalled. "I thought I was going to have the corner office and make a million dollar salary, and then suddenly the market crashed. That made me question the very fabric of reality. I had the realization that stability is an illusion and none of it is real. So, I quit and I pursued my true passion, which is Italy."

"My mother thought I was crazy because she's like, 'The whole world is falling apart and you're quitting and going to Italy?'" Rechelle laughed.

She soon traveled to Italy where she spoke the language, visited museums and studied art history.

"I lived in Italy, and then I went to Vienna and Prague and Budapest. I was having a grand old time by myself, and that really helped develop my character — at least the artistry that I bring to what I do," she noted.

Doing all the things that make her "soul sing" recharged her batteries and allowed her to fully embrace her inner entrepreneur. After working for a creative agency in New York for a few years (helping clients such as Britney Spears, Gucci, Pepsi and Beyoncé), she opted to branch out on her own.

She founded Johnny Social, a company that helped other businesses to better leverage social media and improve their communication and public relations.

"When I founded that tech start-up, that exposed me to technology and that's when I started developing relationships with engineers and really understanding how technology is changing the way we live, work and play," Rechelle recalled.

In 2013, an idea came to her. "At the time, I was really using my Seamless app a lot for my food delivery and I think, 'Why isn't there a company that picks up and delivers my laundry and drycleaning?'" she said. "That was the birth of Juliette."

Long before Juliette was first launched, Rechelle's journey began in the Philippines, though not for long. She moved to America when she was three, where she would be raised in New Jersey by her mother.

"I think it's the classic American dream," she recalled. "You come to America with the dream of more opportunity, and growing up with a single mom, I saw how difficult life can be, *period*. We did go through a lot of challenges growing up, but that did instill in me resilience and perseverance that *never again will I want to experience this level of hardship*. So, a lot of my fire and drive comes from that."

That same fire and drive propelled her earn a philosophy degree from Fordham University in New York, which, in turn, had led her on her way to visions of a corner office and a mil-

lion dollar salary.

In 2013, though, more fire and drive would be needed in order to turn the idea of Juliette into a reality.

"The company is founded on the premise of technology and how technology can disrupt the entire industry," Rechelle began. "It sounds great, but when it was time to execute, everyone

they care about their fashion and people who wear those tailored suits usually live a very sexy lifestyle."

The Juliette brand has been both sexy and successful so far, but Rechelle is all-too-aware that the view is a little bit different behind the scenes at a cleaning business. She is also a graduate of the signature introductory and

have so much more. For me, personally, it came down to will power. What can I actually do with my own two hands? What can I do with the relationships that I have? What can I do through marketing and branding? What are the other skills that I have that are not dependent on money? I just drove that home."



Rechelle Balanzat

Juliette Cleaners
New York City, NY

told me to *get the F out*."

"I had a lot of doors really slammed close in my face, but there was one guy who sort of entertained my idea. He still thought I was crazy, but I needed to prove myself to him," she continued her story. "So, I worked for him for free, learning laundry and drycleaning for a year, and in doing that, I was able to earn his trust."

"In the end, he did give me the key to his things so that I could operate cleaning out of his facility and also launched my idea," Rechelle added. "That's when we launched in December 2014 and how I did it without capital, without investors, no equipment and no lease. It was just a relationship that I fostered over a year. Then, from there, I became an owner/operator in 2017, and opened my own fulfillment center."

From the start, Rechelle was inspired by the glitz and the glam of some of her former social media clients and wanted Juliette to project a strong, sexy brand — not something that is typically envisioned when thinking of cleaners.

"I wanted to build a brand that appealed to everyone, so the way to appeal to everyone is to not exist — to be a figment of their imagination," she said. "And, Juliette is a figment of your imagination. She's the hand that washes all of your clothes, but never tells. She keeps all your secrets and she doesn't wash and tell."

That brand was a perfect match for the market she sought to capture — active professionals who live what Rechelle calls a "very New York lifestyle."

"You know, New Yorkers work hard, play hard and they want to look good while they do it," she said. "These are not people who are wearing yoga pants every day. These are people who wear tailored Italian-made suits to work, and

advanced courses at the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute's School of Drycleaning Technology.

"So much of this industry is hands-on, so many cleaners are generational cleaners — the knowledge has been passed down by generations from father to son or father to daughter, and so I still learn every day," she said. "That's why I'm a part of the DLI community. I love this community. I have a lot of respect for owners/operators. It's long days. It's not glamorous. It's not sexy, and it's not fun."

It also hasn't been easy, especially during the pandemic when the Big Apple was on lockdown.

"We lost 90% of our revenue. We had to shut down one of our locations. I had to furlough 70% of my team and I had to make really quick decisions," Rechelle noted, adding, "What I want to share with my community of cleaners is that, at our core, we are business people and I think we forget that. I think we get caught up in stain removal and discounting ourselves and our services — but we our business people and we made difficult decisions these past two years, and the ones who are left standing are a testimony to our resilience as entrepreneurs."

To survive, Rechelle cut expenses while doubling efforts to communicate with customers. She also used a fair amount of fire and drive to acquire government funds to stay afloat — despite being turned down multiple times.

"I just kept on re-applying and going a different route until I was approved," she said.

Unfortunately, such challenges have been a recurring pattern in Rechelle's life, including while trying to get Juliette off the ground initially. So, she approached the problem creatively.

"You don't have the money, so what do you have?" she asked. "Well, you

Persistence pays off, as Rechelle can personally attest. Lately, things at Juliette have greatly improved and business is good. "We were able to bring everyone back," she said. "And we have grown."

Some of that growth included acquiring Chinese Laundry, Inc. of Manhattan, a business with over 100 years of family-owned history and tradition in the art of hand cleaning.

She also believes she has grown much as an entrepreneur and credits the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program for being a big reason. "The Goldman Sachs community trained me to think differently and to see things from a different lense, and that has been really instrumental in my growth as a business owner. So, I am an ambassador for their program," she emphasized.

Additionally, Rechelle is a Tory Burch Fellow and an All Raise Female Founder. Last year, she was honored by the Philippine Consulate as a "Distinguished Filipino Women" in March, which is National Women's Month.

She understands the challenging road ahead for future female entrepreneurs and wants to help the next generation succeed. "At the end of the day, it's about giving back," she said. "That's it — just being that person for other people that I wish I had."

Whatever obstacles or opportunities arrive on the horizon, Rechelle's daily approach will remain the same.

"One of the things that I personally do before I even start my day is I ask myself, 'What is the one thing I can do today such that by doing it, it makes all things easier,' she said. "I don't try to do everything at once. I just try to do one thing once a day, and then what happens is your start to compound over time. How I was able to grow the way I've grown is because I have been disciplined, relentless and focussed on doing one thing once a day."



