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Cleaners show up for SDA's Showcase '23

By the time the exhibit hall closed on Sunday afternoon, the Southwest Drycleaners Association's (SDA) Showcase 2023 had seen over 460 attendees gather together to view 89 exhibit booths.

The two-day event took place at the Irving Convention Center at Las Colinas in late April. Visitors came as far as Canada and the Netherlands to take part in the only live equipment show of the year.

The weekend was largely about *taking care of business* as attendees took full advantage of their time both on and off the exhibit floor. In fact, both the morning educational sessions hosted upstairs and the afternoon seminars on the show floor featured full and attentive audiences.

Many were present early on during the keynote address by Jeff Butler, author and workplace strategist, who offered tips on how to effectively attract the right talent.

When crafting an ad for a job, give the potential candidates a strong reason why they should join your team, and don't be unclear about what you are looking for.

"Very often when people try to recruit, they try to appeal to everyone," Butler explained. "I think that's a losing strategy. I think there's specifically someone you want to recruit for, and you target specifically for them."

Butler also noted that you should consider adding a video to your ad. "If you have a video in a job ad versus no video, how much more likely do you think it is that someone engages with that job ad?" he asked the audience. "Eight-hundred percent. That's a big impact, right?"

He also emphasized that job candidates are engaged with ads containing video two-and-a-half times longer than they are with those without video.

In order to cut back on costs, you can make your own employee testimonial video. "All you need to do is find that one person who really loves their job," he continued. "Cover these points... *this is why I like working here*. It makes it a lot more personal and relatable."

In addition to asking employees for videos, don't be afraid to seek referrals from

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Over 460 people attended SDA's Showcase 2023 in Dallas in late April and wandered the exhibit floor (top photo). Attendees also showed up early to the morning educational sessions including the keynote address by Jeff Butler (bottom photo), who relied on audience participation to show how to navigate discussions on potentially polarizing topics with potential new hires.

MWDLI to host Summer Summit in August

Coming up soon, the Midwest Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (MWDLI) will host its Summer Summit, which will feature educational seminars, social events, a silent auction and some time for gambling and golf.

The event will be held from Aug. 4 to 6 at the French Lick Resort and Casino located in Indiana.

On Friday, Aug. 4, those who register separately can enjoy golf at the Donald Ross Golf Course from 11 a.m. to about 3 p.m. The cost is \$125 to take part.

Later that evening, there will be a Meet and Greet reception at Valley Sports Bar, located in the host hotel.

Jon Meijer, director of membership for DLI, will offer Welcome Remarks at 8:30

a.m. before he begins his educational session that will exam-



Rechelle Balanzat



Jennifer Whitmarsh



Jon Meijer



Peter Blake



Dave Coyle

ine the state of the industry and offer a regulatory update.

His program will run from 8:45 to 9:30 a.m.

From 9:30 to 11 a.m., there will be a break so attendees can visit the vendor exhibits and peruse through items up for the silent auction.

Then, Rechelle Balanzat from Juliette Technologies will discuss "Why Branding Is So Important" from 11 a.m. until noon.

After a break for lunch, Peter Blake, who serves as the executive director for SEFA, NEFA and MAC, will present "Using Social Media to Increase Your Business" from 1 to 2 p.m.

Later in the day, Dave Coyle of In the Bag Cleaners and Maverick Marketing, will outline "Proven Marketing Strategies to Make Money" from 3 to 4 p.m.

The day will conclude with a cocktail reception and dinner from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

On Sunday, attendees will hear from Jennifer Whitmarsh

of The Route Pros. She will present a program on "How to Motivate and Delegate: Cultivating Your Dream Team"

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Keeping informed to keep improving quality

During the recent Cleaners Showcase exposition (hosted by the Southwest Drycleaners Association at the Irving Convention Center), it was evident that many drycleaners are back on the offensive again, displaying an interest in purchasing newer and better technology in an effort to gain a competitive edge in their marketplace.

When not visiting the exhibit booths, many attendees sought out answers and ideas from a wide variety of expert speakers whose programs covered so many topics that we couldn't possibly report it all. However, it was evident that there have been many positive signs for the industry in 2023.

During his program, Tide Services CEO Andrew Gibson shared some interesting statistics from much of the industry and consumer spending research that Procter & Gamble conducts (see front page story), and despite much talk in the media about if we're already in a recession (or will be in one soon), consumers are mostly unphased by it in the wake of the pandemic.

"They're starting to get back into regular consumer behaviors. We see the economy growing again," Gibson explained. "Consumers are almost saying, at this point in time, 'The headlines no longer drive my decisions.'"

The P&G surveys illustrate that even when inflation is high, American consumers still buy premium products. "Who here in this room sees their product of drycleaning as something that is premium in the marketplace and not just an economy product?" Gibson asked.

Part of the reasoning behind why consumers are willing to pay more for a premium product is they don't want to be burned by an inferior product and have to pay for the same thing twice. In a poll where P&G asked consumers to rank their top reason for choosing a drycleaners, the answers supported that notion. "The number one reason at the top is very simple. It's cleaning quality. Then, it's price," Gibson noted. "When we look back at the verbatims that came

back from consumers, it's not just the cleaning. We all know it's the cleaning, the press, the smell, the presentation of the product."

That quality is what separates the amateurs from the professionals, and lately it seems even the professionals are looking for new ways to improve. Consumers continue to demand more convenience but it must never come at the cost of quality because that is the main reason they are going to the cleaners.

Speaking of quality, we are aware of the industry's relentless pursuit of helpful information and have been trying to improve ourselves, adding more guest columnists to our strong bullpen to offer you more topics to read about. In our May issue this year, Stucky Szczotka wrote about ways to amp up your wash-dry-fold revenue. Haley Jorgensen discussed in detail how to launch residential flatwork business in our March issue.

This month, another guest columnist joins the fold — John Rothrock of Yale Cleaners in Tulsa, OK. As cleaners continue to face a labor shortage, many owners have found themselves driving the van, working the counter or pressing shirts — filling in for a vacancy in an emergency which robs them of the time it takes to work on growing the business. John found himself in that situation lately and came up with a clever way to make the most out of it. Check out his column on page 18.

In the months to come, you can expect more guest columns to be popping up in these pages — and not just in these actual printed pages. Every month, there are stories or columns (sometimes both) that you can only find online. After all, there is not always enough space in our print publication to include everything, but we do not have such limitations online. We understand the value of having a physical paper to reference — or to be shared in the break room — but we also encourage you to check in every month at our website, www.nationalclothesline.com, for even more helpful industry information.

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Finding his footing

When it came time to go to college, Eric Monroe was unsure of what to study. He knew that he was pretty good with people and liked to lead, but he couldn't do what he really wanted.

"Before I went to college, I wanted to become a commercial airline pilot," he recalled. "I had a really bad accident when I was 14 and broke my neck. Some complications from that accident have left me with a little bit of color blindness and some other things. Anyway, long story short, with what I had happen there was no way anybody was ever going to put me in an airplane."

He went on to earn degrees in marketing and managing from the University of Texas at Arlington, and had the good fortune to work for the Texas Roadhouse Restaurant Company back during its early days.

"I worked at their #7 store, which was in Waco, TX," Eric said. "While I was in college, I got an opportunity to manage a store — assistant manager — but I also got to travel all around the country opening up new stores."

After college, he took part in Enterprise Rent-A-Car's training program and worked for the company until late 2003 when he was recruited away for a job selling copiers. He hated the job, but he made six figures, which helped him arrive at an epiphany.

"I figured out pretty quickly that if I can get comfortable in positions where my income is based on my performance, then I can probably do what I wanted to do," he said.

In 2005, he began working for the UniFirst Corporation as a protective apparel specialist. He loved working for the company and did for about seven years altogether, rising up to the position of regional sales manager. When it came time to start a family, he had to leave the position he loved because it couldn't be done without traveling all the time.

It was a very difficult decision at the time, but Eric opted to leave the job he loved with UniFirst to sell gas compression systems with NuCO2, a company he worked with for many years. However, things changed when a private equity firm took over, then changed again when it was bought by one of the largest gas and pressurized companies in the world. One year later, Eric decided he had enough.

"I was just done being an employee, even if I had to struggle, even if I had to go backwards a little bit," he said. "You work your butt off. You get to the top of an organization for doing all the right things, and then by no choice of your own — nothing you can control — you wake up on a Monday and everything's changed."

