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DL EXPO East releases full schedule of events

In just two months, the Drycleaning and Laundry EXPO East will debut at the Gaylord Palms Resort Convention Center located in Kissimmee, FL.

The event, which takes place from June 7 to 9, will be the first of two special new EXPOs that will be hosted this year.

The second one, designated Drycleaning and Laundry EXPO West, is scheduled

to take place from Oct. 4 to 6 at the Horseshoe Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV.

Both EXPOs are a product of four regional drycleaning associations working together in order to produce less, but better, shows — the South Eastern Fabricare Association (SEFA), the Pennsylvania and Delaware Cleaners Association (PDCA), the California Cleaners Association (CCA) and the Southwest Drycleaners Associ-

ation (SDA).

DL EXPO East will kick off on the evening of Friday, June 7, with a VIP Preview of the exhibit floor from 6 to 8 p.m.

Then, during the following morning between 9 and 11 a.m., attendees can enjoy a pair educational seminars.

The first will feature Hall of Fame Keynote Speaker Terry Brock, and his partner, Gina Carr, CEO of Stark Rav-

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DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY EXPO EAST

June 7 to 9
Gaylord Palms Resort Convention Center
Kissimmee, FL



Gould Carr Brock Miller Kuehl

DLI will accept Hall of Fame nominations until May 15

As of April 1 of this year, the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) will begin accepting nominations for this year's class of its new Hall of Fame Award, considered to be the organization's highest honor.

All drycleaning professionals are invited to nominate a candidate for the award; membership in DLI or any other organization is not required in order to submit a nomination. The deadline for submissions will be May 15.

DLI established the Hall of Fame Award to recognize and acknowledge individuals who have contributed to the betterment of the drycleaning and laundry industry. Candidates could include industry pioneers, exceptional business leaders and community advo-

cates. DLI intends to shine a spotlight on individuals who have made a lasting positive impact on the industry.



Nomination forms are available by visiting them at DLIonline.org/HoF.

DLI's Board of Directors will review all of the applications and have plans to announce this year's recipients by mid-September.

"Professional drycleaning and laundry operators from all over the world contribute to the betterment of our industry every day," said DLI CEO

Mary Scalco. "Our goal with the Hall of Fame is to recognize contributions made by any professional in our industry who has made a positive impact and honor them as examples for other members of our industry."

All cleaning professionals, regardless of membership, are welcome to nominate industry professionals. In order to be eligible for nominations, candidates must have a minimum of 10 years of experience working in the drycleaning and laundry industry.

"The Hall of Fame Award aims to recognize and honor these remarkable individuals and businesses, whether they are visionary entrepreneurs who revolutionize the way we

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NCA board names Hargrove-Avery as executive director

The National Cleaners Association (NCA) has officially appointed Dawn Hargrove-Avery to the organization's position of executive director. Recently, Hargrove-Avery has been serving as interim executive director following the passing of Nora Nealis in November.



Hargrove-Avery

NCA appointed her to the position full-time in late February. Her career in the drycleaning industry first began during her teenage years when she worked for

her mother's drycleaning business. That experience instilled in her a deep understanding of the industry's challenges and opportunities. Her educational background includes a B.S. in Technical Management, along with certifications in social media, content management and artificial intelligence (AI) – giving here a broad skill set that spans both traditional business management and the digital domain.

Since officially joining NCA in May of 2010, Hargrove-Avery has helped revolutionize the association's digital marketing strategies,

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Staying on the fairway to success



As a longtime business-minded journeyman, Glen Gould has been making professional connections since he started buying candy in bulk and reselling it to neighborhood kids for profit. Later, he was a golf professional for many years. These days, he is owner of Dry Cleaning Connection of Peachtree, GA, and a board member of the South Eastern Fabricare Association. For the full profile of Glen, see page 6.

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Actively growing and engaging with a network of professionals is an excellent way to make your business better.
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How can you know what you don't know?

At its core, the concept of neutrality is an honorable goal, but it is one that is very difficult to achieve and maintain. This is why it is so impressive that, for over five centuries now, Switzerland has epitomized neutrality. Scholars place the start of these efforts back to 1515, the same year 10,000 Swiss had lost their lives fighting France in the 16-hour Battle of Marignano. Out of the ashes of those heavy losses came the country's steadfast devotion to remaining neutral, hoping to avoid such losses in the future.

That is not to say, though, that remaining neutral doesn't come with its own costs, as well. Even today, the country struggles with remaining sideless in the shadow of recent European conflicts. However, nobody can deny that Switzerland has long been synonymous with neutrality.

In the business world, **The Switzerland Structure** alludes to a strategy of structuring your company so that it is not overly dependent on any one employee, customer or manufacturer. Thus, a business much more valuable because of this autonomy that gives it more flexibility. (For more on this topic, see Kermit Engh's column on page 24.)

While having a business follow **The Switzerland Structure** is certainly something that we recommend; we would like to encourage drycleaners to embrace this concept also when it comes to industry networking.

Historically speaking, many drycleaners have taken the opposite approach. In the past, it often seemed like a majority of business owners preferred not to converse with other cleaners for fear that they may reveal any top secret information or trade secrets. This was understandable considering how competitive and crowded the drycleaning and laundry industries were at the turn of the century. However, this century has been less kind and the pandemic served as the last straw for many struggling cleaners. The number of operators in the industry has slimmed down, and those remaining are having no choice but to become more efficient, business savvy and willing to adapt their methods and services to fit the changing needs of their customers.

More cleaners have also shifted away from isolationism tendencies and have become much more involved in industry groups and associations. After all, the idea of revealing the ingredients of your secret sauce is much less daunting once you realize just how many different secret sauces can lead to success.

For Glen Gould, owner of Dry Cleaning Connection of Peachtree, GA — and this month's profile (see page 6) — the secret sauce is always changing because, well, business conditions always seem to be changing. However, one precept has remained the same for his entire life: he has always benefitted from the power of networking and making *connections*. In many ways, he's like the human embodiment of **The Switzerland Structure**.

From his days selling candy to fellow neighborhood kids to working as a professional golf instructor for a decade, Gould has learned that you don't know *what you don't know*... unless you talk to someone who is in the know. As an example, he noted that he didn't know about various drycleaning associations until he learned of them through his allied trades representatives.

"That being said, I wouldn't have made it through COVID if I wasn't a member of DLI," he said. "There's no way I would have made it through COVID because I learned and found out so many things on those Zoom calls that I never would have had access to."

Today, he is a board member of the South Eastern Fabricare Association (SEFA) and he has some advice for the industry: "I would encourage anybody who's a drycleaner to *stop thinking like a drycleaner*. We call our company a marketing company with a drycleaning problem. We're not a drycleaning company with a marketing problem. I think you have to completely change the way you think."

