



National

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NEFA prepares for ProfitFest in November

Next month, the North East Fabricare Association (NEFA) will head to Marlborough, MA, to host ProfitFest 2024 from Nov. 2 to 3.

This year's theme is "Professionalism in Every Fiber." The event will take place at the Courtyard by Marriott in Marlborough.

Attendees are also invited to take part in an XplorSpot Users Group meeting that coincides with the event. It will take place at the hotel from 2 to 4 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 1.



Blake

The Saturday sessions for ProfitFest will begin with welcoming remarks at 8:30 a.m. by NEFA Executive Director Peter Blake and



Fish

NEFA President Larry Fish.

Then, Dr. Alex Ellis will lead a discussion on "Workplace Culture Reimagined" from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Dr. Ellis is the award-winning author of *Restoring the Male Image* and is an international speaker and trainer. He will explore how investing in your staff and celebrating company wins can ultimately improve production and the bottom line.



Dr. Ellis

Next up will be Mark Albrecht of The Route Pros, who is scheduled to speak from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. His program will focus on "Keeping Winners Engaged."



Albrecht

Afterward, there will be a Brainstorming Lunch Roundtable Session from 12:30 to 2 p.m.

In the afternoon, Jeff Alexander of Orlando Cleaners will discuss "Changing Business Models to Meet Consumer Attitudes." That program is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m.

He will be followed by Cohen Wills of Cleaner Marketing. His program will ex-

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Global Best Practices Awards come to Frankfurt next month

Thirty-five co-host associations, IDC and CINET are set to host the World Congress and Global Best Practices Awards 2024 event, which will take place in the Europe Hall of Messe Frankfurt in Germany next month from Nov. 8 to 9.

This year, hundreds of visitors and participants from over 60 different countries are expected at the event. It has grown in popularity significantly over the years; the first Global Best Practices Awards were handed out ten years ago. Six countries participated at that time.

Since then, it has taken place every two years, with the 5th edition arriving next month.

This year, those who cannot make it to Germany can attend the event virtually as it will stream live. A real-time AI-powered translation service will offer the program in 11 languages.

The Global Best Practices Awards will begin at 8:30 a.m. on Nov. 9 with moderator Mischa van den Broeck.

After welcoming remarks and an introduction to the program, 15 finalists in the Industrial Textile Services will each

give three-minute pitch sessions — making their case to be considered the best in their category on a global level.

At 11:30 a.m., there will be an hour program presented by international suppliers Electrolux Professional, Seitz and Sankosha on the latest technologies available for professional textile care.

Starting at 1 p.m., 15 finalists in the category of Small Retail Textile Cleaners will each make their three-minute pitches.

Finally, at 3 p.m., the 15 finalists in the Big Retail Textile Cleaners category will give their three-minute pitches to attendees.

At 6 p.m., the 2024 winners will be announced.

The World Congress

Those who plan to attend the event live will be able to enjoy many informative programs planned during The World Congress on Nov. 8.

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DLI begins final 2024 classes soon

The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) will soon begin its final signature course offerings for the year.

Those who wish to take the association's one-week Introduction to Drycleaning course or its two-week Advanced Drycleaning course this year have no time to waste.

The final offering of the introductory course takes place the week of Oct. 7 to 11, and the final advanced course will take place from Oct. 14 to 25.

DLI's Introduction to Drycleaning class is suitable for newcomers to the industry with less than two years of experience.

The course covers a wide variety of topics, including: sorting loads; cleaning silk, satin and other fabrics; operating a drycleaning machine; removing coffee, ink, grease and stains from clothing; pressing pants, coats and skirts; and using tensioning equipment to improve finishing quality.

Tuition is \$1,595 for non-members. The cost for DLI members varies from free (Premier members can attend any three courses for

free) up to \$1,195 for Budget or International membership.

Those who graduate the introductory course are ready to take the advanced course, which is more suitable for cleaners with a few years of experience.

The advanced course covers some of the topics of the introductory course — though more in-depth — along with many new ones,



such as: identifying cotton, silk, polyester and other fabrics; using bleaches with-

out damaging the fabric; pressing blouses, dresses, ties, pleated garments, velvets and corduroy; and wet-cleaning wool, silk and more.

The class also emphasizes customer service techniques for cleaners, as well as maintenance topics like maintaining and changing filters, and troubleshooting problems with the drycleaning machine.

Tuition for the advanced course is \$2,195 for non-members. For DLI members, tuition varies from free for Premier members up to \$1,695 for International and Budget members.

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Sneak Peek Inside

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Dumb luck? Don't knock it.

The secret to success with selling door-to-door is a little dumb luck and a whole lot of persistence.

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Sometimes the numbers lie

It's easy to believe a new equipment purchase will boost efficiency, but that equipment won't manage employees.

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Burning bridges when firing

Using softer language during disciplinary actions may feel better, but it can cause you more problems.

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How to start growing

Growing a drycleaning business requires separate skills from starting one.

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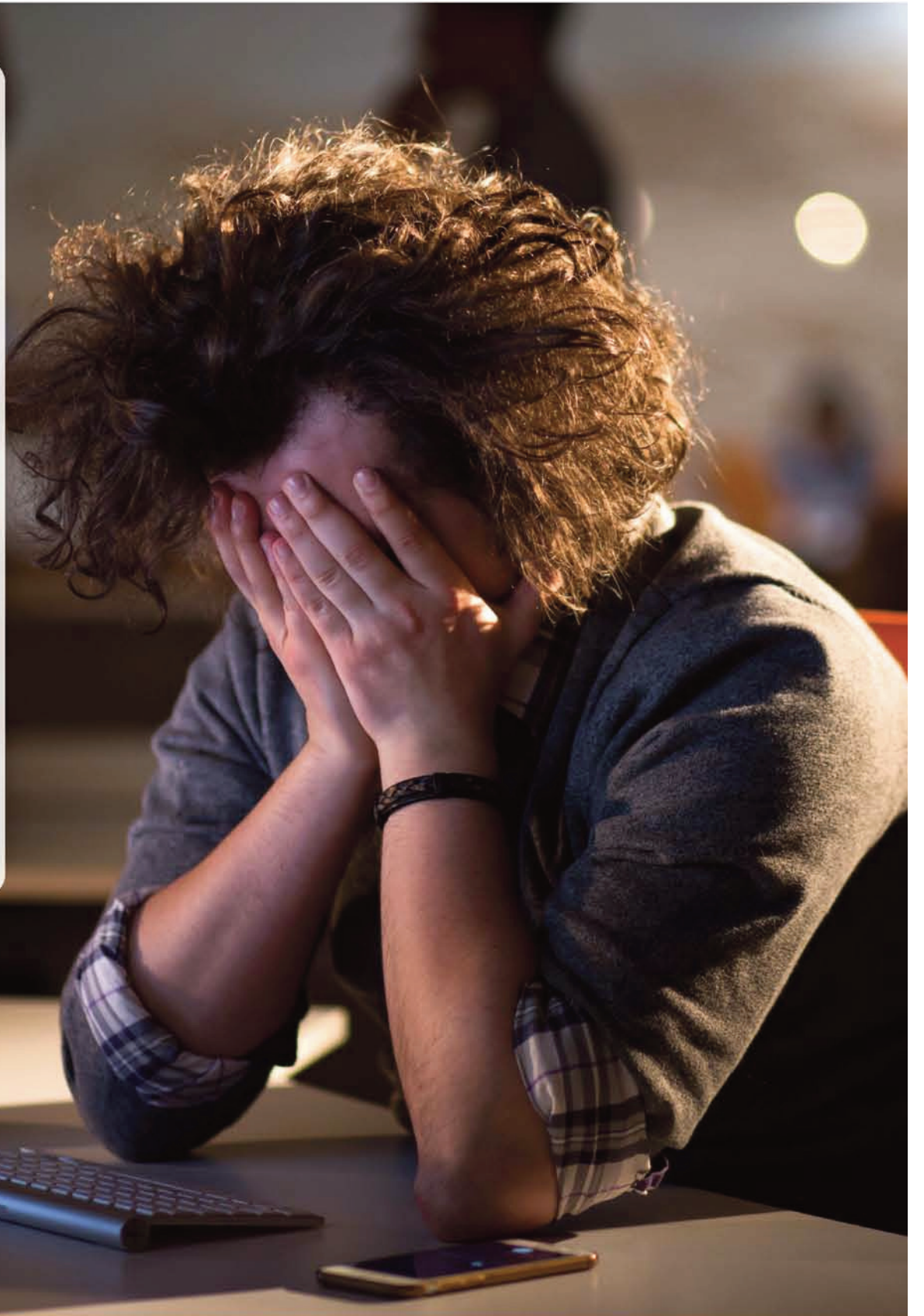


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Even when all the stars align, a good salesperson will need a solid sales pitch, be able to think quickly on their feet and be confident and attentive — just to have a chance. Even so, it isn't always enough. It can be tricky to nail the presentation and timing to make a new sale, but don't let that keep you from taking your shot. On his column on page 8, Peuster emphasizes what Mark Albrecht often tells route trainees: "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take."