Eric began researching businesses to invest in. He never considered drycleaning even though he was a big customer. In fact, one day he was so busy he struggled to pick up about \$350 worth of cleaning. While in the Denver airport, he pleaded on the phone with the owner of his drycleaners to deliver his clothes to his house,

but the owner did not fulfill his request.

"The guy wasn't rude, but he offered me absolutely no help," Eric recalled. "So, I had no idea but I was sitting right next to a guy who owns a drycleaner in the Bay area. He goes, 'I hate to interrupt, but I'm in that business and I can tell you I would have handled that completely different.'"

doing their job well, or you observe them doing something that is maybe above average, then they probably like their job."

Eric does not just save his compliments for just when he's finding new recruits; he also makes a point of letting his employees know

business dramatically," he said. "But, for us, I think one of the things that made a big difference for our business is that we had already started immersing ourselves into being known as a very convenient, customer-focused business."

Offering a higher level of customer service has meant adjusting the overall

Facebook: Martinizing Ft. Worth



Eric Monroe

Martinizing Dry Cleaning
West Ft. Worth Metro, TX

The two talked for a while and the stranger encouraged Eric to invest in a drycleaning business. In June of 2018, he did precisely that by purchasing his first plant and drop store located in the Dallas/Ft. Worth area — a business that was in dire need of some upgrades.

"We took over ownership on June 1st and I walked into a business that had absolutely no technology — a very traditional old school paper ticket operation and we flipped the business," he said. "By the end of 2019 — right before Covid came and knocked on everybody's door — we had grown the business almost 80%."

While upgrading technology played a big role in his revamped Martinizing Dry Cleaning plant, a bigger problem was the outdated company culture.

"The thing that I noticed when I first took over, literally within the first week — and I think I see this a lot in cleaners — is the employees just kind of run all over the owners," Eric said.

Since then, he has been actively recruiting new potential team members, sometimes with something as simple as a compliment.

"If you compliment somebody on the job they're doing, they haven't had that," Eric explained. "One of my locations is right next to a car wash and I will step out back and I will watch people work."

One time, while cleaning the rims of tires, he noticed how one employee had barely did a quick brush by. Later, another got down on her knees and used her towel to clean inside and out.

Eric was impressed and offered her a compliment on how well she did her job. Then, he gave her a business card in case she was looking for a change.

"I'm a firm believer that, in most cases, people don't quit jobs, they leave people," he added. "When you find someone that presents themselves as

when they are doing a good job.

"Generally speaking, people — even though they may not always ask for it and sometimes they are humble and say, 'Oh, I don't need that' — everybody likes praise," he emphasized. "I think that has been lost in a lot of businesses."

In his first two years, Eric had greatly improved his Martinizing business and it was on solid footing... until Covid. Then, the ground disappeared, along with a lot of dirty clothes that stopped coming in. At the time, he gathered his employees and told them he would come up with a plan.

"I said, 'I'm going to figure something out but you're just going to have to bear with me. I want everybody to go home. Just bear with me and I will find a way to get you paychecks,'" he said.

Fortunately, having a strong sales and marketing background came in handy. Eric and his store manager began contacting their customer base to let them know about household goods, wash-dry-fold, and pick up and delivery services. They only had about 150 route customers at that time and usually only did laundry for customers upon special request, but desperate times called for desperate measures.

"That enabled me to bring people back on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, so we would do the little bit of laundry and drycleaning that we would have. Our business dipped down — about 40% was the lowest we got," he continued.

While Eric estimates that close to 25% of the cleaning competition in his area has closed down since 2019, he feels his business is the strongest it's been during his five years of ownership.

"As much as I hated Covid and I never ever, ever want to hear it again, we learned a lot from it. It changed our

pricing a couple of times, but it has helped make the business healthier.

"It's a delicate situation with price, but I think in general customers look at businesses now with more weight in the experiences and the overall value they're getting than before Covid," he said.

When he worked for other companies, Eric estimates that he probably attended between 200 and 250 trade shows — all working in the vendor booths. He'd be happy to never work another one again. Recently, however, he did attend SDA's Showcase 2023 in Dallas.

"This was actually the first convention I've ever attended as a business owner," he said. "We brought all three of our store managers, our general manager and our production manager. I'm super glad I did."

"It was a pleasant surprise for me — how many of the things they brought up to the vendors we use that were there — it helped us fix problems that I would not have brought up," he added.

Admittedly, in the past Eric had some difficulty letting go of some of the control of the business to his leadership team, but since then he's learned that, well, he still has a lot to learn.

"As I grow in my role and the company grows, I realize that there are people who can do things a lot better than me. It's hard for me because I want my hands in everything," he noted. "But, within the last year I've learned that the woman who runs the store I'm in right now runs it better than I ever did for four years. It's a smoother run operation. It's doing more business. I would say, generally speaking, the customers are happier, the place is more organized and we're doing more out of it than when I ran it. But, it's also a person who's solely focused on making sure that this operation runs smoothly, which is a benefit."



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Jennifer: Grio Cleaners Sept 19 2019

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DATELINE

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2023

June 3, 4 East Coast Leadership Conference by PDCA and MAC, Royal Sonesta Harbor Court, Baltimore, MD. For more information, visit online at www.pdclean.org or www.macassociation.com.

June 4-7 The Textile Care Allied Trades Association's 2023 Management & Educational Conference, The Phoenician Resort, Scottsdale, AZ. For more information, visit www.tcata.org.

June 9 "The Art of Stain Removal and Customer Communication" full day program by PDCA and NEFA in Endicott, NY. For more information, call (215) 830-8495.

July 17-21 DLI's School of Drycleaning Technology, "Introduction to Drycleaning" one-week course. For information or to register, call (800) 638-2627 or visit online at www.dlionline.org.

July 24-Aug. 4 DLI's School of Drycleaning Technology, "Advanced Drycleaning" two-week course. For information or to register, call (800) 638-2627 or visit www.dlionline.org.

July 29 SDA seminar by James Peuster of The Route Pros on "It's Time to Get Serious About W-D-F" at 2 p.m. at Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel in St. Louis, MO. For more information, visit them online at www.sda-dryclean.com.

Aug. 4-6 The Midwest Drycleaning and Laundry Institute Summer Summit, French Lick Resort and Casino, French Lick, IN. For information, visit www.mwdli.org.

Sept. 12, 14, 19, 21, 26, 28, Oct. 3 DLI's School of Drycleaning Technology, virtual stain removal course meets on seven different days. For information or to register, call (800) 638-2627 or visit www.dlionline.org.

Oct. 7-8 CCA's Fabricare Show 2023, Harrah's Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV. For information, visit www.calcleaners.com.

Oct. 16-20 DLI's School of Drycleaning Technology, "Introduction to Drycleaning"

one-week course. Call (800) 638-2627 or visit www.dlionline.org.

Oct. 23-Nov. 3 DLI's School of Drycleaning Technology, "Advanced Drycleaning" two-week course. For information or to register, call (800) 638-2627 or visit www.dlionline.org.

Nov. 4-5 National Cleaners Association Virtual Texcare 2023. For more information, call (212) 967-3002 or visit www.nca-i.com.

2024

November 9-13 Texcare International trade show, Frankfurt Exhibition Centre, Germany. For more information, visit texcare.com/brand.

SDA hosts St. Louis seminar on WDF

Next month, the Southwest Drycleaners Association will be gathering in St. Louis, MO, for its Board of Directors and Executive Committee meetings on July 28 and 29.

During that time, the association will also enlist James Peuster of The Route Pros to present a seminar on "It's Time to Get Serious About Wash - Dry - Fold."

He will share some of his experiences and secrets he developed with his own delivery routes, including operational practices and tips on marketing them.

The host hotel for this year's meetings will be the Sheraton Westport Plaza Hotel in St. Louis. SDA has secured a discounted nightly rate of \$139 good through July 6.

There is a direct link to hotel reservations from the site located online at www.sda-dryclean.com. For more information, call (512) 873-8195.



James Peuster

MWDLI to host Summer Summit

Continued from page 1

from 9 to 10 a.m. and then again from 10:30 to 11:30 p.m. with an intermission in-between to allow time to visit vendors.

The cost for a full pass to the Summer Summit, including all Saturday and Sunday functions, as well as the Saturday evening cocktail reception and dinner, costs \$260 per person for those who sign up before the July 11 early registration deadline. After that date, the cost goes up \$20 per registration.

MWDLI has reserved a block of rooms for the event at the French Lick Resort & Casino for a rate of \$209 per night, based on double occupancy. The Group Code is 0823MDC. The cutoff date for room reservations is July 3.

For more information, visit the association online at mwdli.org.



