



National

# Clothesline



August 2023

Volume 61 Number 11

www.nationalclothesline.com

## Fabricare '23 features full slate of speakers

This October, the California Cleaners Association (CCA) will return to Las Vegas to host Fabricare 2023 at Harrah's Casino and Hotel. The theme of the conference is "Shake Up Your Business Game."

The event will take place from Oct. 6 to 8 this year and will include numerous expert speakers, including keynote speaker Jeff Barnes, author of *The Wisdom of Walt: Leadership Lessons From the Happiest Place on Earth*. Barnes is a world-renowned speaker who explores the life of Walt Disney — who experienced many failures before success — and the lessons gleaned from it.

He will present a 90-minute program on Saturday morning on "Walt Disney and the

Power of Resilience."

The education programs will kick off on Friday afternoon when CCA plans to present three that will focus on "The Power of Marketing."

First up will be popular industry speaker Dave Coyle of Maverick Drycleaners who begins at 1

p.m.. He will be followed by

**Oct. 6-8**  
**Harrah's Casino, Las Vegas**

Speakers: Schapiro, Barnes, Uchkoshi, Patel, Benzinger, Fish, Way

Yash Patel of BeCreative 360 at 2 p.m.

The day's educational sessions will conclude with Jason Loeb of Sudsie's, who will discuss the topic of "Brand Revolution" starting at 3 p.m.

After the program by Barnes from 9 to 10:30 a.m. on Saturday morning, will be Ryan Fish, president of Red Hanger Cleaners of

Salt Lake City, UT. He will present a program titled "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

*Continued on page 8*

## A plant tour in wine country

Members of the Association of Wedding Gown Specialists (AWGS) met recently in Napa, CA — famous for being the heart of the Napa Valley wine region.

The group, however, toured a drycleaning business with a fine vintage — Greene's Cleaners — the oldest cleaning company in the Napa Valley founded in 1919 by George Greene. Today, it is owned by Laurie and Alonso Corona.

During the meeting, the association honored Dave Matthews and Kyle Matthews with its prestigious Barth Award of Excellence — named in memory of Canadian drycleaner Jack Barth to recognize contributions to-

ward the advancement, promotion and development of industry standards for wedding gown care.

The Matthews' company, Janet Davis Cleaners of Berkley, MI, has been in business since 1938 and became a member of AWGS in 2006 when Dave Matthews' son, Kyle, joined the company as director of sales and marketing. Over the years, both Matthews have shared many useful ideas and procedures with the group including a method for instantly locating a wedding gown at any point between accessioning the wedding gown and delivering it back to the bride.

Recently retired, Dave Matthews has been named to

the AWGS position of national training director, succeeding Ken Grippi of Dependable Cleaners of Boston, MA.

The meeting additionally featured many guest speakers, including well-known wedding planner Terrica of Terrica, Inc. and Yash Patel of Be Creative 360. Topics included important trends and ideas for branding and networking. There was also a series of roundtable conversations, which gave everyone the opportunity to discuss a variety of topics, from strategic alliances with other wedding professionals to recruiting and training a reliable in-house team.

The most popular part of the weekend was the group's self-analysis of its own strengths and weaknesses. Led by Jan Barlow of Jan's Professional Dry Cleaners of Clio, MI, and Nadine Rana of Style and Grace Cleaners of Toronto, Ontario, members laid out an ambitious plan for the organization's future. The progress report will be given at the group's next meeting in February of 2024 and be hosted by Greg and Margaret Butler of Dublin Cleaners in Columbus, OH.



The Association of Wedding Gown Specialists met recently at Greene's Cleaners of Napa, CA.

## Clean '22 makes Top 100 trade show list

Trade Show Executive magazine recently announced its Gold 100 list — the top 100 trade shows for the year — and The Clean Show made the cut.

Clean '22, held in Atlanta, GA, was run by Messe Frankfurt, Inc. Overall, close to 10,000 attendees showed up to visit booths by 347 exhibiting companies that filled up over 216,000 sq. ft. of exhibit hall.

At the time, it was the first Clean Show for the industry in over 1,100 days — Clean '21

had to be postponed as a result of the pandemic.

Now, in an effort to return to the odd-year format (where Clean shows takes place every other year on odd-numbered years), Messe Frankfurt will host its next offering in two years.

Clean 2025 is scheduled to take place from Aug. 23 to 26 in Orlando, FL.

For more information about Messe Frankfurt or Clean Show updated, visit the official site at [www.cleanshow.com](http://www.cleanshow.com).



## Sneak Peek Inside

- 10 When the fix is off**  
There is no excuse to procrastinate implementing maintenance fixes that can improve your quality today.
- 12 The dry side of stains**  
When water and stains don't mix, drycleaners must rely on dry side lubrication for successful removal.
- 16 Recent rulings from SCOTUS**  
The Supreme Court recently made three headline-grabbing rulings, but how much do they affect cleaners?
- 20 Exit strategy and your age**  
How old you are can affect your attitude toward your business and how you feel about getting out.

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## Adopting a Best Things First philosophy for the day

In a recent poll conducted by OnePoll on behalf of Dave's Killer Bread, 60% of Americans don't believe there are enough hours in the day to get everything done — which, of course, means that the other 40% are wrong.

The average American would need an additional four hours a day to finish off their to-do lists. Nearly half of those items (48%) are likely to go unfinished. There are two main reasons why: running out of time (39%) and lack of enjoyment (39%). The tasks they tend to procrastinate on are the ones they don't enjoy, i.e. housework (38%), outdoor work (37%) and laundry (31%).

While that may look somewhat promising for the future of wash-dry-fold, it's probably worth noting that perhaps our citizens' overly ambitious and long to-do lists are the source of the problem. Regardless, most of us feel that there is no shortage of things that need to be done, though there is a shortage of time in which to do it. As a result of this ongoing dilemma, many people and business owners adopt (consciously or not) a strategy known as Worst Things First. It is exactly what it sounds like. Essentially, it's a means of prioritizing tasks so that you tackle the most difficult ones early in the day when you are at your freshest, saving much easier ones for the end of the day when you find yourself running on fumes.

Worst Things First is not the best strategy for everything, but there is one thing it is perfectly suited for: ending procrastination. It keeps you from running away from the thing you don't want to do, and, instead, attack it head-on.

With that in mind, Don Desrosiers had to overcome his own procrastination so that he could inform cleaners to stop procrastinating with little maintenance fixes that are affecting your shirt quality today. Many such issues make the employee's job more difficult, add to labor costs and lessen the final quality of the product... yet they persist. For more on the topic, read the full column on page 10.

What other problems do you need to address? If you have time to brush up on your spotting skills, you should pop over to page 12 and read about remedies for the dry side of stains. Learn about new dry side lubricants on the market and

how they make stain removal much more effective and easier.

Now that it's summertime, it may be a good time to test water samples from your boiler. In the past, companies selling boiler maintenance chemicals had representatives come to your plant, take water samples and prescribe any necessary maintenance. That's not so much the case these days, so Bruce Grossman is beginning a new series this month (see page 18) that will detail how you can obtain, measure and evaluate your boiler water samples.

Another new column series beginning this month is one on The Focus Method by John Rothrock, who believes the industry needs to redefine the word "convenience." He believes that by limiting the services you offer, you can greatly improve your speed of service which will drive sales up. On top of that, if you refine your systems and workflow in order to achieve better operational efficiency, you have a convenient situation where everybody wins.