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Preparing drycleaners for the future

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need to cut costs... you need to get things under control.”

At that time, the unemployment was near 3.2% nationally. Kuehl noted the dollar was “as strong as it has been in decades,” and one of his favorite statistics — the Purchase Manager’s Index, which tracks what and how much purchase managers buy — indicates there’s growth happening.

“The predictions for next year are still 2 1/2 to 3% GDP growth, even with these couple of quarters where we’ve sunk,” Kuehl said. “Inflation is also supposed to be moderate. We’re being driven again by oil prices and supply chain. The weird thing is that either one of those could end, literally, overnight.”

Even if it did end overnight, however, Kuehl does not be-

lieve the job market is going to improve soon. Fortunately, though, the industry is advancing technologically. “That’s so obvious looking at the displays, you’re becoming more and more sophisticated — which may be the way to deal with the labor shortage because as we get fewer and fewer people — just like everything else in manufacturing — *I got to have machines that are going to do what people used to do.*”

How to Attract and Manage Generation Y

Even in such a case, there must be people to work with the machines, which still leads to dealing head-on with the ongoing labor crisis. Jennifer Whitmarsh from The Route Pros presented a Clean Show program that offered strategies for attracting and managing

members of the largest generation in the workplace — Generation Y (those born between 1981 and 1996).

Whatever method you prefer — Indeed, Zip Recruiter, Monster, LinkedIn, social media posts or store signage — when a candidate expresses interest, do not waste any time. “We need to act fast. We need to call them back or email them back, or, best yet, we can also text back,” Whitmarsh emphasized. “I do know that the average person responds six times more likely and faster when you text them.”

Additionally, be specific with job descriptions. The best talent wants to know what is expected of them on the job and unclear job descriptions suggest your company may be a little disorganized.

Unfortunately, even if you

do everything right, it still may take a while to find someone. “We all have a lot on our plate, but don’t give up, because you know what happens when we give up,” she said. “Try something new. Don’t give up on yourself. Don’t give up on that potential talent coming in because they are out there. *They are out there.*”

Once you attract them, the next step is to motivate them. Whitmarsh said to use clear communication, constructive feedback and show genuine appreciation for the work they do. Avoid micromanaging.

“We have to have patience for our team members, especially the younger generation,” she said. “This is where they’re going to make mistakes. You’re not encouraging them to make mistakes, but that is where we learn the most — from our

mistakes.”

Marketing for Success

Speaking of mistakes, a big one many drycleaners have made is failing to get the most out of their point-of-sale (POS) systems or marketing programs, topics of other programs at the Clean Show.

As Norman Way of Puritan Cleaners noted, marketing success depends on hundreds of little things. He compared it to a strategy highlighted in the film *Moneyball* which depicted the success of the 2002 Oakland Athletics who operated with the third lowest budget in Major League Baseball.

They sought less expensive players with a high propensity to get on base, which propelled them all the way to the World Series where they lost to the Los Angeles Dodgers, the team with the league’s highest budget.

Way’s theory of marketing to get on base began with a lot of effort acquiring customer information and now includes customized marketing emails that include videos tailored to the customer. It was a long journey, but a necessary one, so cleaners should not be discouraged. “We think we need to take the mountain to get there,” he said. “You can take one step.”

One step that has worked for Dave Coyle of Maverick Drycleaners has been gearing his marketing efforts toward his highest spending customers.

“If you include in your target marketing the bottom 80%, those are not going to be clients who are loyal, dependable, reliable, who listen to you... those are people who believe they are in a transactional relationship and that’s why 80% of our industry operates like a one-night stand. We just care about having you in the next time.”

By having an ongoing conversation to better address their wants and needs, Coyle leverages his company’s relationship with the top 20% of clients in order to entice them to utilize other services that can make their lives easier while boosting cash flow.

After his session, Coyle was joined on stage by other Maverick Drycleaners who have improved sales with this method.

“If you take one thing away from this... you should do comforters for sure,” Chris Lema of Matrtinizing Cleaners emphasized.

Sassan Rahimzadeh agreed. When his Arya Cleaners business ran a \$28 comforter special, it was bombarded with business. “It was by far the best promotion we ever ran in the history of our company,” he said.



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Industry plans several major events

Continued from page 1
from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

Then, on Thursday, attendees will be back at it for programs that include a Q&A panel on cleaning advice with WDF pioneers and wash chemistry experts Jeff Gardner (a.k.a. The Laundry Doctor) and Wally Makowsky of Wash with Wally.

Later on, there will be programs on “Best Practices for Delivery Routes” and a panel with various WDF All-Stars — some of the best experts on WDF, delivery and commercial laundry — will be ready to answer the audience’s most challenging questions.

The cost to attend the event is \$699 per person for members and \$899 per person for non-members, which includes breakfast and lunch each day

and two evening receptions. For more information or to register, go online to www.dlionline.com and click on the WDF Workshop 2022 link from the home page.

Profit Fest Enlists the Best
Prior to the WDF Workshop in Chicago, the North East Fabricare Association (NEFA) will present Profit Fest 2022 on Oct. 29 and 30 at The Sheraton 4-Points in Wakefield, MA.

In addition to featuring educational sessions from several guest speakers, it will feature tabletop exhibits.

On Saturday morning, Dave Coyle from In the Bag Cleaners will present a 90-minute program on “Proven Strategies to

Make Money in Drycleaning and Laundry” at 9 a.m.

At 11:15 a.m., Route Pro James Peuster will join with representatives from PuzzleHR to take part in a 75-minute panel discussion on “Solving the Labor Market Dilemma and Building Benefits Packages that Attract Employees.”

There will also be a luncheon roundtable from 12:30 to 2 p.m. that will focus on “Industry Best Practices.”

Later that afternoon, Rechelle Balanzat of Juliette Cleaners will speak on “The Art of the Soft Sell” from 2 to 3 p.m. Next, a panel discussion featuring Cohen Wills of Cleaner Marketing and others will explore ways to increase profits with “Proven Strategies for Profit Generation.”

NEFA will also host a Saturday night cocktail reception, along with its popular silent auction, from 5 to 7 p.m.

On Sunday, Jason Loeb of Sudsies Dry Cleaners will deliver a pair of programs. The first will focus on how “Profits Start in the Call Office,” and the latter will cover “Customer Experience Is Critical to Financial Success.”

Full registration for Profit Fest costs \$270 per member and \$320 per non-member; however, NEFA only charges \$225 per additional member and \$290 for additional non-members from the same plant. The association also offers individual registration packages by day.

NEFA has locked in a discounted room rate of \$189 per night based on double occu-

pancy at the Sheraton 4-Points. For reservations, call (781) 245-9300 and mention NEFA. For more information, or to register for Profit Fest online, visit www.nefabricare.com or call the office at (603) 635-0322.