Finally, there is one last way almost every drycleaning business can improve — growth. Starting a successful business takes many skills, however, Kermit Engh points out that it takes a completely different set of skills to grow the business. Many cleaners do not understand this... and it has hurt their bottom line. In his column on page 22, Kermit will walk you through the decision to bring in someone else to help you with business growth. After all, another one of the most difficult parts of being in charge is knowing when to step back.

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How Many Dry Cleaners Has Your Insurance Agent Handled? One or Two? Three?

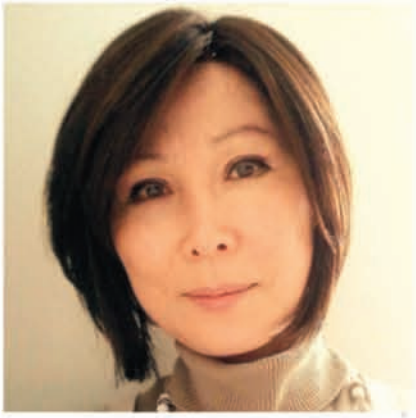


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NEFA prepares for ProfitFest in Marlborough

Continued from page 1
explore the topic of “Weaponizing AI for Small Business Marketing” from 3:20 to 4:30 p.m.
Throughout the day, there will be breaks so attendees can have



Wills

plenty of time to visit the Exhibitor Showcase.
Later that evening, NEFA has planned its Saturday Night Cocktail Reception and Silent Auction to take place from 5 to 7 p.m.
On Sunday morning, the educational sessions will begin with Sara Moncrieff of Puritan Cleaners at 9 a.m.
She will speak on the topic



Moncrieff
Parker of Dependable Cleaners. She will present “Under-

standing Your Customer and Effective Communication Strategies” from 10:30 a.m. until noon.
The cost for a full registration package is \$290 for members and \$340 for non-members – for the first attendee from a plant.
After the initial plant registration, the cost goes down to \$240 and \$290 for each addi-

tional attendee from the same plant.
NEFA has also secured discounted room rates at the Courtyard by Marriott. The cost is \$179 per night based on double occupancy.
To make reservations at the hotel or find out more about the event, visit NEFA’s official site online at www.nefabri-care.com.

Global Best Practices Awards in November

Continued from page 1
Starting at 9:45 a.m. that day, Dr. R. Heimann of the Hess Nature Foundation will be on hand to discuss “Max Sustainability by Optimizing the Professional Textile Care

Circular Performance.”
Also during that morning, Sanjay Sauldie, a digital business consultant, will explore the topic of “Transforming the Laundry Industry Through AI Innovation.”

In the afternoon, there will time for various roundtable discussions by industry experts.
They will explore topics that include: best sustainability in textiles; new technology and

innovations; consumer expectations and services; and hygienically clean laundering.
For additional information on the World Congress and Global Best Practices Awards 2024, visit the official website

at www.cinet-online.com.
In addition to registration and hotel accomodation information, there is also a link to sign up in order to view the live stream of the event that will take place next month.

DLI begins final 2024 classes this month

Continued from page 1
All of DLI’s signature courses take place at its School of Drycleaning located in Laurel, MD.
More upcoming DLI events
In addition to the courses offered at its school, DLI plans

to keep drycleaners busy all month long, including a web presentation on the topic of “Crafting the Ideal Sales Message to Explode Sales” with Dave Coyle of Maverick Drycleaners.
That program is set to take

place at 1 p.m. EST on Wednesday, Oct. 16.
Also on Oct. 16, the association will offer a session of its Marketing Lab at 3 p.m. EST. to allow members to brainstorm marketing ideas in a virtual monthly meeting.

Recent Marketing Labs have covered the value of trigger-based marketing and what some members are doing to keep customers happy and using additional services.
Throughout this month, DLI will continue to host its

weekly peer group meetings online, which take place every Tuesday at 11:30 a.m. EST on Zoom.
For more information on any of DLI’s upcoming programs, visit them at www.DLIonline.org.

Tide Services set for major expansion in Florida

Tide Services has planned a major expansion in the state of Florida, led by franchisee group Consolidated Cleaners, Inc. & Consolidated Laundromats, LLC (CCI & CLL).
Under the leadership of Jon Kassolis, Robert Lyons, Duke Kassolis, and Alton Scavo, the group plans to add a total of 14 new Tide Cleaners locations in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties.
Combined with their 19 other locations across South Florida, this will bring the total to 33 stores in Florida.
In addition, they are introducing the innovative Tide Laundromat concept with five units in Broward County, and plans to expand further into Miami-Dade.

This expansion coincides with the ongoing construction of four Tide Cleaners retail locations in Boynton Beach Marketplace, Downtown Boca Raton and Strand Blvd.
Moreover, CCI & CLL is building a new central plant in Fort Lauderdale to support their operations, ensuring consistent service quality and efficiency.
Currently, CCI operates 14 other Tide Cleaners locations — 10 in Charlotte, NC, and four in Cincinnati, OH — with eight more locations in various stages of development.
“Our entrepreneurial spirit drives us,” said Robert Lyons, president and CEO of CCI & CLL. “With Tide Services, we had the opportunity

to build on a brand that everyone knows, loves and trusts. It’s a platform for us to be at the forefront of revolutionizing an industry that hasn’t changed much over the past 50 years.”
Andy Gibson, CEO of Tide Services, commended the franchisee group’s initiative, stating, “CCI & CLL’s ambitious expansion plans highlight their leadership and dedication to the Tide brand. Their consistent performance reinforces our mission to transform the laundry service industry. We look forward to supporting their continued success and witnessing the positive impact of their efforts on communities across the country.”
For more information, visit tidefranchise.com.



Be sure to send us your upcoming events to be added to our calendar of events.
E-mail them to: info@nationalclothesline.com.

2024

- October 4-6** Drycleaning and Laundry EXPO West sponsored by the California Cleaners Association and the Southwest Drycleaners Association, Horseshoe Casino & Hotel, Las Vegas, NV. For more information, call (916) 239-4070.
- October 7-11** Drycleaning and Laundry Institute’s one-week Introduction to Drycleaning class at School of Drycleaning Technology, Laurel, MD. For information or to register, visit www.dlionline.org.
- October 14-25** Drycleaning and Laundry Institute’s two-week Advanced Drycleaning class at School of Drycleaning Technology, Laurel, MD. For information or to register, visit www.dlionline.org.
- October 16** Webinar on “Crafting the Ideal Sales Message to Explode Sales” by Dave Coyle of Maverick Drycleaners. Presented online at 1 p.m. EST by the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute. For more information, visit www.DLIonline.org.
- Oct. 20-22** Southwest Drycleaners Association’s Membership and Board Meeting, Phoenix, AZ. For more details, visit www.sda-dryclean.com.
- Oct. 21** Annual Coats for Kids Golf Outing by the National

- Cleaners Association, White Beeches Golf & Country Club, Haworth, NJ. To register, go to www.coatsforkidsusa.com.
- November 2-3** North East Fabricare Association ProfitFest 2024 at Courtyard by Marriott in Marlborough, MA. For more information, visit www.nefabri-care.com.
- November 6-9** Texcare International trade show, Frankfurt Exhibition Centre, Germany. For more information, visit texcare.com/brand.

2025

- January 31 to February 2** North Carolina Association of Launderers & Cleaners Winter Meeting, Sheraton Imperial Hotel, Raleigh-Durham Airport. For more information, visit www.ncalc.org.
- May 23 to 26** North Carolina Association of Launderers & Cleaners Annual Convention, DoubleTree by Hilton, Atlantic Beach Oceanfront Hotel. For more information, visit www.ncalc.org.
- August 23-26** Clean Show 2025, Orlando, FL. Call (770) 984-8023 or www.cleanshow.com.
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July 16-19 Clean Show 2027, Las Vegas, NV. Call (770) 984-8023 or www.cleanshow.com.