Finally, we have two very interesting columns that you might not expect to find in a national drycleaning publication, but are well worth your time. Our law expert, Frank Kollman, will chime in with his thoughts on a trio of Supreme Court rulings that made big headlines in the media for being controversial. His column on page 16 cuts into the details of each decision and explains how it will or will not change the law and who it will and will not affect.

Before you finish, though, make time for Kermit Engh's column on page 20. He is not actually a psychic, but his knowledge of management systems and business valuations can sometimes make him seem like one. In his vast experience, he believes your age significantly affects your attitude toward your business and your feelings about getting out. He breaks it down into three categories: ages 25 to 46; 47 to 65; and older than 65. Which category do you fall under? How much attention have you paid to planning your exit strategy?

We realize there is a lot of good reading here that will take up some of your valuable time, but this is not something you can afford to procrastinate. Leave the dishes in the sink. For today, try adopting a Best Things First philosophy and spend time catching up on some required reading in these pages.

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communications  
inc.

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NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE is not owned or operated by any national or regional trade association. Advertisers are solely responsible for statements made in their advertising.

NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE (US ISSN #07446306) is an independent trade newspaper published monthly by BPS Communications Inc. Periodical Postage paid at Willow Grove, PA, and at an additional mailing office. Postmaster: Send address changes to: The National Clothesline, 1001 Easton Rd., Suite 107, Willow Grove, PA 19090.

• Subscription price for anyone actively engaged in the drycleaning and laundry industry in the United States: \$35; Canada \$40 (US); All others, \$75 (US).

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# Diving into cleaning

It was about 67 years ago when Don Schmitt originally started a cleaning business in Evansville, IN, that he named Don's Cleaners.

"My grandfather started the business as more or less a bobtail route delivery. He would go and pick up laundry from customers and wash, dry and fold it in his own washer that he bought secondhand," explained Bryan, who currently operates the business.

"He had a truck that he delivered everything in and he expanded to picking up shirts and drycleaning, and he just dropped those off at some of the local cleaners that we had there at that time," he continued. "Before long, he had decided that he had grown his clientele where he thought he could do it himself."

He found a location and began to expand his services, building the business up step by step throughout the late 1950s and 1960s.

"Then, in the 1970s, my father, Steve, got involved," Bryan said. "He really went full time in the business just before I was born."



**Don Schmitt, original founder of Don's Cleaners, holds a pile of laundry. The picture was taken in 1958.**

Bryan's earliest memories of helping out around the family business go back to when he was eight years old.

"If something needed to be cleaned up or grass ended up needing to be mowed, I'd end up doing it," he laughed. "I always joke that I've worked for the company since I was eight years old for a Coke and a lunch. That was kind of my dad's thing. He'd send me out to the plant and have me work with some people and just find a task to do. Then, he'd take me to lunch and that's what I was paid."

Bryan officially worked for the company behind the counter when he was 15. By 16 he had already decided to pursue the family business.

After high school, he earned a business degree from Murray State University in Kentucky, though he pointed out that he literally spent more time on his minor: equine science.

"I'd be in business class for two or three hours a day sometimes, and the rest of the time I was out at the horse barn riding and shoveling stalls and just having fun getting dirty," he said.

After graduating college — and then DLI — Bryan returned to the business in 2002, a time when Don's biggest competitor continued to be another long-owned family business in the area.

Essentially, the two companies were

like the Coke and Pepsi of the southwest Indiana drycleaning market.

"All I remember when I was a kid in the 1980s and 1990s is — my father and Andy Clayton, the owner of Claytons, just always duking it out," Bryan recalled. "The amount of money spent on their advertising... competing against each other and accepting each other's

Decades before the pandemic, the Schmitts had fully embraced wash-dry-fold because it was the best way to try to grow the business.

"We also have delivery routes so we're going out servicing homes, offices, nursing homes, hospitals... we're going everywhere and picking up this stuff," Bryan noted. "I think that the

or a drycleaners, there is a hierarchy, a chain of command, that is set up and it's meant to work a certain way," he said. "Working in an emergency response kind of teaches you a few things about prioritizing and recognizing what needs to happen first to solve a problem, to get something moving, to get something going."

donsclaytons.com



## Bryan Schmitt

Don's Claytons Dry Cleaning  
Evansville, IN

coupons. Those two are just legendary."

In the 1990s, though, "Coke" took a commanding lead when Steve figured out a way to gain a competitive advantage in the ongoing drycleaning duel.

"My father got involved with the DynaClean distillation system," Bryan said. "His marketing ploy with it was odorless cleaning. He put that system in and got specially made Columbia drycleaning machines to work with that system. They didn't have stills on them because he was going to a central still with that DynaClean machine. When he did that, it lived up to its promise and delivered odor-free drycleaning."

Additionally, he secured exclusive rights to the system to make sure the local competition couldn't use it for a period of time.

"His business tripled practically overnight," Bryan said. "Within months and years, it really put a hurt on his local competition. He was very smart in getting in on the ground floor with that system."

In 2004, Steve bought out his main competitor, Claytons, combining both names to form one business: Don's Claytons. As Bryan puts it, "It's just been a whirlwind of nightmares and dreams come true at the same time ever since."

Over time, Don's survived against as many as a dozen competitors, picking up customers whenever they closed.

"It's put us in the position now where I no longer have any real competition," Bryan said. "So, I think we're kind of an interesting case study that drycleaners need to pay attention to when you've maxed out your market and you really need to be concerned about where the work is coming from. Right now, we say our main competitor is the washing machine. It's been that way for the past 20 years for us."

amount of wash-dry-fold that we do is pretty impressive for the population density we have."

Even with the business on such solid footing, the pandemic shook things up.

"We kept going the whole time. We stayed open, but I did lay off some people, but, as soon as we could, we brought them back. We experienced an 80% drop in our retail business," Bryan said.

That led to rent negotiations, applying for PPP loans and cashing in emergency funds that were meant for harsh winter storm closures. The hardest part was keeping staff busy, but that changed when the company offered to make face masks for customers.

At first, there were enough orders to keep everybody busy. However when news stories about the endeavor showed up online and on television on the same day, the number of mask requests exploded like a bomb.

"Altogether, we provided about 9,000," Bryan estimated. "It was to the point where my pressers — as soon as they got done with their work — were in our break room in a makeshift assembly line. They were cutting patterns. They were running sergers we had set up on tables."

Making masks was hardly the first time Bryan has ever looked out for the general public.

In 2005, he earned a spot on a standby diving rescue team for local hydroplane races on the Ohio river, which led him down a volunteering rabbit hole.

In addition to obtaining diving certifications, he also has trained to be a firefighter and EMT. During his years of working on rescue teams, he's also learned a lot about the intricacies of management.

"It taught me that no matter the organization that you're working in, whether police, fire, military, a hospital

Though much of those management skills were utilized during the pandemic, today Don's Claytons is processing about "75 to 80%" of what they were before it began.



"We've had to move timelines up on certain things," he said. "But, it's opened up other opportunities and areas. We're really the only commercially-oriented laundry in our area. As our drycleaning and retail work dries up, we still get lots of commercial demand for wash-dry-fold."