So, for those who have always preferred isolationism, we encourage you to change the way you think and make more allies. Also, don't be afraid to talk to your fellow cleaners. After all, you don't know what you don't know, but they might.

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Visit us at www.nationalclothesline.com for additional coverage of the drycleaning industry including Online Exclusive columns and articles, visit our issue archives going back all the way to January of 2018.

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Never say never

When Glen Gould says drycleaning “is the most interesting business I’ve ever been involved in,” he has quite a frame of reference for comparison. After all, his first business venture started at a very young age.

“I used to go to the store across the street and buy bulk candy, and come back and sell it to the neighborhood and stuff like that... and I didn’t eat all of the profit,” recalled Glen, who currently owns Dry Cleaning Connection in Peachtree, GA, with his wife, Tammy.

“For my first real job, I was 11 years old working for a catering company. The reason I ended up taking that job was my father died when I was nine,” he continued. “The guy who owned the catering company was a substitute teacher at our school. I think he kind of sensed that I needed some income and some male guidance, and he was kind enough to give me a job.”

During his formative years, Glen worked at Dairy Queen, Wendy’s and was an assistant night manager at Taco Tico at 15 — though circumstances forced him to leave the job. Closing up and getting home at 3:30 a.m. wasn’t working out for him, so his brother, Scott, got him a job picking up golf balls on the driving range at the Standard Club in downtown Atlanta.

Glen’s love of golf motivated him to learn the game intricately and he parlayed that into a career as a golf professional for a decade — not to be confused with a professional golfer. “The professional golfers are the ones you see on TV who make a lot of money and the golf professionals are the ones who work at a country club and teach other people how to golf,” he explained. “I traveled across the country working at different country clubs, teaching golf and meeting amazing people.”

Over the years, Glen taught golf instruction to many extremely successful people, such as Robert Half of the business consulting firm of the same name, and he also worked several years as an assistant to Texas professional golfer Rex Baxter.

After that experience, Glen found himself “needing to be successful somewhere else.” After selling cars for a short while, he applied for and earned a spot on a nine-person roster of salespeople designated to bring the British sporting equipment brand Slazenger back to the U.S. golf industry.

He loved that job and succeeded well for about four years, but realized it was time to look for another opportunity when his sales territory was greatly reduced. So, he joined his brother, Scott, who owned a company in Atlanta that sold janitorial supplies across the country. In time, that business expanded to include contracting for the cleaning work, as well.

“It was a very, very cutthroat business,” Glen said. “We had one employee who went to work for a competitor and they ended up really putting us in a really tough spot and we

ended up selling out to them. When we did that, we moved to Florida and we went to work for them for two years. After that, we picked up 167 K-Mart stores in our own business and that’s one of my favorite stories.”

Gould had scrambled from Punta Gorda to Tallahassee for a last-minute face-to-face meeting with a K-Mart rep-

Over the years, though, Glen became more embedded in the business community and local chambers of commerce. He used that experience to become the vice president of the Noonan Coweta Chamber in Atlanta when he and his wife moved there in 2010. That same year, Glen and Tammy also launched Dry Cleaning Connection.

“They have a saying that their operating procedure is COP — change of plans — and we live by that, too. I think there’s some truth to that,” Glen began. “It’s like that old Mike Tyson saying, ‘Everybody’s got a plan until they get punched in the mouth.’ If you’re not having problems, you’re probably not trying hard enough.”



www.drycleaningconnection.com

Glen Gould

Dry Cleaning Connection
Peachtree City, GA

representative who agreed to let him clean 30 stores starting in 30 days. There was just a few problems.

“I had no money. I had no equipment. I had no employees, but I had a contract,” he laughed. “And, before we started the contract, I picked up another 30 stores in Atlanta.”

Using a vast network of business connections, it all came together and the business kept picking up more K-Mart store contracts.

“It was a very exciting time. Before long, we have over 160 K-Mart stores. Of course, the bad news about that is K-Mart filed for bankruptcy. And so, at that point, we decided we didn’t like people anymore,” Glen laughed.

Needing to be successful somewhere else, the two brothers bought a coin laundromat that took in drycleaning.

“My brother wisely found a Dry Cleaning to Your Door franchise that was in the same general vicinity and we bought it, too,” Glen said.

When an opportunity came along to buy a drycleaning business, the brothers sold their Dry Cleaning to Your Door franchise in order to pay the closing costs and finance it. The name of the business was LaFrance Cleaners and Scott still owns it today.

At that time, the Goulds knew nothing of drycleaning so they began making more connections and learning the craft. Then, in 2004, Hurricane Charlie hit. The company was “at ground zero” and took in a lot of water damage.

Then, they learned a costly lesson. “We took in just a ton of cleaning from people after the hurricane and thought, ‘No need to worry. The insurance company is going to pay us for all of this,’” Glen explained. “Well, after six months, nobody cared about the clothes they used to have. They bought new stuff and nobody came to get their clothes. We cleaned a whole lot of stuff for nothing.”

When they started Dry Cleaning Connection, Glen and Tammy had decided they never wanted a physical plant; they wanted to keep the delivery-only model. Also, they never wanted to work on Fridays again.

“That was what we thought we were going to do,” Glen laughed. “Then we look into how to market this thing and everybody tells you, ‘You’re number one marketing day is Friday.’ So, I guess that’s out the window.”

By 2018, Dry Cleaning Connection had grown its routes considerably and the cleaning plant that handled their work was stretched pretty thin.

“He decided to raise some prices and we didn’t think we could live with that, so my brother had decommissioned a plant in Florida. We’d never built a plant before, but he shipped me the equipment and said he’d get us up and running in two to three weeks,” Glen recalled. “It took us nine months.”

The plant opened in June of 2019 and managed to be fully staffed by early the following year, just before the pandemic. By that time, the company also added a new drop store that didn’t go quite as originally planned.

“In March of that year, the landlord, who was in the Chevron station next to us, told a black customer: ‘I hate dealing with you people,’” Glen said. “The next day we had Black Lives Matter protests out in front of our building... for three weeks. We finally just walked away. We were still doing strong business, but we polled our black customers and asked them a very simple question: ‘Do we look like we are associated with them?’ The majority said, ‘Well, we know you, but if we didn’t, we’d probably think you’re like them.’”

Despite all of his original intentions when opening the business, Glen has learned to adopt a new strategy he learned from Jason Loeb, the owner of Sidsie’s Cleaners in Florida.

When he’s not dealing with issues at his business, Glen serves on the board of directors for the South Eastern Fabricare Association (SEFA) and he also works as a business consultant and public speaker (www.glengould.net).

When those in this industry press him for advice, he tells them to stop thinking like a drycleaner.

“We call our company a marketing company with a drycleaning problem. We’re not a drycleaning company with a marketing problem,” he explained. “I think you’ve got to completely change from what has worked in the past.”

