



National

# Clothesline



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## EPA proposes 10-year ban on perc drycleaning

Recently, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publicly posted its new proposed rules on the use of perchloroethylene (PCE) which place a 10-year nationwide ban on the use of perc as a drycleaning solvent and as a stain removal agent. That action began a 60-day comment period from the public that will end on July 17 of this year.

The proposed rule is the agency's strategy to address perc's "unreasonable risk of injury to human health" as detailed in its December 2020 Risk Evaluation for PCE and the December 2022 revised risk

determination for PCE prepared under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA).

While drycleaning faces a decade-long deadline, most other uses of perc will be banned much sooner.

EPA's proposed rule will only allow 24 more months of the manufacturing, processing and distribution of PCE for all consumer uses.

Some industrial and commercial uses of perc – including for aviation, aerospace and national security — will be allowed to continue, albeit under new strict safety regulations and guidelines designed to cut back on potential exposure problems with the chemical.

"We know that exposure to PCE is dangerous for people's health, and today's rule is an important first step to keeping communities and workers safe," said Michael Freedhoff, assistant administrator for the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention. "We've proposed to ban the uses we know can't continue safely, and we've made sure that stringent controls are in place to protect workers for the uses that remain."

The compliance dates for drycleaning machines will be dependent on which generation of perc machines are in use. Drycleaners with third generation perc machines (dry-to-dry, non-vented machines with refrigerated con-

*Continued on page 8*

## CCA taps Barnes for keynote address at Fabricare 2023

This October, the California Cleaners Association (CCA) will return to Las Vegas to host Fabricare 2023 at Harrah's Casino and Hotel. The event will take place from Oct. 6 to 8 and will include a full slate of educational sessions.

This year's keynote speaker will be Jeff Barnes, author of *The Wisdom of Walt: Leadership Lessons From the Happiest Place on Earth*.

He will present a program on "Walt Disney and the Power of Resilience" at 9 a.m. on Saturday morning.

Barnes will discuss how in business, just as in life, obstacles are an inevitable part of the process of achieving anything worthwhile. He will discuss how Disney overcame many failures and challenges on his path to success.

The educational sessions will begin on Friday afternoon when CCA hosts a trio of programs that will focus on "The

Power of Marketing."

First up, Dave Coyle of Maverick Drycleaners will speak at 1 p.m., followed by Yash Patel of BeCreative 360 at

Following the keynote address by Barnes on Saturday morning, Ryan Fish — president of Red Hanger Cleaners in Salt Lake City, UT — will present "Choose Your Hard" from 11 a.m. until noon. In the afternoon, Jason Loeb will return to offer more thoughts on "Brand Evolution" from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. The day will conclude with a panel discussion on "Moving Forward Together as an Industry" from 4:15 to 5:30 p.m.

The panel will be moderated by Peter Blake, DLI's association services program director, and will include: Kathy Benzinger, president of Benzinger's Clothing Care; Tom Zengeler, president of Zengeler Cleaners; John Thomas, vice president of M&B Hanger Supply and Keisuke Uchikoshi, vice president of Sankosha Manufacturing Co.

On Sunday morning, Jeff *Continued on page 8*



**Jeff Barnes**

Author of *The Wisdom of Walt: Leadership Lessons From the Happiest Place on Earth*



2 p.m. The day's sessions will conclude with Jason Loeb of Sudsie's, who will talk about "Brand Revolution" at 3 p.m.

## A last minute pivot at Preakness Stakes



Jockey Feargal Lynch (pictured above) debuted in his first-ever Preakness Stakes wearing a uniform adorned with the ZIPS Cleaners logo (inset).

With the 148th running of the Preakness Stakes in Maryland a couple day away last month, ZIPS Cleaners learned that the horse and rider it was sponsoring had to be scratched.

The company scrambled to find a new rider and within 24 hours teamed up with jockey Feargal Lynch for his first-ever Preakness run on his colt Perform.

Lynch, a native of Northern Ireland, was joined on race day by members of ZIPS corporate team, principals of its parent company and several franchisees. Then, he and Perform raced wearing a uniform adorned with ZIPS logos. They did not win the race, but ZIPS reaped big winnings in the form of exposure — includ-

ing more than 10,000 views of its social media posts.

Later, Lynch gave his pants and shirts to ZIPS to be professionally cleaned so he could preserve them as a memento of his Preakness debut. ZIPS now seeks to leverage its ties to the sport of horse racing by courting commercial business from the jockey network, the Pimlico Race Course and horse racing organizations.

ZIPS CEO Bob Barry noted, "Just as the entrants in this world-famous race are among the finest of their breed, we consider ZIPS in a class by itself when it comes to customer service, convenience and dependability — and we thank Feargal for carrying our name with him."



## Sneak Peek Inside

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Joe Petrozzi, former NCA president and a founder of its Coats for Kids Program, passed away at 95.

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If you aren't making the necessary changes your business needs, you should be ticked off. Use that anger.

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In these hot months, follow Bruce Grossman's advice to avoid costly water pump disasters.



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# EPA proposed rule harkens the end of an era

The EPA recently proposed a 10-year phaseout for perchloroethylene (a.k.a. perc) as both a solvent and a spotting agent in the U.S. Right now, the clock is ticking as the deadline for the public comment period is July 17. After that date, it's anyone's guess how long it will take the EPA to navigate through the comments and decide upon a final version.

However, it is conceivable that the 10-year phaseout could go into effect later this year, which means perc drycleaning will be completely gone from this country sometime in the second half of 2033.

Keep in mind, there is always the possibility there will be some revisions to the proposed law, but EPA's end plan clearly is to eliminate perc from almost all uses. The agency has allowed some usage exceptions for industries such as aerospace and national security, but they will now require more stringent safety precautions for those who work with it.

Admittedly, on the surface, a ten-year deadline seems short — especially on the heels of all the pivots and changes drycleaning businesses had to instigate to financially survive the pandemic — but this industry has been given a longer moratorium on perc than most. EPA has scheduled it to be phased out of all consumer uses and many industrial and commercial uses in just 24 months.

It is entirely possible that agency members took into consideration the high cost of drycleaning equipment purchases — so at the very least, cleaners can get ten more years' use out of their recent perc machine purchases. Given that won't be the same amount of time as their full expected shelf life, but it's eight more years than anyone else.

For an industry that's down 33% from just a few years ago, that will help, but will it be enough? Will there be financial aid offered by the government to offset the cost of switching over to another cleaning option? With a litany of lingering litigation issues still lingering, the public's perception of perc will likely leave an undeserved stain on the industry. That would be an undeserved and ignominious end for a solvent that helped the drycleaning industry thrive for decades.