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THE ROUTE PRO



BY JAMES PEUSTER

The secret to successful selling: dumb luck

Anyone who is associated with The Route Pros knows that Mark Albrecht is the man. I have had the privilege of working with him when he was at Best Cleaners in Connecticut and now as a Route Pros consultant. No, I didn't steal him away from my client; he and his wife moved away and the rest is history.

One of his favorite quotes is: "The toughest door to get open is your open." This quote reflects how hard is it for drivers

to step out of their van — their comfort zone — and step in front of a potential customer. Mark is right. You can't sell if you don't try. We all know the old saying: "Failing to try is trying to fail!"

We all know there are various ingredients to successful selling. You must prospect in the right areas. You must have a solid sales pitch and be able to think on your feet. Be comfortable, confident... but not cocky. You should listen more than speaking.

Any one of you who has door-knocked knows what I am talking about. Perseverance and patience also plays a big part of getting route customers. However, the one ingredient that can stand out the most is *dumb luck*. Anybody has the opportunity to get a customer, no matter how bad their sales pitch and presentation is.

Take a look at the lottery. You can buy one ticket or 100 tickets. Either one could win the big jackpot. It's up to the

luck of the draw. Sure, the latter has a slightly better chance to win; yet, it comes down to the fact you can't win if you don't play.

This rings true for other gambling situations. I like dog racing and trying to handicap the puppies and determine the order of finish. It increases your chances of getting it right, but not always. Sometime people pick their birthday and win. Selling is similar to this.

A polished salesperson still has to have other variables

lined up for them in order to get a sale. For example, the prospect has to be home, answer the door and maybe, be in a good mood. They have to be upset a little bit about the current cleaner they go to, find a reason to like the salesperson and be in the mood to listen and make the decision to switch. However, many salespeople may take a look at the concerns of the prospect and disqualify them. I've seen route developers leave a prospect literally scratching their heads on the front porch as the driver drives away. You also have to nail the presentation.

It's like the cliff divers who drop 80 feet into the wavy waters, hoping to make the littlest splash. They can't control wind and waves that greatly affect their watery entry. Instead of being judged by, well judges, the developer is judged by the prospect.

Mark Albrecht has taught me a thing or 10. I watch him coach the best of the best route developers and say the same thing. "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." Whenever either one of us is out in the field, we sell along side with them. Quite often we joke about how lucky we get training in the field and getting a new route customer. It's as if the sales gods shine down on us during a presentation. Sure, the talent, the experience helps. But we both can tell you that it's not always that easy. It is a marathon, not a sprint.

The bottom line is this: Don't let your drivers make excuses about a lack of results. There are uncontrollable circumstances that we can consider reasons. But, not making the attempts is the number one reason for a lack of new customers.

One thing I realized in all the sales attempts is that dumb luck plays a part in the selling process. However, you create your own luck by making the attempts. You won't get the girl to dance without asking. Drycleaning customers are looking for convenience. They just need someone to tell them.

James Peuster is a consultant who specializes in route development, management and maintenance. He offers onsite consulting as well as ongoing coaching across the country. He also has cost groups to monitor route efficiency. For information, call (816) 739-2066, email RouteProsJames@gmail.com, or visit www.theroutepro.com.

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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY **DAN EISEN**

How to handle oxidized tanin stains

Tannin stains are those wet side stains that are derived from vegetable or plant matter. It is the most common wet side stain and includes tea, coffee, all soft drinks, fruits, vegetables, hard drinks, wine, many medications and condiments such as ketchup, mustard and soy sauce.

An oxidized tannin stain is a stain that changes chemically by picking up oxygen, making it difficult and sometimes impossible to remove. Oxidation also turns an invisible tannin stain into a visible stain, and changes a soluble stain into an insoluble stain.

An example of oxidization can easily be observed by cutting an apple in half and leaving it exposed to the air, causing it to turn brown. Many people know the trick of writing something on paper using lemon juice and applying heat to the writing, causing it to mysteriously appear.

Tannin stains undergo constant chemical change.

Fruits produce ethylene gas that converts starch to sugar. Ethylene produced by fruits is the reason why fruits ripen when kept in the same bag. The problem with tannin stains is that

not remove tannin stains. Cleaners who use the steam gun improperly also set tannin stains. Many cleaners think that holding the steam gun three to five inches away from the fabric

2) Chemical. Alkali sets tannin stains. Alkali is found in ammonia and protein formula. When alkali is applied to the stain, the color of the stain changes and becomes insoluble.

composition. Red wine and medicines may also differ in appearance.

Tannin Stain Removal

- 1) Flush (water gun)
- 2) Neutral lubricant
- 3) Mechanical action
- 4) Flush
- 5) Tannin formula
- 6) Mechanical action
- 7) Flush
- 8) Test fabric for safety on an unexposed seam when using the following chemicals...
- 9) Oxalic acid
- 10) Heat
- 11) Flush
- 12) Rust remover
- 13) Heat
- 14) Flush
- 15) Peroxide and ammonia
- 16) Heat
- 17) Flush
- 18) Acetic acid
- 19) Flush

Specialized Handling for Other Tannin Stains

1) Mustard. Scrape off the surface of the mustard with a dry brush before proceeding onto the tannin stain removal.

2) Iodine. Place a small amount of sodium thiosulfate in a cloth, making a small sack. Then, wet cloth by spraying with a water gun. Dab the stain with the wet cloth and then flush.

Then proceed onto the regular tannin method.

Dan Eisen, former chief garment analyst for the National Cleaners Association, can be reached at (772) 579-5044, or by e-mail at dannyeisen39@gmail.com or through his website at www.garmentanalysis.com.

An oxidized tannin stain is a stain that changes chemically by picking up oxygen, making it difficult and sometimes impossible to remove. Oxidization also turns an invisible tannin stain into a visible stain, and changes a soluble stain into an insoluble stain.

many cleaners handle it improperly, causing further oxidation and preventing it from being removed.

There are many factors that will oxidize a tannin stain making it more difficult to remove.

1) Heat. This is the fastest way to oxidize or set a tannin stain. This is the reason why tannin stains must be pre-spotted before drycleaning. The heat of drycleaning and drying at 140°F sets tannin stains. The drycleaning process does

is done only for the safety of the fabric. Many strong fabrics can withstand the pressure from the steam gun.

Steam guns are held at a distance from the fabric to avoid setting the stain. The distance is determined by holding your hand under the steam gun and being able to withstand the heat.

This is also the reason why a water gun is the safest way to flush a tannin stain before proceeding onto the next step.

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NU-TONE CLEANERS of WACO, TX, recently installed a new Realstar KM225-C in their plant. Owner Raymond Farrell (right) is pictured with manager Eddie Zamora (left) and Eric Dulock.