“The idea of putting out coupons and hoping people walk in your door — you can’t wait for them to come to you. You’re going to have to go to them,” he added. “I just really encourage people to turn their business upside down.”

It all begins by changing the way you approach a problem. One of Glen’s mentors — Earl Nightingale — gave him excellent advice that he continues to follow today.

“Earl used to talk about how, whenever he had a problem, he would hang it on a hook mentally and walk all the way around it,” Glen noted. “I know that sounds odd, but if you think about it, the only way to really look at something differently is to look at it from all angles — from upside down, from the bottom and all the way around it.”

Sometimes that helps when events transpire that end up inspiring you to look for success somewhere else. Hopefully, Glen will not be going on to another profession anytime soon, though he’d very likely excel at it. After all, good opportunities come to those who keep growing their social network.

“Every lucky thing I’ve had happen in my life has been from connecting with somebody who helped me connect with somebody,” he said. “Networking has worked for me.”



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DL EXPOs East releases full schedule

Continued from page 1
ing Entrepreneurs, who will attempt to demystify the ever-evolving world of artificial intelligence and show how it can be leveraged for a much better marketing impact.

That program will be followed by another one from

Glen Gould, owner of Dry Cleaning Connection in Peachtree, GA (and also the topic of this month's profile article on page 6).

He will explore the various dynamics of team building and explain how you can use enthusiasm-based leadership to

increase employee performance.

Another pair of speakers will be featured on Sunday morning, as well. Economist Chris Kuehl of Armada Corporate Intelligence will discuss some of the current economic trends and forecast what opportunities will lie ahead for business owners. Also speaking will be Dan Miller, CEO of Mulberry's. As the author of four published novels, Miller will discuss "From Laundry to Literature" and explore the secrets to success in realizing your goals and achieving your dreams.

The exhibit hall will be open from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Sunday.

Hotel accommodations are

available at the Gaylord Palms Resort in Kissimmee, FL. Discounted room rates ranging from \$229 to \$304 per night, depending on amenities.

To take advantage of these rates, visit www.dlexpo.org, then choose DL EXPO East.

Four months following DL EXPO East, attendees will have the chance to attend the debut of DL EXPO West in October at the Horseshoe Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, NV.

Hotel accommodations are already available by visiting the official site. Go to www.DLExpo.org and clicking on the portal for EXPO West.



The Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center in Kissimmee, FL, will be the host site for the DL EXPO East coming up in two months.

DLI begins accepting nominations for HoF

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think about drycleaning, unsung heroes whose tireless work ensures the smooth operation of countless companies, or innovative minds who have propelled our industry into the future," emphasized DLI President Kathy Benzinger. "Their impact cannot be overstated."

Once submissions are sorted through, the new Hall of Fame inductees will join the inaugural eight recipients who currently comprise the ranks of its membership — all of whom were previously awarded the association's Diamond Achievement Award over a 25-year period. Those individuals include: Barney Deden, retired drycleaner in Omaha, NE; Stan Golomb, founder of The Golomb Group in Chicago, IL; Chris Edwards of A Cleaner World in High Point, NC; Jeff Miller of Miller's Fine Drycleaning in Hendersonville, NC; Sid Tuchman of Tuchman Training Systems in San Francisco, CA; Don Fawcett of Dependable Cleaners in Quincy, MA; Milt Chortkoff of Milt & Edie's Drycleaning in Burbank, CA; and Walter "Bell" Buster of Bell Laundry and Cleaners of Spartanburg, SC.

The 2024 recipients of the DLI Hall of Fame Award will be recognized at an industry event later this year. For more information about the DLI Hall of Fame Award or to make a nomination, visit them at DLIonline.org/HoF.

NCA names Hargrove-Avery as executive director

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enhancing member engagement and driving significant growth. In her new role, she plans to leverage advancements in AI and digital tools to innovate NCA's services.

"I am deeply honored to lead the NCA and build upon a strong foundation that we have in place," she explained. "The future of the drycleaning industry is bright and I am committed to introducing innovative solutions that will benefit our members and the industry at large. Together, we will navigate the challenges ahead and seize the opportunities that lie ahead in this new era of drycleaning."

For more information visit www.nca-i.com.





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TURNAROUND TIME



BY JOHN ROTHROCK

How transformational are your relationships?

Imagine you're facing a critical business challenge. Your boiler breaks down, and it won't be fixed for at least a week; or, new labor regulations emerge, shifting the playing field. Feeling isolated? Don't be. The answer might lie in a network you haven't fully leveraged.

In today's hyper-competitive landscape, strong connections are more than just friendly faces; they are a strategic advantage.

For years, I, like many business owners, struggled to see the value in industry associations... the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI), state and regional groups, and even cost groups — they all felt like pointless expenses.

But then, in 2019, something shifted. The Southwest Drycleaning Association (SDA) held a conference in Tulsa, OK, and asked me to help facilitate the weekend's events.

During that short confer-

ence, I made a few new connections that would later become an important part of my now much larger drycleaning network.

tial of the industry. No business owner should be isolated, burdened by the pressures of running their company alone.

relationships are fleeting; they can crumble in times of hardship because they are based solely on money. However, when you build

real long-term value for all parties involved; it's a two-way street.

As you reflect on your operation and business relationships, ask yourself this: Are my relationships transactional or transformational?

Actively Engage with Your Network

Every business professional, myself included, can benefit from expanding the size and diversity of their network. That's where getting involved with DLI and your state/regional association becomes crucial.

Like many, I used to view our industry associations as offering limited value. Once you've completed their training courses, on the surface, they might not seem to offer much more.

Sure, they organize the Clean Show, and we've all used TABs to educate staff and customers, but it isn't essential. Nonetheless, like everything in life, you only get out of it what you put in.

This past weekend, I attended the joint SDA/SEFA conference in New Orleans. I had the opportunity to connect with cleaners from across the country. The featured speakers delivered powerful messages and fresh perspectives on the industry's future.

One of the biggest takeaways from the weekend was the palpable energy. It filled the entire room, and everyone was optimistic about their business and the direction of the industry. However, simply attending these events isn't enough; you have to connect, *truly connect*, with the people in the room.

So, how do you make connections in a room filled with over 100 drycleaners and industry leaders with decades of experience? Here's the secret: everyone in the room is looking for the same thing: connection. All you have to do is ask the first question.

Break the ice, introduce yourself, and find ways to

No business owner should be isolated, burdened by the pressures of running their company alone. Instead, surround yourself with a network of people you can count on in both good times and bad.

This month, we'll delve into the power of building a robust business network, forging transformational relationships, and actively engaging with trade associations.

Throughout my nearly two decades in the drycleaning industry, I've witnessed firsthand how these connections can propel a business forward.