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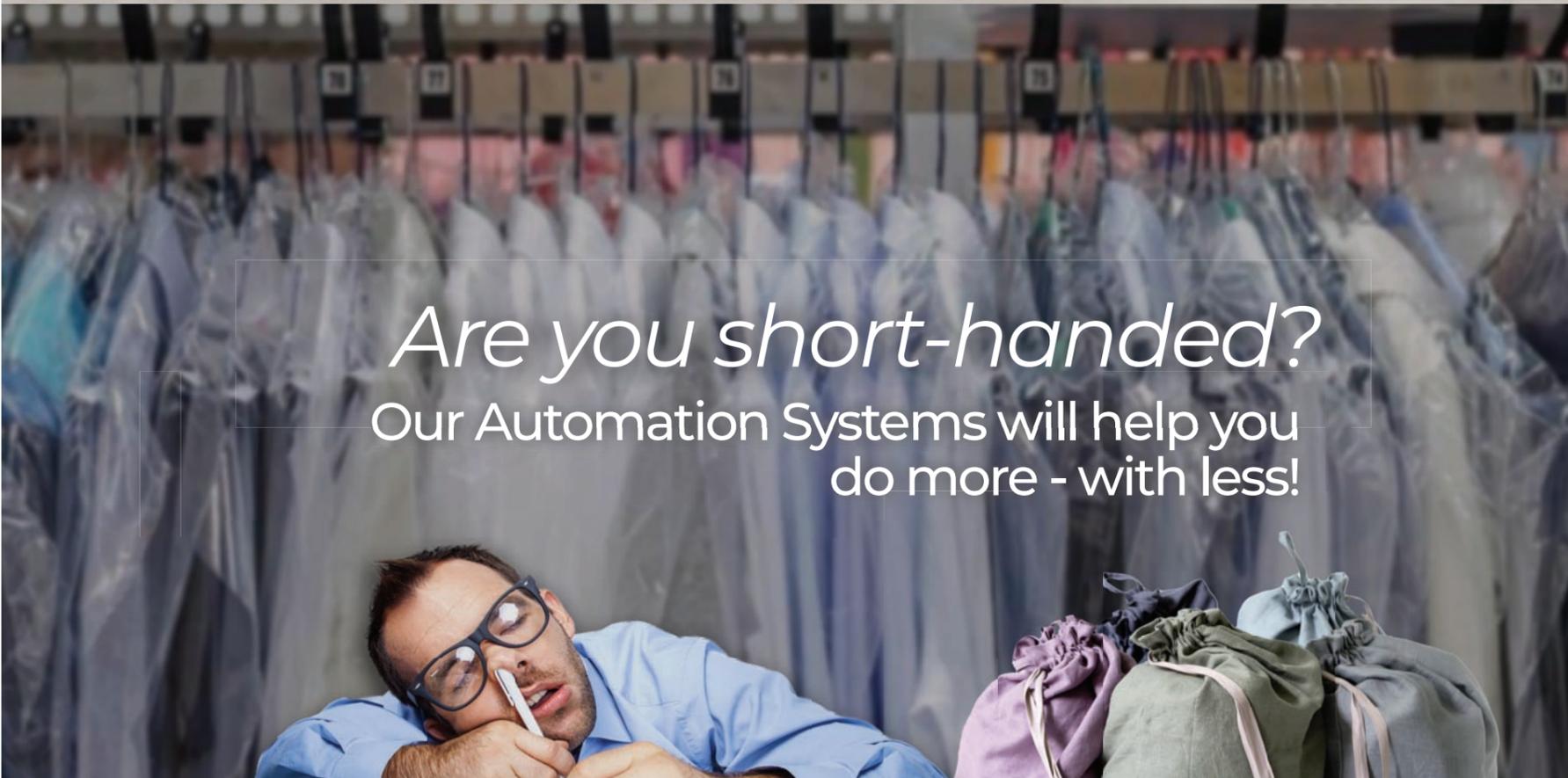
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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

Shaving off seconds can lead to big savings

We are all likely familiar with two similar clichés, though they have diametrically-opposed philosophies: “Take care of the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves” and “Pennywise and dollar foolish.” The latter describes someone who does not take care of the pennies. Which best describes you?

Years ago, I learned to micromanage the heck out of this business when I worked for my father in his cleaning business. I had nothing to do with finances, business decisions or even supplies purchases. I was only involved with operations. In retrospect, that is how I became so involved in the grassroots of this business — operations, people management, training and work-flow. To keep from getting bored in this business, I needed to micromanage every minute. Then, I learned saving seconds could accumulate and become minutes and hours and that pennies could pile up and become dollars.

I learned I could create

slivers of time when others thought there were none. Moving forward, I also learned about *time management*. You probably know about that, too.

You make a big mistake trivializing miniscule time savings on procedures that don't take a whole bunch of time anyway.

It is a nonsensical phrase. Time is one of the things that you absolutely cannot manage. Time is oblivious to you or your challenges. It marches on whether you have 100 shirts to do today, or 5,000. Time is like a merry-go-round turning just a bit too fast. If you try to jump on without a running start, it could get ugly. Time won't bat an eye though. It will simply move on.

But, if you plan it right, you can keep pace with it. All you can really do is man-

age the tasks that need to neatly fit into rigid time frames that offer no flexibility. A successful manager is better at fitting an array of tasks in a given time frame. The more compactly they fit, the more productivity in the same time slot. How do you get something done? Delegate it to a busy person.

Creating slivers of time and using them wisely is fun and rewarding.

Many years ago, I worked with my very first trainee teaching her to press on an Ajax sleeve. It was grueling. She had less than a day's experience, but she was already saying things like “My way is almost as fast” or “I like my own way better.” By crossing my hands when unloading the sleeve press, I could go about two to three seconds faster than her. She was not eager to follow my instruction. Surely, she reasoned: “Two or three seconds? There is virtually no difference there. I rather be two to three seconds slower and be comfortable doing it my

own way.” Most managers accept that. They accept it for the same reason they accept 40 shirts per hour on a machine that should do 50 or more. If you are going to save any quantity of time on just about any procedure in this business, it will be slivers of time. It will be a few seconds here and there.

You make a big mistake trivializing miniscule time savings on procedures that don't take a whole bunch of time anyway. If my trainee could unload an Ajax sleeve in 10 seconds instead of 12 or 13, she would be 20 to 30% faster. Do that with each procedure on your single buck shirt unit and you will turn 40 shirts per hour (far from acceptable) to 50 shirts per hour (a good productivity rate).

A few years after that incident, I was training a new body press operator on a FujiStar shirt press. My business plan was built around 180 shirts per hour from it. The 150 shirts per hour I was getting sounded good, but to me, it meant not eating that day. I watched every detail like a hawk. I measured productivity every hour. Still, accumulating data is a waste of time and money if you don't know what to do with it. Printing reports sounds like a great manager-type thing to do, but it only helps deforest the Pacific Northwest if you don't act on them. If your reports say shirt pressing productivity is too low, what will you do about it? If you do nothing, the reports have served no purpose.

As I monitored my presser's performance, I saw a sharp spike in productivity for about an hour on some days. I had to find out why. If I could duplicate that hour, about 35 times more every week, profit would surely follow. When I approached the presser, he wasn't surprised. He knew exactly why it happened and told me point blank. He was right and it taught me to look for little things. It taught me that if I wanted to cut labor costs, I would have to look for little things... under a microscope.

In order to trim an employee from my staff, I needed to create an “extra” person before I could cut that person. The only way to do that is to maximize the use of

labor hours and minutes, eventually getting a tiny bit off person A, B, C and D's job done by person E, without increasing E's hours, but decreasing the other's hours.

Our forefathers found ways to cut chunks of labor costs by automating. Have you ever seen an authentic Chinese shirt laundry? It's fascinating. They use six people to do what two people with modern equipment do. Now we have two and we still need to keep an eye on costs.

So, how did my shirt presser explain the occasional spikes in productivity? We washed and pressed shirts for a tuxedo rental outfit. Every day, in season, we would have 100 to 200 tux shirts to press. They were quicker to press because the presser had one small step absent from his routine: He didn't have to fold down the collar because there wasn't one. These were wingtip shirts. Just a couple of seconds less work and I got 20% better production. If I recall, sheer repetition and practice turned him into a faster presser, but I learned to analyze the smallest motions and tried to improve on them. If I could find a way to do a 10 second procedure in eight seconds, I knew that I could turn it into something big.

The best operators in the world generate a 30 to 40% profit margin in this business. The poorest profit margins are in the 0 to 10% range. Do you see a connection? The best operators always look for ways to shave seconds of time. That 20 to 30% savings is the profit! Do you see a connection now?

