



National

Clothesline



April 2025

Volume 63 Number 7

www.nationalclothesline.com

Registration opens for Clean '25 in Orlando

This August, Clean 2025 will be coming to Orlando, FL. For four full days – from Aug. 23 to 26 – the Orange County Convention Center will host all of the latest drycleaning and laundry technology, equipment and services available on the market.

If attendance is similar to that of Clean 2022 in Atlanta, GA, then close to 10,000 visitors will be on hand to see first-hand demonstrations and speak directly to vendors on the exhibit hall.

It will be open to explore from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday and Monday, and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Tuesday.

In mid-March, many of the

educational topics for this year's Clean Show were announced, including the topics for sessions presented by the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI).

The association will kick off its first program on Saturday morning at 8 a.m. called "Beyond the Hanger: Marketing Strategies to Strengthen Your Business."

It will help attendees learn how to stand out with the use of strategic marketing and explore innovative ways to attract new customers, retain loyal ones and build a business that sets your brand apart.

On the same morning, DLI has asked Dave Coyle of Maverick Drycleaners to present



Beth Z



Kuehl



Coyle



Gould



Stollings-Holder



Stubblefield



presented by Texcare

Aug. 23 to 26, 2025

Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, FL

"The Client Journey" at 9 a.m. Attendees will learn the tools and tactics to surprise your clients using marketing channels that aren't congested. Spot pain points and identify op-

portunities for magic moments as you build a team that always puts your clients front and center.

The next program will be called "The Only Option at

Any Price" and will be presented at 8 a.m. on Sunday morning by Glen Gould, a serial entrepreneur and owner of Dry Cleaning Connection.

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DLI begins timeline for Hall of Fame nominations

Starting on April 1, the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) will begin accepting its annual Hall of Fame nominations — which are open to all drycleaning industry individuals.

Drycleaning association membership is not required to nominate or be a candidate. The final deadline for submissions is May 15.

This year's nominations will try to join the ranks of the DLI Hall of Fame, considered

the highest honor in the industry by the association.



To date, there are eleven individuals who have received the honor, including: Barney Deden, Stan Golomb, Chris Edwards, Jeff Miller, Sid Tuchman, Don Fawcett, Milt

Chortkoff, Walter "Buster" Bell, William Joseph "Dixie" Stoddard, James Douglas and Michael Nesbit.

These individuals consistently demonstrated exceptional dedication and achievement in their respective fields. The new Hall of Fame award succeeds the institute's highest honor, celebrating excellence in leadership, business operations, community involvement, environmental

Continued on page 12

Industry ad campaign will ask: *Got cleaning?*

The Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) is launching a grassroots social media initiative aimed at amplifying the voice of professional garment care businesses.

This campaign, inspired by the iconic "Got Milk?" strategy, invites all drycleaners to join in educating consumers and promoting the value of professional garment care through engaging social media posts designed to res-

onate with customers and build industry awareness.

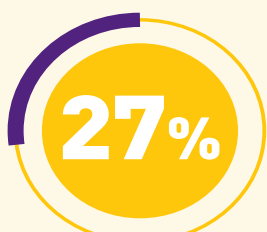
The association plans to start this month by posting social media messages on Facebook, Instagram and other platforms emphasizing the professional garment care industry and the value it provides to customers and their communities. These posts are tailored to inspire emotional connections with customers by highlighting the confi-

Continued on page 12

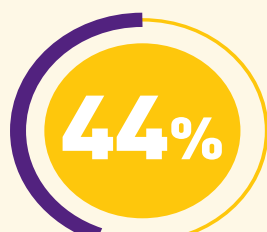
The State of the Drycleaning Industry 2025 Report

27% OF DRY CLEANING OWNERS SAY HIRING IS ONE OF THEIR BIGGEST HEADACHES.

SOUNDS BAD? THIS IS DOWN FROM 44% BACK IN OCTOBER 2023.



STAFF
RECRUITMENT
2024



STAFF
RECRUITMENT
2023

The national average of drycleaning prices has gone up — and so has the industry's adoption of wetcleaning technology.

This month, Jeff Schapiro of Cleaner's Supply will offer his perspective on The State of the Drycleaning Industry Report 2025, a study his company commissioned. Find out what the answers from 894 drycleaners across the U.S. indicate about the present condition of the textile cleaning industry, and how it compares to the previous report that Cleaner's Supply conducted in 2023.

For the full report and review, please visit page 6.



Sneak Peek Inside

16 Lights, Camera, Laundry!

Creating content that can be especially useful to customers is a great way to connect with them.

18 Go fire yourself!

The truth is, the more your company can thrive without you, the more it is worth to potential buyers.

22 Hiring the right manager

What should a plant owner look for when trying to find the best manager for the plant?

24 Dealing with dye bleeding

What are some of the causes for dye bleeding, and, more importantly, what are the cures?



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for drycleaners and launderers
April 2025
Volume 63 Number 7

Reasons to be optimistic about the future

After examining the results of the **2025 State of the Drycleaning Industry Report** (see page 6), there are certainly a few reasons to be optimistic about the future of the garment care industry.

In the latest report, **58%** of the drycleaners surveyed reported that **sales were trending up** in 2024 compared to 2023. Another positive takeaway is that many cleaners have been making progress with their hiring struggles. In the previous survey, **44%** of cleaners said that **hiring struggles was the biggest challenge** they faced. This time out, only **27%** said the same.

The average age of drycleaners in the report was **58** — and nobody seems to be slowing down. In terms of workload, only **26%** of the owner/operators **worked 39 hours or less**. That means **24%** worked between **40 and 49 hours**, **25%** worked between **50 and 59 hours**, and the remaining **25%** worked **60 hours or more**.

Perhaps even more surprising, **55% of owners** still don't believe in spending money on marketing, which is odd, because **39% of cleaners** believe their biggest challenge is finding ways to increase business or sales. Many would suggest marketing to address that need.

While on that topic, we are sincerely hoping that **100% of the industry** tries to support the latest marketing initiative announced by the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) on the front page. It will be patterned after the famous "Got Milk?" ad campaign that kicked off in the 1990s featuring various celebrities sporting milk mustaches and promoting the benefits of adding the dairy product to a daily diet.

Ray Kroner, chair of the DLI Social Media Action Committee behind the initiative, described what the association hopes to accomplish with it. "We need to connect with the 20 to 45-year-old demographics who are unaware of the services we provide. Now seems like the perfect time to educate the general population about what we offer in convenience, protecting wardrobe

investments, cleaning household fabrics, recycling efforts, environmental awareness, and, importantly, sustainability. Times have changed and so have we. Now we need to promote our evolution. If we don't do it, who will?"

The campaign will run across many social media platforms and DLI is relying on all drycleaners to share the posts, add comments and help amplify its reach. To learn more about what you can do, please go to www.DLIonline.org/impact and see how you can participate.

In addition to launching a social media campaign, DLI has also began accepting Hall of Fame nominations for this year's class of the industry's highest honor (see story on front page). The submission deadline is May 15, so be sure to nominate your candidate before that.

It probably also should be said that there is a Clean Show coming up rather quickly on the horizon. Now is a good time to start making plans and preparations using the official Clean Show site, www.cleanshow.com.

We will keep you up-to-date with the latest coverage of the show in the coming months. More importantly, though, if you ever miss or want to review anything, we keep an online archive of past issues that date back to 2018 so you can go back and search for topics and articles at your convenience. It is an excellent source of information.

One last thing — speaking of excellent sources of information — our columnist Don Desrosiers has launched a podcast that releases new episodes every two weeks. Look for "Talk Dryclean and Laundry USA" on Spotify, iHeart Radio and Apple Podcasts. Most episodes are a half hour or shorter and feature Don discussing a variety of topics — including his thoughts on the 2025 State of the Drycleaning Industry Report in an episode posted on Feb. 26.