One area that has proved to be lucrative is safety wear, from hard hats to fire retardant suits to ball harnesses. Many of the items cost \$500 to \$1,000 to replace, and employees often tear them up and get really dirty.

"It's kind of neat when you put the word out there of the different things that you are doing and what type of response that you get," Bryan said. "It doesn't really set the world on fire for you, but it's still something to do. I see us going to more commercially-oriented services instead of retail because demand for the retail side keeps falling and the commercial side of it... it keeps growing."

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# DLI will begin virtual stain removal class next month

The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) will soon be presenting its seven-day virtual course on stain removal, beginning on Tuesday, Sept. 12 and running through Oct. 3.

The unique class offers a mix of live lectures, videos and hands-on activities. Live classes meet online every Tuesday and Thursday during that time from 1 to 3 p.m. EST via zoom conferencing technology.

Some of the topics that will be covered during the course include: removing coffee, ink, grease and other stains from clothing; identifying cotton, silk, polyester and other fabrics; using bleach without damaging fabric color; using specialty products such as digesters, amyl acetate and acetone in stain removal; and identifying fibers and fabric construction.

The price for non-members is \$695. Members pay according to their level: \$495 for Budget and International; \$394 for Standard; \$297 for Gold; and Premier members may take any three courses for free.



## Signature classes coming this Fall

A little further down the road will be DLI's next offering (and final of the year) of its signature Introductory and Advanced Drycleaning courses set to take place in October.

The five-day Introductory course will meet from Oct. 16 to 20 and be suitable for those with two years or less experi-

ence in the industry. The ten-day Advanced course takes place from Oct. 23 to Nov. 3 and is for those with a little more experience.

Tuition for the Introductory course is \$1,195 for Budget and International; \$956 for Standard; and \$717 for Gold. Non-members pay \$1,595 each.

The Advanced course costs \$1,695 for Budget and International members; \$1,356 for Standard; and \$1,017 for Gold members.

Discounts are available for those who take both classes concurrently: \$1,995 for Budget and International; \$1,596 and for Standard; \$1,197 for Gold. Non-members pay \$2,895 each.

For more information on any of DLI's upcoming programs or classes, visit them online at [www.dlionline.com](http://www.dlionline.com).

# Dates set for WDF '23 in Nashville

The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) and the Coin Laundry Association (CLA) will host a second offering of their WDF Workshop. This year's event will take place from Oct. 4 to 6 at the Sonesta Hotel near the airport in Nashville, TN.

The workshop will teach

best wash-dry-fold practices with educational programs, hands-on demonstrations and interactive roundtable sessions led by industry experts. Attendees can also explore some of the latest products and technologies for growing WDF.

The cost to attend is \$799 for CLA and DLI members; non-

members must pay \$999 each.

The registration includes admission to the welcome reception, as well as breakfast and lunch each day.

For more information or to register for the event, you can visit either host's website: [www.coinlaundry.org](http://www.coinlaundry.org) or [www.dlionline.com](http://www.dlionline.com).

## Celebrating 70 Years

# MfM plans Success 2023

This October, consulting firm Methods for Management (MfM) will be celebrating its 70th anniversary by hosting Success 2023, an event scheduled to take place Oct. 26



to 28 at the Hilton Chicago Miracle Mile. Members together to celebrate this momentous occasion."

The firm was founded in 1953 by Max Rechnitz, who was later joined by his daughter,

Deborah, in 1980. Together they built a strong reputation as a top-notch management consulting firm, assisting independent business owners in achieving their personal and business goals.

In 1997, the team was further bolstered by Diana Vollmer, who became a senior consultant with the firm until her retirement in 2014.

That is when Kermit Engh, an MfM member since 1997, became managing partner, bringing with him decades of business experience as the owner of Fashion Cleaners in Omaha, NE.

In addition to the speaker programs, Success 2023 will kick off with a welcome reception and conclude with an awards ceremony for winners of various categories such as Best Idea, Best Plant and Best Van.

For more information about the event, contact [vreed@mfmi](mailto:vreed@mfmi).

to 28 at the Hilton Chicago Miracle Mile.

The event will feature two keynote speakers: Steve Baker, vice president of The Great Game of Business, and Jeff Butler, a speaker, author and workplace strategist who explores human behavior within the working world.

Additionally, numerous speakers have been lined up to present at the event, including: Bob Clements of the Benchmark Business Group; Jennifer Whitmarsh of The Route Pros; Bill Albers, president of SMRT; Toran Brown, vice president of SPOT; and Jeff Gude of MfM.

The entire Methods for Management team is looking forward to the celebratory event and the opportunity to gather current and past Methods for Management members," noted Kermit Engh, managing partner for MfM. "We

# Fabricare '23 features full slate of speakers

Continued from page 1

Uchikoshi, vice president of Sankosha Manufacturing Co.

On Sunday morning, Jeff Schapiro, president of Cleaners Supply, will begin the day's sessions with "Understanding Today's Consumer Needs" from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Afterward, Norman Way from Puritan Cleaners will ex-

amine the topic "Wash-Dry-Fold: Winner or Loser" from 11:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Registration for the event is \$299 per person and available on CCA's website located at [calcleaners.org](http://calcleaners.org). While there, you can also make reservations with the host hotel, Harrah's, at a discounted price for event attendees.



JUDI'S CLEANERS of Citrus Heights, CA, installed a new Realstar KM343 drycleaning machine, sold and installed by Abram Laundry Service. Pictured (left to right) are: Jared Abram, owner of Abram Laundry Services; Antonia Mazatzi, Judi's production leader; and Ben Combs, owner of Judi's.

