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An attentive industry assembles in Irving



DL EXPO West 2026 was a popular event, beginning with the bus trip (top picture) to visit Sunshine Cleaners, Avon Cleaners and Tide Laundromat. Popular seminars during the weekend included a guest panel (bottom left) of Ricardo Torres, Nicolas Abuawad, Bobby Patel and Ryan Fish, and one by Katie Kratz (bottom right), who discussed “Bridging the Gap Between Your Business and the Next Generation.”

By Peter Blake, DLI Director of Association Services

The DL EXPO West was everything the industry needed — and more. The event, co-sponsored by the California Cleaners Association (CCA) and the Southwest Drycleaners Association (SDA), proved to be a resounding success with more than 900 badges issued altogether — including nearly 700 cleaners and launderers.

Additionally, there were just under 120 exhibit booths and one of the strongest educational lineups in recent years.

From the outset, DL EXPO West offered a dynamic blend of networking, education and exploration of new ideas and emerging industry trends.

The event kicked off with a sold-out bus tour of three Dallas-area operations: Sunshine Cleaners, Avon Cleaners and a Tide Laundromat.

All 150 seats were filled, with additional attendees placed on a waiting list.

“This was a great way to start,” said Liz Williams, executive director of SDA. “What better way to experience innovation than by seeing it in a live, working plant? Business owners value the opportunity to visit other operations and take home ideas they can apply immediately.”

Following the tour, the show floor opened with a cocktail preview, giving attendees the opportunity to connect while exploring new products and innovations.

There was no shortage of activity. Two new point-of-sale systems — Magnolia and a new offering from Extract — were introduced to the industry.

Updates to the Sankosha press-free finisher drew strong

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When Door-to-Door Cleaners went 100% electric

Converting his entire fleet of delivery vehicles to 100% electric had been on Sajid Veera’s mind for quite some time, but the technology wasn’t quite there yet. So, he started on a smaller scale for his Door-to-Door Cleaners business in California.

“We switched two of the vehicles about five months ago. We’re doing our own in-house beta test and then

everything worked out,” Veera recalled, noting that even though nothing had gone wrong, he was still a bit convinced that something was going to go wrong.

“We didn’t tell anybody. We didn’t make any announcements,” he added. “Then, on the 1st of January this year, we switched everything over. I was like, ‘Screw it. Let’s just see what happens.’”

It certainly didn’t hurt that Door-to-Door Cleaners had a backup plan. “I still didn’t sell any of my other vans. I held on to those for three months, and for three months, nothing happened,” he said. “We had one instance where it didn’t get charged, but it was human error. The system didn’t fail.”

If Veera sounds a little paranoid, it’s only because his

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California Senator Ben Allen (right) congratulated Sajid Veera (left) for converting his entire delivery fleet to electric-powered vehicles.

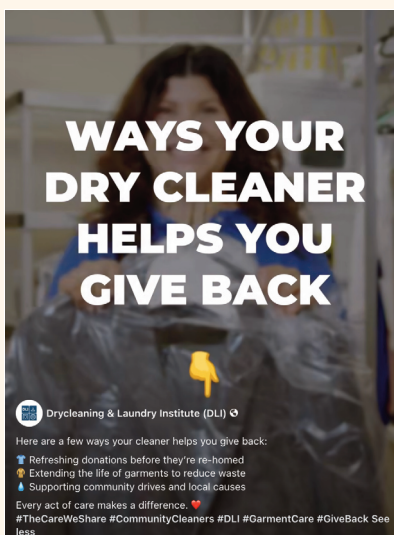
DLI launches new social media content program

For member struggling to find interesting things to post about, the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute (DLI) recently launched a new premium social media content service designed to help drycleaning businesses enhance their online presence with professionally designed, custom branded posts and video (see sample on right).

The new service packages boutique social media content developed through DLI’s recent full industry marketing efforts, including posts originally shared through DLI’s own channels and shown to connect strongly with audiences. The offering also includes brand-new content created exclusively for participating businesses.

The service is built around the same video-led, story-driven approach that helped DLI generate 770,535 views,

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An industry looking to build the proper wings

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., one of America's greatest writers, refused to work with computers during his life. He preferred the tactile sensations that came from clacking away on a typewriter. He clearly was very self-aware because the method worked *really well*. He published 14 novels, three short story collections, five plays and five non-fiction works.

Most fans fondly remember *Slaughterhouse Five*, *Cat's Cradle* or *Breakfast of Champions*, but there is a particularly astute quote from the publication *If This Isn't Nice, What Is?: Advice for the Young*. It goes: "**We have to continually be jumping off cliffs and developing our wings on the way down.**" That seems to be a fairly apt description of the overall human existence, not to mention, how many modern drycleaning business owners probably have felt during the last handful of years in the wake of the pandemic.

What makes the fabricare industry so interesting is that, when it comes to the day-to-day logistics and strategies, there is no *one-size fits all* formula for everyone. The recent DL EXPO West held in Irving in April certainly seemed to prove that. More than 900 attendees showed up to learn about **every option available** for the industry and they were there to learn.

Not only was that a welcome sight to see, it was a strong sign that many of the younger professionals entering the industry are trying very hard to find the right wings that will help their business the most.

While it's true that drycleaning is not a one-size fits all industry, it is becoming a more and more open one with its members willing to share their best practices and ideas. Another example of this is **Sajid Veera**, owner of **Door-to-Door Cleaners**, who recently switched his entire fleet of vehicles to electric and was more than happy to share what he has learned about what type of drycleaners stand to benefit most from such a move, and what type of drycleaners will not. It is not a technology for everyone.

This is timely information as Americans are becoming more interested (again) in converting to electric vehicles. According to a recent Pew Research poll, **32%** of Americans say they would seriously consider buying an electric vehicle, which is **up from 29%** in a poll from **2024** and **down from 42%** in **2022**. Public sentiment towards electric vehicles varies greatly from those who have

never owned one due to fears of "range anxiety," a term for not having enough charge to get where you're going and back. However, among current EV owners, the approval rating of the technology is quite high: 96% say they would consider purchasing or leasing another EV for their next vehicle (according to the J.D. Power 2026 U.S. Electric Vehicle Experience Ownership Study.)