While I've always valued my local network, it wasn't until I expanded my reach through SDA that I truly tapped into the vast poten-

Instead, surround yourself with a network of people you can count on in both good times and bad.

Some of these relationships are obvious, like your local equipment dealer, community banker, and chemical representative. But other relationships may not be so apparent, like partnering with a local competitor during a crisis, say, when your boiler goes down.

There are two types of business relationships: transactional and transformational. Transactional re-

your network on a foundation of trust, honesty, and loyalty, you form a bond that endures.

These transformational relationships seek to build long-term value for both parties.

For example, during COVID, there was a period when hangers were scarce. Many cleaners found themselves out of inventory, struggling with a distributor unable to fulfill orders. Meanwhile, other cleaners, like myself, never ran out of this crucial supply. What was the difference?

The cleaners whose supplier relationship was purely transactional — based on buying products at the cheapest price — found themselves in a weak position when supply suddenly dried up.

In contrast, drycleaners who had formed strong relationships with their suppliers, buying products based on long-term value, never faced such issues.

Ron Rogers of Intex Distributing said, "During COVID and the supply chain issues, many drycleaners reached out for the first time, desperate to buy hangers. Unfortunately, I couldn't help everyone because I had a duty to take care of my loyal customers first."

So, when suppliers had to prioritize who would receive limited hanger supplies, there was only one clear choice. Long-term, loyal customers who conducted business fairly were the ones who got the hangers first.

In every business transaction, the most successful operators strive to create

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One of the first purchases I made in my business was the 24-hour drop box from Iowa Techniques. Sixteen years later, that drop box is still working great and has never needed any kind of repair or service.

-Mike Astorino, Fabricare Cleaners

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John Rothrock

How transformational are your relationships?

Continued from page 10
 build a transformational relationship. Then, take the initiative and invite them to join you for lunch or dinner. It's really that simple.

Now, I understand many drycleaners are understaffed, forcing some owners to wear multiple hats while working open to close. So, traveling to industry events might seem like a distant dream.

The good news is, you can still expand your network virtually. DLI offers weekly Zoom calls — a fantastic platform for connecting with fellow drycleaners, big and small.

Born out of the need to connect during COVID, these digital meetups have become lively and open discussions. If you've participated before and found them underwhelming, I encourage you to give them another try. The topics change weekly, so if one isn't of interest, the next one very likely will be valuable.

lighting the importance of building a strong network

atically grants you membership in your state or regional association, which gives you a powerful two-fold advantage at no additional cost. Here's what membership offers:

Find support, share challenges, and celebrate successes with colleagues who share your passion for the industry. Don't wait another day to unlock the potential of your network.

- **Networking opportunities.** Connect with fellow drycleaners from across the country at local, regional, and national conferences.

Even if you just jump on to listen, you'll likely get drawn into the conversation. Better yet, ask a question to spark discussion.

Building Your Network
 I hope by sharing my personal journey and high-

in the drycleaning industry, I've inspired you to take action. But, how do you translate this knowledge into practice?

The answer is simple: Get involved with DLI and your state/regional association. DLI membership auto-

- **Educational resources.** Gain access to industry best practices, training programs, and informative publications.

- **Advocacy.** DLI lobbies for legislation that benefits the dry cleaning industry.

- **Supplier connections.** Network with reputable suppliers and distributors who understand your specific needs and care about our industry.

- **Sense of community.** Find support, share challenges, and celebrate successes with colleagues who share your passion for the industry.

Don't wait another day to unlock the potential of your network.

Visit DLI online at DLIonline.org to learn more about all of the membership benefits, upcoming events, and how to connect with other drycleaning professionals.

By joining DLI and your state association, you will be taking a significant step towards building a robust network of transformational relationships that can help propel your business forward.

Remember, in today's competitive landscape, connection is not a luxury — it's a necessity.

John Rothrock, a University of Oklahoma alumnus and Certified Garment Care Professional (CGCP), leads Yale Cleaners in Tulsa, Oklahoma. John is passionate about exceeding customer expectations and innovation in the drycleaning industry. His expertise extends beyond garment care, with a viral video educating viewers on the drycleaning process. Currently, he leverages his industry knowledge by serving as the second vice president of the Southwest Drycleaning Association (SDA).

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— Ben Combs, owner of Judi's Cleaners



Jared Abram, owner of Abram Laundry Services, Antonia Mazatzi, Production Leader and 17 year employee of Judi's Cleaners, and Ben Combs, owner of Judi's Cleaners.



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AWGS gathers at Dublin Cleaners

Members of the Association of Wedding Gown Specialists (AWGS) met recently in Dublin, OH, to tour Dublin Cleaners, owned and managed by the Butler family, and to listen to a variety of seminars and socialize.

Guests at the event heard from digital marketing specialist and AI expert Kristina Stubblefield, and Emily Rochotte, a social media manager whose specialty is TikTok content.

A highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the 13th annual Jack Barth Memorial Award of Excellence. Initiated by Linda Stokes-Barth in remembrance of her late husband and his achievements in the drycleaning industry, the award recognizes an AWGS member for advancement, promotion, and development of industry standards for wedding gown care and for outstanding contributions and service to the association and its members.

This year's honoree, was Nadine Rana of Style & Grace Cleaners in Toronto, Ontario. Her parents, Neville and Grace Mungal, joined AWGS in 1991,

and Rana and her brother Don Mungal (of Drape Master) are currently second-generation owners. Rana has presided over rebranding her company from multiple names to the new designation Style & Grace Cleaners.

As she noted, "Our goal at Style & Grace is to take the term 'Take you to the cleaners' and turn it on its head, leaving you with a positive experience, polished product, and convenient service."

Other speakers at the event included Jim Gilligan of Snedcor's in Howell, MI, as well as Gary Fine of Parkers Custom Clothing Care in Toronto, Ontario, and Mickey Goldberg of One Local.

Retiring president Kermit Engh of Fashion Cleaners in Omaha, NE, presided over the installation of officers: incoming president Kyle Matthews of Janet Davis Cleaners in Berkeley, MI; vice president Gary Fine of Parkers Custom Clothing Care in Toronto, ON; and secretary-treasurer Rhonda Wernick of Oakwood the Greener Cleaners in Nashville TN.

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WRENCH WORKS



BY BRUCE GROSSMAN

How to stop press head valve leaks

Here's an easy repair you can do yourself to reduce the cost of production and utilities while helping to keep your employees happy.

While on service calls, I observe presses with head valves leaking steam in almost every plant I visit. This type of leak annoys the presser and significantly increases the time that is required to produce a quality garment.

handle (See **Step 2** in illustration)

Please note, on some valve handles, there is an allen screw retaining the plug that needs to be loosened first.

If the valve leaks steam, shut off the steam and return valves, then close and lock the head.

Then, press down the head steam valve while simultaneously stepping on the buck steam and vacuum valve pedals to bleed off

get the lower end centered in the screw hole.