January Event Announced
For the first time since 2020, DLI and the National Cleaners Association (NCA) will team up to host their joint Five Stars/Brainstorming Conference.

It will take place early next year from Jan. 12 to 15 at the Secrets Royal Beach Punta Cana resort in the Dominican Republic.

There are a limited number of rooms available, though there are several options including a Junior Suite Pool View room for \$654 per night and a Preferred Jr. Suite Pool View room for \$864 per night. There are also a limited number of other room options available. Call Mary Scalco at (800) 638-2627 for information.

Check for updates on the event as they come available by visiting www.nca-i.com or www.dlionline.com.

WSDLA merges with SDA

The Western States Drycleaners and Launderers Association (WSDLA) will join forces and merge with the Southwest Drycleaners Association (SDA).



The union will become official on Jan. 1 of next year.

At that point, SDA will become a 10-state association serving over 240 professional drycleaners throughout Arizona, Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

Early next year, the association has plans to host its Cleaners Showcase 2023.

It is scheduled to take place in Irving, TX, from April 28 to 30.

SDA is also extending seven board of director seats from members in Arizona and Nevada. For more information, visit www.sda-dryclean.com.



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WRENCH WORKS

By BRUCE GROSSMAN

Getting to know about solvent flow (part 2)

This month, I'll continue on the solvent flow subject by discussing the heart of the solvent flow system, the solvent pump. The solvent pump on most drycleaning machines is a centrifugal type pump, a mechanical device designed to move solvent by employing a motor rotating a disk-like device with vanes on its surface called an impeller. Fluid enters the rapidly rotating impeller at its center and is cast out by centrifugal force along its circumference through the impeller's vane tips.

Pump Fouling

As we are all painfully aware, there is no end to the list of junk that solvent washes through the drycleaning machine: buttons, lint, pens, pencils, credit cards, collar stays, pins, coins, and the list goes on and on. Hopefully, the button trap strainer will strain out most of these objects. As we all know, nothing is 100%, and some debris

will get through, and when it does, in most cases, the pump's impeller will just chop it up and pass it through to eventually be trapped in the filter or still. However, when the pump can't chew it up and spit it out, the debris often begins to accumulate in the area between the vanes on the pump's impeller.

This accumulation is a cascading process (like a snowball rolling downhill); once begun, it will rapidly degrade the pump's performance. The following are the most common symptoms when debris is fouling the

solvent pump's impeller, and they fall into two basic categories, electrical and quality of the drycleaning.

the pump motor overload tripping. On most drycleaning machines, this results in the machine shutting down

and displaying an error message.

thereby washing old accumulated debris onto the garments.

- **Poor Filtration:** Another symptom of pump problems is poor filtration. Flow rate through the filters is paramount to good cleaning quality. The solvent pump must overcome the resistance the filters present to solvent flow. This resistance is referred to as filter pressure.

When the vanes of the solvent pump become fouled, there is a marked reduction in the pump's ability to force solvent through the filter, thereby reducing that vital flow rate with the attendant effects outlined in the preceding paragraph on greying.

Checking Pump Performance

A method I've always found handy for checking pump performance is to set up the flow path so solvent is pumped from a tank back to the same tank while watching the spray pattern across the tank sight glass.

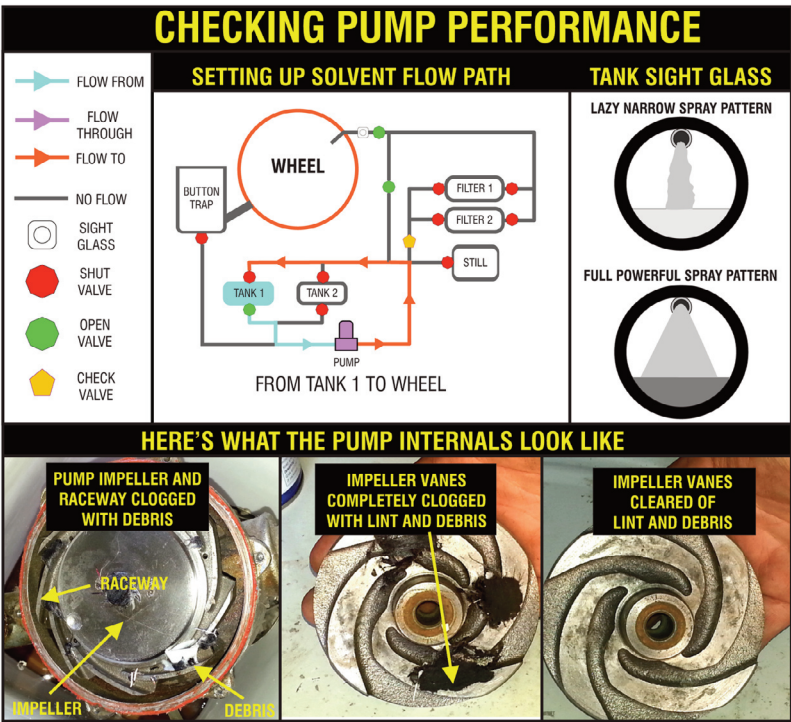
The area the spray fans out over the sight glass is a good barometer of the solvent pump performance.

Often lint, staples, safety pins, and all kinds of detritus clog up vanes on the pump impeller, degrading but not entirely stopping the solvent flow, which affects the solvent spray pattern.

Look at the accompanying illustrations showing the valve setup for the spray pattern check and the pump's internals.

Well, that's it for now. More on valves next time around.

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.



Electrical

Case #1: When an object actually locks up the impeller, preventing it from rotating, the pump motor's excess current draw will almost immediately lead to

displaying an error message.

Case #3: When debris begins to build up in the impeller vanes resulting in a reduced flow rate during the drain period, the solvent level will not drop below the drycleaning machine's basket.

Then, when the extract motor turns on, it attempts to spin the basket through solvent, thereby tripping the extract motor overload.

This build-up of debris in the impeller may be in only one or two impeller vanes, leading to intermittent tripping of the extract motor overload.

Cleaning Quality

When debris clogs the impeller, there is a marked decrease in the volume of solvent being moved by the pump. Symptoms of this reduced flow rate can result in any or all of these undesirable effects.

- **Greying:** With less solvent flushing through the garments in a given time, particulates that would usually be suspended in the solvent then carried to the filter or still, settle back out of suspension onto the garments resulting in greying.

Also, suppose the basket attempts to rotate through solvent remaining in the wheel. In that case, it agitates the solvent, splashing against the tub's sides,

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-Mike Astorino, Fabricare Cleaners

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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

The old and new at Clean 2022 — Part 2

Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of three articles highlighting shirt equipment featured at Clean 2022.