Perc drycleaning debuted in the 1940s. At the time, most of the industry

was utilizing hydrocarbon solvent, Stoddard solvent or even gasoline. Due to its amazing cleaning capabilities and much quicker processing time, perc quickly grew in popularity and has long been the most popular solvent choice for drycleaners. At its peak late in the 20th Century, it was considered to be in use by 80 to 85% of the industry. Over the years, it cleaned a countless number of garments and helped the majority of cleaners thrive and expand.

It wasn't until the 1980s when most regulations for the industry's management of perc as a hazardous waste came about. Passed in 1980 — with amendments added in 1984 — the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) outlined guidelines for the generation, transport, treatment and disposal for hazardous waste. Prior to that, drycleaners did not have any guidelines, nor did they have any obligations or incentives to dispose of the solvent properly.

Once the regulations passed, the industry quickly adopted practices in order to comply with the law. Unfortunately, though, it was already too late for many plants around the country that would go on to suffer expensive pollution remediation costs for various soil and groundwater contamination issues. Making matters worse, they were simply following the law (or lack thereof) for all those years but were still considered financially responsible.

With each decade, as perc drycleaning regulations tightened, the solvent's grip on the industry loosened. Recent estimates from industry groups have placed perc drycleaning to comprise 60 to 65% of the industry today, with about a quarter using hydrocarbons and another 15 to 20% using "alternative" solvents. Fortunately, this century has also seen major improvements to drycleaning machines, as well, and the truth is that the knowledge and technology exists for drycleaners to clean remarkably well regardless of their solvent or method of choice.

There is still time for drycleaners to submit comments to the EPA on its proposed rules for perc drycleaning; the deadline is July 17. Visit the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal located online at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov).

Then, in the page's search engine, enter the docket identification number "EPA-HQ-OPPT-2020-0720-0024".

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# Always improving

There has been a lot of history for Belding Cleaners — a business that is now 105 years old — so much so that Joe Hebeka, who has owned the company since 2007, has spent quite a bit of time trying to piece it all together.

"I've been putting these puzzle pieces together over the years. Belding was founded in Detroit in the early 1900s — in 1918," he explained. "When the neighboring city, which is Grosse Pointe, became a very prominent community, they built a location here, which is the one I'm at right now. That was built in 1929."

The beautiful two-story building included a walk-in fur vault. "They had dye for satin, and, on the front of my building, it's engraved in the limestone: Cleaners & Dyers," Joe noted.

After he discovered more information from the local historical society, he came to the conclusion that Belding Cleaners likely has a famous historical connection.

"I think there's some relation to the Belding brothers who were huge silk manufacturers and textile manufacturers out of the East Coast," he said.

In Michigan, the Belding brothers are well-known throughout the state's history. After they initially started manufacturing silk thread in Rockville, CT, in 1866, the brothers expanded the business and built more mills in other areas, including the largest one in the town of Belding, MI.

Previously, the town had known three other names before it was changed in 1871 in an effort to honor the Beldings who had a descendant there as far back as 1938. He started the first farm in Otisco Township.

"I think there's a relationship between the Belding brothers and George Belding, who founded Belding Cleaners in 1918. I have not been able to make that connection yet," he said.

Still, the tone of some of Belding Cleaners' old advertisements suggest that the "Belding" name was synonymous with *impeccable quality*.

"Way back when there's news articles about them upgrading their equipment. They say, 'Belding is accepting new discriminating customers because they've upgraded their equipment. They're accepting new customers?' Joe laughed. "I gladly accept new customers all day, every day."

The business changed ownership a few times over the years, until Joe's father, Fred, purchased it in the mid-1970s. Joe began waiting on customers there at the age of 15. The business made quite an impression on him.

"I really took a liking to it," he recalled. "I saw the success that could come from it, which initially drew me in. Once I got started, I really liked the whole flow of things."

After high school, Joe continued working at Belding Cleaners while he earned a business degree from Davenport University. In fact, he began managing the business at that time.

"When I was around 20, 21 years old, that's when father kind of semi-re-

tired," Joe said. "I wanted to do some modernizing of the place by being a little more visible on the Internet, offering pickup and delivery — that was becoming popular again — and really just growing as a whole."

The bigger changes he envisioned would have to wait until his father retired in 2007 and Joe bought the busi-



beldingcleaners.com

ness and the building. Now, he had free reign to upgrade much of the equipment and finally add a computer system to the business.

Instigating major changes to the business wasn't too difficult, though, because Joe always tries to make a point of communicating with his employees — and listening to them.

"I trust the feedback I get from my staff," he said. "I'm not sitting there at the press all day so I have to trust the fact that if an employee tells me this pressing machine has an issue or it can be improved, I have to listen to that feedback. I want to make it easier for my staff so that they're happy and they stay longer. The happier they are, the better the product they put out."

When it came time to replacing drycleaning equipment, Joe switched to K4 solvent over a decade ago and found it to be a good fit for cleaning high end clothing.

"We stand behind everything we do," he said. "I like to see quality products from the lobby all the way down to the packaging at the very end. When a customer walks in, it has to be a great impression. The whole process has to be top notch — equipment, route software, text message alerts."

The company's pickup and delivery has grown quite a bit in recent year. Joe can still recall the time when he first really saw a need for it.

"I was probably just 17 at the time and a customer called into the store and said, 'I'm going to send a taxi cab there. Hang up my tuxedo and formal shirt and my wife's cocktail dress for a black tie auto show — put it in the taxi cab and it's going to take it back to us.' And, I did. It worked out great," Joe recalled. "That's when I said, 'We need to do pickup and delivery. This has got to happen.'"

In addition to focussing on growing routes over the years, Joe has also made

a point of integrating himself deeper into the Grosse Pointe community. He has served on the board of directors for the local chamber of commerce for many years and he also founded and serves as president for the Grosse Pointe Park Business Association.

"It's something that we thought we needed to do because this area is actu-

almost 100 years old. Even after 27 challenging years in the drycleaning industry, Joe still manages to feel plenty of passion for it.

"I still enjoy being hands on. I like the action. I like the customers. I like every aspect of it," he said. "I touch a little bit of it all day and every day. I spend a few minutes walking around

**Joe  
Hebeka**  
Belding Cleaners  
Grosse Pointe, MI

ally going through tremendous growth and investment right now," he said.

That is good news for an area that has seen many cleaning competitors close in the past decade. Joe bought two of them to help keep his plant running at full capacity in recent years.

"Leading into Covid, I sold one building and closed one location, converted customers to route, and then a year after — another location I had — its lease term ended and I converted all of those customers to routes," he explained.

Even with less customers coming in during the pandemic, Belding Cleaners simply continued to focus on quality and adjusted prices.