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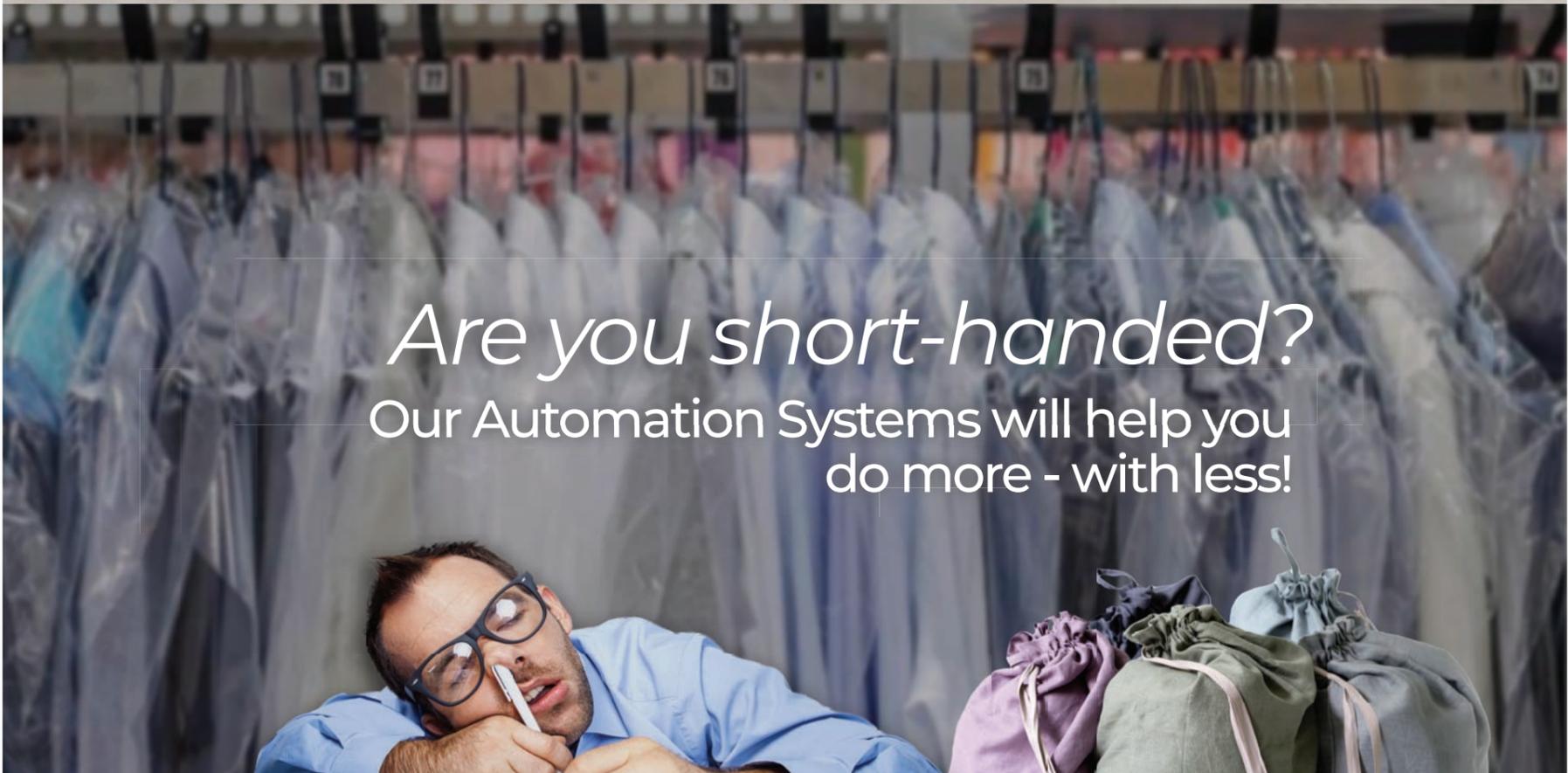
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# SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

## Do not put off fixes that improve quality today

I was with my son at a family function a few weeks ago. I was talking about this column that I write. I told him that I was behind the eight-ball, so to speak. I usually have three or four of these columns written in advance, but this wasn't the case today. My deadline was looming and I hadn't written a word.

I was at a bit of a loss for subject matter, but that is a bit lame. Once I get at this

keyboard, I always have something to say. Frankly, I was procrastinating.

My son, an amazing man, wise beyond his years said, "Dad, go write a column about procrastination!" He is in this industry and is well aware of the goings-on in a drycleaning plant. I told him that I would do exactly that.

There are too many of us who procrastinate. Much of that is associated with maintenance. We seem to put off

the silliest things. Adjustments and minor parts replacements are put off. We wait for the catastrophe that puts our shirt unit out of business. That gets our attention and we fix it.

But, we probably still don't deal with the minor tweaks. These fall into a category that I like to call *deferred maintenance*. The worse part of this maintenance that never gets done is that it almost always is something

that does, indeed, make an employee's job more difficult, costs us labor dollars and lessens the quality of our product.

Here are some examples. The woman doing touch-up is using an iron that leaks water. I'm not sure which is the worse possible outcome, but I have seen the shirt with a wet spot sent along for assembly, I've seen the touch-up person struggle for minutes in a (sometimes un-

successful) attempt at drying the fabric, or the water leaves a yellow spot that means the shirt needs to be re-washed.

Wait. I know what's worse; the iron leaks water that the touch-up person tries in vain to dry, only to watch it turn yellow, but she sends it along for assembly anyway! (No, I've never actually seen that, but I bet it has happened somewhere.)

There is a clamping device on your shirt unit for the cuffs. There are a number of types these days, not just the old kind on the sleeve press. In virtually every case, if this clamping device fails, it is, 1) a very simple adjustment, or 2) a very inexpensive fix. So, why do we choose to procrastinate and thereby allow our quality to suffer?

In every case of a defective clamping device (the one at the collar, too), quality is affected. Instead, we wait in the wings for a catastrophe that is worthy of our attention.

There is a distasteful byproduct of deferred maintenance. Employees get the impression that you don't care. This is not a good thing. I have heard so many times "they don't fix anything around here." I am sure that this is an exaggeration, but it does demonstrate that there are minor annoyances that the presser knows should be fixed, but is given the impression that "it's good enough."

That isn't how you want your product to be evaluated. Only perfection is "good enough."

*"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](mailto:tailwind.don@me.com). The Tailwind web site is at [www.tailwindsystems.com](http://www.tailwindsystems.com).

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# THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

## Understanding dry side lubrication

**L**ubrication is the action of removing a stain by emulsifying, breaking up and lifting it. Dry side lubrication is working on stains that do not have a water base and do not mix with water. Even paint, which originally may be water-based, becomes a dry side stain once dry. Typical dry side stains are oil, grease, lipstick, nail polish, make-up and most inks.

Lubrication also produces protection for the fabric when applying mechanical action. Mechanical action is the use of brushing, tamping and spatula which aids in removing stains on a lubricated fabric. New dry

side lubricants on the market now make dry side lubrication easier and more effective.

### Dry side stains

Heat and age oxidize dry side stains. If a salad oil is dropped on a fabric, simple lubrication will remove the stain. If the stain oxidizes and sets, it is difficult to remove the stain and may require extensive mechanical action. Many oil stains appear to be tannin in nature. Oil stains often form a cross or T in the fabric because it absorbs slowly and follows the weave of the fabric.

The difference in tannin stains can be observed because

it usually has a dark outer ring. If you hold the fabric up to the light, oil stains may appear to be translucent while tannin stains are not. Paint, nail polish and lipstick are not absorbed in the fabric and remain on the surface. If you work a stain wet side and it appears brighter because the fabric turned darker, it usually means it is dry side.

### Dry side lubricants

The oily type paint remover formulations have changed. The original formulations used alcohol and solvents. There were many problems posed with this formulation. If the oily type paint removers

(OTPR) contacted water, it released alcohol and caused color damage to the fabric. That is why it was important to have a black brush only used for dry side spotting.

When spotters were faced with an unidentified stain, they would work it dry side, and then dryclean the garment and work it wet side.

Other problems associated with the original OTPR was that it contributed to odor in the solvent and affected the distillation process. Different companies make different products and usually the darker and one with a strong

odor was stronger. Environmental concern restricted the use of this formulation in many states such as California. This product also cannot be used in some alternative solvents.

### New formulations for OTPR

The new formulations for oily type paint remover are effective and easier to use. The formulations may be slightly alkaline in nature but I have found it to be safe to fabrics and color if used correctly.

Some products can be left on the fabric for a period of time, while others must be drycleaned or flushed immediately. They can be flushed wet or dry and pose no distillation problems in the solvent. It should be noted, however, that vivid colors on delicate silk fabrics should be tested.

### Citrus-based lubricants

These are products that contain a solvent derived from orange peel. This solvent is referred to as d-limonene. It is also combined with a nonionic lubricant which also works on dry side stains. This formulation is also effective on many inks that require wet and dry stain removal. It is a very effective lubricant when added to the wetcleaning operation.