This month, I present to you part two of my Clean Show 2022 coverage. I will cover Forenta and Hi-Steam. I have several videos for your perusal. In every case, focus your smart-phone camera over the various QR codes to view the movie that is described in the caption associated with the QR code.

Forenta has overhauled their line of laundry presses with a load of new features.

In no particular order:

1) Gone are the steel braided steam hoses that are prone to leaking, breakage and kinking.

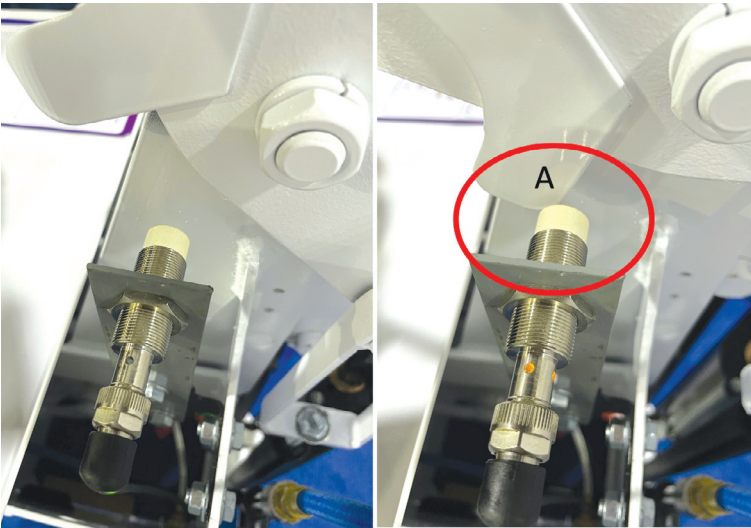
Forenta has now switched to insulated Teflon hoses that also remove the burn hazard associated with the steel braided steam hoses. Drycleaning presses also have this feature, as well.

2) Forenta's signature one-handed control — the prime-

ter bar versus the two-handed buttons — can now be had with a timer.

This is something that was previously not possible.

3) Speaking of two-handed buttons, these are no longer pneumatic, but rather, electric.



On the left, the steam head is in the up position. The steam head is in the down position on the right.

4) A very important safety feature has been added. (See both pictures above.) The sensor shown in the picture notifies a computer the position of

the head. It forces the operator to leave their hands on the actuators until the head is fully closed. Long gone are the days a presser could put a book of matches under one of the buttons and just use one hand.

The electric eye waits for in-

sends a signal to the computer allowing the operator to remove their hands from the actuator buttons. Excellent safety function.

Forenta proudly displayed their single buck shirt unit. It amazes me how easy it is to operate and how easy it is to do a quality shirt.

Whenever I operate it, there seems to be fewer steps than on other units, although that probably isn't true. I guess that it is just easy to operate, simple as that.

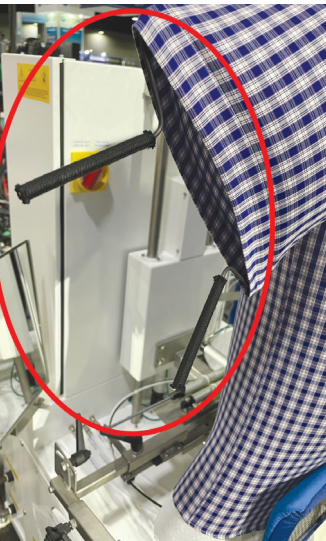
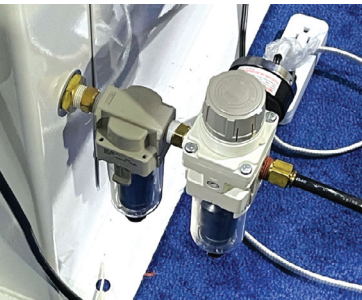


Forenta demo



Don presses on the Forenta single buck

Forenta also moved the air regulator assembly to the outside of their machines (see photo below) where they are easier to service and view.



infinite flexibility for the purchasers.

Also at Clean 2022 in Atlanta, Hi-Steam demonstrated their Turbo 440 shirt unit.

I am especially fond of the titanium spring forms used for the short sleeves (see picture above).

Short sleeve devices for blown sleeve units all seem to have one issue or another, but this simple device is quite clever.

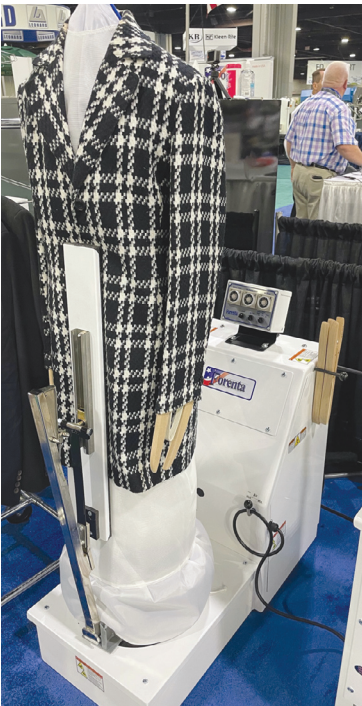


Hi-Steam Turbo 440



Don presses on the Hi-Steam Turbo 440

One last thing that Forenta President Rusty Smith was very proud of was how they made a small but significant change to their drycleaning suzy. Rusty explained to me that the control box was available as mounted either on the right side or on the left side, but either configuration presented challenges for the plant operators. They are now shipping their new suzies with the control boxes mounted in the center (see picture below) for



We will have one more bite at the apple next month.

Highlights will include a shirt unit that can press a shirt in 10 seconds from Sankosha, and a terrific feature that I have wanted for many years from Pony.

See you next month — same time, same channel.

"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.

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BUILDING VALUE

BY KERMIT ENGH

Silver Bullet #2: No Tactical Strategy

Last month I began discussing the **Silver Bullets** — the proven, powerful ways to increase your cash flow and profits with less stress and more free time. As I mentioned, these Silver Bullets make all the difference between businesses that grow monthly and yearly, and businesses that struggle to keep the lights on.

The first Silver Bullet I discussed was **No Exit Strategy**, which I covered in length in last month's article. This month, I'm moving on to the next Silver Bullet.

For business owners, it's not enough to know where you're going (though that is critical). You must also know how to get there. And that's the second big mistake I see business owners making consistently: no tactical strategy!

As was evident in the beginnings of Covid, and why peer-to-peer groups like Methods for Management and the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute were valuable resources to help charter those waters and the various government programs and changes in client needs and wants.

How do you know if you are one of the many with no tactical strategy?