Other episodes and topics include: Make Your Shirts Look Better Free; How to Train Employees; Dealing with Non-Standard Shirts; About Care Labels; How Press Pads Work; Alternative Solvents and much more.

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

BPS

communications inc.

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

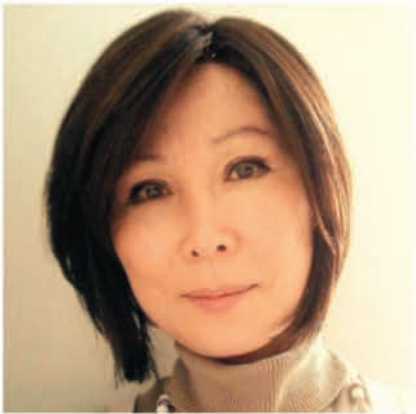


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SPECIAL REPORT

by JEFF SCHAPIRO

2025 State of the Industry Report: Insight & Trends

As 2025 unfolds, it's time to dive into the annual **Cleaner's Supply State of the Dry Cleaning Industry Report**. This year's survey, independently conducted by Drive Research, gathered insights from 894 drycleaning business owners across the U.S.

From shifting sales trends to the growing popularity of wet-cleaning, the report helps paint a detailed picture of where the industry stands, and where it's headed next.

Some of this might feel like déjà vu. But, hang tight — there are some surprises, too.

The Sales Snapshot: Up, Down or Steady?

First, the good news: **58% of drycleaners** saw their sales increase in 2024, compared to 2023. That isn't bad for an industry that's had its fair share of ups and downs in recent years.

Another **22% reported steady sales**, while **20% experienced a decline**.

However, increased sales doesn't always mean more profits. Rising costs — especially labor — have put the squeeze on profitability.

Only **29% of drycleaners** reported an increase in profits, while **36% stayed the same** and **35% saw their bottom line dip**.

The good news? Awareness of these challenges has spurred some operators to think differently about pricing, production schedules, and even marketing strategies.

Regional Differences: The North/South Divide

Not all regions are created equal when it comes to sales growth. The **South** led the charge, boasting the **greatest sales increase**, while the **West** lagged behind. But, this wasn't just limited to sales growth for the **South** — they also saw the **highest increase in profits**. The **West** lagged behind here, as well.

Not all regions are created equal when it comes to sales growth, and the numbers tell an interesting story.

The **South** took the spotlight, leading the charge with the biggest sales increase. But, it didn't stop there — profits followed suit, making the **South** a double winner.

Meanwhile, the **West** found itself **trailing behind** in both sales and profits, proving that

not every region can have its moment in the sun.

Speaking of regional trends, the report offers average pricing data across various garment categories, broken down by national, regional, and urban-suburban-rural locations.

As an example:

- **Laundered shirts** now average **\$4.15 nationally** — a 12% increase from 15 months ago.

- **Drycleaning prices** saw a more modest rise of **4 to 8%**.

The report also indicated the **national average price** for the following items:

Two-piece suit: \$18.18

Pants: \$8.06

Dress: \$14.87

Sweater \$8.43

Comforter \$38.30

Pricing data like this helps cleaners assess their own operations. Are you under-pricing? Over-pricing? Either way, it's food for thought.

Production Schedules and Shifts in Methods

When it comes to production schedules, drycleaners are sticking with what works: **46% of cleaners run production five days a week**, while **24% operate six days a week**.

What's really interesting is the growing trend toward wet-cleaning. About **31% of drycleaners** now use wet-cleaning for non-laundered shirt cleaning, with this method representing **16%** of their garment volume.

At the same time, **18% of drycleaners** are still using **perc** (perchloroethylene) — a reminder that the transition to newer technologies is happening at different speeds across the industry.

Staffing Challenges: A Brighter Picture

Staffing woes have plagued the industry for years, but there's a glimmer of hope.

According to this year's survey, only **27% of drycleaning owners** cited **staffing** as their **biggest challenge** — down from a daunting **44%** in the previous survey.

Even better, the number of cleaners reporting they're under-staffed fell from **47% to 35%**. While it's not time to pop the champagne just yet, these numbers show the tide might be turning.

Finding good help is still a

challenge, but it's encouraging to see some improvement.

Many operators are focusing on retention and making the job more attractive with flexible schedules and better pay.

Fewer Locations But Optimism Remains

Here's a little shift that caught our eye. The **average number of stores** owned by a typical drycleaner **dipped from 1.8 to 1.7 locations**.

While not a drastic change, it suggests that some cleaners are pulling back and focusing on fewer stores.

That said, the industry's optimism is hard to ignore: **44% of drycleaners** expect to see sales growth this coming year, and **54% plan capital improvements** in their business.

What's on top of their shopping list?

- 1) Drycleaning presses
- 2) Drycleaning machines
- 3) Boilers

This investment in infrastructure is a good sign that many operators are playing the long game.

Marketing: To Spend or Not to Spend?

While some cleaners embrace marketing, many are still skeptical. According to the report, **39% of drycleaners** say their biggest challenge is finding ways to increase business, yet **55% still don't believe in spending on marketing**.

For those who do invest in marketing, **Google Ads** is the favorite, followed by coupons and **Facebook Ads**, which is gaining traction.

Cleaners who've cracked the marketing code know it's all about targeting the right audience with the right offer.

Even a modest investment can go a long way toward driving new business.

What Does the Future Hold for the Industry?

As always, the future of the drycleaning industry depends on its people.

The **average drycleaner owner** in the survey is **58 years old** with **25 years of experience**.

It's no surprise, then, that **36% of owners** plan to sell or pass their business to a family member **within the next five years**.

The big question is: Who

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GOOD NEWS!
(WELL MOSTLY...)

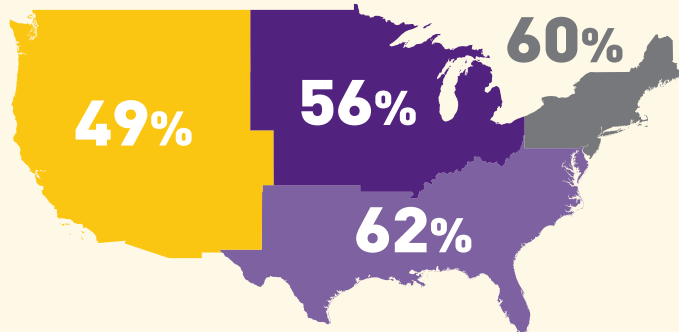


58% OF DRY CLEANERS SAW THEIR SALES GO UP IN 2024!



BUT ONLY 29% SAW THEIR PROFITS RISE.

AND THE WINNER IS...
THE SOUTH!

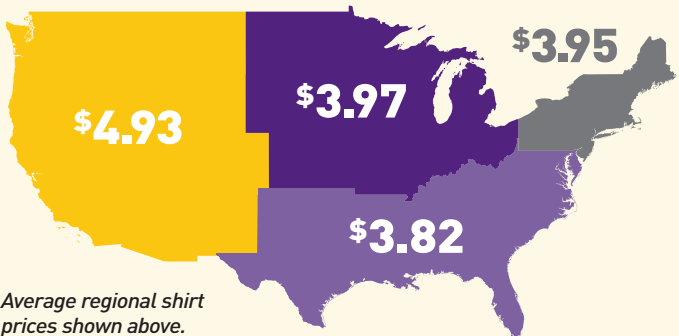


THE SOUTH LED THE CHARGE WITH THE MOST AMOUNT OF DRY CLEANERS SEEING A SALES INCREASE!

MEANWHILE, THE WEST SAW THE LEAST AMOUNT OF DRY CLEANERS SEEING AN INCREASE IN SALES.