"It's so basic, but so many cleaners just look past it," Joe noted. "They just want to turn their boilers off early. That's not the key to profit all of the time. It's not the key to success."

Today, Belding Cleaners has 15 employees and one location — the 5,500 sq. ft. building that is

talking to the staff, just making conversation. Show some interest in them other than *Are you pressing the pants properly?* Things like that are important. That's what creates a really good team and a really good work environment and a good culture and that shows at the counter — and the customers see that and they feed off that.

"They want to be doing business with someone who is doing things in the community. They want to be somewhere that gives them a great lobby to walk into and granite countertops to put their clothes on. That's what people like."

If cleaners cannot invest in their business and update it to keep up with what customers want, Joe believes more will be closing down in the future.

"I believe that you get out what you put in," he said. "One minute, I'm writing checks, the next minute I'm laying on the floor trying to change a drain so that we're not shut down for two hours. You have to put in the effort. There's always a way to improve things."



At Belding Cleaners in Grosse Pointe, MI, every inch of its 94-year old 5,500 sq. ft. building is utilized. The front counter and inspection areas are downstairs, along with the cleaning equipment. After inspection, clothes go up an elevator to the second floor where they go for auto assembly and packaging before the finished product returns downstairs.

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# EPA proposes 10-year ban on perc drycleaning

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densers) will have three years from the publication of the final rule to stop using perc.

Cleaners using fourth (dry-to-dry, non-vented machines with both refrigerated condensers and carbon adsorbers as secondary vapor controls) and fifth generation machines (dry-to-dry, non-vented machines with secondary vapor controls, a motor inside the machine drum, and an interlocking system to ensure the concentration is below approximately 300 ppm before the loading door can be opened) will have the full ten years to comply.

"After that time, perc will be gone completely from the

industry, including stain removal agents," noted Jon Meijer, vice president of membership for the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI).

While Meijer admitted he was expecting a shorter timeline for the drycleaning industry, he still believes DLI may advocate for a little more time. "We may push for 15 years so the people who have purchased equipment fairly recently should be able to use that equipment for the life of it," he said.

Now that the proposed rule has been published on the Federal Register, the public will have a limited time to submit comments online.

To do so, visit the Federal

eRulemaking Portal at regulations.gov and search for the docket identification number: EPA-HQ-OPPT-2020-0720-0024.

Once the comment period ends, it is unclear how long it will take for EPA to publish the final rule and when it will go into effect. The process could take several months or longer if affected groups file lawsuits, but once published, the ten-year countdown begins.

At this time, it's not quite clear how many drycleaners will be directly affected by the proposed rule. EPA estimates that there are now about 6,000 perc plants in the country, but nobody knows for sure the actual number, only that it is

probably about an estimated 33% down from what it was just prior to the pandemic.

In addition to affecting any drycleaner currently using perc, there may be another concern for the industry.

"The state of Oregon is getting rid of their cleanup fund. Illinois already has a sunset provision for their cleanup fund, which is like seven years. The significance of this is they're already having problems with most of the cleanup funds, because most of the funds are fed through either a gross receipts tax or a solvent tax," Meijer explained. "And, because drycleaning has gone down and the equipment has gotten better – so there's not

as much perc being purchased – there's a lot less to be taxed so the funds have been struggling."

While the new proposed rule would give perc-using drycleaners a limited time to switch to an alternative solvent, there may be the possibility of financial aid.

President Biden's Fiscal Year 2024 budget request proposes funding for new pollution prevention grants that would support small businesses with transitioning to TSCA compliant practices.

If implemented, it could help lessen the impact for some cleaners making the switch to an alternative solvent.

## Obituary

### Joseph Petrozzi, Coats for Kids founder, former NCA president

Joseph Petrozzi, a former National Cleaners Association (NCA) president and one of the founders of its Coats for Kids program, passed away on June 6. He was 95 years old.



Originally born in Niagara Falls, NY, he graduated from Niagara Falls High School be-

fore he served two years in the U.S. Army, stationed with occupying forces in Japan.

In 1948, he joined his uncle, Sam Viso, in opening Capitol Cleaners and Feldman Furs on Main St. in Niagara Falls. He operated the business for many years with his wife, Grace Chiarenza (they married in 1950) and with his son, Russell.

The business grew to include locations in Lewiston,

the Town of Niagara and Grand Island.

In 1966, though, an idea came to him when he looked out the window of his drycleaning shop in Niagara Falls to see a pair of young kids walking to school in frigid temperatures wearing only light jackets.

He proceeded to ask customers if any of their children had outgrown their winter garments and those that did were

happy to donate them.

Then, whenever he saw kids without good winter coats walking down the street, he would have them come inside his store and find a jacket for them.

In time, he added a box out front with a sign that said: "Coats for Kids." The box continued to be filled up and Petrozzi continued to help keep the local kids a little warmer.

In the drycleaning industry, Petrozzi served for many years as president for the Western New York chapter of NCA. That chapter adopted the Coats for Kids program and soon took the concept to other cities in the region before eventually going nationwide and including winter clothing and accessories for teens and adults.

In 2003, the United Way of Niagara honored him and his family with the Humanitarian Award for their efforts in the

Coats for Kids program.

Petrozzi also served as president of NCA and was a longtime member of its board of directors.

He was a past president of the Niagara Professional Cleaners and Tailors Association and was the longest tenured member of the Better Business Bureau of Upstate New York – where he served on both its board of directors and its dispute settlement committee.

Additionally, he was the longest-serving board member of the Health Association of Niagara County and served as its treasurer for many years. In 2008, he received the organization's President's Award for Distinguished Service.

Petrozzi's wife, Grace, passed away in 2015. He is survived by his son, Russell, and daughter, Marcia Britton; his brother, Chuck; six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

## CCA taps Barnes for keynote address

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Shapiro, president of Cleaners Supply, will present a program on "Understanding Today's Consumer Needs" from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Afterward, Norman Way of Puritan Cleaners will discuss "Wash-Dry-Fold: Winner or Loser" from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Registration for the event is available on CCA's site at cal-cleaners.org.

Also on the site is a link to make reservations with the

host hotel, Harrah's, at a discounted price (\$169 nightly plus resort fees) for event attendees.

Look for more information soon about an upcoming pair of events. First up will be a two-day Leadership Training seminar featuring Jennifer Whitmarsh of The Route Pros that will be held on Sept. 27 and 28.

Later in the year, The North East Fabricare Association will host its ProfitFest convention on Nov. 4 and 5 in Salem, NH.

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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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# KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

## Disciplining employees with “bad attitudes”

I want to talk this month about attitude. Because the word can be positive, negative and everything in-between, this column will touch on the good, the bad, and the ugly about attitude.