Lift the valve handle up all the way, and, using the large-bladed screwdriver, forcefully push the screw plug down into the threaded hole while rotating clockwise.

You may need someone to hold the handle up for you as you push down on the screw plug (See **Step 3** in illustration). In cases where an allen screw is present, tighten it.

After screwing the plug into the handle until it stops, back the screw back out three-fourths of a turn and open the steam and return valves and wait about five minutes for the press to heat up again. You should be good to go.

If the valve still leaks, the valve disk is likely at fault and must be replaced, which will be a topic for a future article.

Well, that's it for this month. Look for a downloadable PDF file of this article to be available on my website located online at www.fixit-academy.net where even an amateur can learn to make their own equipment repairs.

Bruce Grossman is the Chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing. EZtimers manufactures

If the spring is broken, it's usually a slam dunk that was the problem; if not, it could be a bad valve disk. Whether the spring is broken or not, if you have a spare, replace the spring.

It's a good idea to have the parts and tools handy before beginning the procedure (See **Tools and Parts** in illustration).

With the head closed, slide a couple of hangars over the end of the head, then open it. Hangars will retain the position of the head to facilitate the repair (see **Step 1** in illustration).

Before performing further repairs, use a large-bladed screwdriver to stop the leak — try screwing the screw plug into the valve

any remaining steam pressure.

Unscrew the plug from the valve handle and remove the spring from the head valve. Needle-nosed pliers are helpful for this task.

If the spring is broken, it's usually a slam dunk that was the problem; if not, it could be a bad valve disk. Whether the spring is broken or not, if you have a spare, replace the spring.

Drop the new spring into the valve handle and

STOPPING HEAD VALVE LEAKS

TOOLS & PARTS

STEP 1

STEP 2

STEP 3

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CURRY CLEANERS of Savannah, GA, recently purchased a new Realstar KM218-C drycleaning machine. Owner John Curry (right) is pictured with Mike Yancy of DC Sales.

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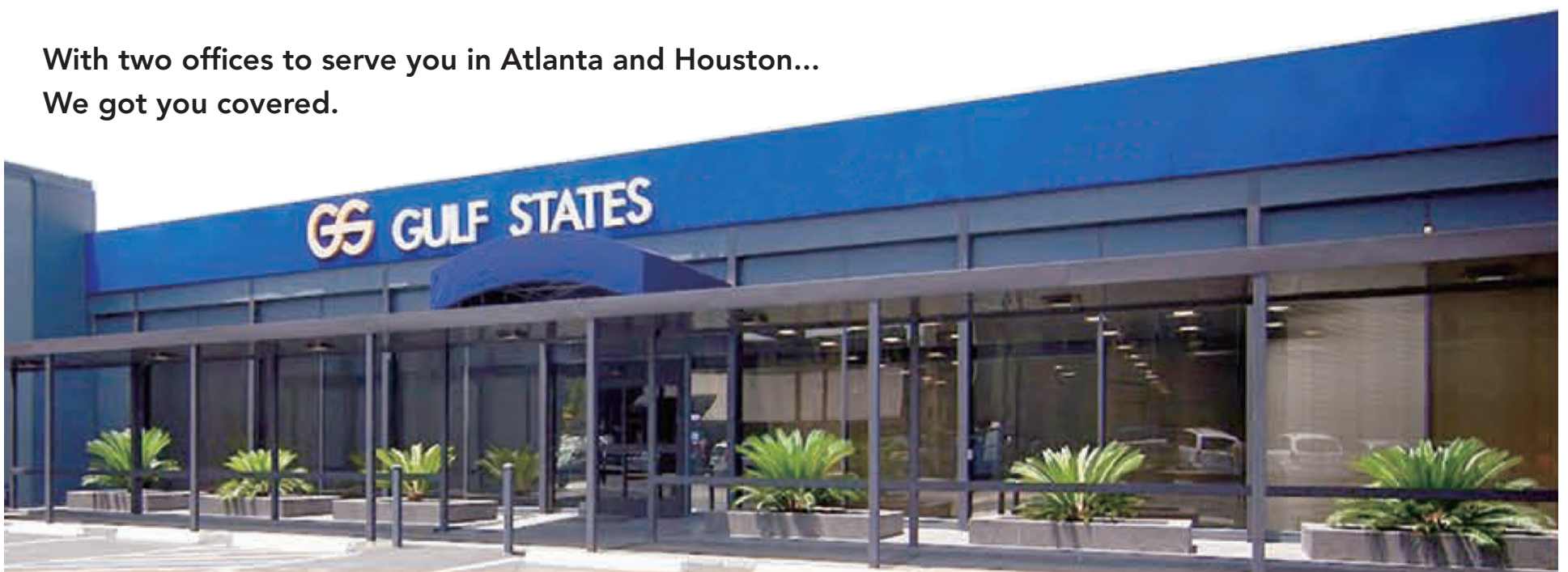
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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

If you do not measure it, you cannot manage it

Many managers have heard this and it is difficult to argue with. It makes perfect sense, but what is hard to understand is that few managers live by this golden rule.

If you need to be convinced that you can't manage something if you don't measure it, consider this: You want to improve the productivity (shirts pressed per hour) off your shirt unit. You consider it to be a problem primarily because you aren't getting orders completed on time.

Your drivers wait every afternoon for the shirt department. Perhaps you bark at the pressers in the shirt department.

You aren't measuring anything, but you feel certain that if you press shirts more quickly, your problem will disappear. This seems logical, but it is inconclusive.

This is called a correlation between x and y (x = poor production and y = delivery delays). The problem with a

correlation is that you don't have all of the facts.

Does x cause y ? Or, does y cause x ? Or, is it another factor — z — that is the culprit? The conventional wisdom is that poor production breeds delivery delays because it is "simple, convenient, comfortable and comforting — though not necessarily true."

Measuring everything would have shown you that you can only clean 50 pounds per hour, but you have pressing equipment that can easily press twice that. Big problem. The pressers know that they do not produce at maximum speed because they learned a long time ago that if they pressed at their optimum rate, they would run out in 30 minutes.

We correlate poor production with delivery delays (x causes y), but this is wrong. Perhaps z is the cause, but what does z equal? The only way to know is to have been measuring it.

Maybe your delivery delays have nothing to do

with pressing productivity at all. It is possible that the inspection/assembly area is a disaster; shirts get pressed quickly, but then they go into the black hole that is the assembly area.

It's possible that pressing productivity exceeds your expectation and because of that, your inspection/assembly area is over-

whelmed. That suggests that your barking about poor production may be causing the delivery delays!

Maybe the problem is the person scanning barcodes. They are too slow. Or, maybe it isn't the scanner (person) but rather the scan-

ning device.

Switching gears, if the drycleaning isn't getting out promptly, you may assume that pressing productivity is the culprit.