“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 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

Learning a lesson from pizza-making robots

This column will be a little different from all the past times we have been together. To start, I would like to thank the folks at the Southwest Drycleaners Association's (SDA) Showcase in Dallas this past month, and especially to Amin Bata, the conference chairman. I thoroughly enjoyed the folks I got to meet and the chance to be one of the speakers presenting the "Eight Drivers of Value."

Many who know me are aware I have always had several business interests going at any one time. In the past two years, I have sold two of these. One was our Christmas Tree farm which we operated for 28 years. I was getting too old for the amount of work it took, especially for my wife. This was an incredibly rewarding venture due to the memories we created over the years.

The second venture was our fire/water restoration operation owned and managed by my daughter, Audra. And now

for the rest of that story.

This past November, Audra, her husband and my wife and I have partnered to open a large brewery with a pizza kitchen in a fast-growing community near Omaha, NE. The drycleaning industry has been very good to us during the past 31 years. I would have never had that opportunity without the help from my in-laws providing the means to buy our first operation. And, it was my father-in-law who got started due to his father-in-law. In family tradition, we are paying it forward.

With twenty beer taps all brewed in house, five mixed drinks on tap including an Old Fashioned named after my father (more about Charlie soon), a fabulous pizza kitchen — all in a building which seats 305 inside and many more outside.

Now, why do I tell you this? This past March in Las Vegas we attended the Pizza Expo with 12,000 of our closest pizza friends. The keynote speaker on the second day was a gen-

tleman who spent six years with SpaceX, and years prior for an EV car maker, engineering battery technology.

These robots made any kind of pizza toppings on the menu, all in four minutes.

His new mission, with several other SpaceX engineers, has been to design a box truck full of robots which make pizzas, even when moving. This first time a human touches the product is to cut it, out of quality control. These robots made any kind of pizza toppings on the menu, all in four minutes. It was amazing.

I tell this story because it gave me a glimpse into what could be automated in the garment care industry. I believe we have only seen the begin-

ning of automation for drycleaners. I know, I have heard all the reasons it can't be done, but if these guys can figure out how to perfectly arrange pepperonis on a pizza, anything is possible.

By the way, Heavy Brewing is going great. I have been the behind-the-scenes business coach and am qualified to bus tables and wash dishes, as well as test the product. I am extremely excited to be part of this.

Now, about Charlie. March 4th was a day that changed our household, as Charlie (my father) moved in with us to Nebraska from the Twin Cities. This man is a 98-year-old WWII veteran of the Navy. At the age of 21, he was the skipper of a small ship in the Philippines, Okinawa, and China. They grew up real fast in that Greatest Generation.

Moving in will give him the opportunity to get to know his five great grandchildren, two whom he had never seen. We have made lots of adjustment

to schedules, meals, and I lost my office — well, moved to the lower level. But, what an amazing opportunity this will be for all of us.

Next month, we'll go back to the Building of Value for your business and your ability to realize your dreams and goals. 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 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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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

More ways of using hydrogen peroxide

Hydrogen peroxide is one of the most versatile chemical agents a drycleaner can use.

In my consultations, I find most drycleaners do not use hydrogen peroxide to its full potential.

They use it in a very limited way by applying it to a fabric, adding ammonia and heating.

This is not the only way of using hydrogen peroxide, nor the best way.

Hydrogen peroxide can be

used more effectively as a spotting board bleach, pre-spotting agent and a wet-cleaning adjunct.

Facts about hydrogen peroxide

1) Slightly acid but very near to neutral. It decomposes into water and in mild concentrations does not have to be rinsed from the fabric.

2) Accelerated by ammonia and heat.

3) Comes in various

strengths — 3% 10 volume, 6% 20 volume.

4) 30% — 100 volume.

5) Used to remove last traces of tannin, protein and dye.

6) Use to remove scorch.

7) 3% hydrogen peroxide is safe on fibers and dye when not heated. Stronger concentrations must be tested.

Spotting board bleaching

1) 3%, 10 volume. Apply to fabric, add ammonia,

heat, flush, neutralize with acid, flush. Test dye and fabric for safety.

heat, flush, neutralize with acid, flush. Test fabric and dye before using.

In my consultations, I find most drycleaners do not use hydrogen peroxide to its full potential. They use it in a very limited way by applying it to a fabric, adding ammonia and heating.

2) 6%, 20 volume. Apply to fabric, add ammonia,

3) Spray method — 3%. Spray on fabric and hang. Repeat several times if staining is not removed.

This does not have to be rinsed and is relatively safe on fabrics and dyes.

This method is also effective for removing yellowing and oxidation.

Pre-spotting

Hydrogen peroxide can be added to pre-spotting mixtures for removing yellowing and oxidation on shirts and similar items.

Mix one part 14% peroxide, one part detergent and four parts water.

Brush on fabric before wetcleaning.

Wetcleaning adjunct

Hydrogen peroxide can be added to a wetcleaning formulation to increase the bleaching potential of the formula.

The advantage of using hydrogen peroxide rather than alkali or more sodium perborate is that it reduces the amount of sour necessary to neutralize the load.

Bath bleach

Hydrogen peroxide can be very effective as a bath bleach especially for fabrics such as wool and silk.

It is also useful as a color safe bleach on fabrics that might be affected by sodium perborate or sodium percarbonate.

Add two ounces of 6% hydrogen peroxide per gallon of water.

Add one ounce of a lubricant per gallon of water. Soak garment in solution for 45 minutes and then rinse.

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

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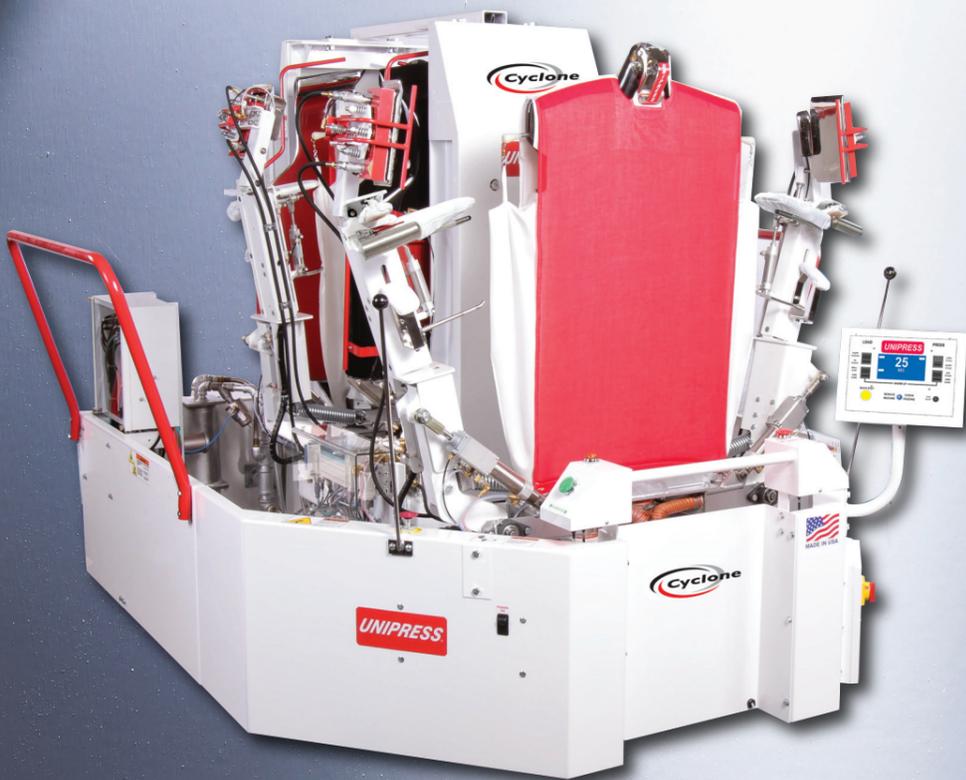
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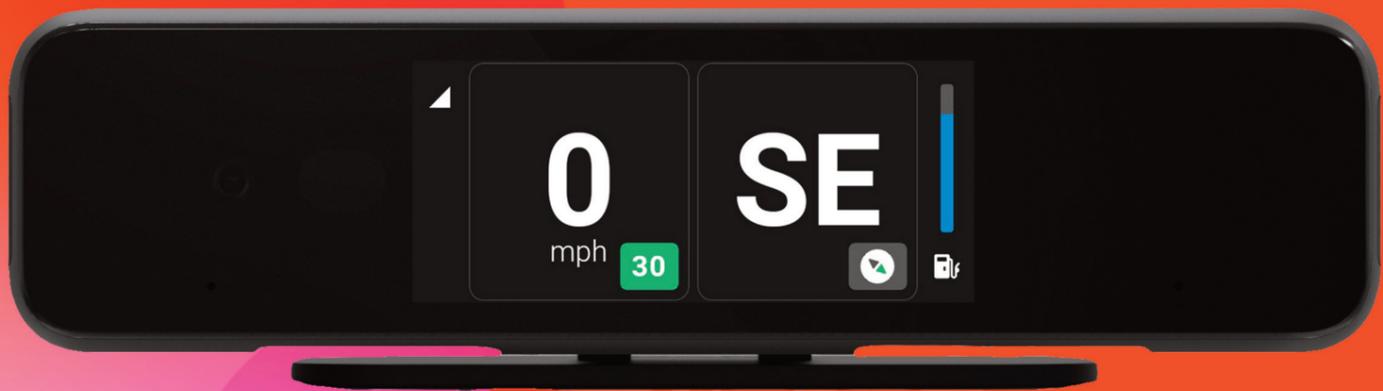
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TURNAROUND TIME