Let's start with the ugly. After the Civil Rights Act was passed in 1964, many employers who still wanted to keep minorities out of their workforce decided employees could be fired or not hired because they had “bad attitudes.” Because they could not fire a minority employee for performance reasons or for en-

gaging in misconduct, they would fire the employee because of his or her bad attitude. As a result, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) began to hate the word, seeing it as a code word for “minority status.”

For this reason, I never allow my clients to fire an employee for a bad attitude, especially an employee protected by the various civil rights laws, even if he has a bad attitude. Instead, I tell my clients to describe what the employee said and did, which will establish the bad attitude without using the word that

drives the EEOC to distraction.

For example, “John was fired because every time I asked him to work a little faster, he raised his voice, demanding I talk to other employees about their speed, and refused to communicate with them for the rest of the day.” Or, “John was not hired because, during his job interview, he said he didn't really need this damn job.” Sounds like a bad attitude, but let the EEOC decide that without using that word.

On the other end of the spectrum, whenever I give a seminar to employers, I urge

them to approach management with a positive attitude. If you're going to own a business or be a supervisor, you have to have a management attitude, and you should be proud to display it. While a manager must be aware of the various laws affecting workplace interactions, a manager must also adopt an attitude of confidence and certainty. If an employee fails to perform after counseling or engages in misconduct, it is not your fault you have to discipline them.

Think of management as a sacred vocation, and if you're

certain you've made the right decision, own it. If you must discipline an employee, you should not “feel bad,” tell the employee you're sorry, soften the blow, or allow them to believe you're uncertain about your actions. Don't be a jerk, but make it clear that improvement is expected, you are disappointed in their performance, and they're the reason for the discipline. If you reward good performance, you should never feel guilty about dealing forcefully with poor performance. Embrace your management credentials.

Attitude of employees in a service business is too often ignored. Customers sense when employees do not like their jobs, often because it reflects in how those employees treat those customers. If you have employees who don't smile, act annoyed when customers ask questions, argue with them when “I'm sorry” would be the better response, and generally mope around until their shift is over — you need to talk to those employees about their attitudes.

In that context, you can use the word “attitude,” but make sure you are specific in discussing how that attitude causes the employees to act and affects their performance. It can be as simple as telling the employees they need a positive attitude that makes customers think they are liked, that shows the employee cares, and that gives the impression the employee enjoys working for you. If they cannot do this, perhaps another company would suit them better.

I once heard an enthusiastic attitude is worth 20 IQ points. I absolutely agree with that. Someone who wants to do well is more likely to do well than a person with a negative attitude. Employees who are smart enough and enthusiastic are worth more than geniuses.

The word attitude is meaningless without explanation. When disciplining employees, explain what they're doing wrong with a management mindset. Encourage them to be pleasant and empathetic to customers. Reward employees with great attitudes and great performance. Look for those 20 additional IQ-point-people.

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](http://www.kollmanlaw.com). It has articles, sample policies, news and other information on employee/employer relations.

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# NEWSMAKERS

Forenta recently celebrated 62 years of manufacturing pressing equipment in Morristown, TN, by hosting a breakfast for its employees and for members of the local Chamber of Commerce. In attendance were former Forenta presidents **Lee White** and **Jerry Rose**, Industrial Board Chairman **Jack Fishman**, local business leaders and city council members.

During the event, **Ruth Laico**, sales coordinator for Forenta, was recognized as the longest tenured employee at 48 years. Current Forenta President **Rusty Smith** shared the history between Forenta and its predecessor, the **Forse Corporation** (who started making equipment in the late 1920s in Anderson, IN). Throughout the 1960s, Forenta existed simply as a manufacturing con-

tractor for Forse. During the early 1970s, Forse went out of business due



to the onset of polyester clothing and leisure suits. Since Forenta had many skilled manufacturing and technical employees, it survived the drycleaning downturn by manufacturing other products in its 88,000 sq. ft. manufacturing facility.

After obtaining the intellectual property rights and customer lists from Forse, Forenta continued to manufacture a small amount of pressing equipment through the mid-1970s. The only difference was

that the Forenta logo and serial plate were now placed on the equipment. Fortunately, the drycleaning industry bounced back and Forenta was on the map as a producer and seller of pressing equipment.

The company went right to work upgrading the design of existing equipment and adding new equipment to its product line, including spotting boards, puff irons with steel bucks, a simplified form finisher and scissor drycleaning presses. In the coming years, Forenta even designed – and now manufactures – a line of water chillers and garment conveyors that are geared toward (but not exclusive to) the drycleaning industry.

**GreenEarth Cleaning** was awarded a U.S. Patent earlier this year for the development of an anti-viral cleaning methodology which has been incorporated into the GreenEarth Cleaning System.

The patent enables GreenEarth affiliates to integrate vaporization into the drycleaning

cycle to deliver the highest level of protection from current and future lipid-layer viruses.

“In the spring of 2020, after the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared the Covid-19 outbreak a global pandemic, we contracted with MRI Global – an independent laboratory approved for testing with SARS-CoV-2. Our intent was to determine the effectiveness of our system in penetrating the lipid layer of the coronavirus using a high drying temperature of 158° F (70° Celsius) for 30 minutes,” explained **Tim Maxwell**, president of GreenEarth Cleaning. “We were surprised when the initial reports showed only a 14.28% deactivation efficiency with heat alone, so we went back to the drawing board.”

Eventually, through diligent manipulation of the washing extraction and drying steps, GreenEarth was able to achieve deactivation levels of 75%.

In response to that result, GreenEarth created a silicone vapor program component

that achieved a deactivation level greater than 98% on SARS-CoV-2 contaminated wool fabrics.

“Once we solidified the vaporization and process, and attained the result on a consistent basis, we added the anti-viral cleaning methodology to our suite of offerings available to GreenEarth affiliates,” Maxwell added.

“We continue to achieve extremely high viral eradication without adding aggressive chemistry,” he continued. “With this innovation, we are providing an expanded level of care without doing harm to the environment, people or their garments.”

Earlier this year, GreenEarth technical support began incorporating the necessary program modifications into all of its GreenEarth affiliate machines.

“With this advancement, we feel that our affiliates are better prepared for the potential arrival of any possible new variant of Covid, or the next virus,” Maxwell said.