At this point, EVs with a range of 300 miles are considered high. For Veera, that was well within the range he needed; his longest route is about 160 miles. Another factor that should be considered is that mileage may vary significantly depending on climate.

Extreme temperatures above 100 degrees can cause EVs to lose around 17 to 18% of their total range (according to "How Hot Summer Weather Affects EV Range" at *Recurrent*) or more. Air conditioning helps tax your system and extreme heat can help lead to quicker battery degradation. EVs can also lose up to 32% of range in subzero temperatures, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. It also requires a lot of extra power to run heating systems and cold temperatures slow down internal battery chemical reactions, as well.

For Veera, the California climate was not a concern, but he did want to make sure he had a backup plan in place. He made sure each vehicle was charged on its own dedicated breaker, and it helped that he charges overnight when electricity rates are considerably cheaper and nobody else is working at the business. He also kept his fuel-powered vehicles in storage, just in case.

"I knew that I would not rest easy unless I knew there was a built-in redundancy, like the way our plant runs," Veera noted. "I have two boiler, two vacuums, two of everything in the plant. Redundancy — just because we never want to tell the customer, 'You're suit isn't ready.'"

So far, the conversion has gone quite smoothly for several months and Veera does not seem to miss the previous *typewriter* method. Obviously, the EVs cost more initially than their fuel-powered counterparts, but Veera noted that the electricity charge costs are *less than 10% of what the fuel used to cost*. According to a report by Coltura, the U.S. EV drivers saved 7.4 cents per mile compared to those driving gas-powered vehicles on fuel alone. When factoring in maintenance costs, EV owners saved 11.3 cents per mile, or about \$135 a month.

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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.

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DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY

EXPO EAST

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An attentive industry assembles in Irving

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interest, while Macpi showcased its pressing lines at a regional drycleaning show for the first time. Unipress demonstrated advancements in pressing technology with live equipment and Forenta attracted attention with innovations in spotting boards and garment storage conveyors.

Education remained a central focus throughout the weekend. The DL EXPO West featured four keynote programs across Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Saturday's sessions highlighted wash-dry-fold opportunities with presentations from Brian Wallace of the Coin Laundry Association and Ajay Prakash of Rinse. Their insights emphasized the importance of diversification and adapting to evolving consumer preferences.

Sunday shifted to business development and the future of the industry. Dave Coyle shared proven strategies for

business growth, while Dale Pedzinski delivered an in-depth look at the role of AI and what operators can expect in the years ahead.

On the show floor, attendees were given additional opportunities to learn through ongoing sessions and discussions. One standout was the panel "Own Your Cleaners, Don't Let Your Cleaners Own You," which featured some of the industry's most respected voices.

Traffic remained steady throughout the event, with the association's Membership Lounge serving as a central hub of activity. Volunteers from SDA, CCA, and DLI connected with attendees, highlighting the value of membership and industry engagement. As a result of those efforts, DLI and its partnering associations welcomed 16 new members during the show.

As prospective members heard firsthand how DLI supports businesses across the



DLI CEO Mary Scalco (left) poses with members Spencer and Tiffany Grant of Monarch Cleaners in Southlake, TX, Gina Hernandez of Ortega Cleaners in San Juan Capistrano, CA; and Laura DeLeo, also of Monarchy Cleaners.

country, the value of community and shared resources became clear.

"What struck me most," said Peter Blake, DLI's director of association services, "was the enthusiasm of the attendees. There was a genuine eagerness to learn and to explore everything this industry has to offer. We saw a strong presence of younger operators, along

with prospective buyers looking at opportunities.

"There's often concern that drycleaning is fading, but events like this tell a different story. While traditional *drycleaning* may be evolving, fabric care remains essential — and the future is full of opportunity. The number of younger professionals entering the industry is a clear sign of that

momentum."

With DL EXPO West setting a new standard, all eyes will turn to DL EXPO East, coming to Washington, D.C., October 16–18. If the momentum in Dallas is any indication, the East Coast event promises even more innovation, more ideas and more opportunities to connect with the people shaping the future of fabricare.

When Door-to-Door Cleaners went 100% electric

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business has faced its share of struggles in the past handful of years, including the pandemic, the Hollywood strikes and the Palisades fires.

"I had just spent like half a million bucks on two new stores, one in Malibu and one in Pacific Palisades. Our stores look really nice and they're very slick," he said. "We opened the second week of February, and then the Covid lockdown started in March. We had two brand new stores and we had zero dollars coming in. It took us like a year and a half to get back on our feet, so to speak — and things were going great. Then the Palisades fire happened. My Palisades store was my third best performing store."

Door-to-Door Cleaners, which had 13 stores pre-pandemic, was down to nine locations, though still doing well. Still, Veera did not want to make a huge investment in a new electric delivery fleet if it was not going to pan out.

Fortunately, Veera has much less doubts now than when he started. When Door-to-Door converted at the start of this year, they did so with two types of electric vehicles: Chevrolet Bright Drops and Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Vans. "The Bright Drops are made using the Hummer chassis," Veera noted. "The body itself is a fiberglass body so it's super light with I believe an aluminum frame. So, we got a

bulk of those and then we got two high roof long wheelbase Mercedes Sprinters, and surprisingly, the Chevys are way better from a technology perspective and from a range and driveability perspective, but the build quality isn't that great.

"Now, the Mercedes Sprinters — the build quality is amazing. You can't tell the difference between a diesel Sprinter and an e-Sprinter — everything on the inside is exactly the same. It's all Mercedes, perfect, but the technology isn't there. The range isn't there. The pick up isn't there. The torque isn't there. It's just sluggish. We use the Mercedes Sprinters as our shuttle vans. They are not used for the route."

In terms of the logistics of keeping the electric vehicles properly charged, Veera has many precautions in place. "All of our equipment uses electrical power during the daytime, and the vans go out between 7 and 8 a.m. and they don't come back until between 5 and 8 p.m.," Veera explained.