### New oily type ink removers

These ink removers are very effective on many inks. These products are usually slightly acid in nature. They are also very effective on plastic-based stains such as nail polish, glue and some paint. In many cases I have found it to be just as effective as amyl acetate on many plastic-based stains.

### Lanolin type ink remover

These ink removers are very effective on some inks that other products are not. They are slightly alkaline in nature so some colors on silks must be tested.

### Combining dry side lubricants

Some dry side lubricants can be combined with wet side products to make the stain removal more effective.

Oily type paint remover that is alkaline in nature can be combined with a protein formula. Lanolin type ink remover can also be combined with a protein formula. Oily type ink remover can be combined with a tannin formula. Citrus-based products can be combined with a dry side or wet side lubricant.

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](mailto:cleandan@comcast.net) or through his website at [www.garmentanalysis.com](http://www.garmentanalysis.com).

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# KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

## How recent Supreme Court decisions affect you

The Supreme Court decided three cases this summer that will change employment discrimination law in several ways. First, the Court changed the standard for employers asked to accommodate religious practices, making it harder for employers to say “no.”

Second, the Court held that an employer’s religious beliefs could be a basis for refusing to provide services to certain customers. Lastly, the Court drastically curtailed affirmative action programs in the form of college admission standards to

avoid giving preferences to minority applicants.

The media is hyping the reports on these decisions. Yes, they are significant changes, but not unexpected decisions without justification. I thought I’d devote this month to a calm explanation of what these changes mean.

With respect to religious accommodation of religious practices (holidays, Sabbath observances and clothing), it has been the law for many years that employers must grant the request unless it involved more than a *de minimis* expense. This made it

relatively easy for employers to deny requests. Under the new decision, to deny requests, employers must show “substantial increased costs in relation to the conduct of the particular business.”

In the case before the Court, a postal worker wanted the Sabbath off, and because of the size and resources of the postal service, it would not cause an undue hardship to cover the Sabbath with other workers.

This might not be the same with a small business where accommodating a *Saturday Sabbath* would require

more juggling and expense.

If you have an employee who has a religious practice in need of accommodation, I recommend engaging in the interactive process of discussing with the employee how the practice can be accommodated with minimum disruption. It is fine to investigate whether the practice is actually dictated by religious belief or merely the employee’s personal preference. The wearing of certain clothing and jewelry may crop up from time to time. You are allowed to consider safety in whether deciding to allow or

reject the accommodation. Commonsense and employee agreement should prevail. If not, seek legal help.

The second case dealt with a web designer whose religion opposed gay marriage. The Court held she couldn’t be forced to design a site for a gay couple. While the Court said someone who did not have religious beliefs opposed to gay marriage could be forced to provide services to gay couples, those with such religious beliefs could not. The Court did not say a drycleaner could refuse to clean gay customers’ clothes because of religious beliefs. That would still be illegal. I could argue that a religious drycleaner could refuse to launder garments used in same-sex ceremonies, but I believe the Court wouldn’t have allowed the web designer to refuse to create a site for a drycleaner just because he or she was gay. I believe the Court was saying a religious business owner couldn’t be forced to participate in the celebration of same-sex marriage. But, that owner could be forced to provide other services not requiring participation.

Finally, affirmative action was supposed to try correcting past discrimination against minorities by requiring employers to seek minority applicants and, where qualifications were substantially the same, allowing the employer to favor the minority to facilitate a more racially balanced workforce. However, it morphed into something where one could argue that racial preferences were granted. In fact, in college admissions, better qualifications were being overlooked in favor of balancing the student body.

The Court’s decision to strike down these racial preferences in no way changes anti-discrimination law. Very few employees are required to have affirmative action programs, so this decision affects very few. Programs encouraging the recruitment of minorities are still legal. Employers without affirmative action programs will have no change to their businesses.

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.



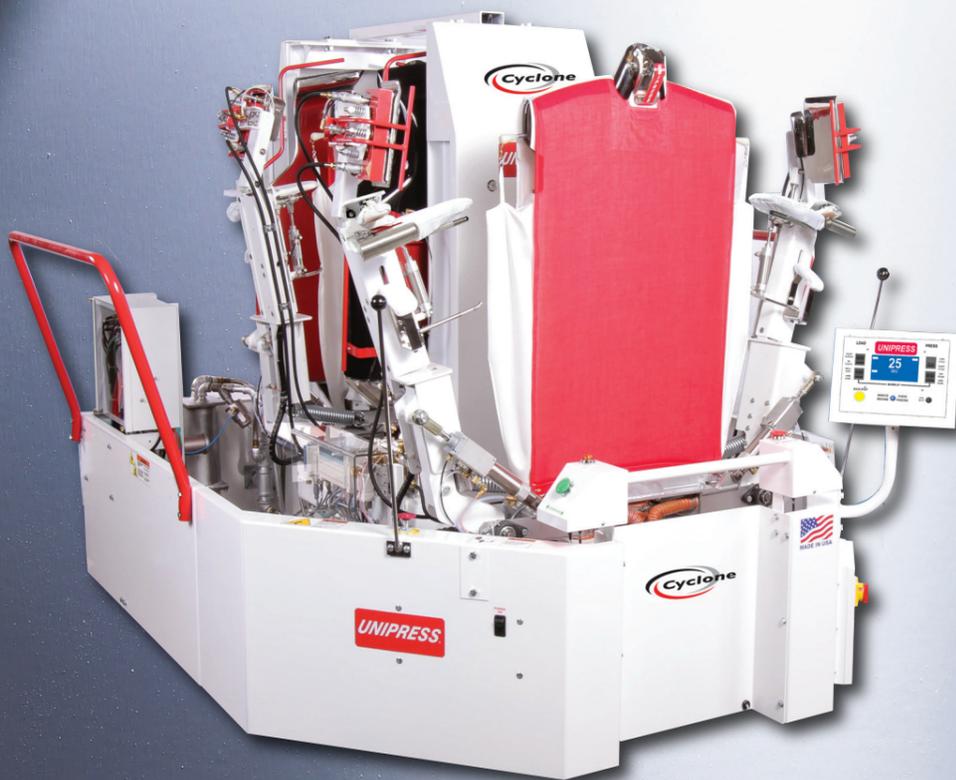

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# WRENCH WORKS



BY BRUCE GROSSMAN

## Boiler water testing — Part one

In the past, companies supplying boiler maintenance chemicals like “boiler compound” had representatives visit your plant, take water samples and analyze them to prescribe the proper blow-down procedures and how much boiler compound to add and when. However, the business model which provided that type of high-level service is no longer workable in most areas.

Therefore, these test procedures must now be carried out by sending samples to a lab for analysis or by onsite water testing by plant personnel.

So, this series of articles by me will aim to teach how to use modern testing devices to analyze the water samples and determine the proper balance of boiler chemistry and blow-down procedure. This series will teach the methods used to obtain, measure, and evaluate boiler water samples.

Water is often referred to as the universal solvent, and therein lies the problem. Water can dissolve almost anything that comes in contact with it — salts, sugars, acids, bases, many gasses — water just doesn't care. It dissolves them and keeps rolling along. Take a moment and think about it.