PRICES ARE ON THE RISE.

\$4.15 | NATIONWIDE AVERAGE FOR A LAUNDERED SHIRT—A 12% INCREASE FROM 15 MONTHS AGO.



Average regional shirt prices shown above.

DRY CLEANING PRICES SAW, ON AVERAGE, A 4-8% INCREASE FROM THE PREVIOUS 15 MONTHS.

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Jeff Schapiro

2025 State of the Dry Cleaning Industry

Continued from page 6

will take the reins? Will we see a new generation of cleaners embrace innovation and sustainability while honoring the traditions that built this industry? Time will tell, but one thing's for sure — the drycleaning business is nothing if not resilient.

For the full report, visit www.cleanersupply.com/research-reports

Jeff Schapiro has been the president of Cleaner's Supply for more than 30 years. Originally, the business began in the basement of his drycleaners in upstate New York. Today, it is a manufacturer and distributor of more than 20,000 drycleaning products shipped to cleaners all over the world. He can be reached by email at jeff@cleanerssupply.com.

FEWER LOCATIONS, BETTER FOCUS.



THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF DRY CLEANING LOCATIONS PER OWNER DIPPED FROM 1.8 TO 1.7.

NOT HUGE, BUT AN INDICATOR DRY CLEANING OWNERS MIGHT BE FOCUSING ON LESS AND BETTER LOCATIONS.

HIRING MIGHT SLIGHTLY BE GETTING BETTER!

27% OF DRY CLEANING OWNERS SAY HIRING IS ONE OF THEIR BIGGEST HEADACHES.

SOUNDS BAD? THIS IS DOWN FROM 44% BACK IN OCTOBER 2023.



STAFF RECRUITMENT 2024

STAFF RECRUITMENT 2023

Obituary: James Cripe, Valet Cleaners, past DLI president

Jim Cripe — a longtime industry leader and owner of Valet Cleaners and Laundry — passed away on Feb. 27, 2025 at the age of 81.

Born in South Bend,



IN, on Aug. 2, 1943, Jim later made Louisiana his home and eventually graduated from Northwest Louisiana University in 1965.

He was a talented musician who began playing the trumpet in his high school band, The Lucky Seven, and later traveled with The Gentrys and other bands in the

1970s. He also taught himself to play the piano.

Jim would go on to build a successful career, starting at Litton Industries before settling in Temple, Texas, where he worked for Texas Hydraulics and Strasberger Enterprises. In 1972, he met the love of his life, Lillian “Cissy” Zehr, and they married that July,

blending their families. In 1975, they welcomed another son, completing their family of four children.

Always entrepreneurial, Jim purchased Valet Cleaners and Laundry in 1975. He dedicated over 50 years to the drycleaning business and was actively involved in the Texas Laundry and Drycleaning Association, the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI), and the Southwest Drycleaners Association (SDA), serving as president and chairman of the board on the latter groups.

Jim was also an elder at First Christian Church for over 30 years. He had a zest for adventure, earning his pilot’s license, playing racquetball, biking, and traveling across the U.S. with Cissy in their RV.

Jim is survived by his loving children: Kelli Cripe Nelson, Debbie Cripe-Drake and husband Stan, Allan Cripe and wife Molly, and Daniel Cripe and wife Rachel. He was a proud grandfather of twelve and great-grandfather of four, bringing joy and love to all their lives.

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

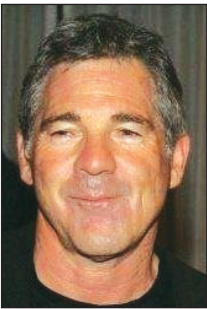
-Mike Astorino, Fabricare Cleaners



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Founder of Herson Supply

Obituary: Ron Herson



On Feb. 20, Ronald Gene Herson, founder and owner of Herson Supply of Gaithersburg, MD, passed away at the age of 72.

Born on April 30, 1952, Ron would go on to live a life of purpose, love and ambition. He was a successful businessman known for his exceptional work ethic and keen sense of opportunity, always striving to make a positive impact on the world around him.

In his personal life, Ron was the proud father of five children: Scott, Emily, Michael, Bradley and Dana, with their mothers Martha and Anne; and six grandchildren: Juliana, Sebastian, Lucas, Landon, Stevie and Logan.

In addition to family and work, Ron also had a deep love for life’s simple pleasures. He was an avid cook, and his culinary creations brought people together. Whether it was preparing a Sunday meal for his family or hosting friends with a new Caribbean-inspired dish, he approached cooking with the same love and care that he did everything else in life. His passion for the flavors of the Caribbean was especially close to his heart, and his meals were a celebration of culture, warmth, and generosity.

Cycling was another of his great passions, and he found peace and joy on long rides, whether exploring new landscapes or simply enjoying the open road. His love for cycling not only kept him physically active but also gave him the opportunity to connect with nature.

GS GULF STATES

DRY CLEANING EQUIPMENT

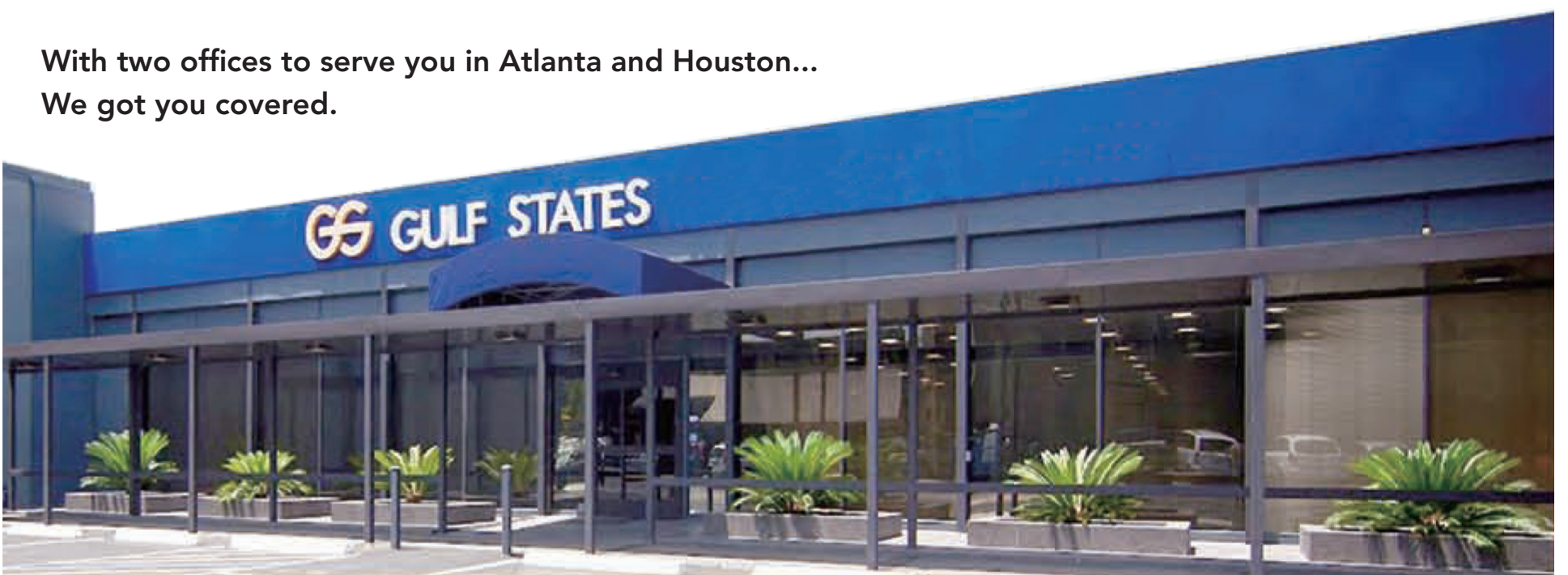
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Registration opens for Clean '25 in Orlando

Continued from page 1
Discover how to position your business as the top choice for customers — regardless of price. This program will focus on proven strategies for delivering exceptional customer service, building customer loyalty and creating a value-driven brand that makes price comparisons irrelevant.