"The drivers return the longer range electric vans, which give us anywhere between 270 and 300 miles per charge, and they plug them in when they get back. I have the chargers programmed to start at 9:05 p.m. because the price of electricity drops 40% after 9 p.m. We charge them to 80% — which give more than enough capacity to finish the route the



When Door-to-Door Cleaners converted 100% to electric vehicles, they opted on two different ones: the Chevrolet Bright Drops and the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter Vans.

following day."

It takes about five to seven hours to reach the 80% capacity. Veera has also made sure that each charger has a dedicated breaker. Even if a circuit breaker were to trip before it could finish, the vans still have enough "juice" to function and do the routes for two days.

For Door-to-Door Cleaners, that is important because they run routes six days a week with the biggest one covering 160 miles a day. Overall, that has led to huge savings after the switch.

"We were spending between \$125,000 and \$175,000 a year on gas and diesel, depending on what was going on in the world, who was fighting who, and the price of gas," Veera noted. "So, it was a lot of gas. When you completely take away the gas, and then you factor in that we're charging when electricity is 40% lower between 9 p.m. and 4

a.m. the next day, it's a significant saving. The electricity is like under 10% because it's negligible what it costs to charge the vans."

Veera also pointed out that his drivers have appreciated the switch, as well. "They love it because they don't have to go to the gas station. The diesel vans were giving us anywhere between 15 and 19 miles per gallon, but our other vans were giving like between 11 and 13 gallons, so they were hitting the gas station two, three times a week, and you factor waiting in line 20 to 30 minutes each time. That's completely gone. They just leave, do their thing, come back, plug it in and they're good to go. They're also getting a lot of positive feedback. When we first rolled these out, people were taking pictures of them."

Overall, Veera would highly recommend other drycleaners switching to elec-

tric, but it comes with a caveat. You have to be sure the conditions are copacetic with the change.

For example, Door-to-Door Cleaners has two facilities that are larger than 10,000 sq. ft. in capacity, so he had enough power for charging.

"If it's a drycleaner who has one or two locations that don't have the space and the electrical grid or the electrical system capacity, then that's a problem," he said. "The other thing that helps us is that we are charging at night so nothing's on — like no production. But, if there's somebody who's doing production at night, it would be difficult for them to charge their vehicles."

"I think the other thing to mention is that if drycleaners are looking to switch over... I believe people on the East Coast have like 20 to 30% less driving range because of the cold weather," he added.



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DLI launches new social media content program

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22,334 engagement actions, 1,976 new followers, and a 10.7% engagement rate in 2025.

According to a report on DLI's 2025 social media impact, performance increased significantly after the Institute shifted to a more intentional content strategy focused on structured storytelling, professional video, and platform-native short-form content.

Each month the new service will feature a curated content theme. Businesses select

the posts they determine fits their audience, goals and brand voice.

The result is a ready-to-use library of polished videos and images (see the sample on right) designed to help cleaners stay visible online without the pressure of constantly creating social media posts from scratch.

Story themes will include: professional services give customers more leisure time; the benefits of professional garment care; our favorite clothes become part of our lives;



drycleaners support their communities; garment care professionals make laundry super easy; household items can benefit from a professional cleaning; and, through the seasons, professional care cuts down on

stress.

DLI developed the service to give members access to content shaped by real-world performance while making it easier for busy operators to market their businesses consistently

online.

For a one-time investment of \$1,200, participants receive high-quality branded video and image content designed to save time, support a stronger brand presence and help busi-

nesses appear online with confidence.

DLI's report found video content scored the highest engagement and furthest reach.

Consistent messaging around garment care, longevity, professionalism, and modern relevance outperformed simpler standalone static imagery.

For more information about DLI's premium social media content service, contact the association at Membership@DLIonline.org or (800) 638-2627.

Summer schedule heats up with multiple offerings

The heat won't be the only thing rising as summer approaches; the industry schedule of events will also be heating up throughout the country.

There will be two notable events coming up for drycleaners in Reno, NV, and Anaheim, CA.

First up, the California Cleaners Association (CCA) will host a seminar called "Advanced Spotting: Reduce Sorry Tags" that will take place on Saturday, May 30 at U.S. Western Multitech at 1261 N. Patt St. in Anaheim.

The program will be taught in English by Chris Patten of A.L. Wilson Chemical Co., who will be joined by

Gina Hernandez of Ortega Cleaners who will provide Spanish translation.



Patten Hernandez

It is recommended that two years of spotting knowledge is necessary in order to attend. The program will focus on how to use all bleaches safely in the removal of tough stains.

The seminar will run from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.; lunch will

be provided.

The cost to attend is \$60 per person for DLI members; the rate changes to \$50 per person if two or more people from the same member plant attend. Non-members must pay \$100 each. For more information, visit www.calcleaners.com.

CCA will be hosting another upcoming event, this time with the assistance of the Southwest Drycleaners Association (SDA).

The associations will present a Tour of Cleaner's Supply from June 26 to 27 in Reno, NV. There will also be a presentation by company owner Jeff Schapiro.

A bus will be provided for the tour and plans are in the

works for additional social opportunities.

The tour will take place at 1 p.m. on Friday, followed by Schapiro's presentation. On Saturday, CCA and SDA will both host meetings from 8 a.m. until noon.

For more information, visit www.sda-dryclean.com or www.calcleaners.com.

June Leadership Summit

In June, The North East Fabricare Association (NEFA) and the Mid-Atlantic Association of Cleaners (MAC) will be teaming up to host an educational Summer Summit June 18 to 19 at Cleaner's Supply and Wedding Gown Preservation Co. in New York.

On June 18, the event will begin with a tour of the Cleaner's Supply facility from 3:30 to 5 p.m.

Afterwards, the Cleaner's Supply team will present a program on "Striving for a Great Customer Service Experience" from 5 to 6 p.m.

The evening will conclude with dinner at a local restaurant.

On the following morning, there will be breakfast at Wedding Gown Preservation's facility at 8

a.m. Starting at 9 a.m. will be a program on "What Your Data Knows that You Don't" with Wash Responsiveness of Drycleaning Advisors.

Your POS captures hundreds of data points every day. Every transaction tells a story. The problem is, most operators never hear it. In this session, Respress breaks down what



Schapiro

your data really is saying about your customers, revenue and blind spots.