BY JOHN ROTHROCK

Making \$500/hour while pressing shirts?

As a business owner, it's easy to find yourself focusing on *demand activities* instead of *planned activities*.

Planned activities are projects that improve your business and help it grow, such as developing a more efficient workflow, buying new equipment, updating your website, or looking for a new location.

Demand activities are emergent problems that need to be solved immediately, like being short-staffed, broken equipment, a utility outage, an ink load, or unexpected production volume.

It's far too easy for demand activities to overtake planned activities, leading to lost opportunities for growth.

Recently, I found myself falling into this pattern. Every day, there seemed to be an "emergency" that needed my immediate attention, taking me away from the big picture of growing my business. Does this sound familiar?

Day after day, I found myself standing behind a YAC double buck, cranking out shirts at one of our 11 production locations. A team member and I would get into a good rhythm, averaging just over 120 shirts per hour. But before I knew

it, the day was over, and I realized that I missed yet another opportunity to work towards the goal of growing my business.

When a demand activity takes priority, the question we should all be asking ourselves is, "Can I still work on at least one of the big things simultaneously?"

Whether you're pressing shirts, marking-in clothes, or driving a route van, it's impossible to make \$500 an hour, as the absurd title sug-

gests. However, the experience can teach you how to make \$500/hour decisions for your business.

men can make money using their feet...everyone else must use their hands."

So, if you see a lot of foot movement, consider moving your equipment closer together. Every task and team member should have a clearly defined workstation where they plant their feet firmly in place to perform their work.

You can also evaluate how well your finishing equipment works. Does it put out a quality shirt with

enough steam? Is it easy to load or overly complicated? How difficult is the training process for new employees? Observe the equipment's condition. Does it need maintenance or new pads? Does it function so poorly that it's time for the shirt unit to be replaced?

ciently motivated and capable of producing the equipment's advertised pieces per hour output, how can you expect a team member making an hourly wage to do so?

Lastly, look for how the clothes are flowing through your building. Ideally, clothes should flow in a circle: counter, washers, pressing stations, inspection/ assembly, the line/conveyers and back to the counter.

ments or walking;

- Developing workstations;
- Systemizing workflow (hour lot system);
- Embracing "smart" technology not all technology.

These ideas are just a starting point. Every operation is different, and as the business owner, you're uniquely qualified to see the most pressing issues. But it will only work if you can take off the rose-colored glasses.

So, what's stopping you from making \$500 an hour while pressing shirts?

Take a moment each day to reflect on your business, develop a plan, and most importantly, take action.

You have the power to make your business more efficient, profitable, and successful.

Don't let the day-to-day demands of running a business distract you from achieving your goals.

Remember, demand activities will always be a part of running a business, but it's essential to not let them overshadow your planned activities that help you grow.

Use the time you have to observe your operation, evaluate your marketing, systems and equipment, to consider new strategies for improvement in all areas.

Developing a list of the **big things** you need to work on and making progress on at least one of them every day can have a significant impact on your business in the long run.

Remember, small changes every day will add up to big results over time.

John Rothrock is the president and CEO of Yale Cleaners, a family drycleaning business in Tulsa, OK, that is focussed on providing high quality, same day drycleaning with exceptional customer service. He earned a degree in Business Administration in 2005 from the University of Oklahoma, and is a graduate of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute as a Certified Garment Care Professional (CGCP). He can be reached at (918) 461-8612, ext 102 or john@yalecleaners.com.

Every day, there seemed to be an "emergency" that needed my immediate attention, taking me away from the big picture of growing my business. Does this sound familiar?

gests. However, the experience can teach you how to make \$500/hour decisions for your business.

As the pile of shirts fades away, how do you spend your time? Do you listen to music or a podcast, do you focus on the task at hand, or do you simply let your mind wander aimlessly?

A better choice is to observe your team members and evaluate their movements.

Are they working with their hands or moving their feet? My dad always said, "Only pro athletes and mail-

minimal effort? Is it easy to load or overly complicated? How difficult is the training process for new employees? Observe the equipment's condition. Does it need maintenance or new pads? Does it function so poorly that it's time for the shirt unit to be replaced?

If so, use this time to hone your skills so you are better equipped to select a new unit at the next Clean Show in 2025.

It might even be beneficial to calculate the efficiency of the unit. As the owner, if you're not suffi-

If clothes are bouncing like a ping-pong ball throughout your plant, you have major efficiency and control problems that should be addressed.

Focusing on the strategies below has proven to be a very powerful tool for reducing labor costs in my company. These strategies have enabled us to consistently achieve total store labor averaging 22% every week, for more than 10 years. (Store labor includes all CSRs, production staff and managers' salary.)

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Cleaners show up for SDA's Showcase '23

Continued from page 1
them, as well.

It is imperative to have a strong online presence — everything from your website to your Yelp review status — because those who want to answer your ad will search the Internet to learn more about your company and decide if they really want to work there.

State of the Industry

While few cleaners needed any reminders of the difficult labor market, most would prefer gaining access to a crystal ball with answers to what the future holds for the industry.

Andrew Gibson, CEO of Tide Services at Procter & Gamble (P&G) had the next best thing — results of many recent P&G surveys and studies of the state of the drycleaning industry and American consumer spending habits.

"If you're here right now, things are starting to get maybe a little better. Pricing may be taking hold. Volume's still behind where it was. Piece counts aren't what we want them to be. But, it's starting to come back. There's reason for optimism," he said.

One positive indicator has been that the American consumer has resiliently continued spending despite the rising shadow of inflation.

While 38% admitted making significant spending habit changes last September and only 11% had not made any, those numbers changed directions in February when only 32% polled by P&G still made significant spending changes and the percentage of those who didn't make any changes rose steadily to above 20%.

In addition to consumers spending more, it appears, drycleaners are charging more. P&G polled over 7,000 cleaners on pricing in 2019 and in 2022, revealing a significant change in the national average.

"Laundered shirts went from \$2.68 up to \$3.47," Gibson noted. "Shirt prices went up by 29%, give or take, depending on the market, obviously. Pants prices, which are kind of a signature drycleaning track, went up 18%." (Pants price average in 2019, \$5.99; price average in 2022, \$7.04.)

Overall, the garment mix has changed, too. Pre-Covid (2019), drycleaning garments represented 51% of all cleaning volume and laundry comprised the other 49%. Today, drycleaning garments make up an average of 47% of all garments, according to P&G surveys.

While conditions appear



On Saturday afternoon at SDA's Showcase 2023, Jeff Schwarz from A.L. Wilson (left photo) discussed stain removal strategies to an engaged crowd. Earlier that day, a different crowd (right photo) showed the same engagement with the morning speakers.



good for growth in the future, Gibson strongly cautioned all cleaners that they need to immediately invest in cyber security in order to protect all of their customers' personal data. Why? Hackers have been having much more success.

rights as the drug dealers to keep the fuzz out," Kollman smiled. "Is OSHA there to make your plant more safe? No. They're there to determine whether you are in compliance with their regulations."

Thus, you should have a de-

P&G polled over 7,000 drycleaners on pricing in 2019 and 2022. Laundered shirts went from \$2.68 up to \$3.47. Shirt prices went up by 29%, depending on the market. Pants prices went up 18%.