Also on Sunday morning, popular technology guru and speaker Beth Z will present “Seven Things Your Company Should Be Doing with AI” at 9 a.m. This seminar will explore artificial intelligence applications, from streamlining operations and improving customer service to enhancing marketing strategies and optimizing inventory management. Learn how AI tools can save you time, reduce costs

and boost profitability.
On Monday morning, the association will offer a panel discussions of “Cleaning for a Cause: Community Impact and Business Growth” at 9 a.m. Attendees will discover how giving back can make a difference for both your community and your business. The panel will feature drycleaning operators who will discuss how they participate in charitable causes and strengthen their business’s reputation.

Afternoon educational sessions

In addition to the early morning educational sessions, there will be afternoon programs scheduled on Aug. 23 and 24.
A popular speaker at previous industry events, Chris Kuehl of Armada Corporate

Intelligence will be back to offer an “Economic Outlook: What to Expect in 2025 and Beyond” at 2 p.m.
An experienced economist, Kuehl will offer his insights on the current state of the economy and his forecast for the year to come – specifically, what small business owners need to know to navigate that coming economy.
On the same day, professional speaker and trainer Jessica Stollings-Holder will present a program on “Generational Fluency” at 3:30 p.m. She has studied how to bridge gaps across generations for over two decades and uses theoretical, historical and practical insights to present a high-level view of the generations in the workforce and how to bring them together for

greater understanding and more effective working relationships.
There will be another pair of educational programs presented on Saturday afternoon, including one by Kristina Stubblefield, a digital marketing specialist, who will present “Unlock the Power of AI to Revolutionize Your Business” at 2 p.m. Those who attend will learn how AI can elevate their marketing by personalizing interactions and streamlining operations.
Lastly, there will be an expert panel of laundry professionals slated to speak from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on “How to Start and Grow a Commercial Laundry Business.” Panel members will discuss the best way to begin such a transition, how the industry works, what

competition exists and whether or not it’s the right move for you.
Innovation Awards debut
This year, show organizer Messe Frankfurt will present its inaugural Innovation Awards program to honor exceptional performance in the fields of industry research, new materials and technologies. They will be measured in four categories: Best New Application; Best New Product; Best New Technology for Sustainability; and Best New Technology for Automation.
Exhibiting companies have until a July 18 deadline to submit innovations to be considered for the program. A jury of industry experts will assess the entries and the winners will be acknowledged and announced sometime during Clean 2025.

For those planning on making the trip to Orlando in August, it’s best to register as early as possible. There is a reduced cost for “early birds” who sign up by July 19 — \$130 for non-members and \$120 for members of one of the sponsoring associations. After that date, the cost goes up to \$170 per non-member and \$156 per member between July 20 and Aug. 16. On-site registration costs \$200 per person for both members and non-members.

DLI will be headquartered at the Rosen Centre Hotel, which will be offering Clean Show 2025 attendees a special discounted rate starting at \$215 per night. Links to that hotel, and other official Clean Show hotels, can be found by visiting the “Planning and Preparing” section of the website, www.thecleanshow.com.

For general attendees, there are plenty of hotel options to choose from, including the Hilton Orlando, Rosen Plaza Hotel, Rosen Shingle Creek, DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at Sea World and several others with nightly rates ranging from \$159.

The official Clean Show site also has links for Southwest Airlines, United Airlines and Delta Airlines discount codes for those needing to make flight plans.

In the same section, there is a downloadable schedule for the complimentary shuttle bus that runs to and from the Clean Show hotels and the Orange County Convention Center. Service will run from 7 to 11 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 23. On Sunday and Monday, it will run from 7:30 to 11 a.m. and 3 to 6 p.m. Finally, on Tuesday, it will run from 7:30 to 11 a.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the afternoon.



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~ Benjamin Franklin

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DLI begins timeline for Hall of Fame nominations

Continued from page 1
stewardship, and a deep-seated passion for the industry. DLI's Board of Directors established the Hall of Fame Award to recognize and acknowledge individuals who have contributed to the betterment of the drycleaning and laundry industry. "At a DLI Board meeting last year, we all thought of people in our industry who helped us grow personally and professionally and how we

might honor them," said Norman Way of Puritan Cleaners in Richmond, Virginia and DLI's District 2 Director. "We know others feel the same and the DLI Hall of Fame Award seems like the perfect way to commend and recognize these impactful leaders who left a lasting effect on us all." Nominations for DLI's Hall of Fame Award are open April 1 through May 15 and will require a nomination form that is available online at

DLIonline.org/HoF. To be eligible, candidates must have a minimum of ten years working in the drycleaning and laundry industry. The selection process will involve a two-stage voting process by DLI's Hall of Fame committee, and the awardees will be publicly announced and celebrated later this year. DLI's Board of Directors will review applications and recipients will be announced to the industry by mid-Sep-

tember. Candidates for the award include industry pioneers, exceptional business leaders, and community advocates. DLI intends to shine a spotlight on individuals who have made a lasting positive impact on the industry. "Professional drycleaning and laundry operators from all over the world contribute to the betterment of our industry every day," said DLI CEO Mary Scalco. "Our goal with the Hall of Fame is to recog-

nize contributions made by any professional in our industry who has made a positive impact and honor them as examples for other members of the industry. All cleaning professionals, regardless of membership, are welcome to nominate industry professionals they see as inspirational for this award." For information about the DLI Hall of Fame Award and to make a nomination, visit www.DLIonline.org/HoF.

Industry ad campaign will ask: *Got cleaning?*

Continued from page 1
dence, elegance, and lasting impressions that professionally cared-for garments provide. "During my travels to trade shows and association

board meetings, as well as while promoting the benefits of DLI membership, one request consistently emerged: a 'Got Milk?'-style campaign for the drycleaning industry," said

DLI President Kyle Nesbit. "In the past a campaign like this wasn't economically feasible, but today with social media we believe we have a channel to finally deliver on this ask."

Watch for posts from DLI focused on explaining what items consumers can actually dryclean, with emphasis on convenience, the environmental impact of home laundry,

and much more. DLI's Social Media Action Committee is composed of DLI leadership, several DLI members from several markets around the U.S., and an outside strategic social media consulting company developed the program over several months. Posts will be primarily video driven and audience engagement data will determine how the campaign develops, leaning into topics users find most interesting.

The campaign will seek to overcome common misconceptions about professional garment care to an urban professional social media audience in their late twenties to early forties. The campaign's central themes include: the value of time; the feeling of confidence; sustainability; community involvement; and industry innovations.

"This campaign is about more than just cleaning clothes; it's about showcasing the transformative impact that professional garment care has on people's lives," noted Mary Scalco, CEO of DLI. "By encouraging drycleaners to actively share these posts, we aim to expand our message to a broader audience and help consumers appreciate the expertise behind the services professional cleaners provide."

Drycleaners are encouraged to participate by:

- Following DLI on Facebook and Instagram to access the posts;
- Engaging with content with likes, comments, and shares to amplify its reach;
- Sharing posts with their customers to push these consumer-oriented messages to their feeds.

DLI has created a landing page, www.DLIonline.org/impact, where drycleaners can learn more about the initiative. The page includes step-by-step instructions, direct links to social media platforms, and some tips for maximizing engagement.