Measuring everything would have shown you that you can only clean 50 pounds per hour, but you have pressing equipment that can easily press twice

lunch!

I mentioned to a client that I was suspicious about a presser that did starch pants and BDUs. This employee had been clocked in for four hours and had only pressed 20 pieces (I know this because I measured it). I was clear about my dissatisfaction with this productivity rate.

"It's noon and this guy has been here since 8:00 a.m. This is not acceptable!"

The owner corrected me by saying that this presser only gets in at 11 a.m. I showed him the time card report that showed him clocked in at 8 a.m. Every day.

It turns out that someone in collusion with this dishonest employee would clock him in every morning at 8 a.m. She was caught on video. They were both terminated that day, of course. But, the real lesson is that you can't manage anything that you don't measure!

Measure everything! Even if you have no clue what the standard should be. And when you have no clue, it is amazing what you learn in 24 hours.

I have numerous examples of measuring something for which there is no previously established benchmark, but learning within a day, that one day the cost is double what it is on the other day. Measure everything and then go from there. Management will get much easier because undesirable statistics will be your manager's call to action!

Don Desrosiers has been in the drycleaning and shirt laundering business since 1978. He is a work-flow engineer and a management consultant who provides services to shirt launderers and drycleaners through Tailwind Systems. He is a member of the Society of Professional Consultants and winner of DLI's Commitment to Professionalism award. He can be reached by cell phone (508) 965-3163, or email to: tailwind.don@me.com. The Tailwind web site is at www.tailwindsystems.com.

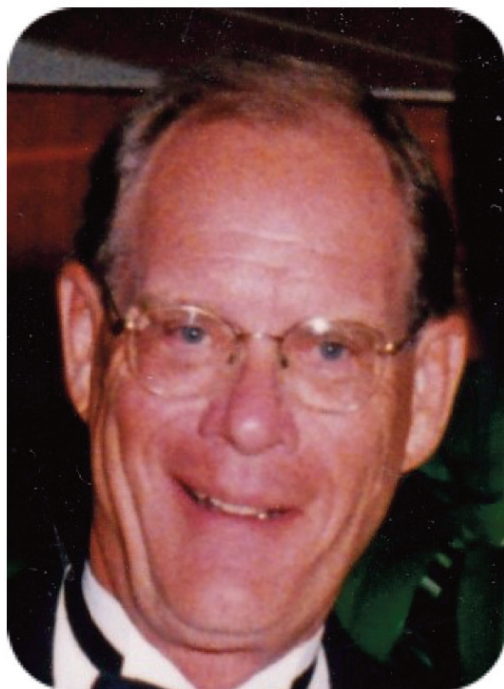
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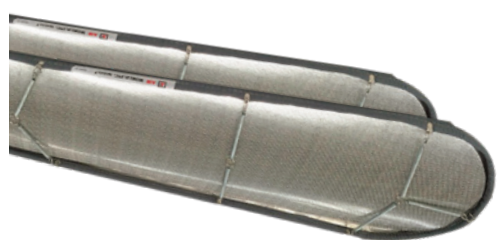
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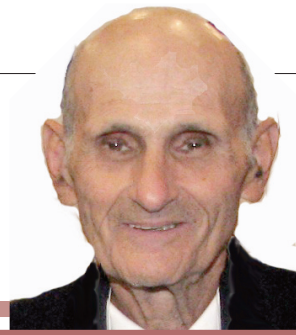
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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

How to handle poorly dyed silk fabrics

Silk continues to be a troublesome fabric for many drycleaners. Independent Garment Analysis Service receives many silk garments ranging from color loss due to oxidation and spotting procedures.

The dye choice of the manufacturer and its application determines the fastness of the dye. Poorly dyed silk fabrics can still be processed, but the inspections, spotting and cleaning methods must be changed.

Inspection

If you go into a retail store and examine silk garments on the rack, it will enlighten you to the extent that fading can occur. Just compare unexposed areas to exposed areas such as on the shoulder.

The same inspection should be done at the counter. Examine for discolorations on the underarm area as well as weak areas. Silk fabrics are highly sensitive to chloride salts found in deodorants and perspiration.

Safe spotting techniques

Flushing. Always place an absorbent towel under the fabric when flushing with the steam gun.

stability of dye.

Digesters. If dyes are determined to be weak, the safest spotting agent available is a powdered enzyme.

keep the area wet.

Place this mixture on stained area for 20 minutes before flushing. This method is considered to be

most efficient way of feathering a silk fabric.

Leveling agents. Difficult feathering can be avoided by applying a leveling agent.

Drycleaners should seek from their supplier a tannin and enzyme-based protein formula with a built-in leveling agent.

This means that after spotting, the area can be feathered or just hung to dry and then recleaned.

Dryside stains. I would rather use a mild oily type paint remover than a strong one.

You can judge the strength by the color of the paint remover. The light colored paint removers are mild while the darker ones are stronger.

The problem with oily type paint remover is that water present in the paint remover will activate the alcohol that is present in its composition, causing color loss.

Oily type paint remover should also be used with amyl acetate which aids in dryside stain removal as well as diluting the strength.

Drycleaning poorly dyes silk. The routine drycleaning process should not affect dyes on silk. If moisture is present, the dyes will bleed and discolor.

The problem I have observed in my consultations is that a small load of silk is subjected to the same amount of soap injection as a large load.

Detergent is injected based on the amount of solvent in the wheel rather than garment weight.

Batch injection detergents contain a great deal of moisture, and small silk loads subjected to that moisture can bleed and discolor.

as safe as just applying plain water.

Tannin stains. Most tannin formulas are safe to dyes on silk. If the lubrication tends to bleed the dye when mechanical action is applied, use a chemical action of the tannin formula.

Apply to stain and heat with a steam gun and then flush. Acetic acid can also be used for chemical action.

Test oxalic and rust remover which are generally safe to the dyes on silk.

Protein and albuminous stains. Refer to the section on digesters.

Bleaching. Last traces of staining can usually be removed with a mild hydrogen peroxide. This is the only neutral-based bleach available.

Sodium perborate and sodium percarbonate are alkaline in nature and will discolor silk dyes. Although testing is required before using peroxide, it is generally safe.

Apply hydrogen peroxide with a q-tip and allow it to be exposed to the air for 20 minutes. Then, flush and repeat the method if it has been showing results.

Feathering. Many cleaners are adept at feathering by flushing the area and force drying the wet area from the outside toward the center.

The only problem with this method is that the forced drying can remove dye from the silk garment as well as chafing the yarns.

I would rather use the method of steaming the outside area of the ring and wiping the wet area with a towel so it blends into the dry area.

This is the safest and

The problem I have observed in my consultations is that a small load of silk is subjected to the same amount of soap injection as a large load. Detergent is injected based on the amount of solvent in the wheel rather than garment weight.