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DRY CLEANING EQUIPMENT

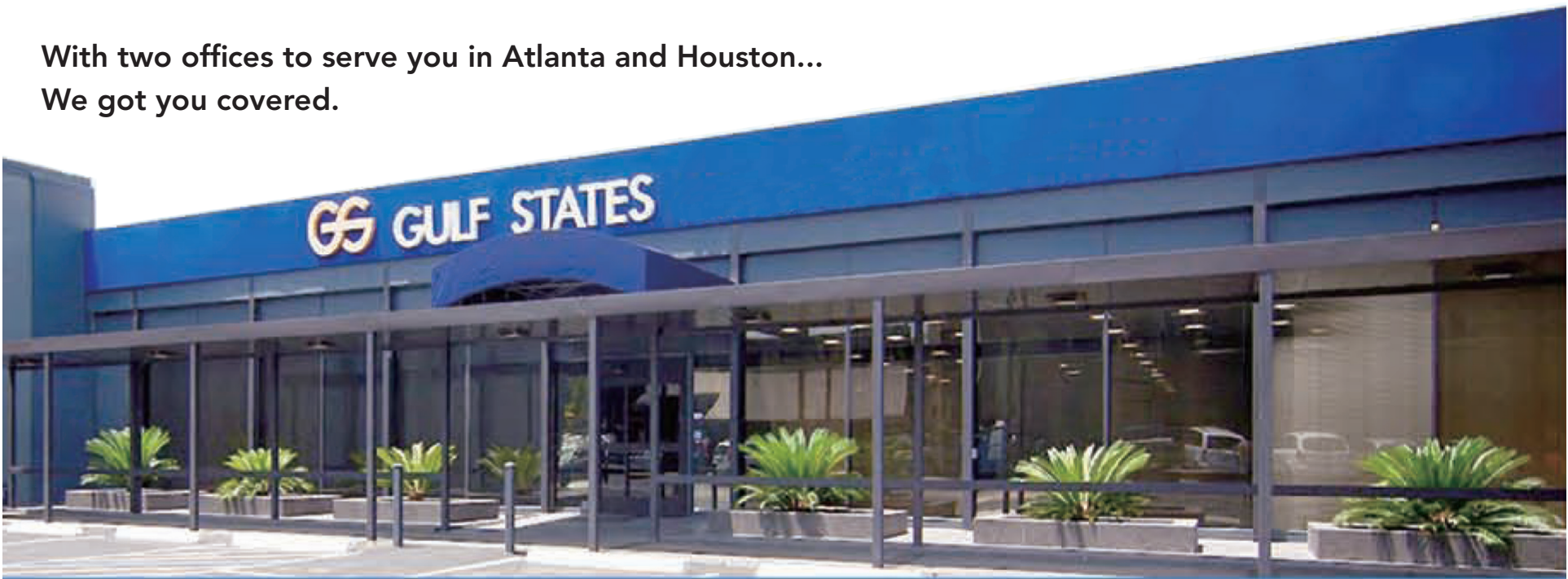
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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

The cost of not monitoring productivity

Let's imagine you have a shirt laundry with a double-buck unit and you do 3,500 shirts per week. In that mix of shirts, you do about 145 *hand-finish* shirts, 275 pull-over knit shirts and 185 blouses and shirts that are too small for the shirt unit.

So, out of 3,500 shirts per week, about 600 of them never actually get to the shirt unit. With me so far?

You have a hot head area for this so-called *junk*. In that area, you have an active, motivated employee that works 40 hours per week to do these odd pieces. Arguably, this employee produces 15 quality pieces per hour (600 pieces divided by 40 hours). Universally, this department is a loser.

Your two shirt pressers collectively are producing roughly 90 shirts per hour. At the \$4 per shirt that you charge, your shirt unit produces \$180 worth of sellable service each and every labor hour. In order to get that from your hot head area,

manned by one person, you would need to charge an average of \$12 for each of the pieces—the knits, the small shirts, the blouses, the hand-finish.

Mostly likely the knits and the small shirts have little or no mark-up over regular shirts, but even if they do, it probably isn't 300%. We are often afraid to charge more for blouses, given the history of legal issues related to that. So often there is no up-charge for them.

mains; there is little money to be made in the hot-head area. Let's assume that the average price there is \$5 each divided up like this:

- 145 hand-finish shirts @ \$4.50 each = \$652.50;
- 275 knit pull-overs (no-mark-up) @ \$4 = \$1,100;
- 185 blouses @ (marked up) \$5 each = \$925.

That's total gross revenue of \$2,677.50 for 605 pieces — an average of \$4.43 each. Oops! Let's say your prices are higher than that

happens. My point today will be to make sure that you don't allow the occurrence of something good to turn into something bad, so you will need to follow along closely.

The good thing that happens is: You read a recommendation from someone like me (or in this case, *me*) say that any shirt launderer who has a large amount of odd items, like blouses, knit shirts or small shirts that need to be done on a hot-

With this new \$2,000 per week — \$8,600 per month — you are sure to be in for some smooth sailing. (Maybe even on your new sailboat!) Are you following this? Let's recap to make sure.

- You are currently doing odd items in your hot-head area at the rate of 15 pieces per hour.

- You charge an average of \$5 for each.

- The tensioning-type shirt unit that you buy, at the usual retail price, does 25 shirts per hour (they may do more or less, but for the purpose of my point, let's say that 25 shirts per hour is uncontested.)

- Because you will now be capable of doing 10 additional pieces per hour for 40 hours per week, you will be able to produce 400 additional pieces per week.

- This equates to \$2,000 per week or about \$8,600 per month when charging an average of \$5 per piece.

Is there anything wrong with these facts and figures? No. Just to illustrate that my point has nothing to do with tensioning equipment per se, but rather is actually quite generic, I'll go off on a tangent for a minute with two other examples.

You could upgrade your old clunky shirt unit that is capable of no more than 40 shirts per hour to another that can easily do 50 shirts — a 25% increase in productivity! Instead of doing 2,000 shirts, you can do 2,500 shirts in the same amount of time.

Now, for another example. You can drastically increase the productivity of your pants presser. How about an increase of 50-100%? I saw these presses in Japan that rather easily process 60 pants per hour. You could do twice as many pants without any increase in labor. This is uncontested.

So, what is my point? What is the problem? The problem is that we pray that the equipment that we buy will manage our business. We buy a shirt unit that we see pressing perfect shirts at the show. We pray that we, too, will get 100% perfect

The problem is we pray that the equipment we buy will manage our business. We buy a shirt unit that we see pressing perfect shirts at the show. We pray that we, too, will get 100% perfect shirts with the same unit at our plant. I assure you that this will never happen.

As for *hand-finish*, there are some people that have no upcharge for that either, but I have seen 600% premium for this service.

Anyway, my point re-

and the average is, like I said: \$5. That department has long been your nemesis and you have merely accepted it as part of the business. Then, something good

head, will save substantial payroll dollars by investing in one of those form-finisher tensioning shirt units that are widely available.

Let's assume that you consider 25 pieces per hour from that unit uncontested. Let's assume that the equipment rep has completely captivated you. Frankly, you're thrilled that someone is not only sympathetic to your plight in that dreaded hot-head area, but this someone is actually presenting a plausible, worthwhile and affordable solution to it.

Why am I making so many assumptions? Because the point of this column isn't to recommend this tensioning equipment for higher volume shirt laundries. The fact that I do recommend them is merely a peripheral benefit. The point that I am leading up to is what happens once you get it in the plant.

Are you still with me?

So you buy a supplemental tensioning shirt unit. This is such a good buy that the upfront cost is immaterial. \$10,000? \$20,000? What's the difference?

The reality is that instead of doing 600 pieces in 40 hours, your hot head presser will now be able to produce 1,000 pieces in the same time — 400 extra pieces @ \$5.00 each, or \$2,000 per week.

Continued on page 18

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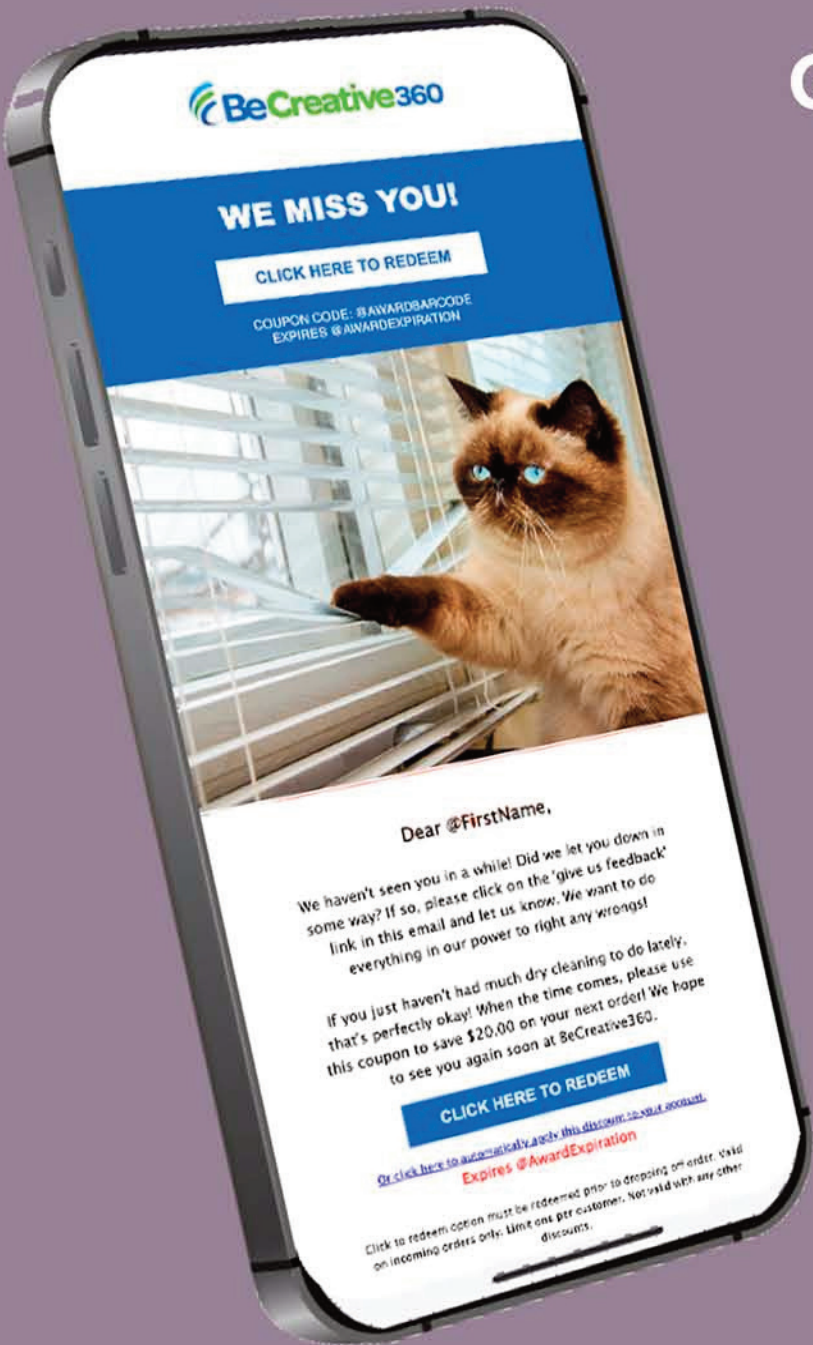