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Creating content that connects with customers

In a world saturated with advertising, it's easy to tune out the constant barrage of *buy this* and *try that*. At Sudsies, we believe in a different approach. We understand that our guests aren't just looking for a drycleaner; they're looking for a partner in simplifying their lives.

That's why our marketing isn't just about selling our services; it's about providing genuine value and building a relationship based on trust and helpfulness.

We see ourselves as more than just a business; we're your friendly neighbor — always ready to lend a hand (and expertly clean your favorite cashmere sweater).

Our marketing content reflects this philosophy. Instead of endless promotions, we focus on providing information that truly benefits our community.

Travel tips and more

Take our recent blog article, for example. *"Lights, Camera, Laundry!"* provides our guests with a complete film festival packing list, and even gives

them dates and locations for all the upcoming festivals they might want to attend.

Of course, we also mention that we can help get their couture favorites **red carpet** ready

why they're essential for preserving the quality and longevity of your clothes.

Ever wonder why your silk blouse requires special attention? *We'll break it down for you.*

Our recent blog article *"Lights, Camera, Laundry!"* provides our guests with a complete film festival packing list, and even gives them dates and locations for all the upcoming festivals they might want to attend.

(and care for all their garments when they return home, too).

Our Instagram account is also filled with helpful information, including our 24/7 Automatic Dry Cleaning Machine locations, how to schedule a valet pickup, and more.

Educating and empowering our guests

We believe that an informed customer is a happy customer. That's why we dedicate a significant portion of our content to educating our guests about the intricacies of garment care. We delve into the science behind drycleaning, explaining the different processes and

Curious about the benefits of professional stain removal? *We've got you covered.*

Our blog posts and social media channels are filled with practical tips and advice. We share insights on how to care for different fabrics, how to organize your closet, and even how to pack efficiently for your next trip (because we know our guests are often on the go).

We understand the frustration of trying to decipher confusing care labels, so we provide clear and concise explanations to take the guesswork out of garment care.

Building a community

At Sudsies, we're not just cleaning clothes; we're building a community. We strive to create a welcoming and approachable atmosphere, both

Our marketing reflects this commitment to convenience. We highlight our pickup and delivery services, our online ordering platform, and other features designed to make your life easier.

Our commitment to providing valuable content is ongoing. We're constantly looking for new and innovative ways to serve our community.

We're exploring partnerships with local businesses, developing educational workshops, and continuing to expand our online resources.

At Sudsies, we believe that marketing should be more than just advertising; it should be about building relationships, providing value, and making our guests' lives a little bit easier.

We're not just cleaning clothes; we're caring for our community. And that's something we can truly smile about.

Jason Loeb strives to deliver exceptional results and leave a lasting impression on the customer, business partners, and the communities served by his brands. Through strategic partnerships and real estate acquisitions, he ventured into the textile care industry to realize his dream of building a remarkable "people business." Sudsies represents his commitment to preserving the integrity of couture and cherished clothing by ensuring that each garment receives the care it deserves. To contact Jason, send email to jason@sudsies.com.

in our stores and online.

Our marketing content reflects this commitment to community. We share stories about our team, highlight local events, and encourage dialogue with our guests. We want to be more than just a faceless corporation; we want to be a familiar and trusted presence in your neighborhood.

Our team loves to spend time learning about guests, remembering the names of their children and spouses, and even keeping inventory of their clothing so that we can keep them updated on how it is wearing over the years.

Why should our marketing be any different? Our goal is to add value, not exhaust them with ads.

Saving time and stress

We know that our guests are busy people. Between work, family, and social commitments, there's often little time left for mundane tasks like laundry. That's where Sudsies comes in. We want to free up your time and alleviate some of the stress in your life.



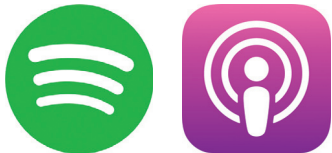
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DUBLIN CLEANERS in Columbus, OH, recently purchased a new Fimbmatc EG 80K machine for use with Kreussler Solvon K4 solvent. The sale and installation was handled by Capstone Equipment. Pictured with the machine is Brandon Oney of Capstone Equipment.

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BUILDING VALUE



BY KERMIT ENGH

Why you should consider firing yourself

If you find yourself in a position where your customers always insist on speaking with you directly, it is time to consider shifting your business structure. Doing so can improve the value and efficiency of your business.

When I bought Fashion Cleaners in 1992, I had one high-maintenance customer who always asked for the prior owner. I would simply say he wasn't in today. Could I help her? After a couple of months, she said, "Rueben isn't here anymore, is he?" I said, "No, but can I help you?"

A business that can thrive without the owner at the center of all its operations is more valuable because processes can run smoothly with or without you. If you're too stuck in the weeds, it will be difficult to improve or evolve — and your employees will miss the opportunity to grow and become advocates for your brand.

This process is hard but necessary. Think of all the experiences and knowledge about your business that reside in your head — vendors, repair people, contacts, and situations. Start by documenting this information, just as you've likely documented your operational processes. To maximize the value of your business, aim to quietly slip into the background and let your staff take center stage. Here are five ways to make customers less inclined to call you.

1) Re-rank. If you display

bios of key staff members on your site, reorder the list alphabetically rather than hierarchically. Don't take center stage.

2) Re-brand. If your surname is in your company name, consider a rebrand. There's nothing that makes a customer want to deal with the owner more than having the owner's surname featured in the company name. I've acquired three companies and started six during my career. Intentionally, I didn't use my family name, and it made selling three of those businesses much easier.

3) Hire a president or general manager. Giving someone the title of president or general manager signals they have real authority to solve customer problems. This may be tough, as it requires you to give up control. Many entrepreneurs get to where they are because they've been in control of everything.

4) Use an email auto-responder. Tim Ferriss, author of *The 4-Hour Work Week*, made the email auto-responder famous — and it can serve you well. Set up an automatic response for emails explaining that you're traveling or attending to a strategic project and are unable to respond immediately. Train your customers to direct questions to the person best suited to answer them.

A word of caution: If you continue to answer customer emails after setting up an auto-responder, it will become ap-

parent you're hiding behind it, which could diminish your credibility. Once you set it up, be ready to let others step in.

5) Play hooky. If your business is one customers visit in person, consider setting up a home office so you can spend more time away from your location. I enjoy my home office and find it allows me to work on my business, read books, and further my knowledge. Remember, leaders are readers.

For hard-charging, A-type entrepreneurs, the steps above can be complicated and may feel counterintuitive. They might even have a short-term negative impact on your company's sales. But, once you train your customers to rely on your team, you will be able to scale further.

Now, if you draw a picture that represents your role in your business, what would it look like? Are you at the top of an organizational chart, or stuck in the middle of your business like a hub in a bicycle wheel? The **Hub & Spoke** model is a driver of value that shows how dependent your business is on you for survival. It can only be as strong as the hub. The moment the hub is overwhelmed, the entire system fails. Acquirers generally avoid businesses like these because they understand the dangers of buying a company too dependent on the owner.

Here are five signs your business could be too dependent on you:

1. You are the only signing authority. Most business owners give themselves final authority all the time. What happens if you're away for a few days and an important supplier needs to be paid? Consider giving an employee signing authority for an amount you're comfortable with, and change the mailing address for your bank statements to your home. That way, you can review everything that comes out of your account and ensure the privilege is not being abused. I've yet to give up signing all the checks and reconciling bank accounts myself, a result of a bad experience many years ago. But, it's important to start letting go and always trust, but verify.

2. Your revenue is flat compared to last year. Flat revenue from one year to the next can indicate you're in a Hub & Spoke model. No matter how efficient you are, every business that relies on its owner reaches capacity at some point. Consider narrowing your product and service line by eliminating technically complex offers that require your personal involvement and focus instead on selling fewer things to more people.