"We're seeing the volume of hacking go up exponentially, not just a little bit at a time. It's exponential and the threat is there are more and more of them," Gibson emphasized, "and they're not just going after big companies like Target or Best Buy. They're going after small businesses. Here's the scary part of the data: 60% of small and mid-sized companies who have been hacked are out of business in six months."

Remaining Legal and Retaining Employees

Rounding out the Saturday morning sessions, attorney Frank Kollman noted many of the costly mistakes employers often make when it comes to paying overtime, posting notices and keeping up with labor laws that can change from state to state.

"You will find that there is evil in the world, but more times than not, it's stupidity," Kollman said. In his experience, most infractions stem from an ignorance of the law rather than an intentional failure to comply.

That is precisely why cleaners should not be helpful when an OSHA inspector comes around; that will only encourage them to come back.

"When it comes to OSHA — I know this is going to sound horrible — but treat yourself like you're a drug dealer and you just got a big shipment in the back. You've got the same

tailed plan ready before the unexpected OSHA inspection occurs. The same advice applies to employee retention, according to Route Pros James Peuster and Jennifer Whitmarsh. It's hard enough to hire new employees now, but nobody can afford to lose their good team members. Are you actively trying to retain them?

"One of the things I've always said is, the number one rule of team member retention is that you change your mindset and look at your employees as an investment, not a cost," Peuster explained.

The two discussed several ways of engaging and empowering employees and the importance of a solid on-boarding process to create a buy-in. There are no short cuts, either. Proper training will take time and cost money, but don't forget that employee turnover will cost you more.

"It's expensive to train. We do have to put in the time — and nobody has extra time," Whitmarsh said. "But, if we plan for it, we can make it successful. We can work with these team members where they're going to become lifelong team members. They're going to grow with the company."

On the topic of growing, speaker Dave Coyle from In the Bag Cleaners of Wichita, KS, told the story of how he bought his business with one location in 2000.

Since then, he has built it up to include 13 locations and almost 70% of his market share. More importantly, if he decides to sell his business someday, it will be very attractive to the kind of buyer he hopes to attract: strategic ones.

"Strategic buyers understand one key thing and that your greatest asset is not that production facility you own — that helps a lot," Coyle noted. "Your actual number one asset is your list of trusted clients that you have. That's why it's so important to build out your data."

"Even if you're a laundromat and you're not capturing data creatively for the people who come in and use your laundromat service so you can market to them, you are missing the boat," he added.

Kermit Engh, managing partner of Methods for Management, offered the audience many tips on improving the overall value of their business. Not only will the bottom line be greater, so will your capacity for spare time.

"If you're looking to exit or you're looking to gain time in your life, figure out those people around you who can have the knowledge and the skill set that you've empowered them to do those functions," Engh said. "Don't just give them the stuff you don't want to do — which is not a bad idea, either — but [give them] those things that will help your business grow because a lot of times you're what's keeping the business smaller or constricted."

Another good idea is to pare

down the overall number of services you offer so that you can focus more on your areas of expertise.

"The industry you're in and the revenue is important, but it's not the only thing. Focus on selling less stuff to more people. That way, you're a lot more consistent," he explained. "Your people can handle that better. You're not scattered. I know in some cases you want to have diversification in what you're doing and there's a number of ways to do that... but don't get too spread out. You can't be all things to all people."

In addition to the speaker sessions upstairs at the Irving Convention Center, Showcase also featured numerous sessions on the show floor on Saturday and Sunday afternoon.

Many showed up to listen to Jeff Schwarz, the "Stain Wizard" from A.L. Wilson, discuss his recipes for removing some of the toughest garment stains.

Meanwhile, Bruce Grossman, owner of EZ Timers, gave firsthand demonstrations of how to fix various machine problems with the proper tools, parts and safety methods. Michael Tatch of Tatch Technical Services showed the audience photographs of many mistakes cleaners have made over the years, and how much it cost them in fines from an OSHA inspector.

Finally, Frank Briercheck from Seitz Chemical, Co. extolled the virtues and latest technological advances in wet-cleaning.



A crowd at Showcase 2023 gathers around speaker Bruce Grossman as he demonstrates equipment maintenance repair methods that most drycleaners can do themselves.

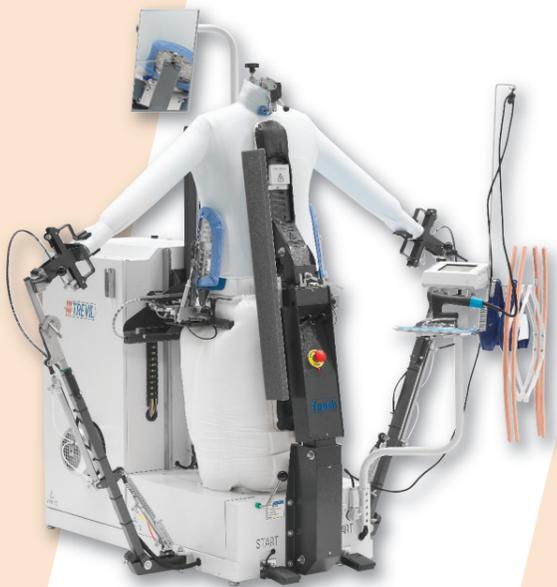


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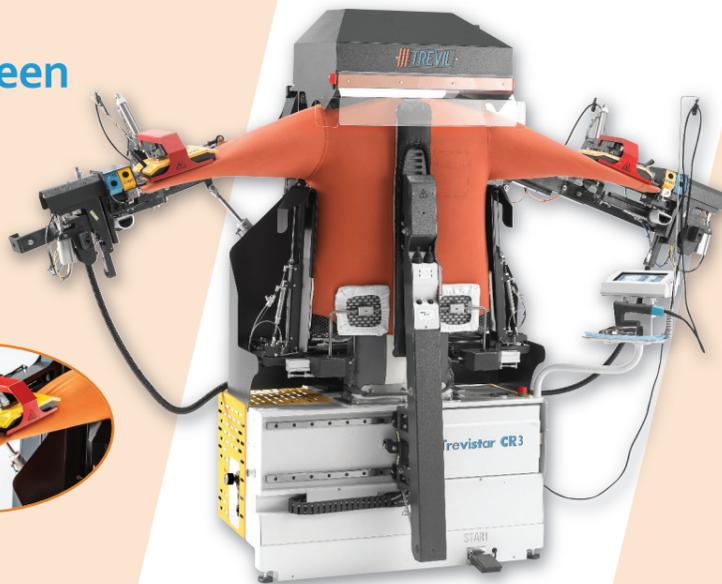
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NEWSMAKERS

Recently, **Platinum Dry Cleaners** of Naples, FL, was named a finalist for the 2023 "Distinguished Entrepreneur Award of Southwest Florida." The business is a full service dryclean and laundry operation with two retail locations and 12 delivery routes, a 12,000 sq. ft. processing facility and 40 employees.

Every year, the Florida Small Business Development Council at Florida Gulf Coast University presents the awards celebrating entrepreneurial excellence, recognizing three Southwest Florida business owners for their success, innovative technology and business advocacy. This year marks the 11th annual celebration.

Platinum Dry Cleaners joins over 25 nominees with eight other finalists from a five countywide area vying for the award.

"On behalf of our 40 employees, we are all humbled and honored to be nominated

and recognized for our efforts coming off the pandemic and



Owners Chris and Craig Bamberg

hurricane," noted **Craig Bamberg**, owner/partner of the company. "Platinum provides Southwest Florida an unequalled dryclean and laundry service. It falls on the efforts of 40 dedicated employees and being considered for this award is a testament to this amazing staff."

Eagle Star Equipment of Troy, MI, was recently named the **2022 Poseidon Textile Care Systems (Poseidon) Distributor of the Year** for superior sales and customer support.

Led by **Michael "Stucky" Szczotka**, Eagle Star is a full-service distributor of quality solutions for the textile care, vended laundry and on-

premise laundry markets.

The company has more than 47 years in the industry, offering drycleaning and laundry planning, equipment, installation, parts and service.

"Eagle Star and Stucky helped us create, field test and launch the Poseidon brand through their market expertise, said **Joel Jorgensen**, vice president of sales for Girbau North America (GNA). "Since then, Stucky and his team have introduced Poseidon to the textile care market where the brand has taken hold and continues to grow year over year. Eagle Star's continuous sales efforts, backed by their first-class service and technical support, make them a valued industry partner."

"My relationship with GNA has been very beneficial over the years," **Szczotka** said, "not only for my business, but to myself personally as I've been blessed with many friendships since officially joining them in 2001."