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KEEP IT LEGAL



BY FRANK KOLLMAN

In matters of discipline, stick to the truth not spin

As the presidential election approaches, it is perhaps an appropriate time to revisit the subject of *truth*. Truth stands in stark contrast to *spin*, which involves presenting facts in a way that suits one's agenda.

While spin is not outright deception, it is a subtle manipulation of reality, often crafted from verifiable facts.

In the context of employer-employee relations, especially when dealing with discipline, spin should never be employed.

Employers who resort to spin to justify disciplinary actions can inadvertently provide a plaintiff's attorney with the ammunition to build a case for unlawful termination.

Let's consider the analogy of a political candidate. A seasoned candidate, much like a skilled plaintiff's attorney, knows how to twist the narrative to make their opponent appear guilty by association.

Just as a candidate may use spin to avoid scrutiny of their own record, a plaintiff's attorney can expose spin used by an employer to challenge the legitimacy of those actions. If spin is required to justify a disciplinary decision, it could indicate that the employer may have had ulterior motives.

On the other hand, truth — presented with confidence and clarity — can be difficult to refute.

A historical example

comes from Harry Truman's 1948 presidential campaign. When someone from the crowd shouted, "Give 'em Hell, Harry!" Truman famously replied, "I don't give them Hell. I just tell the truth about them, and they think it's Hell."

minate John. HR approves the termination, and the task of delivering the news falls to the HR director and the company president.

At this stage, John should be told directly and succinctly that he is being fired for his inappropriate and disruptive be-

havior — specifically, dropping his pants, making vulgar comments to his supervisor, and throwing a paperweight through the office window. the HR director or president might tell John during the termination meeting that they "feel bad" or "wish they didn't have to do this," or perhaps even imply that they are merely supporting the supervisor's decision.

These missteps weaken

Discipline, particularly termination, must be delivered with directness and truthfulness. It is essential to avoid sugarcoating the facts or apologizing for necessary actions.

Employers should not feel guilty about taking appropriate action, especially when the employee's behavior left them with no choice.

In fact, the employer should feel frustrated that the employee's conduct has necessitated such action in the first place.

In my seminars, I encourage managers to fully embrace their role. Early in my career, as a young attorney working for a large firm, I often viewed management policies as overly harsh.

Today, as someone responsible for those very policies, I understand that managing a team is far more challenging than simply showing up to do a job. I now take pride in being part of management, and I urge others to do the same.

There are, of course, times when disciplining a genuinely nice but underperforming employee can be difficult.

Even in these situations, however, it is crucial to be honest and direct. For example, an underperforming worker might be told, "The minimum standard is to iron 24 shirts per hour, and you have never exceeded three." While empathy is important, it should not cloud the facts.

Ultimately, nice people hire lawyers, too. The best way to protect your company from a lawsuit is to provide as little ammunition as possible.

Stick to the truth, present the facts clearly, and leave any apologies or feelings of guilt at the door.

Employees, much like children, require honesty — even when the truth is hard to hear. Courts and juries need to hear it as well.

Unfortunately, many employers fall into the trap of softening the language, opting to generalize the reasons for termination. This diluted language fails to capture the severity of the incident.

This principle is highly applicable to employee discipline: honesty, when delivered effectively, leaves little room for challenge.

Consider the following scenario. John, an employee, enters his supervisor's office to discuss a tardiness issue. In a fit of anger, he drops his pants, bends over, and tells his supervisor to kiss his backside, using more colorful language.

On his way out, he grabs a paperweight and throws it through the office window, then returns to his work station as though nothing happened.

John's supervisor, knowing that discipline should never be issued in anger, takes a step back and reports the incident to the Human Resources (HR) department, requesting permission to ter-

minate John. HR approves the termination, and the task of delivering the news falls to the HR director and the company president.

At this stage, John should be told directly and succinctly that he is being fired for his inappropriate and disruptive be-

havior — specifically, dropping his pants, making vulgar comments to his supervisor, and throwing a paperweight through the office window. Unfortunately, many employers fall into the trap of softening the language, opting to generalize the reasons for termination. They might say John is being dismissed for "engaging in an inappropriate display of anger" or "endangering others." This diluted language fails to capture the severity of the incident.

Additionally, in an effort to ease their own discomfort,

the employer's case. Why feel bad about firing someone whose actions clearly warrant termination? Why not fully stand behind the decision rather than passing the responsibility onto the supervisor?

Moreover, why use vague legal terms like *inappropriate* instead of stating the actual events that occurred?

Such language opens the door for doubt, especially when considering other factors — John is 65, recently returned from Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, and had previously filed an OSHA complaint.

By diluting the reasons for John's termination and attempting to soften the blow, the employer has inadvertently weakened its position, making it more susceptible to legal challenge.



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Mulberrys plans expansion in northern VA

Gemini Cleaners LLC, the franchisor developer of Mulberrys Garment Care, recently announced that it has secured its first multi-unit agreement, calling for three locations to open in Northern Virginia between March 2025 and September 2026.

The stores will be operated by Leesburg CBK LLC, a new partnership formed by Brett Vago, Kyo Kim and Carlos Cadenas. Vago and Kim already own Mulberrys Garment Care of Friendship Heights, which opened in Washington, D.C., last December.

They also operate five ZIPS Cleaners locations – three in Virginia and two others in Washington, D.C.

Cadenas is a partner in their Sterling, Va., ZIPS location, and separately operates three

other ZIPS stores in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Gemini is a division of Value Drycleaners of America (VDA), the parent



of ZIPS.

“My partners and I are absolutely thrilled to be signing this development deal, which marks a significant milestone in the expansion of the Mulberrys franchise brand on the East Coast,” said Vago. “Since we opened our first Mulberrys location in D.C., customers have been very happy with the service, especially our convenient and free pickup and delivery.

“This partnership represents an incredible opportunity to bring Mulberrys’ unique drycleaning and laundry approach further into the DMV market. We’re excited to see the positive impact it will have as we continue to grow and innovate.”

As sibling brands under the VDA umbrella, Mulberrys and

ZIPS share a commitment to customer service and to providing exceptional value and convenience to their respective client bases. Mulberrys caters to the discerning customer who places a premium on five-star service.

ZIPS, with its single low price to dryclean any garment and “in-by-9-out-by-5” guarantee, is most popular among cost-conscious consumers who value professional cleaning to look their best, but who also set saving time and money as a high priority.

Because of the link the two brands share, VDA can now offer new and existing franchisees the opportunity to develop territories featuring both ZIPS and Mulberrys locations, with each placed where they will do best in a market.