3. Your vacations don't feel like vacations. If you spend your vacation answering questions and putting out fires from your cell phone, it's time to cut the cord. Start by taking one day off and see how your company operates without you.

Build systems to handle failure points. Gradually work up to where you can take a few weeks off without impacting your business. I know owners who have graduated to turning off their phones except for a short time in the morning and late in the afternoon. This is tough. We're trained to always be available. Think about what you could do with that time.

4. You know all your customers by first name. It's great to have your finger on the pulse of your market, but knowing every customer by name can indicate you're relying too heavily on personal relationships to hold your business together. Consider hiring a sales team to replace you as the "rainmaker," and, as inefficient as it may seem, have a trusted employee shadow you when meeting customers.

When we acquired our first cleaners in 1992, I worked hard to know everyone who came in the door. Now, I love hearing from customers that our customer relations managers know their names — or even better, having my managers introduce me to our customers.

5. You get CC'd on more than five emails a day. If employees, customers, and suppliers are constantly CC'ing you on emails, they may be looking for your tacit approval or you haven't clearly communicated when you need to be involved in their work. Start by asking employees to stop using the CC line unless it's absolutely necessary, and only if they need a specific action from you. Start asking, "What would you do if I weren't here?" and use the answers for coaching. Soon, questions will stop, and actions will happen.

Until next month, keep building value.

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.



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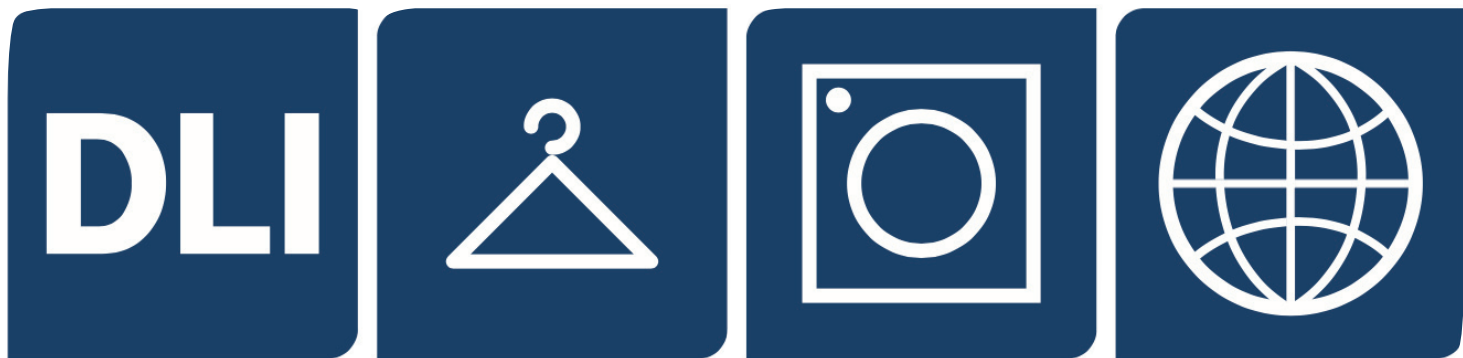


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**DLI's Board of Directors invites you to
nominate inspirational industry professionals at
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- Nominations open April 1 – May 15
- Membership not required to nominate or receive award
- Recipients will be announced later in 2025
- Open to all drycleaners, launderers, allied trades, consultants or any professional involved in the drycleaning and laundry industry
- Learn more about the program and make a nomination at DLIonline.org/HoF

WRENCH WORKS



By BRUCE GROSSMAN

Drycleaning machine systems — part 2

Last month, I explained the basic processes of the most common type of distillation system found in drycleaning machinery. In this issue, I'll describe the components associated with the distillation process in detail.

There are many variations in the distillation systems used in drycleaning; I've pictured the distillation system for perc. However, the safety devices are essentially similar for machines using other solvents (not all of the items discussed and those shown in the illustrations may not be present on your machinery).

The steam heating section of the still contains the following components, which correlate to the numbers shown in the circles in the accompanying illustration. The numbers assigned to the paragraphs indicate the numbers attached to the components shown in the illustration:

1) Steam Pressure Regulator. Controls the pressure of the steam in the still heating system. Steam temperature directly correlates to steam pressure, so when you adjust the

steam pressure, you vary the temperature of the still heat.

The correct steam pressure setting is usually between 40 to 60 lbs/sq. inch. Settings will vary depending on the machine manufacturer and the solvent used, so follow the manufacturer's suggested setting.

Common problems encountered with this device are:

A) Regulator set too high or not regulating. If the pressure in the still is excessively high, it's possible to overheat the solvent and cause it to boil too violently. This boiling forces the raw still content up the still riser pipe into the still condenser, contaminating the condensed solvent (condensate) in the condenser, the condensate flow path throughout the machine, and the water separator.

This contamination will usually contain drycleaning detergent, which prevents the proper separation of water and solvent in the water separator when mixed with the water in the condensate. A milky white mixture of solvent or water can usually be observed when this

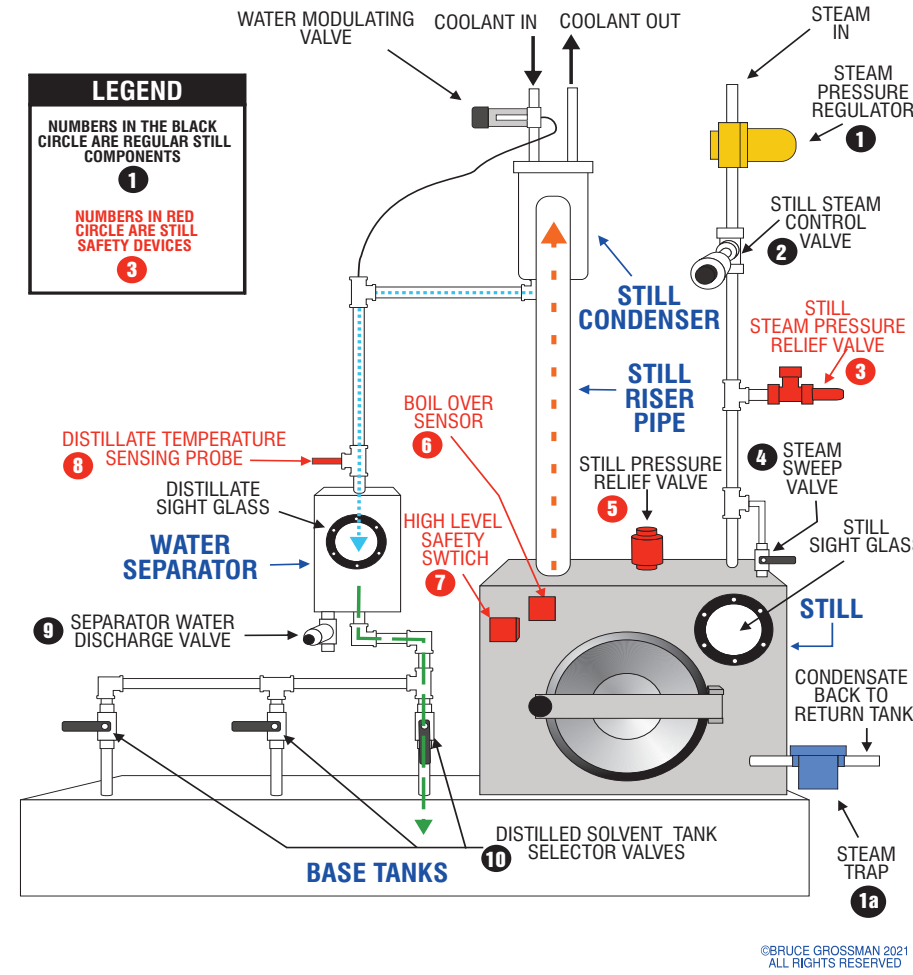
condition is present.