What barbarian amongst us would confuse a glass of sparkling San Pellegrino or

Perrier with a glass of ordinary tap water? After all, isn't it just H<sub>2</sub>O?

Well, the difference in taste is what is dissolved in the water (a solute is a term for something dissolved in a solvent, in this example, water is the solvent). Water being added to the boiler must be treated to remove or control the concentration of most of these solutes. There are three sources of water referred to in this and future articles on this subject:

**A) Tap, Makeup or City Water.** This is the raw water used to make up for water that has been lost in the process of using the steam generated by the boiler.

**B) Feed Water.** This is the combination of fresh makeup and condensate returning to the return (condensate) tank.

**C) Boiler Water.** This is the water contained inside the boiler itself, which will be converted to steam.

From this point forward, we will only be concerned with **feed** and **boiler water**. There are maximum allowable quantities of dissolved impurities for feed and boiler water, which will vary slightly with each boiler manufacturer.

Although there is a long list of impurities to be found in water entering a boiler, in the drycleaning and laundry industries, by

far, the major ones affecting the operation of boilers are:

**1) Dissolved solids are known as TDS or total dissolved solids.** This family of impurities provides the chemicals which form scale. As scale accumulates on the heat transfer surfaces inside the boiler, it acts as an insulation blanket, reducing the boiler's efficiency, and dramatically increasing fuel costs.

Additionally, over time scale clogs the tubes and/or internal flow path of water inside the boiler resulting in local hot spots on the heat transfer surfaces, leading to early boiler failure.

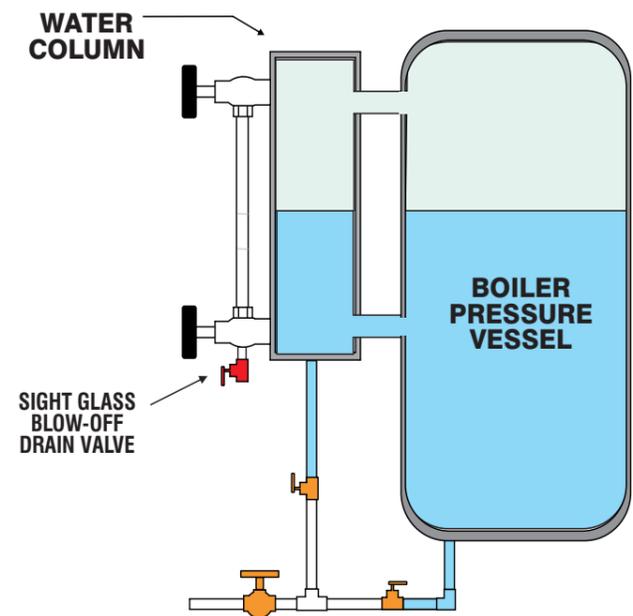
**2) Oxygen is dissolved in the new, city water entering the return tank.**

This oxygen combines with carbon dioxide to form carbonic acid, a destroyer of the metal in the boiler and piping throughout the steam/return systems.

The pH indicates the concentration of acids in boiler water (pH is a scale used to specify how acidic or basic [alkaline] a water-based solution is).

### OBTAINING A WATER SAMPLE

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Fortunately, test equipment in the form of electronic meters is readily available, inexpensive, and easy to use, providing the data to control the concentration of these bad actors.

Measuring TDS and pH levels can indicate the condition of the treated water entering and inside the boiler, allowing us to adjust the blow-down frequency and the volume and timing of boiler compound addition to the return tank to prevent boiler damage.

### Obtaining a water sample for testing

Where's the best place to get a water sample? I've found the most accessible and safest place to obtain a water sample is from the blow-off drain at the bottom of the sight glass on the water column.

After turning the boiler on, wait until there is just a few pounds of steam pressure, and while wearing a *leather or rubber glove as well as eye protection*, drain about a cup of water for testing (If there is not a ball valve at the bottom of the sight glass fixture, install one).

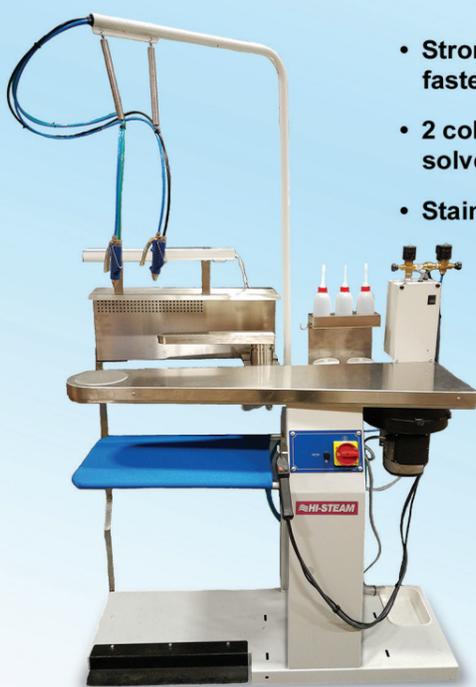
**Caution: Steam will scald you on contact; observe extreme caution when obtaining a sample.**

That's it for this issue. Next month I will continue on how to use the two boiler water measuring devices — the TDS and pH meters.

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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# BUILDING VALUE



BY KERMIT ENGH

## What your age says about your exit plan

**A**s I have gotten older and have been a multi-business owner for over 30 years, my perspective on what drives owners has changed. In my experience, age significantly affects your attitude toward your business and how you feel about getting out. Here's what I've found:

### Business owners between 25 and 46 years old

Twenty- and thirty-something business owners have grown up in an age where job security did not exist. They watched as their parents got downsized or packaged off into early retirement, and that caused a somewhat jaded attitude toward the role of a business in society. I personally have been laid off three times in a 10-year span. The first time was a gut punch — I had small children, a mortgage, and a significant questioning of my self-worth and abilities. The second time just made me angry as, again, I had no control over the

situation, nor had the 90 others laid off that day. The third time I didn't care. I already planned never to have someone else control my life.

Business owners in their twenties and thirties see their companies as a means to an end, and most expect to sell in the next five to ten years. Like their employed classmates who have a new job every three to five years, business owners in this age group often expect to start a few companies in their lifetime.

### Business owners between 47 and 65 years old

These individuals came of age when the social contract between company and employee was sacrosanct. An employee agreed to be loyal to the company, and in return, the company provided a decent living and a pension for a few golden years.

Many business owners I speak with in this generation think of their company as more

than a profit center. They see their business as part of a community and, by extension, themselves as a community leader. To many in this generation, the idea of selling their company feels like selling out their employees and community, which is why many business owners in their fifties and sixties are torn.

They know they need to sell to fund their retirement but agonize over where that will leave their loyal employees. They may also be in a situation where the business cannot run without them. I have discussed this particular example many times prior; it is called the **Hub and Spoke Driver of Value**. Essentially, they're trapped by what they've self-inflicted on themselves and their business.

### Business owners older than 65

These entrepreneurs grew up in an era when hobbies were impractical or discouraged. You went to work while

your wife tended to the kids (today, more than half of businesses are started by women, but those were different times), ate dinner, watched the news, and went to bed. With few hobbies and nothing other than work to define them, business owners in their late sixties, seventies, and eighties feel lost without their businesses, so many refuse to sell or experience depression after they sell.