Next up, there will be Glen Gould of Drycleaning Connection who will host a program from 10:30 a.m. until noon.

It will be called "The Only Option at Any Price."

Gould will present a step-

by-step process improvement program designed to ensure that you understand the importance and process of building enduring relationships.



Gould

Attendees will learn how to create relationships with employees, teammates and clients that are so strong, it will be difficult (if not impossible) for them to leave.

For more information or to register, visit online at www.nefabricare.com or www.macassociation.org

Other Opportunities Online

Also coming up are a pair of online educational opportunities for the drycleaning industry. Both will be hosted by Bruce Grossman, known for his monthly column "Wrench Works" published in *National Clothesline*.

He will teach the same one-day workshop on two different dates: March 13 at 4 p.m. EST and March 12 at 1 p.m. EST.

Attendees will learn how to troubleshoot and repair buck valves, head valves and foot switches. This webinar is designed to give you immediately useful knowledge you can apply in your operation.

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THE SPOTTING BOARD



BY DAN EISEN

Various methods of removing rings

A ring can be a bothersome occurrence for any cleaner and a customer. There are many reasons why rings occur and the solution depends upon *what caused the rings* and the *nature of the fabric*.

Rings can fall into three categories.

1) **Wetside.** This occurs when moisture contacts a fabric and shifts the impurities in the fabric and thus forms a ring upon drying.

2) **Dryside.** The same condition occurs with dryside agents as with wetside agents.

3) **Fabric sizing.** Some fabrics have a water soluble sizing that dissolves upon contact with moisture forming rings and discolored areas.

Some fabrics are also impregnated with a dryside resin sizing that breaks down and forms a different ring with a different solution.

Removing Wetside Rings at the Spotting Board

1) **Forced drying.** This is a method of using the air gun and vacuum end of the spotting board at the same time to dry the fabric before it rings.

To effectively use this method it is advisable to keep the wet area localized. The best way to keep a wet area localized is to spot over a towel.

When you start to dry, do the outside of the ring first and progress toward the inside. If the heavy outer ring is dried quickly enough, this procedure

will avoid rings.

2) **Feathering.** This is a method that cleaners do not often use and is probably the most effective and safest way of removing rings.

You hold the steam gun three to five inches above the

forced drying since the volatile dry solvent dries quickly with a minimum of air usage.

Leveling Agents

Leveling agents are products that mix with water and dry solvents. When applied to a wet area and brushed, the

You also should check with the chemical company to make sure the leveling agent you are using is compatible with the detergent you use.

For example, a cationic detergent is not compatible with an anionic leveling agent.

This method of spraying will avoid rings from the water gun.

2) **Resin sizing.** Many satins and taffetas may have a plastic resin sizing that can break down forming difficult rings. This type of sizing is not removable using your normal dry- or wetside spotting agents. The only way to remove this type of ring is to apply amyl acetate, brush lightly and then reclean.

Mustard Stains

One of the most difficult stains to remove is mustard. The reason why mustard is so difficult is that it has oils and dye content.



The proper way is to brush off the surface with a dry brush and then work it dryside followed by the tannin method.

One of the effective things that I have found on set mustard stains is to use a wet dry spotting formulation.

These are special spotting agents manufactured by various chemical companies that have wetside lubricants mixed with some dry solvents.

This type of formulation and spotting may prove to be very successful on those set mustard stains that you cannot remove.

There are many reasons why rings occur and the solution depends upon what caused the rings and the nature of the fabric. Rings can fall into three categories: wetside, dryside and fabric sizing.

fabric and use just enough steam to break up the ring yet not saturate the fabric.

You then wipe the outer edge of the ring from the inside of the ring toward the outer edge. You are attempting to gradually move the wet area into the dry area.

If you do a small portion of the ring at a time, the wet area can be hung to dry without ringing.

In the forced drying method the steam gun is held at such a close range when drying that there is a big chance of damaging the fabric from the force and pressure of the air.

Dryside Rings

If dryside agents were used and you wanted to remove the rings, use the same feathering procedure but wipe with a towel damp with volatile dry solvent.

You do not have to use

water spreads out and loses its ability to form a ring.

Many companies make different types of leveling agents and it is important to know whether the leveling agents has in it perchlorethylene solvent which is outlawed by EPA in many areas to use on a spotting board.

Some chemical companies such as Cleaners Chemical Corp incorporate leveling agents in their protein and tannin formulas. This means that, after spotting, if a ring occurs, the garment will have to be hung to dry and then recleaned.

Many spray spotters such as those made by R.R. Street are effective leveling agents to be used on the fabric and hung to dry. If you are using a leveling agent that you must throw into the cleaning machine wet or damp, it is the wrong leveling agent.

If dryside rings are present on a fabric, all that has to be done is re-cleaning the garment without the use of a leveling agent.

Removing Sizing Rings Due to Fabric

1) **Water soluble sizing.** Many silks and rayons have a water soluble sizing that breaks down causing shiny areas and loss of luster.

Use a fogging method for the solution. Steam the affected area holding the steam gun five inches from the fabric and dry quickly with the air gun.

You can also place the garment on the pressing machine, spray lightly with water and then dry it with a steam iron.

Note: If you are having problems with rings when pressers spray with a water gun, instruct them to aim the water mist upward and let it condense on the fabric.

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Dan Eisen is the former chief garment analyst for the National Cleaners Association and also an inductee of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute's Hall of Fame, the highest honor the association can bestow on an individual. For questions and concerns, he can be reached at (772) 579-5044, or by e-mail at dan-eisen39@gmail.com or through his website at www.garmentanalysis.com.

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PROACTIVE PRACTICES



FEATURING
KATIE KRATZ

The real cost of OSHA non-compliance

On a recent visit to one of our client sites, the manager of the location greeted us with her updated, 4-inch, bright red, SDS binder in hand saying, "I'm glad you're here. I'm afraid of OSHA." I looked at her with a bright smile responding, "Rightfully so!!"

Most business owners and managers don't understand that one employee complaint or serious injury could completely bankrupt a company. When an investigation happens, fines can rack up fast! Furthermore, if they aren't dealt with, those fines and violations can compound quickly.