B. Regulator set too low or stuck shut. The solvent will not evaporate at the expected rate if the regulator provides insufficient steam pressure, resulting in very slow or no distillation. This condition may lead to causing the still to overfill when solvent is programmed to be pumped automatically into the still during the dry cleaning cycle.

2) Steam control valve. This valve starts and stops the steam flow to the still. Its operation is usually selectable from a button on the control panel and is also controlled by safety devices,

TYPICAL DRY CLEANING MACHINE DISTILLATION SYSTEM

*This illustration is a composite of several machine brands and may not represent your exact still configuration



which will be explained later in the article.

Common problems encountered with this device are: **A) Valve not opening.** This is often a pneumatic (air system) problem. Either the air pressure to open the valve is too low, which is likely an incoming air pressure regulator problem, or the air is blowing by the valve's piston, which is used to open the valve. A symptom of this valve not opening would be no or very slow distillation.

B. Valve not closing. A steam control valve sticking open is usually caused by a build-up of scale on the shaft connecting the valve disk to the piston, causing friction that exceeds the force exerted by the spring that closes the valve.

Symptoms of this problem during standard distillation include a continuously heated still, which may result in a still boilover, hot solvent, leading to poor solvent/water separation, as well as increased utility costs.

3) Steam pressure relief valve. This valve relieves steam pressure in the still steam jacket if it exceeds the safe design limits. It's important to understand that this is the pressure in the steam jacket that surrounds the lower portion of the still, not to be con-

fused with the area of the still that contains solvent.

Common problems encountered with this device are:

A) Valve not opening. If the steam pressure exceeds the limits of the still steam jacket, it could cause steam leaks or a rupture of some component used in heating the still. I have found no realistic method of testing this valve.

B) Valve leaking. If this valve leaks, the escaping steam will be obvious and will likely require the replacement of the valve.

That's it for now. Next, I'll explain the safety devices used in the distillation system.

Bruce Grossman is the Chief of R&D for EZtimers Manufacturing. EZtimers manufactures machines that make your machines run better. For those needing to replace Zero-Waste or Galaxy misters, see our SAHARA 2 model. For those with boiler problems, check out our EZ-Level and EZ-Dose machines. For more information on EZtimers products, visit www.eztimers.com. Please address any questions or comments for Bruce to bruce@eztimers.com or call (702) 376-6693.

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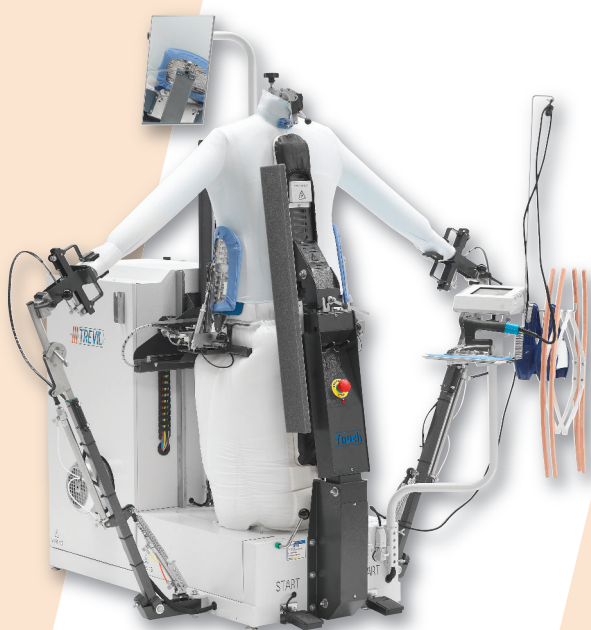


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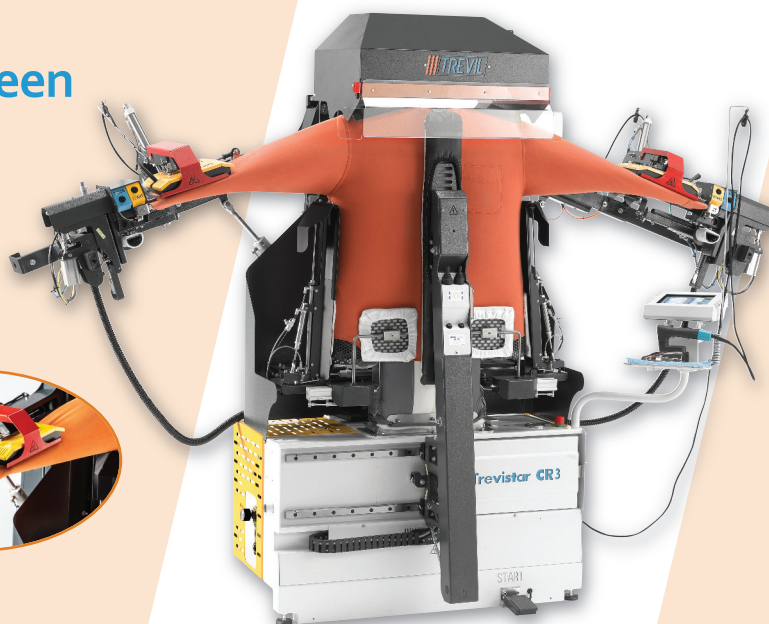
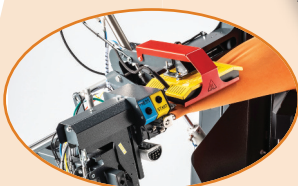
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/// NEW MODEL

/// NEW MODEL



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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

How to manage finding the right manager

Let's face it. It's difficult to find managers in this business. Let me be more specific. It's difficult to find qualified managers in this business. This is an inconvenient truth because I believe the most valuable investment that you can make — the one with the most significant Return on Investment — is a qualified manager. I see clear patterns.

1) Hard workers with an exemplary work ethic are promoted to management.

I am as guilty as anyone of taking a great employee and wishing them into a supervisory role. This has a clear advantage. It is important that employees view their leader as a person that isn't ever afraid to roll up their sleeves. If you expect a lot out of your staff, but are personally a slouch, you will fail as a manager.

However, the downside will keep you stagnant. This person will do whatever it takes to get the work out. They will push through anything to make it happen. They will work long hours if necessary. This is the most common type of manager that I see. The problem is they

work harder than they should. They are fine with being the best employee in the company, but they don't groom their subordinates to be the same.

There was a drop store manager in Louisiana some years ago who I am certain was the best drop store manager ever — *and he knew it*. He loved being the envy of his peers, the one who they looked up to.

He would do anything that was asked of him, except for one thing. I believe that he would have been much more valuable to the company if he worked to make the other managers in the company as good as he was, rather than just viewing them from his ivory tower. These managers are often too involved in the day-to-day and in their own agenda to look for ways to improve the company, streamline the operation and improve the customer experience.

Change is tough for them and they cite being "too busy" as the reason for wanting everything to remain status quo.

2) Long-term employees are promoted to management.

This type of manager isn't quite as common as the previous one, but there's a bunch out there and they are often very poor. Most times, I find they are on the wrong team. They are in a management role but they aren't on *your* team.

It's easy to see this once you peel back the candy coating. Let's say that this person is your production manager and you pressure him/her to improve pressing productivity. Their response will be, "I keep telling them," but nothing improves. Many managers think that they have done their job because they *keep telling them*. Their job isn't to tell them; their job is to make it happen. Anybody can do the telling!

When push comes to shove, the manager still has failed to improve pressing productivity, but now the defense for failure becomes more vivid.

Now, instead of saying, "I keep telling them," they say, "These people need their hours." You know that you have the wrong person in place when they say this.