“We’re seeing increasing interest in both ZIPS and Mulberrys since we aligned our two brands under the VDA umbrella,” said Michael Waintraub, director of business development for both brands. “This is coming both from people outside of our system and from our existing franchisees. Like Brett, Kyo and Carlos, our ZIPS operators see this as a great opportunity to fulfill their development commitments or create new ones, in either case having greater options for answering the demand for garment care in any part of their markets.

“We’re excited to see these next three locations open and to continue growing both of our systems.”

For more information, visit mulberryscleaners.com.

NCA hosts Coats for Kids golf outing this month

The National Cleaners Association (NCA) will be hitting the fairways later this month for its annual Coats for Kids Golf Outing.



Coats for Kids

Collect. Clean. Donate.

This year, registration for the event will begin at 10 a.m. on Oct. 21 at the White Beeches Golf & Country Club in Hawthorth, NJ.

Following breakfast at 11 a.m., there will be a shotgun start at noon. After the round of golf, there will be drinks and dinner later in the evening.

The cost to take part is \$325 for an individual golfer package and \$125 for a dinner guest.

NCA’s Coats for Kids program dates back to 1967 when Joe Petrozzi, a drycleaner in upstate New York, noticed kids walking to school without warm garments — unable to afford them. He began giving those children coats when he saw them go by — usually his son Russ’s old coats.

He began asking customers to help him on his endeavor and he could provide the cleaning and delivery of them for free. Then, he asked NCA to help him expand it.

For information, cleaners can contact Dawn Avery at dawnaverynca@gmail.com or visit the official site, located at www.coatsforkidsusa.com.

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Don Desrosiers

The cost of not monitoring your productivity

Continued from page 12
shirts with the same unit at our plant. I assure you that this will never happen.

When we buy that tensioning unit, the math that we do is correct, but there is logic absent. Can you press 1,000 shirts in the same time that you could previously press 600? Of course! Will you save \$5,000 per month? Of course not! Will you get the \$5,000 per month wind-fall? Extraordinarily doubtful. Will getting this tensioning unit save you money? Uh, it is absolutely within the window of “possible.” (How’s that for carefully worded?)

I’ll quit mincing words. You will be able to do 1,000 shirts in the 40 hours during which you could have previously pressed a mere 600, but from where will the 400 *extra* shirts come? They won’t come. This is not *Field of Dreams*. Do not adopt its premise. You will not press 400 more shirts at all, you only have that *potential*, and that potential dissipates with time. So, do you stand to save money by supplementing the equipment in your hot-head area? Still, the answer is *possible*, but it must be managed. The equipment will not manage your plant or your work flow. You must do that.

You do not stand to improve your cash flow by \$5,000. You stand to save about \$320 per week. Disappointed? Well, you should be if you were thinking \$1,200 per week.

Let’s estimate a lease payment on your tensioning shirt unit at \$360. Subtract that cost from the weekly labor savings (16 hours at \$20) and you’ll experience a net savings of about \$920 monthly. There is nothing wrong with that. That is real dollar savings that you spend on yourself, but if you bought the unit at a trade show with the *more-common-than-you-may-think* thought of increasing sales \$5,000 – or saving \$5,000 – you will find yourself somewhere between very disappointed and livid. With whom will you be perturbed? No one has lied to you, or even misled you. You simply let quasi-facts entice you. A year later, you may wonder why you ever bought that thing because your \$320 per week payroll savings will soon evaporate if you remain ill-advised.

Let’s continue with our imaginary plant that I described earlier. Betty is the lady that conscientiously works in the hot-head area from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., five days a week. She makes \$20 per hour, all in. Her weekly take-home pay is important

just in time for you to have a vacancy somewhere else, like perhaps the front counter. Otherwise she contributes to overstaffing.

She may look busy, but there is a good chance that what she is doing has been done by others previously.

In order to save payroll dollars, management must cut labor hours, not redistribute them. Furthermore, management must always monitor productivity. Always. I say that because it’s always true.

to her family. Enter the new tensioning shirt unit on which she easily does 25 pieces per hour. Now she works 24 hours per week – or does she? Therein lies the problem.

You, as the manager, and perhaps the one on the hook for a \$360 lease payment, have four choices:

- 1) Send Betty home when she’s done her day’s work while continually monitoring her productivity so that you are assured she is getting that all-important 25 pieces per hour.
- 2) Send Betty home when she’s done her day’s work but pay her for a full day anyway.
- 3) When Betty is done pressing her miscellaneous items, you give her something else to do so that she still gets her 40 hours. If her hours were to be cut, she would quit.
- 4) Let Betty do what she wants by ignoring her and her department with the belief that she does 25 pieces per hour now rather than 15.

Only one of these options will save you the three hundred-and-something dollars that we talked about, and that is option one. The only way to cut labor is to continually monitor an employee’s productivity and then send them home (without pay) when the day’s work is done. Sound gross? Well maybe, but it is the truth.

Let’s estimate a lease payment on your tensioning shirt unit at \$360. Subtract that cost from the weekly labor savings (16 hours at \$20) and you’ll experience a net savings of about \$920 monthly. There is nothing wrong with that. That is real dollar savings that you spend on yourself, but if you bought the unit at a trade show with the *more-common-than-you-may-think* thought of increasing sales \$5,000 – or saving \$5,000 – you will find yourself somewhere between very disappointed and livid. With whom will you be perturbed? No one has lied to you, or even misled you. You simply let quasi-facts entice you. A year later, you may wonder why you ever bought that thing because your \$320 per week payroll savings will soon evaporate if you remain ill-advised.

If you send Betty home, but still pay her, you will save no money at all. She may think that you’re wonderful, but I don’t think that this was the goal. If you give Betty something else to do, you may not be as nice of a guy, and you may not save any money, either. The only way that you would save actual cash dollars is if Betty happens to become available

For instance, she *helps* to mark in. No one goes home earlier, but now you have three people marking in instead of two. Giving employees *something else to do* is counterproductive to cutting labor cost, a direct cause of plant overstaffing and it is kind of a company endorsement for padding the time clock.

If you send Betty home but still pay her, there may be miniscule, theoretical savings somewhere in there, but I doubt they will make your lease payment. Please note that the operative words are *may*, *miniscule* and *theoretical*. That would happen if Betty finishing her stuff earlier would mean that the inspection and assembly department could finish earlier — assuming of course they had previously been waiting on hot-head items in the past and no longer do so.

So, what happens in the real world? **Option 4** happens in the real world. Betty runs her own department and management is oblivious. She finishes early on the days she wants to get out early (proving to one and all that she — and the equipment — does 25 pieces per hour) but pads the time clock during the days and weeks that she needs 40 hours. Is Betty to blame? No, management is to blame.

Management allows it to happen. In order to save payroll dollars, management must cut labor hours, not redistribute them. Furthermore, management must always monitor productivity. Always. I always say that because it is always true. Don’t expect what you don’t inspect. My management mentor used to say that all the time 40 years ago. It’s still true.

Some of us will be in an

ideal situation. Some of us will have two people in the hot-head area, for example, both working 34 hours per week, doing a total of 1,000 pieces. Acquisition of a tensioning shirt unit gives one person a 40 hour per week job. One employee cut,

\$1,000 per month net savings, month after month. That is neat and tidy and it keeps us from having to manage our employees, which is delicious.

The remaining presser may motivate herself because she doesn’t desire a 10 to 12 hour day. Bottom line is that this situation will surely be the exception, but it often makes us think that the investments are only for the “big guys.” This is sad and untrue.

If your payroll is \$3,000 a week, the prospect of saving \$340 a month is appealing, but saving \$1,000 per month is what you’re really looking for. You’re perhaps saving your pennies for an investment that will save you that much. You may wait forever.

If you covet the guy that saves \$1,000 per month, consider that if he’s doing 1,000 hot-head pieces a week, he may be at the volume level that breeds a payroll of \$50,000 per month. Proportionately speaking, his savings pale in comparison to yours.

Betty expects 40 hours per week because that is what she has been allowed to expect. She isn’t wrong to expect that, but the drycleaning and laundry business rarely makes for neat and tidy eight-hour days and 40-hour weeks.

Getting your employees to understand that should be your New Year’s resolution. So, what to do? How about an employee meeting during which you explain your dilemma? Follow that up with a new rule for yourself regarding new hires: “How many hours will I be getting, Mr. Boss?” You reply, “I’m not sure. Here we don’t have set quitting times. We work until our job is done while meeting certain goals. As a pants presser, you’ll be ex-

pected to press 33 pants per hour, then when you’re done and will be free to leave after checking with the manager on duty. Some weeks that will yield 25 hours. During other weeks you will work 40 or more hours.”