Stucky Szczotka

Bob Barry, president/CEO of **ZIPS Franchising, LLC**, announced that it has added four new members to its corporate team headquartered in Savage, MD, including:

Mike Waintraub, director of business development, is the former founder/operator of Captain Dry Clean and Princeton Linen Supply of central New Jersey. Early in his career, he was a Corporate Client Relationship Manager with UBS Wealth Management. He holds a degree in Business/Corporate Communications from William Patterson University of New Jersey;

Summer Williams, information technology manager, brings with her eight years of experience in the tech space. Previously, she was an IT Specialist with Bognet Construction and an agent with Geek Squad. She studied at American University in Washington, DC, concentrating on communications and information systems and technology;

Claire Hofmann, digital marketing coordinator, was previously Digital Content Producer at Flying Dog Brewery and a marketing coordinator at Atwater's Traditional Food. She holds bachelor's degrees in mass communications and advertising, and in psychology from Towson University;

Megan Sterner, controller, is a dedicated senior accounting leader with more than 12 years of experience. She spent the last three years as a public accountant. Having earned her bachelor's degree in business administration and management from Stevenson University in Maryland, she is currently completing a master's degree in accounting.

"We are very fortunate to have added such seasoned and skillful new team members to our organization," Barry said. "Mike's experience as a startup owner in our segment will be incredibly valuable as we strive to attract prospective franchisees looking to become business owners themselves, and he'll be able to leverage his relationships in the restaurant and hotel segments to bring in commercial business to our stores. Our other three hires all represent expansion in their respective departments. They enhance our infrastructure with their skills and experience while also increasing our bandwidth to support operations systemwide. Each of our new team members will be in-

tegral to our continued growth, evolution and success."

Chris White, executive director of **America's Best Cleaners**, has achieved the Certified Mastermind Group Facilitator designation from The Success Alliance, leading the way for professional development and growth opportunities for the ABC affiliate community.



Chris White

White began the program in 2021 and received his official certification in December of 2022. However, ABC has been focussed on promoting its affiliates' achievements and initiatives, which is why White chose to delay the announcement.

Founded by Karyn Greenstreet, The Success Alliance's mission is to foster communication, brainstorming, learning and problem-solving among mastermind group facilitators.

The facilitator certification takes over a year to complete and involves completion of a Mastermind Group Facilitator Training class, as well as a final certification exam.

Successful candidates must demonstrate competence in the Mastermind Group Facilitator Core Skills, which include following ethical guidelines, active listening and building trust and rapport among all members.

Greenstreet shared, "The role of the mastermind group facilitator is two-fold: to assist individual members with both strategic thinking and tactical actions so that they can reach their goals, and to manage the entire group dynamic so that the peers in each group share their collective wisdom and support each other from a strong psychological community mindset."

On the achievement, White added, "Professional development is critical to enhance the value of our services and skills set within the ABC community. With the ever-evolving business climate and the desire to better serve our affiliates' needs at the various stages of their growth process, the skills enhanced with this certification will aid us in delivering efficient and meaningful space for our affiliates to share and grow together."

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BY FRANK KOLLMAN

KEEP IT LEGAL

The use of profanity in the workplace

I am a big fan of open expression. While I try to keep profanity to a minimum, every now and again I throw a curse word in to highlight a point or add some sophomoric humor. If you watch any television shows these days, you will realize that “The Seven Dirty Words You Can’t Say on TV” by George Carlin is hopelessly old-fashioned. Those words were: s***t, p**s, f***k, c****t, c*****er, m*****er and t**s. I hear those words all the time, sometimes from members of Congress and the President. *Darn*.

The workplace, on the other hand, has tried to remain appropriately prudish. We can’t have employees cursing out supervisors, or other employees for that matter. Customers do not want to hear language that would make an Army drill instructor blush. For the most part, dirty words are fighting words, and they show a real lack of respect for people who prefer gentle, civil language.

Employers have been curbing such speech in the work-

place for years, enforcing those curbs with discipline, including discharge. Unfortunately, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is controlled by union zealots who believe vulgar language, if used in the context of protected speech under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), is protected, as well. Why should you be aware of this or care?

Whether you have a union or not, the NLRA applies to your workplace in many ways. Under the NLRA, employees have the right to engage in speech and other activities concerning wages, hours, and working conditions at your facility. That is why handbook clauses prohibiting non-supervisory employees from discussing their wages are against the law. Fire someone for violating that handbook policy, and the NLRB will order that employee reinstated with back pay, among other things.

The same protections apply to speech and activities employees take on behalf of two or more employees. In simple

terms, if an employee says, “I hate this place, I hate my hours, and I hate you,” that is not protected speech. If two or more employees say, “We hate this place, we hate our hours, and we hate you,” — that is protected. You can tell those employees to get back to work, but you can’t fire them just for expressing that sentiment. That has been the law since 1935.

Employees even have protection when expressing those sentiments on social media. What do you do, however, when those employees lace their sentiments with profanity? What if I hate you is followed by “and you’re a f***ing a****ole who should eat s**t and die.” Until May 1, 2023, the NLRB said it was OK to fire such an employee if the profanity alone would have been enough to get him or her fired. The Board reversed that position on May 1, holding that if the employee is engaged in protected activities or speech when uttering those vulgar words, the employee does not lose the protections of

the NLRA. Mere “animal exuberance” as they call it will not remove those protections.

The one dissenting member of the Board reminded the pro-union members that earlier boards controlled by similar officials had found that the use of the “N-word” did not result in the loss of the protection of the NLRA.

In other words, employees advocating for unions or overall employee working conditions can be racist, sexist, and generally disgusting despite other legislative admonitions against discrimination.

How does this affect you? First, if an employee uses vulgar or abusive language, you must now analyze the context before you take disciplinary action. If the argument or discussion concerns working conditions, you may need to get a legal opinion.

Second, if an employee is engaged in protected activities concerning wages, hours, and working conditions, you may not discipline them for their use of salty or vulgar lan-

guage. In fact, you may not even be able to discipline them for racist, sexist, ageist, or other discriminatory activity. It’s a shame. Let’s hope the courts reverse the Board, but it could take years.

I think the NLRB has lost its way, as it does whenever a pro-union Board gets in control. I had to resist lacing this article with profanity under my First Amendment right of free speech, but I believe *National Clothesline* has policies against that. So, I will reserve my vulgar criticism to the office where like-minded management labor and employment lawyers still think profanity should be extremely funny and extremely rare.

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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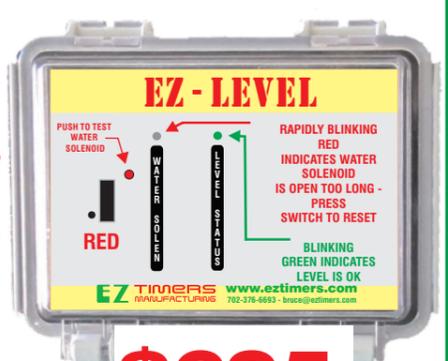
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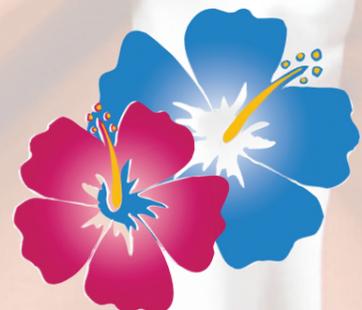
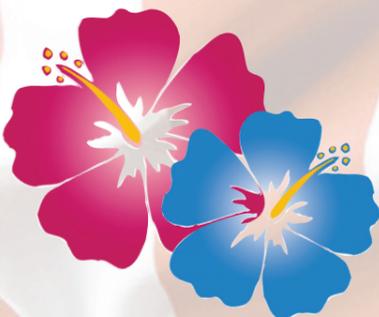
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WRENCH WORKS



BY BRUCE GROSSMAN

Solutions for hot weather cooling problems

With summer upon us, your drycleaning machine's cooling system will be under greater stress. It doesn't matter if you are using a water tower, chiller, or city water for cooling; conditions that weren't an issue during the cooler months may become problems as the ambient (surrounding) temperature rises.

frigerants) and some form of coolant (generally water or a water and glycol mixture).

It doesn't matter which Freon is used; the process itself requires a device called a refrigeration condenser which changes hot, vapor-rich Freon gas back into liquid Freon, which is constantly being recycled during the drying segment of the drycleaning cycle.

vapor-rich, hot, compressed Freon gas to the coolant flowing through the refrigeration condenser.