For many cleaners, day-to-day operations are focused on serving customers, keeping production moving, maintaining equipment and managing staffing challenges. Safety can sometimes become something that is addressed only when there is an accident, complaint, or inspection. However, failing to prioritize workplace safety can be extremely costly.

OSHA exists to help protect workers from injury, illness and unsafe working conditions. In a drycleaning plant, that can include hazards such

as chemical exposure, hot equipment, slips and falls, lifting injuries, machine guarding issues, bloodborne pathogens, electrical hazards, lockout/tagout concerns, and fire risks.

While following OSHA standards is important because it protects employees, it is also important because non-compliance can become very expensive very quickly.

Surprise OSHA Inspections Can Happen

Many business owners believe OSHA inspections only happen after a major accident. While that can happen, OSHA may visit a facility for any number of reasons including:

- An employee complaint;
- A referral from a former employee;
- A report from a customer or vendor;
- A nearby incident at another facility;
- Inclusion in a local or national emphasis program;
- Follow-up inspections for past violations;
- Random programmed inspections.

We've heard from multiple drycleaners this year who've either received a letter threatening an OSHA visit if they

didn't provide proof of compliance or who've been the recipient of a surprise visit. All of the business owners we spoke with cited different reasons for OSHA's outreach.

It's important to know that when OSHA arrives, their first stop is typically your records and written programs. They want to see all of the documentation you have on file that helps keep your employees safe. They may ask to review:

- OSHA injury and illness logs;
- Hazard communication program;
- Safety Data Sheets (SDS);
- Employee training records (including annual retraining records);
- Lockout/tagout procedures;
- Respiratory protection program;
- Bloodborne pathogen procedures;
- Fire extinguisher inspections;
- Machine guarding practices;
- Emergency action plans.

Each of these items, if not present or complete, can lead to individual serious violations/citations that add up to

hefty fines.

If you're reading the list and don't know what those programs are, haven't updated your programs in several years, or you aren't sure where that documentation lives, it's time we have a chat!

Documentation is key for every industry when it comes to OSHA (and overall employee safety). My motto is always, "document, document, document."

If you see an employee not following guidelines outlined in any of your programs, it's important that you document it. If a new issue comes up that you don't already have a written policy for, create one, train everyone, and document the training. Documentation and written records serve **you** and **your company's well-being** as evidence that you did your job in trying to provide a safe and healthy workplace. Documentation can help not only in OSHA situations, but also in workers' comp claims.

The Financial Cost of OSHA Violations

Let's talk numbers. Did you know, OSHA penalties increase almost every year?

- As of 2026:
- Serious violations can carry penalties of up to \$16,550 per violation;
 - Willful or repeat violations can carry penalties up to \$165,514 per violation;
 - Willful violations have a minimum penalty of approximately \$11,524.
 - Failure-to-abate violations can result in penalties of up to \$16,550 per day beyond the correction deadline.

That means a drycleaner who receives multiple citations in a single visit could easily face tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines.

Let's say, for example, if an inspector finds...:

- Missing SDS sheets (even for things like the hand sanitizer on your front counter);
 - Unlabeled chemical bottles (these include spray bottles of water);
 - No written hazard communication plan, or an incomplete plan;
 - Missing lockout/tagout procedures or equipment;
 - Improper machine guarding (or machine guarding left off after repairs);
 - A lack of employee training documentation (including annual retraining documents).
- A plant could face more than

\$50,000 in penalties from a single inspection. If OSHA believes the company ignored the problem, those penalties could become much larger. Serious violations can escalate to *willful* violations, meaning citation costs can increase by up to 10 times!

The good news is that most OSHA problems are preventable. By simply keeping your documentation and labeling up to date, you can easily save yourself tens of thousands of dollars in potential fines.

All of the following are cost-effective ways you can build a culture of safety while also saving yourself a lot of trouble and financial stress:

- Conducting regular safety meetings;
- Keeping written programs up to date;
- Training employees annually;
- Training new employees before they are assigned their first work task;
- Performing routine inspections of equipment and work areas;
- Correcting hazards immediately;
- Updating your SDS book;
- Maintaining organized records;
- Encouraging employees to report concerns before they become serious issues.

OSHA compliance is not just about avoiding fines. It is about protecting employees, reducing injuries, and creating a safer and more efficient workplace. For drycleaners, even small safety issues can become expensive if they are ignored. Investing time in training, documentation and regular safety reviews is far less costly than dealing with citations, injuries, or a surprise OSHA inspection.

Katey Kratz is a founding member of Kratz Executive Solutions, the management company for Safety and Environmental Compliance Consultants. Kratz Executive Solutions offers one-on-one coaching and individualized strategies designed to address challenges faced by business owners, organizations or leadership teams. Katie has developed a diverse skill set including: marketing, social media networking, building an online presence, enhancing organizational structures, payroll management and team development. To contact Katie, email katey.kratz@gmail.com.

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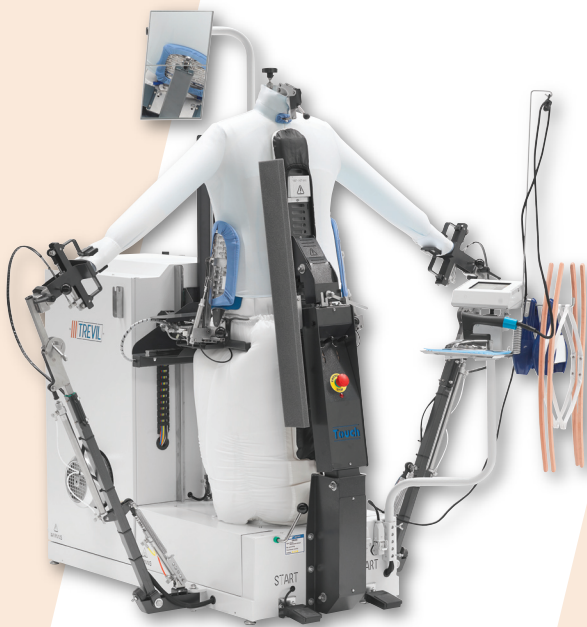