Do you think that you can pull that off? It’s not hard and it gets the momentum swinging in the right direction. You may think that you can’t do that. You may think that you are desperate for a pants presser (to continue with the same example) and I’m sure that they may be in short supply. So you give them what they need — 40 hours guaranteed.

Consider this: Visualize two equally qualified, motivated and available shirt pressers. One wants \$15 per hour, the other wants \$24. Seems logical that you would choose the one that only wants \$15, right? But, if this employee is not managed — goals set, monitored and maintained — and presses 15 hot-head pieces per hour instead of the standard 25, he/she is working at the rate of \$24 per hour because this person is taking 40 hours to do 25 hours worth of work.

That \$24 per hour is a rate that you never would have considered paying, but you are allowing it to happen by paying a 40 hour wage (\$15 x 40 hrs = \$600) for 25 hours worth of work (\$15 x 25 hours = \$375). If you pay \$600 for 25 worth of work, even if it takes 40 hours to produce, you are paying at the rate of \$24. That is the cost of not monitoring your productivity.

If you do want 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 launderers and drycleaners through Tailwind Systems. He is a member of the Society of Professional Consultants and winner of DLI’s Commitment to Professionalism award. He can be reached by cell phone (508) 965-3163, or email to: tailwind.don@me.com.

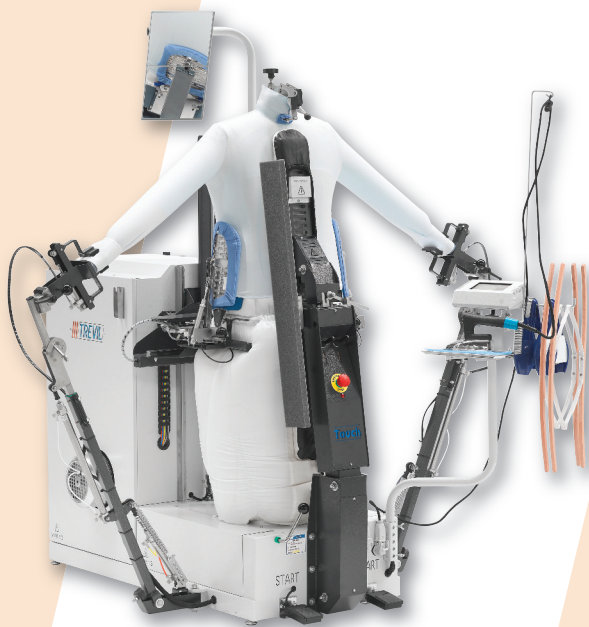


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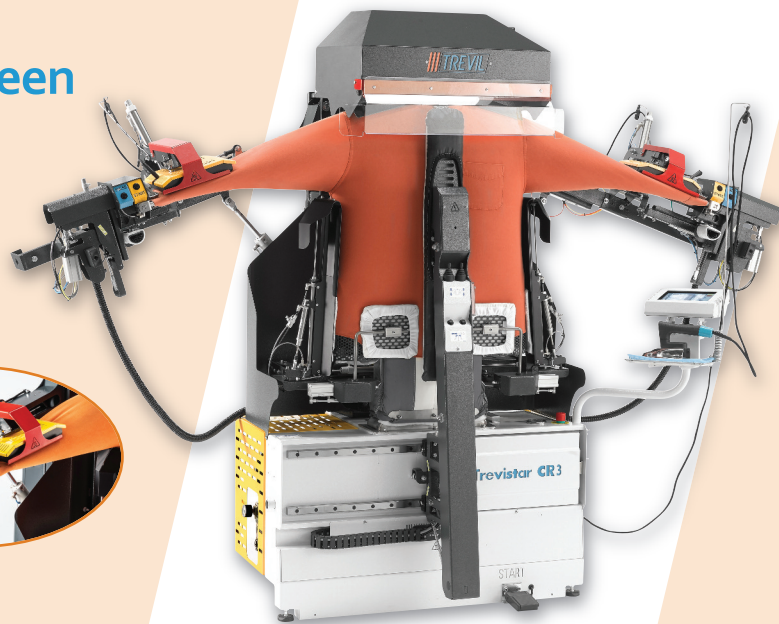
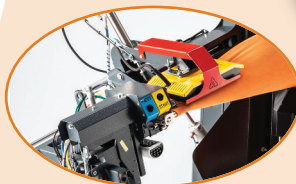
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NewsMAKERS

Certified Drycleaning Network (CRDN), a franchise network dedicated to providing comprehensive home contents restoration services to the insurance industry, has announced **Meredith Magaha** has joined the organization as the vice president of sales.



In her role, **Magaha** will execute sales strategy and drive company growth with both national and regional property insurance carriers across the residential and commercial sectors. “Meredith is a dynamic leader with an exceptional track record, who has deep expertise in this industry,” said **Steve Gibson**, president of CRDN. “Her relationships and experience working with property insurance carriers

both regionally and nationally brings invaluable insight to our sales efforts and will propel innovation for CRDN’s contents restoration services. I am confident that her leadership, industry knowledge, and passion for excellence will significantly impact our continued success.” **Magaha** brings over 18 years of sales expertise to CRDN, with the last 12 years dedicated to the restoration industry. Prior to CRDN, she excelled as a national account manager at ServiceMaster Restore, where she successfully built and maintained relationships with some of the largest insurance carriers in the United States. In this role, she was responsible for managing and increasing the company’s annual revenue through these key partnerships. Throughout **Magaha**’s career, she has built relationships with c-suite leaders, claims and field claims executives and key personnel. To learn more about CRDN contents restoration and its comprehensive line of art, textiles, electronics and

full-service contents restoration services, visit www.CRDN.com. **Xplor Technologies** announced that **Justin Beck** has been appointed its chief commercial officer, home services. In this role, **Beck** will oversee revenue-generating operations, including sales, marketing, customer success, and business development, to drive sustainable growth. **Xplor Technologies**’ Home Services division serves over 20,000 small business locations across North America, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, in childcare and early education, field services including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, lawn care, snow removal, pest control, and drycleaning. **Beck** joins **Xplor Technologies** with over 20 years of experience in the technology sector, where he has successfully led high-performing teams and delivered substantial revenue growth for global enterprises in education, healthcare, financial services, and technology verticals. He previously served as senior vice president of global sales at Instructure, the maker

of Canvas, where he led the team through multiple acquisitions, organizational re-designs, and product launches. Prior to Instructure, **Beck** also held senior leadership roles at Salesforce, video experience provider Kaltura, and education software companies Everfi and Blackboard. “We are thrilled to welcome **Justin Beck** to our executive team,” said **Pam Joseph**, CEO of **Xplor Technologies**. “His extensive experience in driving growth and scaling global operations, and his passion for solving the pain points of small businesses align perfectly with our strategic goals. I am confident that he will be instrumental in accelerating our trajectory and strengthening our position as a market leader.” In his new role, **Beck** will focus on enhancing customer value, optimizing the revenue strategy, and expanding **Xplor Technologies**’ global footprint. He will work closely with the executive team to refine and execute a comprehensive strategy that leverages **Xplor Technologies**’ innovative SaaS products and proprietary embedded payments solutions to meet the evolving needs of customers worldwide. “I am excited to join **Xplor Technologies** at such a pivotal time in the company’s journey,” said **Beck**. “I look forward to working with the passionate and talented teams across the organization to deliver exceptional value to our customers, bring industry-leading solutions to more small businesses, and enhance our leadership in key markets.” To learn more about **Xplor Technologies** visit www.xplortechnologies.com. **ZIPS Cleaners** announced that it has signed an agreement with **One Maryland Collective**, the Name, Image, Likeness (NIL) arm serving student-athletes at the **University of Maryland**, to provide and promote a subscription Wash N Fold laundry service

for students, branded as “Terrapin Wash.” As part of the agreement, **ZIPS of College Park** will provide free pickup and delivery twice a week to four different **University of Maryland** campus locations. Students will also be able to add drycleaning and comforter cleaning to the semester-based subscription services. As part of the agreement, **One Maryland Collective** will receive revenues based on the subscription sales, which in turn will support **University of Maryland** student-athletes. The initiative empowers student athletes to thrive both on and off the field and engage more actively in their communities. “**ZIPS Cleaners** recognizes students’ needs to keep their clothes looking, feeling and smelling fresh as they juggle their classes, studies, and extracurricular activities,” said **Mary Ann Donaghy**, chief marketing and customer experience officer at **ZIPS Franchising LLC**. “The Terrapin Wash program gives students back a little time to focus on school, while supporting student athletes.” This pilot program launches with the start of the first semester of the university’s 2024-2025 academic year and will be promoted through campus-wide events, social media posts by student-athletes, on-campus signage, email communications to students and parents, and groups such as Career Services and the Panhellenic Council. Negotiations to expand the program to other universities are in progress. “With 70 **ZIPS** locations, a high concentration of which are in the Baltimore-Washington region, there is ample opportunity for us to bring this convenience to a large number of college students,” said **Donaghy**. “We look forward to serving the Terrapin community this fall and hopefully other student communities in the near future as well.” For more information, visit www.321zips.com.