Methods of supplying coolant to the condenser

1) City Water. Water from the city main is forced through the dry cleaning machine's refrigeration condenser propelled by existing city water pressure. The exiting water is then sent down the drain.

2) Water Tower. A pump circulates water through the drycleaning machine's refrigeration condenser, over an evaporative cooling media (that looks like corrugated plastic tubes), which has air forced through, aiding in evaporation, into a sump where the suction inlet of the pump is connected.

The evaporation of the water from the surface of the media cools the remaining water, which drops into the sump for recirculation through the drycleaning machine's refrigeration condenser.

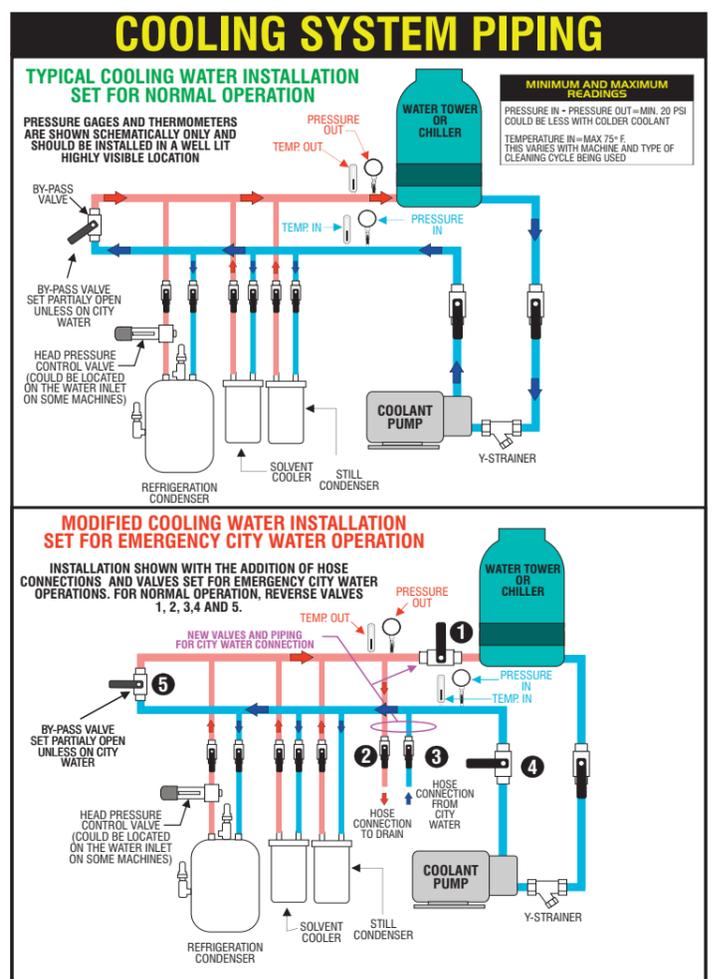
3) Chiller. Water or a mix-

The accompanying illustrations show schematics for typical cooling water installations on systems using a water tower or chiller.

Most of the cooling problems will rear their ugly heads during the drying segment of the drycleaning cycle. Drying, in the drycleaning machine sense, is all about moving heat energy. The media which moves all this heat is called a refrigerant (most machines use R22 Freon, some of the newer models and the K4 machines use R400 Freon as re-

In almost every case, this condenser is cooled by a liquid (there are a few air-cooled condensers that are not this article's topic). Hot, compressed Freon gas is forced by the refrigeration compressor into the refrigeration condenser (where it is cooled and condensed by the coolant water).

In this case, we are transferring the heat from a



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

No matter what method is used for cooling and circulating the coolant through the refrigeration condenser, the efficiency of the process is dependent on two factors:

A. Coolant Flow. The amount of coolant moving through the condenser.

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

Each of the above factors can be easily monitored using pressure and temperature as indicators of what is going on in the coolant system. A pressure gauge and thermometer at the inlet and outlet of the coolant system located near the drycleaning machine are vital for monitoring the cooling system performance.

The pump must supply enough pressure and flow in sufficient quantity to push coolant through the components that require cooling on the drycleaning machine.

On most machines, this would include not only the refrigeration condenser but also the still condenser and solvent cooler; in the case of

water towers and chillers, also back to the tower or chiller sump, which are often located on the roof. Unfortunately, there is no hard fast rule for what the pressure readings should be.

The best method for obtaining the "numbers" is to note the drycleaning machine inlet, outlet pressure, and temperature readings when the drycleaning machine works properly for future reference.

Lets have a look at what the thermometers and pressure gauges can tell us about the condition of the coolant system. The following are some possible scenarios for different combinations of qualitative data:

1) Inlet pressure high/outlet pressure low:

A. Check for blockage inlet flow path — a clogged Y strainer between the pump and the drycleaning machine;

B. Heavy scale build-up — the build-up of scale inside the piping of the drycleaning machine.

2) Inlet and outlet pressure rapidly changing:

A. Low coolant level in the pumping system.

3) Low inlet/high outlet pressure:

A. Open bypass valve on pumping system.

Continued on page 28

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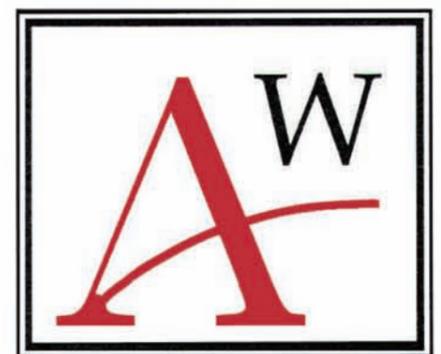
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Bruce Grossman

Solutions for hot weather cooling problems

Continued from page 26

4) Low inlet/low outlet pressure:

- A. Pump off.
- B. Clogged inlet strainer.

5) High inlet temperature/high outlet temperature:

A. Water tower fan not working/chiller refrigeration system faulty.

- B. Pump off.

6) Slightly higher than normal inlet temperature/high outlet temperature:

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

B. Excessive heat source — still boil over or steam sweep valve open; steam supply valve to steam boost coil or carbon adsorber.

Back to the drycleaning machine operation — problems with the cooling system will most likely appear during the dry cycle. To be more specific, towards the end of the dry cycle when the drycleaning machine goes into cool-down mode.

During the drying mode, the heat exchanger coil transfers much of the heat from the Freon to the air

stream, and only a small portion of the heat load is being dumped into the refrigeration condenser.

chines have a refrigeration head pressure adjusting valve, which controls the refrigeration head pressure by vary-

lating on systems using a water tower or chiller.

The top illustration is most commonly found; the bottom is an installation with the addition of valves 1,2,3 which are used when city water hook-up is included in the installation.

This city water hook-up provides an emergency back-up for continuing operations when there is a failure in the normal cooling system and ready access for connecting a descaling pump.

Bruce Grossman is the Chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing. EZtimers manufactures machines that make your machines run better. For those needing to replace Zero-Waste or Galaxy misters, see our SAHARA 2 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.

These pumps seldom fail without giving ample warning of an evolving problem. If the circuit breaker that controls the pump trips frequently, it is a sure sign of looming disaster.

In the cool-down mode, solenoids and dampers change and almost the entire heat load is now dumped into the refrigeration condenser.

This type of problem is indicated by the refrigeration compressor entering a high-pressure condition and tripping the refrigeration high pressure safety switch.

This would usually cause an error message on the programmer screen and require a manual reset of the refrigeration high-pressure safety switch.

This condition is almost always caused by either a clogged Y strainer or excessive scaling inside the refrigeration condenser.

Most drycleaning ma-

ing coolant flow to the refrigeration condenser.

This valve is adjusted to give sufficient refrigeration head pressure for efficient refrigeration system operation. When scale builds up in the refrigeration condenser past the point where the normal adjustment of the head pressure adjusting valve can compensate, many drycleaners simply open the valve wider in the very mistaken belief they have fixed something.

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

The accompanying illustrations show schematics for typical cooling water instal-

Fix-It Academy to focus on steam systems in July

This summer, Bruce Grossman will be launching the Fix-It Academy to instruct even the most “tool challenged” individuals on 25% of easy repairs most drycleaners will encounter in their plant.

Fixing such issues is very doable when taught with the proper combination of methods, parts and tools.

In July, the Fix-It Acad-

emy will present a seminar on “Steam System 101” which will cover: replacing steam traps; replacing boiler sight glasses; finding and replacing faulty check valves; and finding and replacing faulty blow-down valves.

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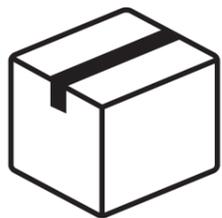


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