This will prevent dye transfer and indicate the stability of the dye to water and wetside agents.

If you flush into a screened area, the wet area of the silk will not indicate dye loss until it is dry. If dye transfer occurs readily, the method of stain removal must be modified.

Lubrication. If dyes are stable to flush, the garment is placed on a towel and a neutral lubricant is applied. Tamp the area with a soft spotting brush and note the

This is good for protein and albuminous stains as well as some tannin stains.

Alkali in protein formulas will bleed dyes on silk. Liquid enzymes have lubricants in their composition and require extensive flushing, which is not quite as safe.

To use powdered enzymes put ½ teaspoon of digester in a pint of warm water (100 to 120°F).

Add a teaspoon of glycerin or neutral lubricant for better penetration and also

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Dan Eisen, former chief garment analyst for the National Cleaners Association, can be reached at (772) 579-5044, or by e-mail at danneisen39@gmail.com or through his website at www.garmentanalysis.com.

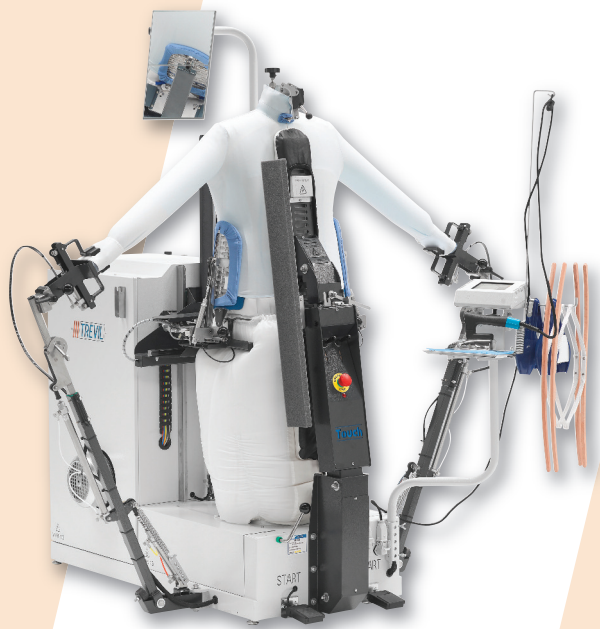


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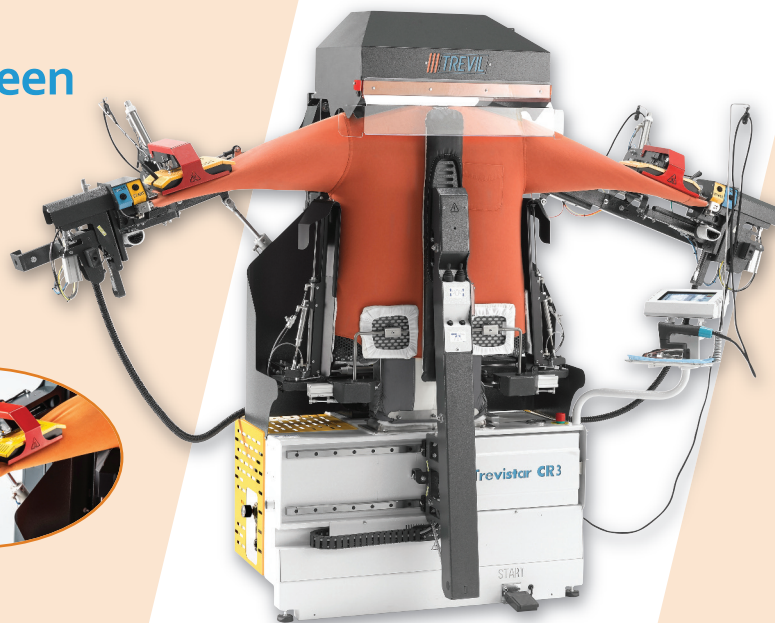
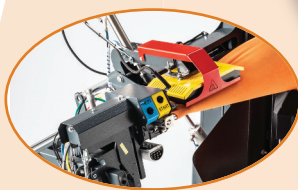
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BUILDING VALUE



BY KERMIT ENGH

How the Switzerland Structure boosts value

One of the eight factors that impact your company's value is something the team at **The Value Builder System™** refers to as "*The Switzerland Structure*," which emphasizes the importance of business independence.

Supplier dependency comes in many flavors, but the most pernicious is a dependency on a single marketing supplier for sales leads, such as a dominant e-commerce site or social media platform. This also applies to having a primary single supplier for your poly/hangers/chemicals.

Due to the changes in the industry, many of us have a single supplier. And if they close, as I have witnessed, you are in a world of hurt.

Six Ways Supplier Dependency Cuts Your Value

Amazon, for instance, is a prime example where businesses heavily invest to gain market access and visibility. However, dependence

on a single sales platform like Amazon can devalue a business in the eyes of investors or acquirers for several reasons:

Investors typically favor businesses with multiple channels for growth opportunities. Being bound to one platform can limit a business's potential for expansion.

1) Increased Risk Exposure. Reliance solely on one platform exposes a business to the risks of sudden policy, fee, or algorithm changes. The platform's negative alterations could significantly impact the business's sales and profitability.

2) Lack of Diversification. Overdependence on a single channel is perceived as vulnerability, while a diversified sales approach suggests resilience and adaptability, appealing to investors and acquirers. This is why operators have diversified into restoration,

Airbnb work, hotel valet, home cleaning, fluff/fold and routes.

3) Limited Growth Potential. Exclusive reliance on

one platform can restrict a company's growth opportunities. Investors typically favor businesses with multiple channels for growth. Being bound to one platform can limit a business's potential for expansion.

4) Brand and Customer Relationship Limitations. Operating primarily through a third-party platform may lead to limited customer interaction, hindering the development of a strong brand identity and customer loyalty, both highly valued by investors.

Pay great attention to

the POS system and any integrated marketing company you use. Measure the results you are getting, which is not easy.

5) Negotiating Power and Autonomy. Dependence on a platform like Amazon can reduce control over crucial business aspects, such as pricing and customer service. Investors may view this lack of autonomy as a strategic weakness.

6) Perception of Innovation and Independence. Businesses demonstrating innovation and independence are often more attractive to investors. Over-reliance on a single platform can create an impression of a lack of these qualities.

Improving Your Score on the Switzerland Structure

Chad Maghielse's company, Pets Are Kids Too, originated with a simple spray to help improve his dog's breath, and it swiftly expanded to over \$2 million in sales with a 35% profit margin within three years, relying solely on Amazon.

Recognizing the risks of this dependence on the e-commerce giant, Maghielse embarked on a path of supplier diversification.

He expanded to another e-commerce platform, Chewy.com, and launched his own online store.