“Our recent MfM collaborative gathering served as a platform for sharing knowledge, discussing emerging trends, and brainstorming innovative solutions to common challenges faced by our industry. As CEO of Best Care Dry Cleaners, I am proud to have participated in this exchange of ideas. By staying informed of the latest advancements in garment care technology, we can ensure that our services are efficient, convenient, and tailored to meet the evolving needs of our clients.”

~Lisa Loscerbo, Best Care Dry Cleaners, Winnipeg

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The Route Pros are (left to right)
James Puester, Brian Fish, Jen Whitmarsh,
and Mark Albrecht.

“DLI is a great organization and community that can help your company on so many levels. The Route Pros are very proud to be allied trade members of DLI.”

Brian Fish, Director of the Route Pros Leadership Council

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BUILDING VALUE



BY KERMIT ENGH

A fresh look at starting vs growing a business

In the world of drycleaning, launching a business requires a certain set of skills — vision, understanding your market, and the drive to fill a specific need. However, transitioning from a startup to a thriving, scalable enterprise demands a different approach. Just because you excel at starting a business doesn't always mean you're equipped to grow it, and this distinction can make or break a company's long-term success.

Drycleaning, like other industries, face this challenge, but it can be overcome with the right strategies in place.

Many drycleaning business owners start with a unique idea or a specialization, such as eco-friendly cleaning solutions, luxury garment care, or same-day service. In these early stages, the owner's passion and hands-on management drive much of the business's success. However, new challenges arise as the business grows: more employees, locations, and operational complexity. As Damian James, the founder of Aged Foot Care (later Dimple), discovered in the healthcare industry, the skills that helped him start the business weren't enough to help it scale.

The same challenge applies to cleaners. While the initial years may be focused on attracting new customers, perfecting service offerings, and managing costs, the growth phase introduces a whole new set of demands. Growth doesn't just mean doing more of the same — it requires a shift in leadership style, processes, and sometimes even strategy.

Many cleaners may relate to James's frustration with Dimple's stagnation despite early success. As a business owner, you may find that despite hitting a certain revenue target, things start to plateau. Perhaps you set ambitious goals, but quarter after quarter, your team falls short. This isn't necessarily a reflection of the team's competence but rather of the increasing complexity of managing a growing business.

Operational efficiency is

key for cleaners. When your business grows, you need systems in place to handle everything from inventory and equipment maintenance to managing staff and meeting customer demand. James realized that he needed outside help to get his business back on track. Many

tured the deal so that the CEO had an incentive to grow the company beyond its current revenue, offering additional equity for every \$1 million the company earned over \$5 million. This ensured that the CEO was motivated to focus on growth, and it worked.

the drycleaning industry, this might involve building relationships with new corporate clients, launching new service offerings, or expanding into new locations.

By delegating operational responsibilities to a trusted manager, you free yourself up to focus on these

Damian James's story poses an important question for every business owner: Is it time to bring in new leadership to help grow your business? For many drycleaning owners, the answer may be *yes*. As your business grows, so do the demands on your time and expertise. By bringing in experienced managers or operations professionals, you can ensure your company continues to thrive without burning yourself out.

Growth is challenging, but it's achievable with the right strategies and the right people in place. By recognizing the limits of founder-led growth, aligning your team's incentives with your business goals, and knowing when to step back, you can take your drycleaning business to new heights.

Kermit Engh has been an owner/operator in the drycleaning industry for over 32 years, a CINET winner in 2016 and has been a Methods for Management member for over 28 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.

For cleaners, the lesson is clear: Growth requires letting go of certain responsibilities and trusting others to manage the operational side of the business. By doing so, you position your company for long-term success.

drycleaning business owners face the same decision: Do you keep trying to do it all yourself, or do you bring in someone with a fresh perspective and specialized skills to help you grow?

Bringing in Outside Help

In James's case, hiring a chief operating officer was the turning point. He recognized that to take his business to the next level, he needed someone with different skills — someone who could manage the day-to-day operations and allow him to focus on the bigger picture. This decision ultimately led to Dimple's growth from \$2.5 million to \$11 million in revenue in just a few short years.

Bringing in a general manager or operations manager for drycleaning businesses can have a similar effect. As the owner, you're likely wearing many hats, from overseeing staff, handling customer complaints, and managing finances. But to truly grow, you may need to step back from the daily operations and let someone else handle the details. This doesn't mean giving up control — it means shifting your focus to where you can add the most value, such as developing new services, expanding your customer base, or improving your marketing efforts.

One key reason Dimple succeeded under new leadership was the alignment between the new CEO's compensation and the company's growth. James struc-

In the drycleaning industry, owners can implement similar strategies to ensure their management team is aligned with the company's goals. Whether it's offering performance-based bonuses or other incentives, creating a culture where everyone is focused on growth can significantly improve revenue and operational efficiency.

Additionally, having the right systems in place to track key performance indicators — such as customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and revenue per employee — can help cleaners manage their growth effectively. By focusing on these metrics, you can identify areas of the business that need attention and ensure that your team is driving the company toward its growth goals.

James's decision to step back from the daily operations and take on a more visionary role was crucial to Dimple's success. While it's natural for business owners to want to stay involved in every aspect of their company, growth often requires a shift in leadership style. For drycleaners, this can mean focusing less on the day-to-day operations and more on long-term strategies for growth.

Stepping back doesn't mean you're no longer critical to your company's success — it simply means you're focusing on the areas where you can make the most significant impact. In

larger initiatives that will drive future growth.

For James, stepping back and letting his new CEO take the reins was difficult, but it paid off significantly. Under new leadership, Dimple grew by over 500% in three years, ultimately being acquired for \$13.4 million. This kind of growth wouldn't have been possible if James had continued to try to do everything himself.

For cleaners, the lesson is clear: Growth requires letting go of certain responsibilities and trusting others to manage the operational side of the business. By doing so, you position your company for long-term success, whether that means expanding into new markets, increasing your customer base, or even preparing for a potential sale.



US CLEANERS of Amarillo, TX, installed two new Union HXL-8025-C machines. At the startup were owner Brad Van Volkenburg (left), along with Chris Abercrombie of UNX Christeys and Matt A. Lipman of Union Drycleaning Products USA.

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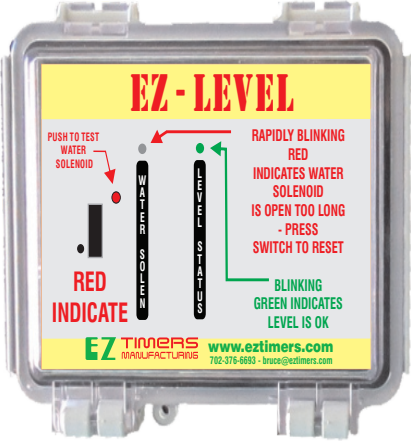
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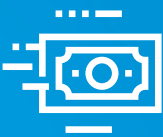
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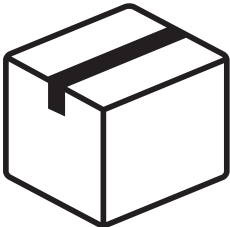
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NCL Profile
Life goes on
For the Bodin family, starting a cleaning business in Yorkers, NY, was an opportunity for a clean slate. Before that, 12-year-old Paul Bodin and his father, David, had been forced to flee their native country during the Russian Revolution (during which the family business in Kiev was confiscated). An old article from the Herald.

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

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

Don's wishlist to St. Nick: 2021 edition
by Don Derosiers
BFF 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

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, began his 20th year consulting teams

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