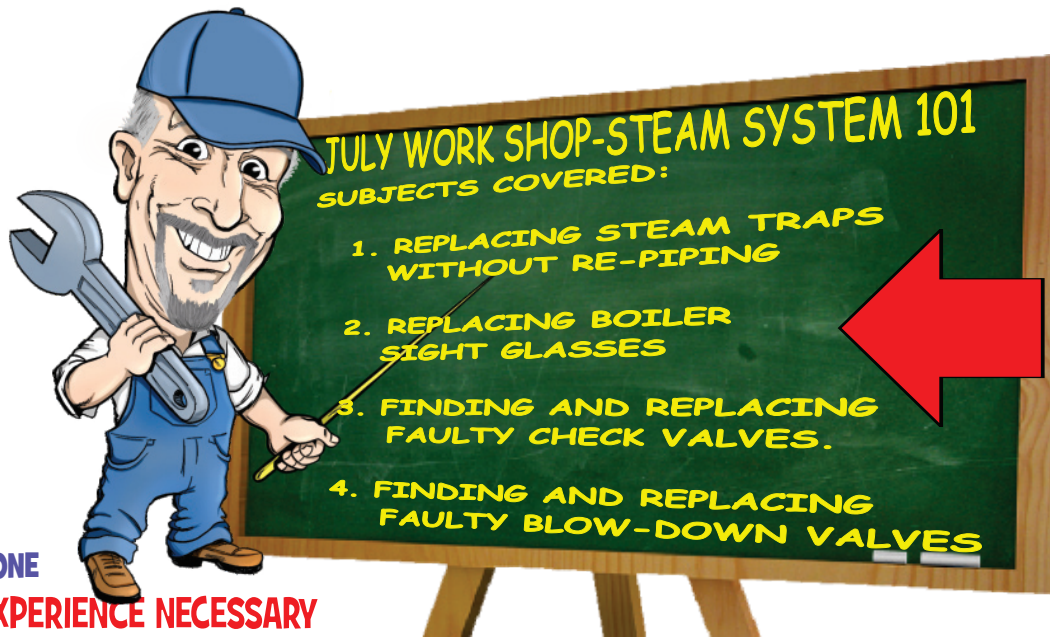
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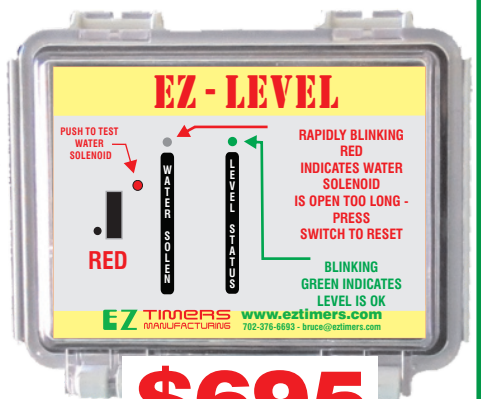
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# STUCKY'S STRATEGIES



BY STUCKY SZCZOTKA

## Expansion into the vended laundry sector

**M**ore and more drycleaners looking to diversify are embracing the vended laundry business... and for good reason.

By adding a vended laundry or two to their business portfolios, drycleaners can capture new revenue streams, expand and lockdown on a given geographic area, and achieve economy of scale thanks to shared routes, locations, labor and marketing. Plus, when compared with drycleaning, vended laundries are much simpler businesses to operate.

If you're interested yet need more convincing, or if you're convinced and want to know where to start, read on.

First let's review the benefits of adding a vended laundry, or several of them.

### Diversification

A vended laundry allows you to diversify and expand revenue streams and clientele. The traditional vended laundry is resistant to economic fluctuations because clean clothes are a basic human need. When downturns occur,

generally fewer people can own homes (and their own laundry equipment). They frequent vended laundries more often.

There are also full-service revenue streams in which vended laundries serve residents and businesses alike with Wash-Dry-Fold (WDF) and flatwork processing. Such diversification helps protect you as a drycleaning operator, counter economic downturns and maximize revenue.

### Maximize Overlap

Many drycleaners have satellite locations and an established clientele within a specific geographic region. By adding a vended laundry, you can reach new markets — self-service customers, full-service customers and full-service commercial accounts. Use the vended laundry as a drop-off drycleaning site, and simultaneously, use your plant and satellite locations to support and grow full-service vended laundry services like WDF.

In Michigan, Sheldon Cleaners recently opened two vended laundries and a third is

in the works. It plans to close most of its satellite locations moving forward. Instead, the vended laundries have become distribution and drop-off/pick-up sites for everything, including drycleaning. Sheldon Cleaners' third laundry will be 2.5 hours away from the central plant, but it will be used as distribution center and route drivers will grow a whole new territory.

Similarly, in Maine, Pratt Abbott Garment Care is the state's largest provider of drycleaning, vended laundry and linen/uniform rental services. Pratt Abbott's vended laundry sector significantly contributes to the success of the company as a whole. Most Pratt Abbott vended laundries and drycleaning stores are located side by side. This configura-

tion draws revenue from a broader demographic, creates shared operational savings and encourages consumer crossover. The idea is to use routes already established on the drycleaning side and expand them to pickup and deliver "anything laundry or drycleaning."

Meanwhile, you'll also streamline your management and labor. Maximize the overlap to your advantage and clinch down on your geographic area to help eliminate competition.

### Simpler Businesses

Vended laundries are simpler to operate than a drycleaning business. I'm not saying they are easy, but there are fewer specialized variables requiring skilled labor with specialized training. There are no presses, air compressors or boilers. The level of government regulation is much less, as well.

By investing in a vended laundry, you can dramatically decrease your percentage of payroll in total, which increases profit.

### Vended Laundry First Steps

**Step One:** Partner with a qualified laundry equipment distributor. Be picky. Interview multiple distributors and select the best one based on what they can provide you. Look for a distributor that offers help with site selection, demographic studies, operational training and marketing, equipment mix and installation, proformas, financing, and obviously, local service after the sale.

**Step Two:** Establish your lo-

cation. Your distributor must be able to provide you with demographic, traffic and competitive analyses to help you evaluate a location. Zero in on opportunities within the geographic areas you already serve through your drycleaning business.

**Step Three:** Equipment mix. Diversify your equipment offering to stand apart from the competition and glean maximum revenue and profit. If you have plans to process flatwork, ensure you've got space to operate a flatwork ironer, and possibly, a back-of-store area for doing full service WDF. In general, choose high-speed laundry equipment with flexible programmability.

**Step Four:** Launch Wash-Dry-Fold. Utilize idle attendants and machines to offer and process drop-off WDF. Harness your drycleaning plant and satellite locations to take in WDF processed at the vended laundry. Use the vended laundry as a drop-off site for drycleaning.

When you have your arms around it, go after commercial accounts, including spas, vacation rentals, salons and moving companies.

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

### Vended Laundry First Steps

Ready to expand into the vended laundry sector? Use these steps a guide for either developing or purchasing a location.

1



#### Step One: Partner With a Qualified Laundry Equipment Distributor

Be picky. Interview multiple distributors and select the best one based on what they can provide you. Look for a distributor that offers help with site selection, demographic studies, operational training and marketing, equipment mix and installation, proformas, financing, and obviously, local service after the sale.