In many cases, you have all the vision in the world. You have huge dreams and aspirations, revolutionary

ideas that can change the world (or at least make a tremendous impact on your industry). And yet, you lack the follow-through to make it happen.

In many cases, many self-sabotage themselves. As a result, many studies have proved that you end up with lackluster results, half-implemented ideas, and much discouragement.

Fortunately, there's a simple way to avoid that trap. It's the next Silver Bullet, a **Strategic Plan**.

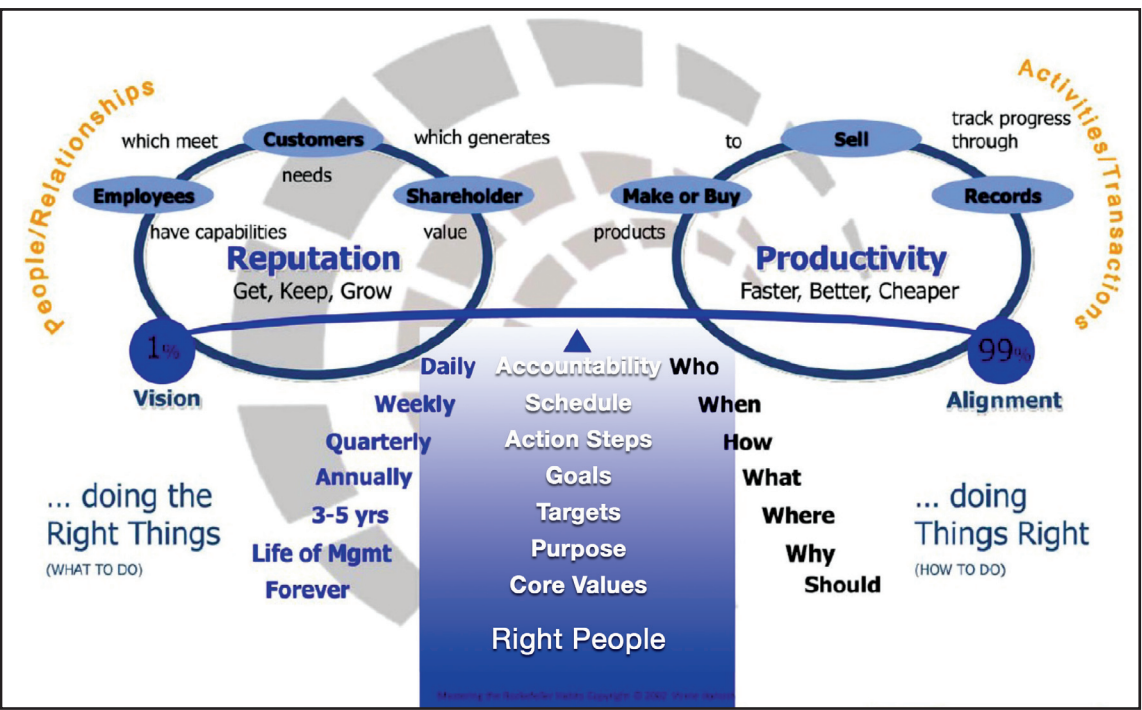
Your Strategic Plan begins from the book *Mastering the Rockefeller Habits* by Verne Harnish. He has written additional books which you may find to be great reads. There is a saying, "If you are not reading, you are not leading" and I believe that.

Your Strategic Plan begins with **the right people doing the right things right!**

On the top right of this page is a rather complicated diagram, so take a moment to review it carefully.

Upon review, you might find this to contain ideas you have seen in other articles. For example, parts of EOS from Gino Wickman's book *Traction* are included.

The key to aligning all these critical components lies in one groundbreaking tool: **the one-page strategic plan (1PSP)**. There are four major decisions, or critical



questions, your 1PSP helps you address:

- 1) What are our core values and purpose?
- 2) What are our dreams?
- 3) What makes us different?
- 4) What do we need to be focussing on now?

Until you have ready, solid, in-depth answers to each of the above questions, *you will never be able to put together a long-term strategy that will lead you to your objectives.*

This Strategic Plan is not a process to be done by yourself. Ideally, you will want to include your employees (at least your management), several customers who will give you honest

opinions and suppliers you can trust for their confidentiality.

Lastly, you could reach out to peers with whom you have a relationship. But, you must provide the vision and leadership to drive this process and ensure implementation.

It's hard to explain how the 1PSP works until you see it with your own eyes.

As a "thank you" gift for reading, I'd like to give you a free template of the 1PSP you can use in your business.

To request it, email me at kengh@mfmi.com, subject line "1PSP Template" or call the office at (402) 690-0066 and mention this gift.

Once you download the

form, the elements of the one-page plan will include the following: SWOT analysis, Core Values/Beliefs, Purpose — BHAG, Targets, Goals and Initiatives, Actions (rocks), KPIs, Brand Promise and Annual/Quarterly Themes.

Then, there are the various stages of the Team Life Cycle. It starts with Forming of the Team. Next is Storming (the reaction to the teammates), followed by Norming, where the team blends together — don't skip this one, then Performing (the task is accomplished). Next is Dorming where the team is successful through groupthink, and, lastly, Adjourning, where the team disbands, which may be bittersweet.

This plan may sound like a lot of work — and it is — because this process will separate successful operators from those struggling and looking for exits with no plan. I hope you will take me up on the offer.

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 SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

Removing oxidized and set stains

During consultations, I find that many set stains are caused by procedures used by drycleaners and spotters.

The first thing that we have to do is define a set or oxidized stain. These are stains that require more than drycleaning fluid, water or lubrication to remove.

Tannin, protein and oils oxidize and set by picking up oxygen from the air. An example of oxidation is cutting an apple in half and watching it turn brown from oxygen from the air. This is the theory behind invisible stains that show up after a period of time. Vegetable and cooking oils also oxidize by picking up oxygen from the air. These oils differ from mineral oils such as Vaseline and motor oil which do not oxidize. Paints and glues also oxidize after a period of time. We all know that a fresh paint stain can be simply washed off or drycleaned to remove.

There are several factors which produce oxidation and set stains, some of which are more important. At the laboratories of Inde-

pendent Garment Analysis I conducted several experiments concerning oxidation on various stains.

1) Age. The longer a stain remains in the fabric, the more oxidized and set it becomes. That means when customers bring in a garment with older stains, it will be more difficult to remove than fresh stains. The extent to which a stain oxidizes due to age is a factor but not necessarily a major one. We stained several garments with vegetable oils, tannin and protein, allowing it to set in the fabric for two weeks. Although the stains oxidized it did not do it to an extent that it could not be removed.

2) Heat. This is a major factor to oxidation. We found that the heat of the spotting gun — when improperly used — caused oxidized and set stains. We found that mustard placed on a fabric and steamed with the steam gun at close range caused the mustard to oxidize so only bleach could remove it. When spotted properly, without using excessive heat, the mustard was removed easier.