This strategy reduced Amazon's share of his sales to 65%, while Chewy and his store contributed 30% and 5%, respectively. This strategic shift resulted in a significant reduction in his business's platform risk and an increase in its appeal to potential buyers.

Thanks partly to Maghielse's diversification strategy, Pets Are Kids Too was acquired in a deal valued at three times its EBITDA, with a substantial portion paid upfront. Maghielse's journey highlights the critical insight that

diversification shields against market volatility and enhances a business's overall value.

Embracing the Mentality of the Swiss

Reducing reliance on a single marketing supplier bolsters your company's market resilience and notably increases its value.

Adopting a Swiss-style mindset, which values independence and strategic autonomy, is more than a tactical move; it is a key strategy for achieving sustainable growth and boosting your business's value in the long run.

The Switzerland Structure is a vital blueprint for cultivating business resilience and independence in an ever-evolving market landscape. By diversifying marketing suppliers and sales channels, companies mitigate risks and enhance their appeal to potential investors and acquirers.

The journey of Pets Are Kids Too, under Chad Maghielse's guidance, exemplifies the transformative power of strategic diversification.

This approach safeguards against the erratic nature of market giants like Amazon and paves the way for sustainable growth and increased business valuation.

Embracing the Swiss-style mentality of independence and strategic autonomy is not merely a defensive tactic; it is an essential strategy for any business aiming to thrive and maintain its relevance in a competitive landscape.

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 27 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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for a lifetime of demonstrating excellence in customer service and charitable giving.



Chortkoff is pictured with his wife and industry treasure, Edie.

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BY FRANK KOLLMAN

Ten things to do for workplace management

I started my law firm in 1988 after practicing with three other firms. The first two were large law firms and the third was a moderately-sized outfit where I was a “partner.”

I quit the first firm, even though I was one of the rising stars there, because my department chair was accurately described by one of his partners as “an insect, a subhuman.”

He was nasty, duplicitous and generally despicable, but for nearly three years he gave me great opportunities and experience. When he decided I might be a threat to his control over the labor department, he turned on me. I quit to go to another firm.

The second law firm was stodgier, but the labor department there was congenial. The department chair was larger than life, and I was his favorite associate until his favorite partner plagiarized an article for a seminar I was doing with him. [The author of the arti-

cle happened to be at the seminar — talk about bad luck.].

I would not cover up the problem, so the department chair turned on me. He tried

to fire me, but the other partners would not let him, so he found other ways to retaliate. I quit a few months after his favorite partner, the plagiarizer, was fired. I have since become friends with the true author of the article. My last firm before I started this one was my favorite of the three, but as my practice grew, I realized that the senior partners were unwilling to make room for me at the higher echelons.

If you want to keep good employees from quitting, bad employees from bringing lawsuits and all your employees from seeking union representation, you need to think about what the philosophy of your workplace should be.

In those 36 years, we have had to fire some folks, and we have had people quit — lawyers and staff — who we would have wanted to remain.

One lesson I have learned is that employees rarely, if ever, warn they are thinking of leaving. You have to look for signs and they are not always there.

I also believe that if the employee had discussed his or her concerns prior to looking elsewhere for employ-

ment, someone might have kept a good employee or addressed some serious concerns that might have caused other good people to leave.

I know it has become a cliché, but communication is the key to preventing most problems. If you are not talking to your employees, and more importantly... listening to your employees, you will be blindsided by unexpected resignations, lawsuits, and, in really bad cases, unionization.

With respect to unionization, I have stated for years that the principal reason why employees unionize is not wages, but hostility towards management. And, how does that hostility come about? Usually, it's *lack of communication*.

The second largest cause of unionization is fear and anxiety about the direction the company is going, another problem that might be solved by communication.

If you want to keep good employees from quitting, bad employees from bringing lawsuits, and all your employees from seeking union representation, you need to think about what the philosophy of your workplace should be.

While this is not Plato or Aristotle, here are some of my thoughts on workplace management philosophy:

- 1) Talk to your employees.
- 2) Listen to your employees.
- 3) Recognize and reward good work.
- 4) Poor work is recognized, remedied if possible, and addressed with disciplinary action if necessary, without undue delay.
- 5) Supervisors are trained on the law and the company's workplace philosophy.
- 6) Always do the right thing. In cases where that is not possible, do the best thing you can and *communicate the reasons* to those employees affected.
- 7) If an employee identifies a problem, fix it.
- 8) If an employee needs to be disciplined, have the courage to do it.
- 9) Acknowledge the problems, even if it reflects badly on the business. Fix them.
- 10) No one is indispensable, including the owner. As Charles de Gaulle said: “Cemeteries are filled with indispensable men.”

I am sure you can come up with many more maxims that reflect your philosophy, but this is a start.

Running a good workplace requires a little effort. But, running a bad workplace takes even more effort to contain and address the damage. Run a good workplace.

Frank Kollman is a partner in the law firm of Kollman & Saucier, PA, in Baltimore, MD. He can be reached by phone at (410) 727-4300 or fax (410) 727-4391. His firm's web site can be found at www.kollmanlaw.com. It has articles, sample policies, news and other information on employee/employer relations.

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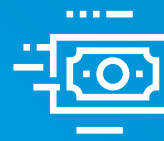
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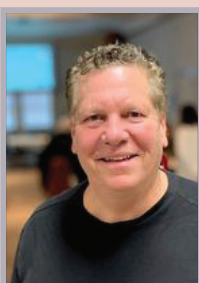
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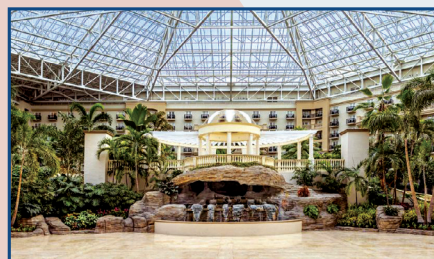
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Industry balancing act to continue in 2022
 As cleaners prepare to close the door on 2021 (and perhaps throw away the key), the last 12 months have proven to be another arduous challenge. Hardly punctuated by shortages of every imaginable kind: hangers, plastic, computer chips, steel and other metals, lumber, packaging materials, zippers and...

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

Light always follows darkness
 by Peter Blake
 It has been a long, interesting and challenging 18 months, to say the least. I know I have never worked harder or more hours than I have during the past year and a half. I also know I am not alone, and...

Don's wishlist to St. Nick: 2021 edition
 by Don Derosiers
 BH happy December! It is that time once again for my annual Christmas Wishlist. Every year, I send a plea to the great St. Nick for products that do not exist yet, but I believe they...

A Tribute to James Peuster
 by Mark Albrecht and Jennifer Whitmarsh
 As we round out 2021, lets recognize an achievement of a familiar personality in our industry. James Peuster, JP has many know him begins his 20th year consulting teams...

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