2



#### Step Two: Establish Your Location

Your distributor must be able to provide you with demographic, traffic and competitive analyses to help you evaluate a location. Zero in on opportunities within the geographic areas you already serve through your dry cleaning business.

3



#### Step Three: Diversify Your Equipment Offering

Stand apart from the competition and glean maximum revenue and profit. If you have plans to process flatwork, ensure you've got space to operate a flatwork ironer, and possibly, a back-of-store area for doing full-service wash/dry/fold. In general, choose high-speed laundry equipment with flexible programmability.

4



#### Step Four: Launch Wash/Dry/Fold

Utilize idle attendants and machines to offer and process drop-off wash/dry/fold. Harness your dry cleaning plant and satellite locations to take in wash/dry/fold laundry processed at the vended laundry. Use the vended laundry as a drop-off site for dry cleaning. When you have your arms around it, go after commercial accounts, including spas, vacation rentals, salons and moving companies.

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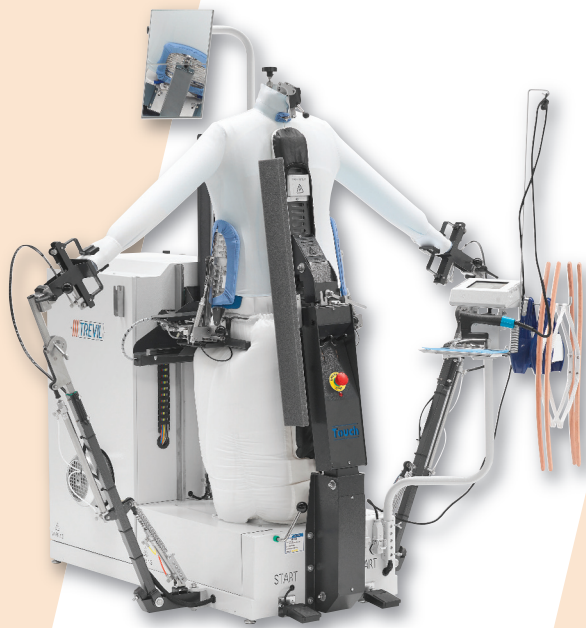


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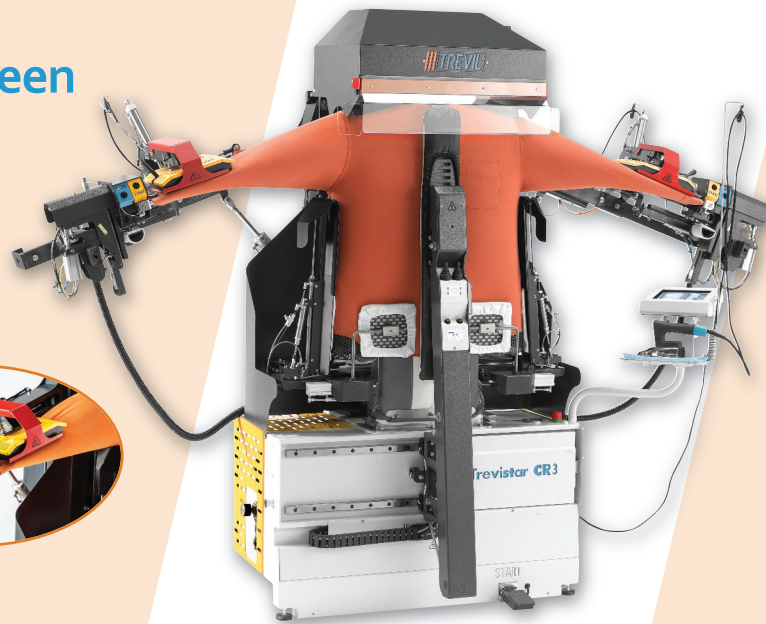
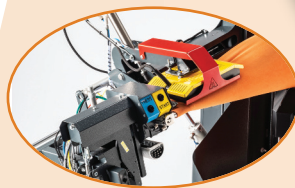
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# TURNAROUND TIME



BY JOHN ROTHROCK

## Getting ticked off for change

**L**eadership conferences, trade show seminars, and industry columns—all inspiring—but, what do they all have in common? *Good intentions.*

That's right—good intentions—nothing more and nothing less. From contributors to consumers, we all come to the table with good intentions.

So, why is it that no one seems to take meaningful action?

As John Doerr once said, "Ideas are easy. Execution is everything."

Whenever we attend these events or read articles brimming with actionable content, all business owners share the great intention of implementing the new things they've learned in their companies.

You can easily observe the audience—people taking detailed notes, snapping photos of PowerPoint slides, and others asking engaging questions.

Sadly, those notes will never be read, those photos will never be reviewed and the answers to those questions will never be learned. It should make you mad, *really mad!*

*It's time to get ticked off for change.*

Growing up as a kid, I

was a band nerd. In 6th grade, I joined the school band, playing the trumpet. Soon after, I was "encouraged" to join the church orchestra.

Being in the band had a profound impact on my life and taught me countless life lessons, one of which is getting mad for greatness.

know you're mad, but that's when you play your best. You need to get mad for greatness."

Initially, that only fueled my anger even more. For a long time, I resented that director. However, with age and experience, I've come to appreciate that experience as a valuable life lesson. And

for even your most loyal team members to consider quitting.

Change is never easy and always comes at a cost.

Remember, if it were easy, everyone would be doing it. But in the end, the results will be worth all of your hard work and effort.

So, I ask you today, do

City and everywhere in-between.

But, despite market differences, there are universal business practices that tend to yield more success than others.

In future columns, I will present a series aimed at challenging the way many in our industry define success. Some will agree with what I have to say, while others will vigorously disagree. I suspect that some readers may even get mad, and that's OK.

Regardless of which camp you find yourself in, my challenge to you is to take action. When you encounter a great idea, regardless of its source of inspiration, I want you to get so mad at the problem it solves that you have no choice but to take immediate action.

Eat, sleep, and breathe that problem until your new solution has been fully implemented.

You will face numerous roadblocks along the way. Are you willing to do what it takes to become the change agent in your business, challenging the status quo?

Do you want more than your fair share of the drycleaning market? Will you do whatever it takes to bring about the change you desire? Or, will you be among the 98% of small business owners who never reach their full potential?

Remember, small changes made every day will transform you and your business forever.

It's about time we all get ticked off for greatness because our customers deserve the flawless performance we are all capable of providing.

John Rothrock is the president and CEO of Yale Cleaners, a family drycleaning business in Broken Arrow, OK, that is focused 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. He is a graduate of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute, and is a Certified Garment Care Professional (CGCP).