The same concept can be

applied to vegetable oils. When vegetable oils from hot foods such as pizza splatter on a fabric, the stain was much more difficult to remove than oils used in salads.

3) Drycleaning. The drycleaning process often uses heat from 140°F to 150°F which can set stains.

4) Pressing. The heat of pressing is one of the biggest factors causing stains to oxidize. This is the reason why many vegetable oils on laundered shirts are most difficult to remove, especially when pressed on a hothead.

5) Fabrics. Wet side stains on natural fabrics such as wool, cotton, silk and linen will oxidize to a greater extent than synthetic fibers such as polyester and nylon. Vegetable oils oxidize to the same extent on all fibers.

6) Chemicals. Certain chemicals can set stains making them impossible to remove. For example, when alcohol was put on a blood stain or other protein matter, the stain in many cases was impossible to remove. Tannin stains such as coffee, tea, medicine and mustard will oxidize from contact with al-

kali. Put an alkali on a coffee stain or mustard and watch the stain change in color.

Avoid Oxidized Stains

Pre-spotting. Light colored fabrics should be pre-spotted before drycleaning. Dark garments do not have to usually be pre-spotted.

Spotting Procedure to Avoid Oxidization

Tannin:

1) Flush area but keep steam gun six inches from fabric. If you can hold your hand under the steam gun it is the right distance.

2) Apply lubrication

3) Use mechanical action

4) Flush (Safe distance)

5) Tannin formula

6) Mechanical action

7) Flush (Safe distance)

Any stain not removed at that point is oxidized and heat can be applied.

8) Oxalic acid test

9) Heat

10) Flush

11) Rust remover (Test)

12) Heat

13) Flush

14) Peroxide and ammonia (Test)

15) Heat

16) Flush

Protein Stains:

1) Flush (Safe distance from fabric)

2) Neutral lubricant

3) Mechanical action

4) Flush

5) Protein formula or digester

6) Mechanical action

7) Flush

8) Peroxide and ammonia

9) Heat

10) Flush

11) Acid

12) Flush

Dry Side Stains:

1) Oily type paint remover

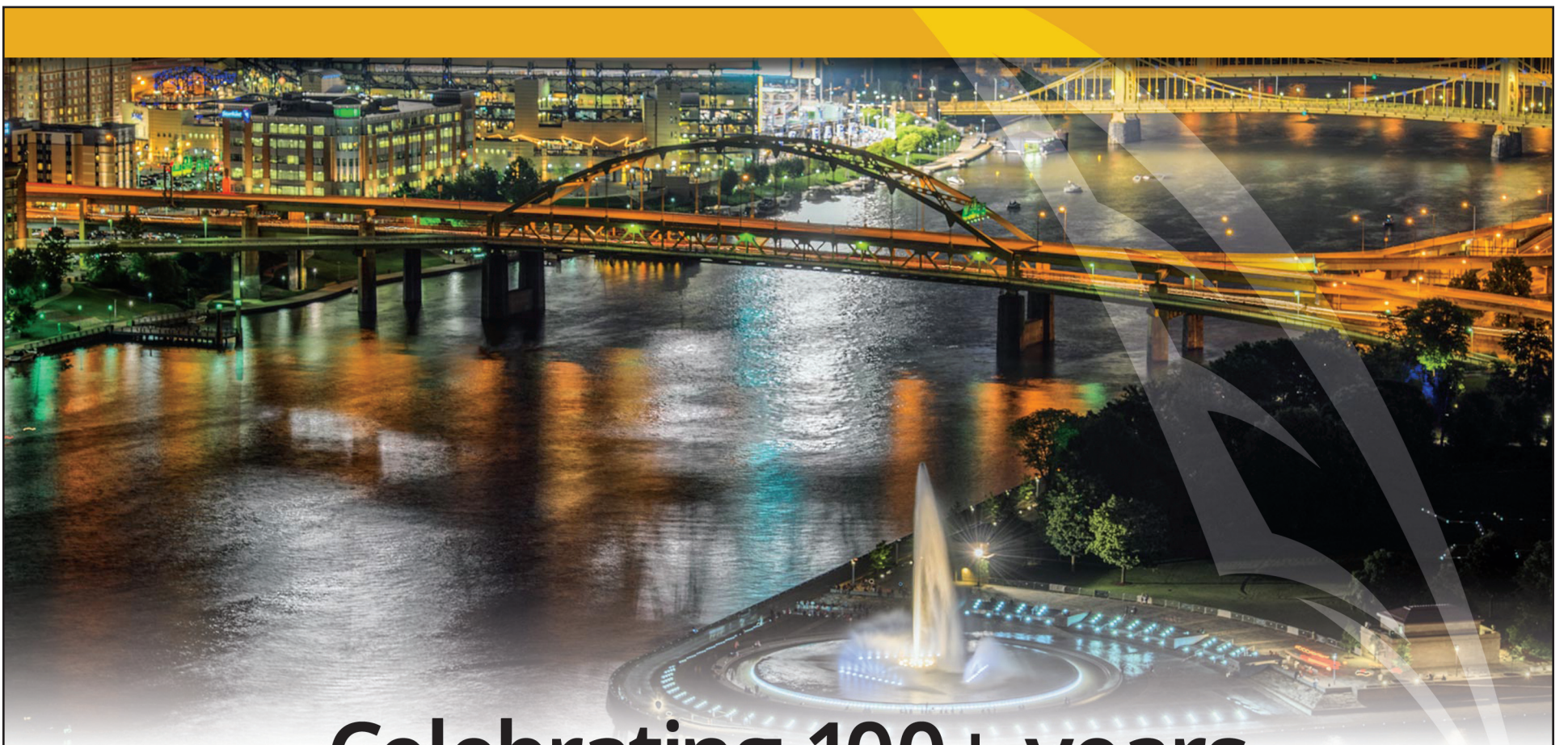
2) Mechanical action

3) Oily type paint remover and amyl acetate

4) Mechanical action

5) Dryclean

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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- Janet Garman
Glyndon Lord Baltimore Cleaners
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AN OUTSIDE PERSPECTIVE



BY PETER BLAKE

You could be leaving money on the table

For many small businesses, the **Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC)** will provide significant financial relief. Between the pandemic closing businesses and offices and the constant inflation forcing people to reduce discretionary spending, drycleaners have been one of the hardest hit industries in the past few years.

As an industry, we need to be aware and utilize all the tools and programs available to us to continue to rebuild.

The ERTC, passed under the CARES Act, is a refundable tax credit that rewards businesses who kept employees on their payroll during the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

Many businesses do not think they qualify, but the rules have changed and now there are multiple ways to get the money that you are owed.