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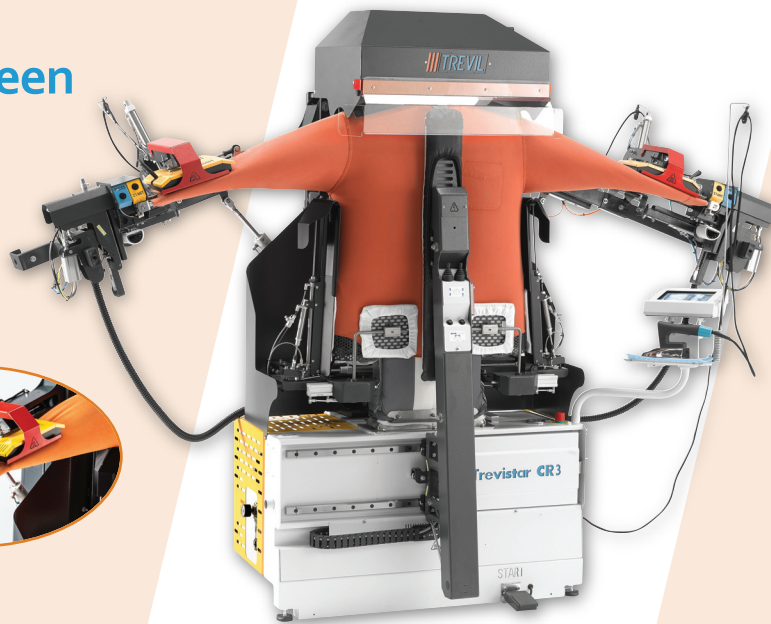
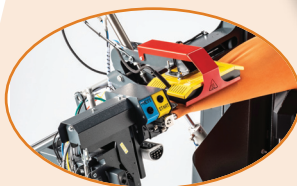
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SHIRT TALES



BY DON DESROSIERS

What is the secret starch level of shirts?

So... what about starch levels? I feel compelled to write about this today because today, like most days, I got questions about it. Seems many clients, acquaintances and friends in this business handle starch as almost a company secret. Here's what I mean:

If you are among the 90+% who have two starch levels: yes and no (that is, starch or no starch.), you may already be relieved to know you are in the tremendous majority. So many clients tell me they have this company *secret* in an apologetic tone. Often the wash person will say softly, "We only have starch and no-starch here." They are so happy to hear that I expected that.

I think that some of the employees in a lot of places think that management is deceiving the customers by seemingly offering four options: no starch, light starch, medium starch and heavy starch. Some of the employees will tell the customers that they can't have light starch. They'll pressure the customer for a yes or no answer. *Do you want starch or*

don't you? We don't do light starch here. These statements are probably unnecessary. Few consumers will understand the reasons why the starch feel will

I have a client on the West Coast who had **five starch levels**. I have been doing shirts for almost 50 years and I didn't know that there were *five* lev-

starch or no starch, he fears that he will be disappointed.

Have you ever had a customer that, every week, asks for "light starch on the cuffs,

reason because the starch will still feel different from fabric to fabric. *But*, the cookers have several advantages, not the least of which is being able to starch colored shirts with perfect results.

So, how do you decide what to do in your plant? Have an employee bring you three completed bundles of four to five shirts each. Hang them on a rack. Without looking at the invoices, touch the cuff on each shirt. Tell yourself what level of starch is in each one. This is how I changed the West Coast client's perceived need for five starch levels. I took three bundles of five shirts each. All of the orders were marked for medium starch. I asked the client to tell me the starch level in each of the shirts.

Every shirt **should have** felt like medium starch, but I knew that there wasn't any way that was going to happen. I'd like to say he gave me 15 different answers for 15 shirts. Naturally, I can't say that, but he did say that some were heavy starch, others medium starch, some no, some light — wow! If this happens to you, think about the trouble that you go through to separate those shirts by starch type. It is only worth the trouble if you get measurable results from all of that sorting.

Starching shirts is important because a customer cannot do it at home. Give the customer what they want, but be sure that, at the end of the process, you are giving the customer what you think you are giving them. By the way, when a wet shirt is pressed on a hot head, the fabric dries with a bit of "crispness." This is what a customer thinks is light starch. It's not starch at all — it's pressed wet.

"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.

I have a client on the West Coast who had five starch levels. I have been doing shirts for almost 50 years and I didn't know that there were five levels: no starch, light starch, medium starch, heavy starch and extra-heavy starch.

vary from fabric to fabric. They may claim to understand, but they probably don't. Most have no clue that starch is a rinse additive.

Let's say *Bartholomew McGuillicuddy* brings in four shirts. One is a 100% polyester, one is a 60/40 blend Oxford, one is a cotton Oxford and the last one is an all cotton broadcloth. Pick any starch level that you like, but each shirt will feel different than any of the others. You can even try some creativity if you like. Heavy starch the polyester shirt and no starch the cotton Oxford. You won't get them to feel alike. *Never.*

els. He had (notice the key verb is *had*): no starch, light starch, medium starch, heavy starch and extra-heavy starch!

This happens, I speculate, when a relative newcomer to the business is a bit too eager to give the customer whatever she or he wants. I don't advocate telling a customer, "We don't do light starch." Or, "Medium starch, heavy starch... it's the same thing."

My advice is don't bother. Chances are quite high that he is only saying he wants light starch because he is happy with the starch feel on his shirts now. If he says anything but light starch, like medium

heavy starch on the collar and no starch on the rest of the shirt"? There are lots of people like this across the country.

Everybody in the business knows this person can not be accommodated, but this customer most likely fears that if she/he forgets to exclude the cuffs and the body of the shirt from the dreaded *heavy starch*, he or she will be disappointed.

I have seen customers make a phone call back to the store that they just left to say something like: "I forgot to tell you that I want light starch on my shirts. I didn't mean to say no starch." In nine out of 10 plants, it is exactly the same thing. Probably more.

So then, why not be honest with the customer? If you tell them you "don't do light starch," you run the risk of saying this to someone who knows they can get light starch at your competitor's place. They may feel you are ill-equipped to do it correctly. In actuality, your competitor doesn't do anything that you don't do, and knows nothing that you don't know — except to know enough not to tell a customer something they don't absolutely have to know.