**"The process will require people to step out of their comfort zones. Feelings will be hurt and some will get mad. You must be prepared for even your most loyal team members to consider quitting. Change is never easy and always comes at a cost."**

Around the time when I was in 8th grade, my church orchestra was preparing for our big Christmas performance. I had a major solo part that I just couldn't seem to master.

The director kept pushing me, often calling me out and trying to embarrass me in front of the entire group. Week after week, I was fuming, and yet he just kept pushing harder and harder.

As the performance drew near, everyone could sense I was at my breaking point. Then, in the middle of one of the last rehearsals, from the podium he said, "John, I

yes, when the big moment came, my performance was flawless.

Now, it's your turn to get mad for greatness!

Personal change or growth is never easy, and organizational change is even more difficult.

The dynamics of changing systems, workflows, employee habits and company politics at the point of reaching critical mass are almost insurmountable.

The process will require people to step out of their comfort zones. Feelings will be hurt, and some will get mad. You must be prepared

you truly want your business to be exceptional? Do you aspire to be the market leader?

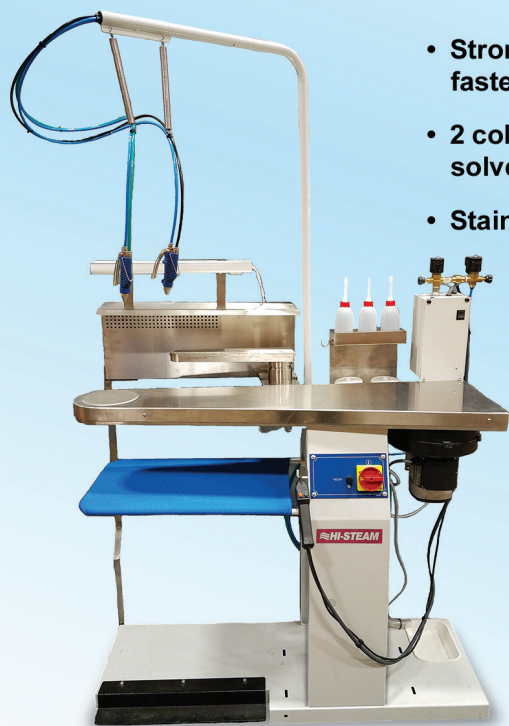
Do you seek to become the next industry trailblazer? Or, are you simply content with the status quo and your current level of performance or success?

The drycleaning industry today has many experts, and there is more than one successful business model. It's not a simple, one-size-fits-all answer.

Yes, there are differences between markets. What works in Tulsa, OK, will differ slightly from New York

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# WRENCH WORKS



BY BRUCE GROSSMAN

## Preventing water pump problems

**T**he disaster for this month will be the failure of the water pump. This pump supplies coolant to the still and refrigeration condensers of the drycleaning machine. A liquid "coolant" is forced through the coils of the condensers by this pump to cool these condensers. The coolant is water in systems using a water tower; it is either water or a mixture of water and anti-freeze called "brine" in systems using a chiller.

**If the circuit breaker in the electrical panel that controls the pump trips frequently, it is a sure sign of looming disaster.**

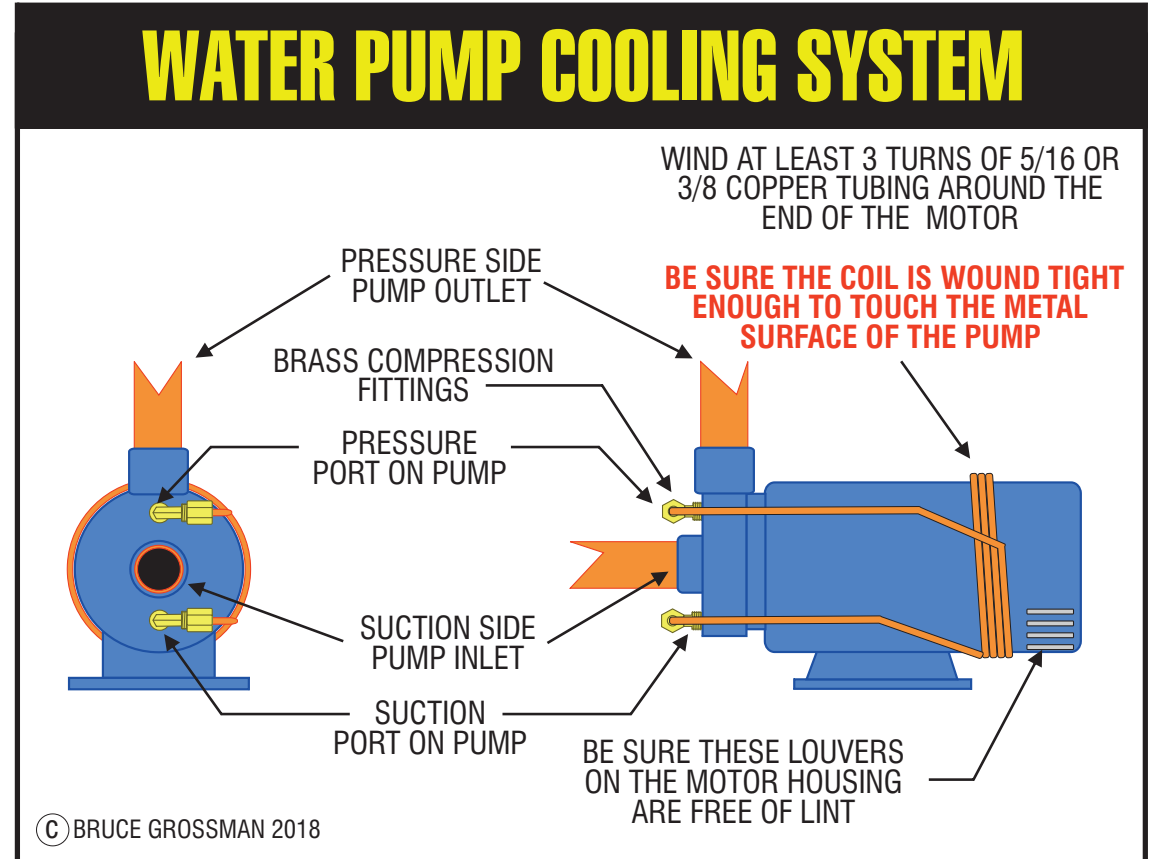
In water tower installations, the pump is sometimes located on the roof near the tower, or the floor near the drycleaning machine; in chillers, the pump

is generally inside the enclosure housing the refrigeration components.