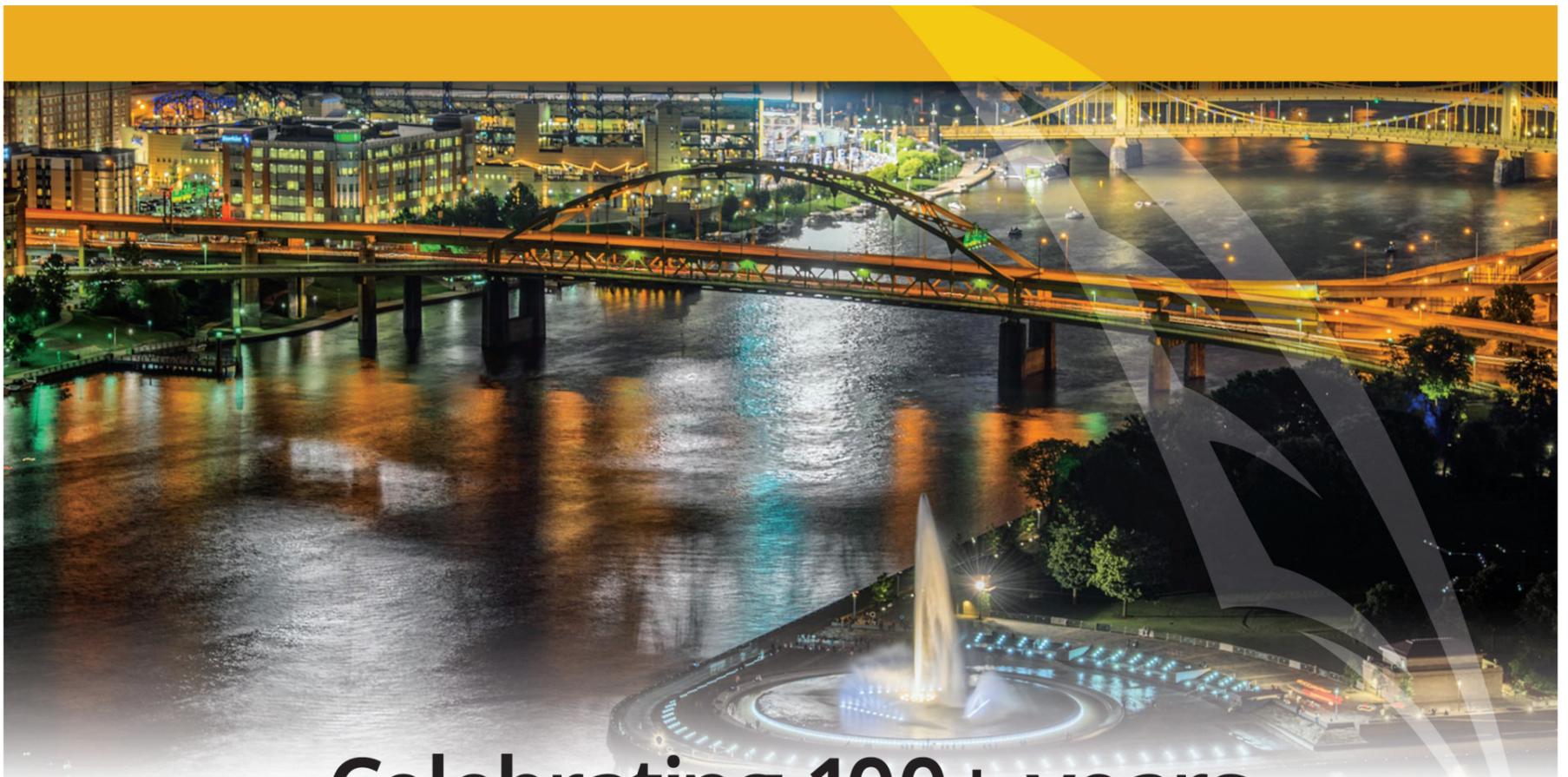
We all know operators in their advanced years still turning on the boiler every morning. Is that you?

Of course, there will always be exceptions to general rules of thumb. Still, I've found that your birth certificate defines your exit plan more than your industry, nationality, marital status, or educational background.

In previous articles, we have discussed the **Eight Drivers of Business Value**. This process positions your business for one of two primary futures. The

first is to prepare for an eventual exit and the greatest value. The second is to have a more valuable business in the position to sell if someday a buyer comes out of nowhere with the right size check. If you want to learn more about growing value in your business or have any other questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Until next month...

**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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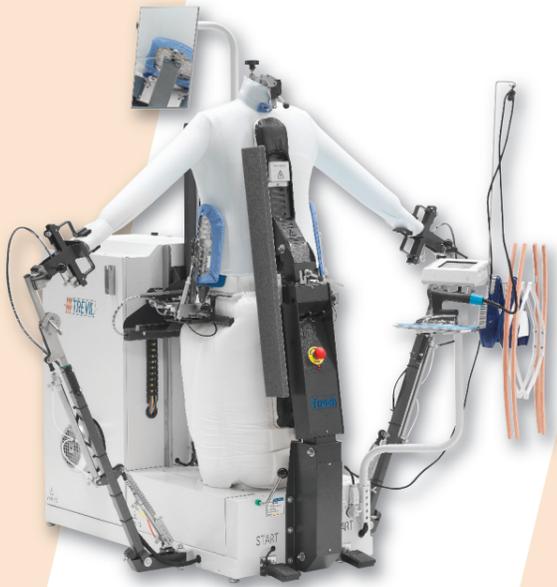


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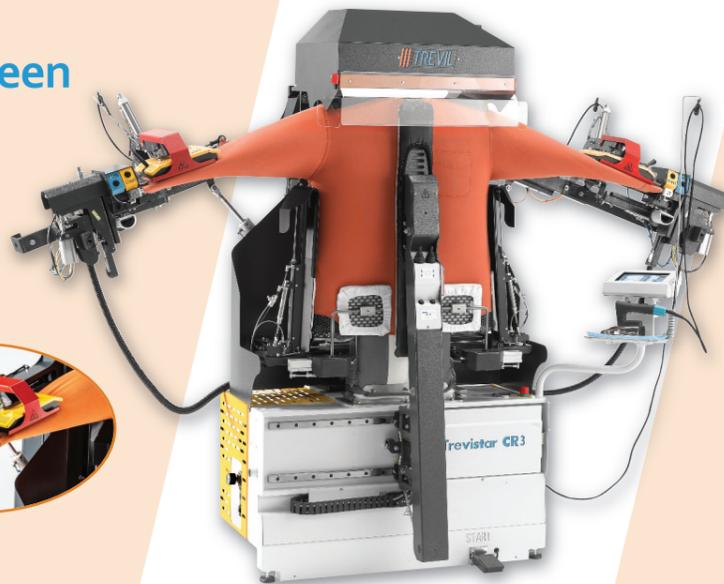
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# TURNAROUND TIME



BY JOHN ROTHROCK

## The Focus Method redefines convenience

It was March 11, 2020. My wife and I had settled on the couch after putting our two kids to bed when the news broke, 90 miles down the turnpike in OKC. Chesapeake Arena was packed with a sellout crowd, ready for the Jazz and Thunder to tip off. But, news spread that one of the players had tested positive for something called COVID. The officials canceled the game. A short time later, the NBA decided to cancel the entire season. I realized the world as we knew it was about to change.