In the English language, if you add the word *yet* to the end of a sentence, *you completely change the meaning of that sentence*. Why am I saying this now? Because I am going to do it. Here it goes.

There is absolutely no difference between light starch, medium starch and heavy starch, and *yet*...

There, I did it. I have left room for doubt. Some starch cookers seem to be exacting enough to show some distinguishable difference between levels. This is a revelation to an old laundry man like me. After putting forth hundreds of words here implying there is no difference, I thought it quite important to say that *there can be*. I do not advise, though, buying a starch cooker for that

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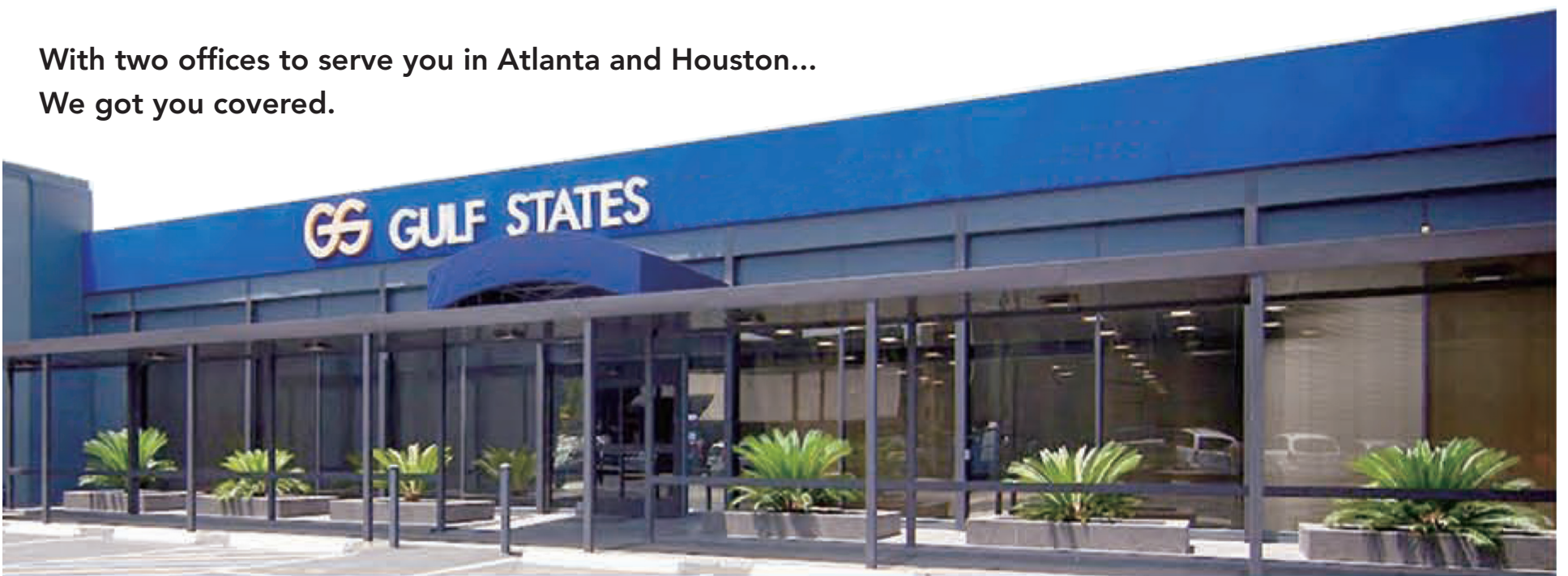
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BUILDING VALUE



BY KERMIT ENGH

The one question that can affect your growth

I had a great time at the recent DL EXPO West. It was a pleasure seeing old friends and meeting new people — both new to me and to the industry. It reminded me of how long I've been doing this.

During the recent Methods for Management (MfM) meeting, the topic of Net Promoter Score (NPS) came up as a way to really get a handle on how your business is performing in the eyes of your customers.

Many companies recognize the power of customer loyalty and its impact on financial performance. Not only is loyalty intuitively appealing, there is a growing body of evidence suggesting companies that ignore it may find themselves on unstable footing as they work toward long-term success. Because of the clear link between loyalty and financial outcomes — such as increased market share, higher revenue and lower costs — companies continue to invest in programs designed to measure, manage and improve customer loyalty.

However, the true value of these programs is often limited by unclear or inconsistent measurement systems. To address this, **Satmetrix**, in close

consultation with **Frederick Reichheld** of **Bain & Company**, launched a research project in 2003.

At the micro level, the goal was to identify a single question that could reliably predict short-term purchasing and referral behavior. At the macro level, the research aimed to connect that metric to long-term financial performance across multiple industries.

The results were compelling. The research not only identified the most effective question for measuring customer loyalty, but also introduced Net Promoter as a powerful indicator of long-term corporate growth. Adoption has grown steadily. Through platforms like **netpromoter.com** and industry conferences across North America and Europe, it has become widely used. At Forrester Research's 2007 Marketing Forum, CEO George F. Colony said, "Net Promoter is becoming a driving force within organizations."

One Question That Matters

The research found that a single question can effectively measure customer loyalty across industries: *On a scale of*

0 to 10, how likely are you to recommend this company to a friend or colleague?

Customers who indicate a high likelihood to recommend are also more likely to repurchase and refer new business. Conversely, those who would not recommend are less likely to return or refer others.

Responses fall into three categories:

- **Promoters (9–10):** Highly loyal customers who drive repeat business and referrals

- **Passives (7–8):** Satisfied but less enthusiastic customers.

- **Detractors (0–6):** Customers who are less likely to return and may share negative feedback.

Net Promoter Score is calculated as: $\% \text{ Promoters} - \% \text{ Detractors} = \text{NPS}$.

This simple calculation provides a clear snapshot of customer loyalty and its potential impact on growth.

One of the most important findings of the research is that a customer's willingness to recommend a company is closely tied to long-term financial success. When customers are truly loyal, their relationship with a business goes beyond a basic transaction. They continue to

support the company even when prices increase or occasional mistakes occur. More importantly, they actively promote the business through word-of-mouth.