Before we get into managing this species of disaster, here are a few words about prevention. These pumps seldom fail without giving ample warning of an evolving problem. If the circuit breaker in the electrical panel that controls the pump trips frequently, it is a sure sign of looming disaster. *If you are not experienced in working with electricity, hire an electrician for the following procedures.*

Be sure to set the breaker for the pump in the off position, remove the protective electrical plate at the rear of the pump, then take a good look at the wire connections at the pump with the aid of a flashlight. There is little room for the wire connections at the end of the pump, and pumps vibrate, causing the screw connections or push-on connectors to loosen and eventually fail; this is the problem area in many cases.

Observe if there is any



melted insulation, bluing, or discoloration of the wires or connectors; if so, replace them. Remove the cover to the appropriate breaker panel and switch off the breaker controlling the pump. Make sure the screws holding the wires in place are

securely tightened down. Using a flashlight, observe if there is any melted insulation, bluing, or discoloration of the wires or circuit breaker connections or the area where the circuit breaker attaches to the power busses in the breaker box.

Another harbinger of doom is frequent pump motor shut down due to the motor's internal protective thermostat. If this is the case, follow the same steps outlined in the previous paragraph, and, in addition, *make sure the louvers that allow air to flow through the motor are free of lint, dust or obstructions.*

You can drastically shorten the time this internal thermostat requires to reset by obtaining a bag of ice, placing it inside another strong plastic bag, and laying it on the far end of the pump motor. Remember, this is only a temporary solution. The following goes for all equipment. **Do not use the circuit breakers as switches to turn equipment on and off!**

This practice degrades the breaker's performance and can keep the breaker from tripping at the correct current levels. Each machine should have a disconnect close by; use this for switching instead of the breaker.

The next pump killer is excessive head pressure. Several factors could cause this and will be indicated by a high reading (45 PSI and above) on the pump outlet pressure gauge if you have one installed. Also, the

pump's starting-up sound will differ under high head pressure. Trying to describe sounds is nearly impossible, but the best way I can is to say that when starting the pump, the sound will take longer to even out (sorry best I could do).

Causes of this problem often lie in the bypass valve being shut or not sufficiently opened or the clogging of strainers going into the drycleaning machinery.

Whether you're currently having problems with your circulating pump or not, installing a cooling coil to prevent the pump motor from overheating would be a good idea. The illustration accompanying this article shows an easy and inexpensive installation to accomplish this.

EZtimers has a new program available for obtaining illustrated instructions on these procedures. Contact [bruce@eztimers.com](mailto:bruce@eztimers.com) for information.

**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](http://www.eztimers.com). Please address any questions or comments for Bruce to [bruce@eztimers.com](mailto:bruce@eztimers.com) or call (702) 376-6693.**

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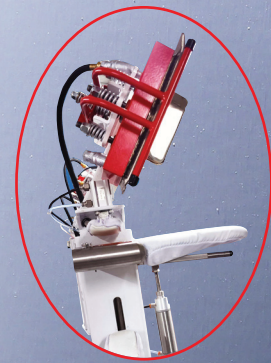


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# SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

## The importance of inspecting the inspector

**W**e all sometimes run into quality issues. Try as we might, sooner or later — one way or another in spite of our best efforts — some sort of undesirable quality defect will rear its ugly head. Why?

You have probably already answered that question in your head. Perhaps you said, “*We are all human*” or something similar — *human error* — or perhaps you said, “*S\*\*t happens.*” In all seriousness, those are the right answers.

The reason that we still can get easily annoyed by the appearance of any type of quality defect is because we have all sorts of stop-gaps to prevent them. Why do they fail? And, it is especially disconcerting when you continually observe your *stop-gaps* hard at work. Your pressers find stains, the drycleaner checks his work and re-cleans items, the washman scrubs collars and rewashes shirts.

We have a procedure to touch up shirts. They are

there to make sure that only good quality goes out to the customers. Good move.

Everywhere along the line, someone checks the work of the previous garment handlers. If the wash person fails to add sour, the pressers discover it and there is a call to action. If the presser doesn’t do a great job, touch-up is there to perfect it. And, the inspector acts as the final authority.

In the drycleaning department, the chain is similar. The drycleaner will inspect the clothes for stains. He may observe that the mark-in people failed to identify a stain, a stain type or its location. Hopefully, management rectifies this and any other malady. When the clothes are hung after cleaning, there is a quality inspection, perhaps merely a casual one, but nonetheless some sort of inquisition: “How well did we clean these garments?”

The pressers continue observing how well the previous team members have

performed. In turn, their work is inspected by the inspector. How could anything possibly go wrong?

If a customer returns a pair of pants with a double crease and a stain, surely you must conclude that every person in the plant is blind!

We are really trying hard to double-check every person’s work, but still we occasionally deal with a customer that has a bonafide complaint. Why? We have covered every base! Or, have we?

Throughout the entire assembly line that is your plant in operation, every one has the occasion to observe and evaluate previous employee’s work. Except one.

I ask you this: Who inspects the inspector? Who monitors his or her quality? Did they assemble the orders correctly? Did you check? Did you do a spot-check of the garments that they have passed? Do you open up orders hanging on the conveyors from time to time to see what the customer sees?

I bet that very few of you do this. It’s not about distrust. It’s no different than your touch-up person checking the shirt pressing quality. It’s about what you said to yourself a few minutes ago: “It’s human error.”

I’m sure that your inspector is someone that you trust. I’m sure that he or she is someone that you evaluate as a good employee that has your interests in mind. But, I bet that you have many employees that you would evaluate that way — even those who have been “caught red-handed” making some sort of minor mistake.

I am very often in the position where I must double-check the work of an inspector/assembler. This happens when I am training them on the intricacies of the Tailwind System. I double-check their work as far as assembly goes, but I very often stumble upon obvious quality defects that were approved by the inspector. This teaches me that inspecting

the inspector will pay big dividends as far as customer satisfaction is concerned.

Now, quit goofing off and take a walk through your plant and double-check everybody’s work. *Everybody’s*. Don’t forget to catch somebody in the act of doing something right. But, if you don’t find anything wrong, try again and look harder this time.

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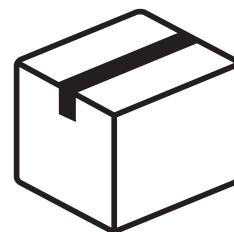
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**Industry balancing act to continue in 2022**  
 As cleaners prepare to close the door on 2022 and perhaps throw away the key, the last 11 months have proven to be another arduous challenge, harshly punctuated by shortages of every imaginable kind: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

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

**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... [Read More](#)

**Don's wishlist to St. Nick: 2021 edition**  
 by Don Derosiers  
 BH appy 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... [Read More](#)

**A Tribute to James Peuster**  
 by Mark Albrecht and Jennifer Whitmarsh  
 As we round out 2021, let's recognize an achievement of a familiar personality in our industry. James Peuster, JP (as many know him) begins his 20th year consulting teams... [Read More](#)

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