In the 1970s, my grandfather faced similar challenges. While the circumstances were different, so much remains the same. Grandpa just built a state-of-the-art central production plant serving 22 dry stores. However, the polyester era followed by an energy crisis hit the industry hard, causing a reported 33% of cleaners to go out of business. Yale Cleaners was hemorrhaging money, and my grandpa and great uncle hadn't taken a

salary in nearly two years.

By comparison, in the fall of 2019, I embarked on my own building project. Yale broke ground on a multi-million-dollar package plant in Jenks. Phase one was complete, including building a 23' retaining wall backfilled with shale, bringing utilities to the site, and preparing the pad site. In April of 2020, I was finalizing plans to start Phase two — the building — when Covid hit and 90% of Yale's sales vanished overnight. Add fast fashion, athleisure wear and work-from-home trends to the mix, and it's no wonder over 20% of cleaners across the globe had to go out of business.

Yale was losing money, forcing me to make tough choices, including temporarily suspending salaries and buyout payments to all current and past owners. Was history repeating itself?

For years, I had heard stories from my dad about what happened in the late 1960s and 1970s. But, while I had heard those stories repeat-

edly, I couldn't fully relate to all of the stress caused by having outside factors suddenly push a once successful company to the brink of failure. I stood in front of my entire management team, many of whom had worked at Yale as long as I had been alive, poised to make many of the same tough decisions that my grandpa had during his crises. I realized that the stories of the past were no longer just stories — they were my reality. They were all of our realities.

For the first time, I truly understood what grandpa had been through and the resolve it built within him — the resolve to reimagine what was possible in the drycleaning business, and, more importantly, the resolve to *act on his ideas* and do whatever it took to make them become reality.

Now that the pandemic has subsided, I am taking a hard look at the health of our industry. Many experts give advice on how to add ancillary services like delivery, W-

D-F and alterations. They explain best practices, marketing advice, and help with

Limited Service Offerings; and 3) Defined Systems and Workflows.



government assistance programs. However, to me, it seems to be surface-level information. No one is willing to give away the *secret sauce*.

So, I have decided to write about the strategies Yale learned and developed over the past 40 years that have resulted in our enduring success. The information I'm sharing in this multi-part series was not developed overnight. It took years of hard work, often doing things the hard way and the wrong way before learning what actually worked best. These same ideas, if implemented in your company, will work for you, too.

In order for our industry to thrive again, we need to take a hard look in the mirror. What do today's drycleaning customers actually want? At Fabricare 2021 in Las Vegas, speakers emphasized the importance of **convenience** for the future of the drycleaning industry. *Convenience* stood out as the most significant insight of the conference. However, I believe there is a fundamental issue with how our industry defines that word — *cleaning everything for everyone*. Is that truly what our current and future customers want?

Let me be bold and suggest convenience goes beyond that. In my opinion, most cleaners should consider significantly reducing their current service offerings and here's why. Your company's success, as well as the industry's, is contingent on how responsive we are to customer expectations. The answer to our chronic problems of operational inefficiency (high cost to produce) and decreasing market share (declining sales) lies in executing three seemingly simple strategies I have defined as **The Focus Method**: 1) Fast Speed of Service; 2)

If increasing sales is your goal, then increasing your **speed of service** *must* be your mission. It will require you to limit your service offerings. Ideally, it will force you to provide only the most popular and profitable services. But, fast turnaround and limited service offerings alone are not enough.

Consistently delivering fast service requires developing clearly defined systems and workflows throughout your operation. The goal is to manage systems and workstations, not people and activities. As you optimize your business systems, the resulting efficiency gains will enable you to provide faster service, which in turn will lead to more sales. And, there is another **huge benefit** to all of this: dramatic cost savings that go straight to your bottom line!

It really can be that simple! Fast service increases sales, and doing what it takes to provide fast service reduces costs. Talk about a win-win business strategy! Customers get what they want, and business owners get what they desire.

**The Focus Method** enables a business to profit by increasing sales through efficiency gains. As we move forward, we'll explore each strategy in detail, providing actionable insights and practical advice for implementing them in your own operation.

**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).**



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**Jennifer Whitmarsh**  
Customer Service Pro



**Speaker**  
**Bob Clements**  
Co-founder Benchmark Business Group

Additional speakers scheduled include Bill Albers, President of SMRT; Toran Brown, Vice President of SPOT, and Jeff Gude, MIMBI. Along with this fabulous speaker line-up industry leading POS systems SPOT and SMRT representatives will be hosting breakout rooms to enable users to talk one-on-one.

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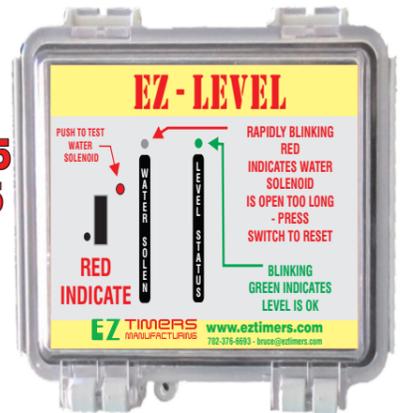
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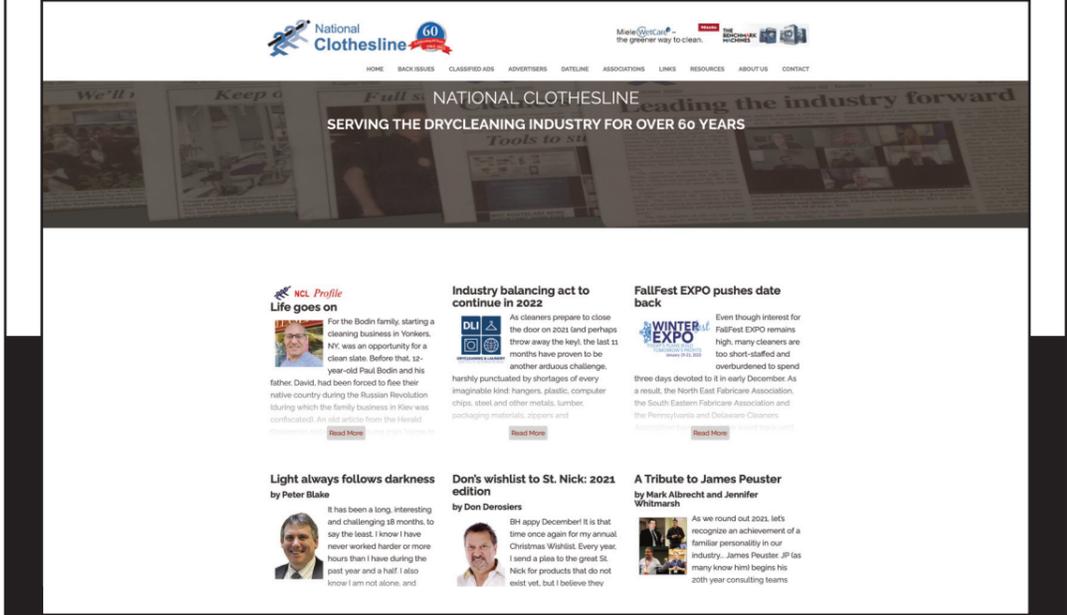
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