The good news is that many businesses have al-

ready claimed and received ERTC for both 2020 and 2021.

The bad news is the majority of small businesses have not filed for the program or have not taken full advantage of all they can.

The truth of the matter is the program is new and has been evolving and changing constantly.

gram, we have found other “triggers” that can be used to enter the program.

As an industry, here are the top criteria drycleaners can use to qualify for ERTC Relief:

• **Reduction in Revenue:**

Either a 50% reduction in gross sales in Q2, Q3 and/or Q4 of 2020 as compared to the same quarter in 2019;

From everything I have seen, 80% of all small businesses probably qualify for the program, but I believe for a variety of reasons they have not taken full advantage of it.

The more you look into the program the more nuances you notice that can have a direct impact on the applicability for drycleaners.

At the outset, we were only looking at the revenue reduction criteria, but as we dive further into the pro-

and/or a 20% reduction in gross sales in Q1, Q2 and/or Q3 of 2021 as compared to the same quarter in 2019.

In some cases, if a specific quarter qualifies, another quarter will qualify automatically 50% in 2020 and 20% in 2021.

• **Your business had to pivot to succeed**, and that change was more than 10% of business in 2019: wash-dry-fold, pickup and delivery.

• **Paying employees for “non-productive” work.**

• **Supply chain disruptions** due to COVID restrictions on suppliers led to a more than nominal effect.

What can this mean for my business?

The financial package can be significant. If you fully qualify for each quarter, you can receive up to **\$26,000 for each W-2 employee.**



The amount will vary depending on what time period you qualify for and how your company was affected by covid restrictions.

From everything I have seen, **80% of all small businesses** probably qualify for the program, but I believe for a variety of reasons they have not taken full advantage of it.

I think most of the larger companies have already filed for this and received the checks/refunds, but I know there are a lot of people that are not filing thinking they do not qualify.

I also firmly believe some of the early filers may not have taken full advantage of all that they are entitled to receive.

There have been some significant changes in the program since its inception. One of the most significant

changes eliminated the PPP restriction.

Now, even if you did use the PPP, you can still file and take advantage of the ERTC. In the beginning, there was only a revenue reduction criteria, and since then there have been a number of added criteria that could help many more businesses.

If you qualify for one quarter of ERTC in 2021, it will also automatically qualify for the following quarter as well.

Why haven't I heard this, or think it doesn't apply to me?

CPAs do not typically deal with quarterly returns or weekly payroll.

QuickBooks, ADP and Paychex require business owners to manually apply for this credit on their own. It is an involved process and takes time to make sure you qualify — but the return on your investment can be huge.

I strongly urge everyone to take a look at their situation and thoroughly investigate applicability. You don't want to leave this kind of money on the table.

I have been researching companies that will do this for you on a contingency basis.

Generally, for 15% of whatever refunds and tax credits you receive, the company will review your payroll records, establish applicability, and work with you to take full advantage of the program.

If you have not filed yet, or if you filed, but think you may be entitled to even more credits based on some of the new criteria — let me know.

I can put you in touch with a company that may be able to file for significant tax relief.

If you need advice or help, contact me at (617) 791-0128 or peteblke@aol.com.

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

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COVID-19 Economic Relief Resource

An excellent online resource for those seeking more information on Covid-19 federal government relief programs is www.treasury.gov/coronavirus

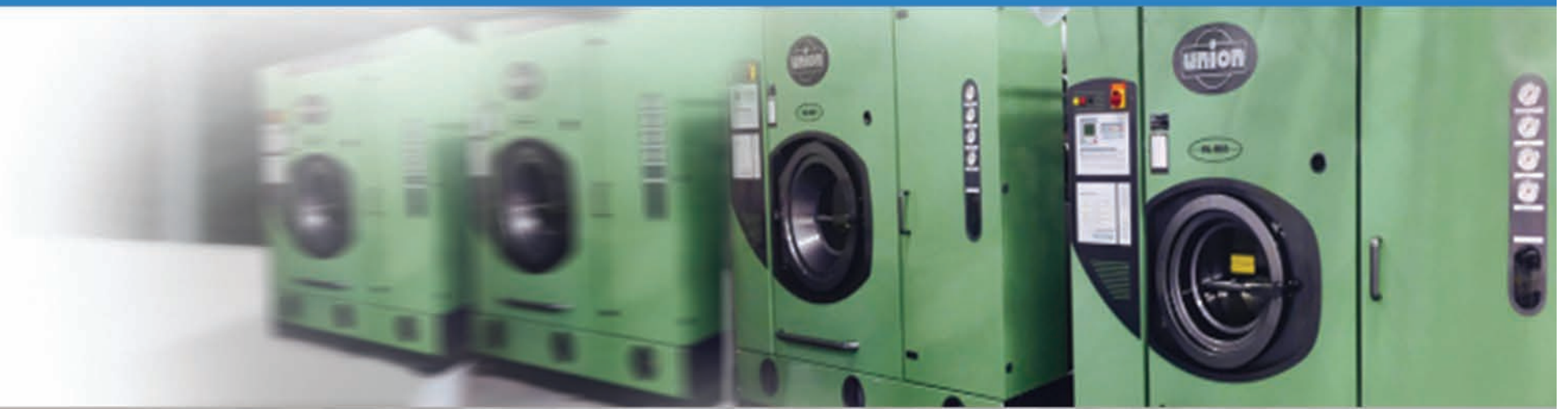
Click on the blue box marked “Assistance for Small Businesses.” There you will find links to additional details about the **Employee Retention Tax Credit** and **Paid Leave Credit** programs, as well as the **Emergency Capital Investment** and the **Paycheck Protection** programs.



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DLI issues monkeypox tips

Recently, the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) posted guidelines taken largely from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website for handling garments suspected of being contaminated with monkeypox.

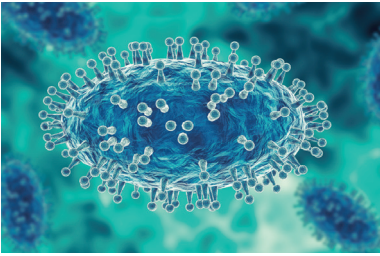
Typically, monkeypox is a rare disease found in West and Central Africa that is similar to smallpox in terms of symptoms, though it is much milder and rarely fatal. Symptoms include skin rashes or lesions that spread across the body. In some cases, it can produce flu-like symptoms. Unlike COVID-19, it *does not* spread through the air. Transmission occurs during close contact either through prolonged physical contact, direct contact with body fluids or lesions, and it also may spread face to face through respiratory droplets or contact with contaminated bedding or clothing. The incubation period is about one to two weeks.