This statement shows that they are on the employees'

team, not yours. When I hear this, I am not even sure that they ever sincerely pressured the pressers to work more aggressively towards their production goals. I consider that they probably chose to side-step the issue in order to avoid a confrontation with the staff.

Remember, this manager was once their equal, but now they are expected to be their superior when they jumped to your side of the fence. That change in their thinking never took place, in spite of their words. The results, or lack of them, proves this.

3) New hires that used to be a manager for another drycleaner are promoted to management.

Sometimes you think that you've scored a touchdown when you stumble upon a person who was a manager at another cleaners, near or far. Sometimes you will be right. The trick is to make sure that this person adopts your methods first rather than you adopt his or her style. They might come to the table with everything you need, or they may come with bad habits that have continually thwarted his/her success or advancement.

If he is the former, then he is demonstrating his flexibility and his ability to adapt. Just because you need a manager does not mean that any of your procedures need changing. Just because you hire someone from the outside does not mean that their ideas are better than yours. I see this often with new start-up plants. Someone completely unfamiliar with this industry hires a much-needed manager with an extensive resume. Every word this person utters sounds like gospel. This is very dangerous, especially in the case of these industry newbies. By the time the new owner catches on, much damage has been done, and sometimes it's too late.

As a very costly byproduct of any of these, investments in equipment are made in an effort to do the management work. Equipment doesn't run any business. Managers do.

When you have any sort of problem, the solution always lies within management. It's a costly lesson. Examples of this are everywhere. You find that your shirt pressing quality is lacking. Customers are complaining, or worse.

You see a shirt unit at the Clean Show that presses shirt

after shirt, flawlessly. You buy that but do not get the same results. Because you are only getting 20 pants per hour, you buy a sandwich legger so that you can get 50 pants per hour. It doesn't happen. You switch to bar codes to speed up assembly and eliminate errors. Nothing changes.

All of these undesirable results happen because you didn't need a shirt unit, a pants press or an assembly machine. You needed a manager who continually develops the staff, works to improve the company and to enhance the customer experience. Equipment minus management often turns out to be a train wreck.

I have found that former restaurant managers adapt well to this industry. The environment in which they work is similar in that the surroundings are not glamorous, the need to get it done now prevails and it can be hot and uncomfortable to work. The learning curve can be steep, but the right person easily overcomes that obstacle.

Unfortunately, the epilogue here does not contain a magical answer — only wisdom. We all have made bad hires but the trick is to be capable of recognizing when enough is enough... being able to read the handwriting on the wall... to be able to see inside the crystal ball (one more for the cliché-fest).

If you have multiple plants, train a new manager for plant A at plant B. If you don't have more than one plant, train a new manager at a drop store so that he/she gets as much experience as possible with everything that goes on there — including reading lots of back issues of this and every other publication. Good luck. It's a challenge out there!

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 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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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

The causes and cures of dye bleeding

Dye bleeding is a fairly common occurrence plaguing drycleaners. Dye bleeding can occur in drycleaning, wetcleaning or spotting.

It is important to pinpoint the source of the bleeding so proper remedies can be applied.

Dye bleeding can occur due to several factors.

1) Poor dye fastness in manufacture.

This means that the dyes are not properly applied or set during manufacture. Dye bleeding can occur in drycleaning due to solvent soluble dye or wetcleaning due to fugitive dyes to water.

Bleeding can also occur in spotting due to wet and dry-side chemicals used. It is not unusual for fabrics to be soluble in both wet and dryside solvents.

2) Hot solvent.

Hot solvent induces dye bleeding. There are many drycleaners using solvent heaters to heat up their solvent

and make it more aggressive.

Hot solvent will make the solvent more aggressive giving it the ability to remove more dryside stains but adding to its ability to produce bleeding and dye transfer.

3) Poor dyes will bleed in wetcleaning even if proper dye setting agents are used.

Dye bleeding is more apt to occur if the garments are not agitated enough to flush away loose dye.

This means that garments which are soaked will tend to bleed and transfer dye more readily than if the garments are kept in motion by agitation.

4) Spotting.

Dye bleeding and transfer can occur in spotting if the drycleaner does not use a white towel to contain the loose dye.

The use of a towel is also necessary to detect poor dye fastness.

The use of alkalis and protein formulas may increase the possibility of dye bleeding, especially on silk and wool.

Cures and Prevention

1) Drycleaning.

The cooler the solvent, the less chance dye bleeding will occur. Cool solvent decreases the aggressive nature of the solvent.

should be wetcleaned again, using adequate mechanical action so loose dye can be flushed away from the fabric.

3) Spotting.

All spotters must use a white towel when flushing.

Dye bleeding is more apt to occur if the garments are not agitated enough to flush away loose dye.

If dye bleeding does occur in drycleaning, the drycleaner should re-clean the garments.

Water and wet side spotting agents should not be applied since this will set the dye and change a dryside dye into a wet side dye.

2) Wetcleaning.

Wetcleaning using an acid-based detergent reduces the incidence of dye bleeding. Cooler water temperatures also reduced the incidence of dye bleeding.

If dye bleeding does occur in wetcleaning, the garment

Use a proper lubricant when applying mechanical action to a stain. The lubricant will tend to suspend the loose dye so it can be flushed away without settling on the fabric.

If the dye bleeding is noticeable on a fabric it should be flushed with the steam gun and then using air and pressure to push the dye into the cloth while drying rapidly.

Bleaching Process

When dye bleeding does not respond to the aforementioned processes it may need a bleaching process. Do not use

a bleach without testing, making sure it does not effect the base dye and will remove the dye that bled.

Titanium sulphate is usually the most effective bleach to remove dye bleeding. It is not unusual, however, for other bleaches such as sodium hypochlorite to work on fabrics such as cotton, linen, rayon and polyester.

The drycleaner can also attempt to use a mild solution of a bleaching agent, even if the base dye is slightly affected when testing.

The drycleaner would make up a very mild bleaching bath and only immerse the garment in the bath for a few seconds before removing and rinsing.

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

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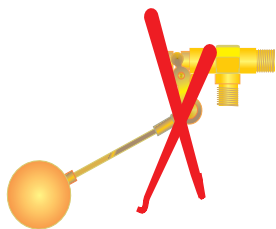
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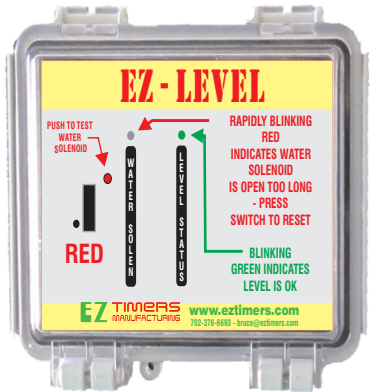


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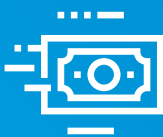


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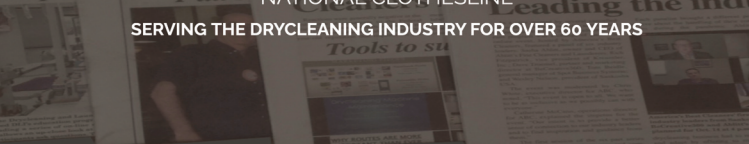
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FallFest EXPO pushes date back



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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, clippers and

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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 for...

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Light always follows darkness
by Peter Blake

It has been a long, interesting and challenging 18 months. To say the least, I know I have never worked harder or more hours than I have during the past year and a half. I also know I am not alone, and...



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

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



A Tribute to James Peuster
by Mark Albrecht and Jennifer Whitmarsh

As we round out 2021, let's recognize an achievement of a familiar personality in our industry. James Peuster, JP (as many know him) begins his 20th year consulting teams...



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