Poxviruses can survive in linens, clothing and on surfaces, especially in dark, cool and low humidity environments. For professionals tasked with cleaning linens suspected of being contaminated with monkeypox, DLI issued the following instructions:

- The customer or institution must supply the linen marked and packaged separately.
- Personnel should wear disposable gloves when handling. Goggles and protective clothing should be worn if there is a risk of direct contact with

active spores (for example, in the event of splashing).

- Replace and launder protective clothing in the event of contamination.
- Transfer soiled laundry items to be laundered in an impermeable container or bag that can be disinfected afterwards. Alternatively, a fabric bag may be used that can also be laundered along with the soiled items.
- Avoid shaking the garments once they are removed from the bag before placing in the washer.
- Wash laundry in a standard washing machine with detergent, following label instructions. Laundry sanitizers may be used but are not necessary.



- If linen is to be transported on routes, other guidelines from the CDC and Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) on the handling of linen need

to be mentioned. The soiled linen must be separated from the clean linen. Any containers used to transport clean linen, if previously used for soiled linen, must be properly decontaminated. Containers must be labeled appropriately.

- Any surface that comes in contact with contaminated linen should be cleaned with an EPA-registered disinfectant, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Follow all manufacturer directions for use, including concentration, contact time, care and handling.

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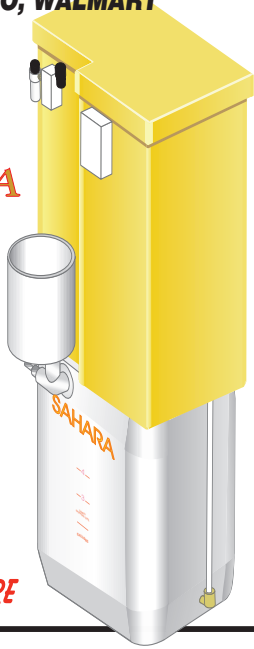
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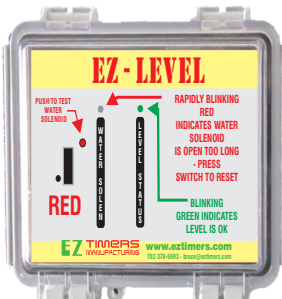
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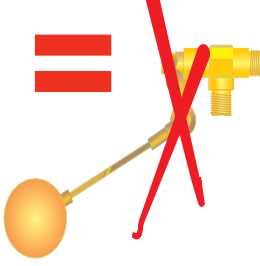
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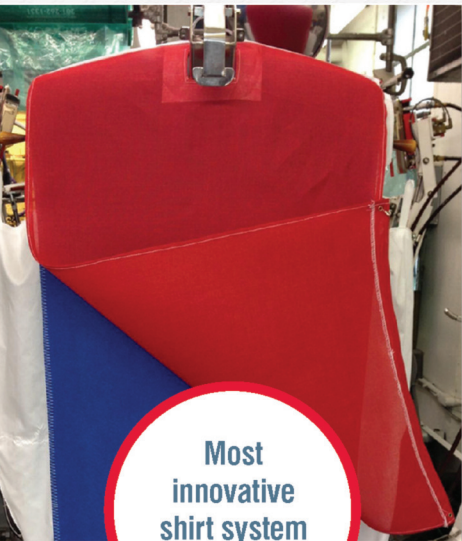
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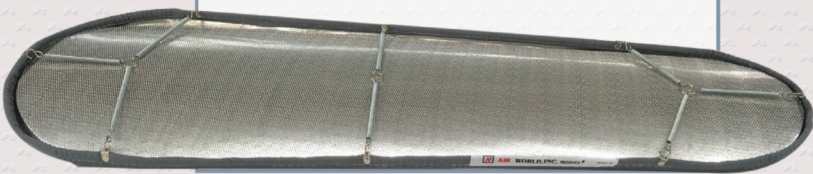
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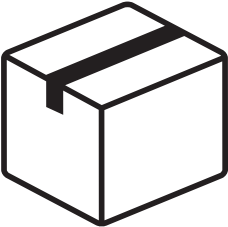
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NCL Profile
Life goes on
For the Bodin family, starting a cleaning business in Yonkers, NY, was an opportunity for a clean slate. Before that, 21-year-old Paul Bodin and his father, David, had been forced to flee their native country during the Russian Revolution, during which the family business in Kiev was confiscated. An old article from the Hood...

Industry balancing act to continue in 2022
As cleaners prepare to close the door on 2021 (and perhaps throw away the key), the last 11 months have proven to be another arduous challenge, heavily punctuated by shortages of every imaginable kind: hangers, plastic, computer chips, steel and other metals, lumber, packaging materials, zippers and...

Fall/Fest EXPO pushes date back
Even though interest for Fall/Fest 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 Eastern Fabricare Association, the South Eastern Fabricare Association and the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners...

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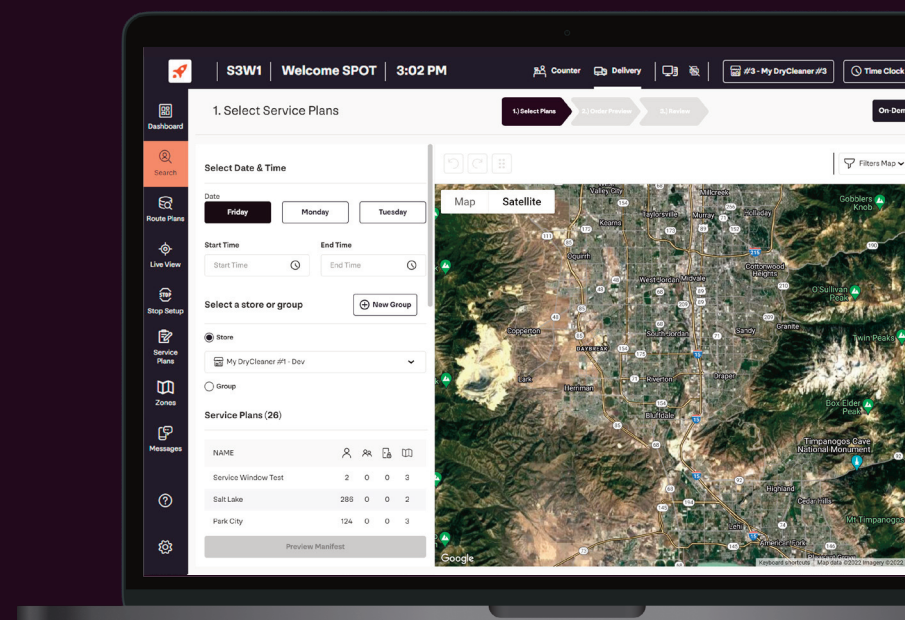
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