These recommendations are powerful because they reflect trust. Customers are effectively putting their own reputation on the line when they recommend a business to others.

At a broader level, Net Promoter captures both positive and negative word-of-mouth. It reflects not only the growth generated by promoters, but also the potential loss created by detractors. This balance is what makes NPS such a strong indicator of long-term performance.

The Value of Your Business

When discussing business value, many entrepreneurs believe buyers are purchasing their brand, customer list, or inventory. In reality, buyers are focused on one thing: your future stream of profit.

The value of a business comes down to two questions:

- 1) How much profit is expected in the future?

- 2) How reliable are those projections?

This is the foundation of most investment decisions.

1) Power of Predictability

Business value is often discussed in terms of a multiple of profit — three times, five times, or more. But what drives that multiple? The biggest factor is risk, often reflected in what buyers consider the "discount rate." If a buyer believes your future profits are predictable and reliable, they are willing to pay a higher multiple.

Understanding how buyers think about this allows you to negotiate from a position of strength.

2) Predicting Growth

If business value is based on future profit, the next question becomes: how do you demonstrate that your future performance is reliable? This is where Net Promoter Score plays a key role.

Frederick Reichheld's research into customer satisfaction surveys revealed a surprising insight: companies that performed well on traditional satisfaction metrics did not necessarily grow faster than those that performed poorly. Common survey questions — about satisfaction, pricing or service — showed little correlation to future growth. However, one question stood out. The likelihood

to recommend proved to be highly predictive of future performance.

When Reichheld analyzed companies based on their responses, he found that average businesses tended to grow at roughly the same rate as the overall economy. In contrast, companies with high Net Promoter Scores experienced significantly higher growth rates.

Well-known companies such as Apple, Google and Harley-Davidson are often cited as examples of organizations with strong NPS performance and corresponding growth.

To calculate your score:

- 1) Ask customers the recommendation question.

- 2) Group responses into Promoters, Passives and Detractors.

- 3) Subtract the percentage of Detractors from the percentage of Promoters.

The average NPS typically ranges from 10% to 15%, so a score of 20% would be considered above average. One of the strengths of NPS is its simplicity — not just in measurement, but in action. After asking for a score, follow up with a simple question: *Why did you give us that score?*

This feedback allows you to:

- Identify and address issues raised by detractors.
- Improve the experience for passive customers.
- Strengthen relationships with promoters.

By acting on this information, businesses can improve customer loyalty and, in turn, strengthen their future profitability.

Kermit Engh has been an owner/operator in the drycleaning industry for over 33 years. Notable awards include CINET's 2016 Best Practices for sustainability and country. He has been a Methods for Management member for over 30 years. His current position as managing partner and business coach with them allows him to share his extensive background in strategic planning, finance, process improvement, succession planning, acquisition and disposition analysis, packaging and branding, corporate culture, employee training programs, profitability, quality and production standards, cost analysis and development of management KPIs as well as being a Certified Value Builders Coach. Contact him at kengh@mfi.com.



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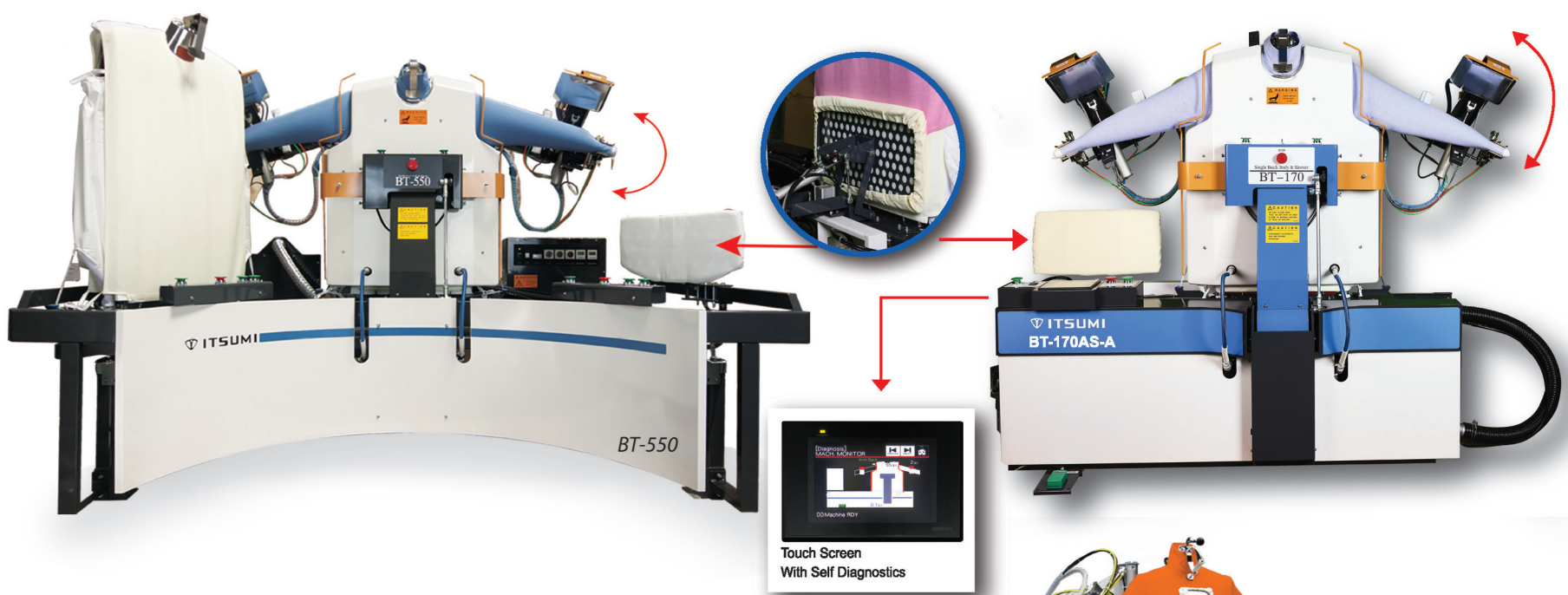
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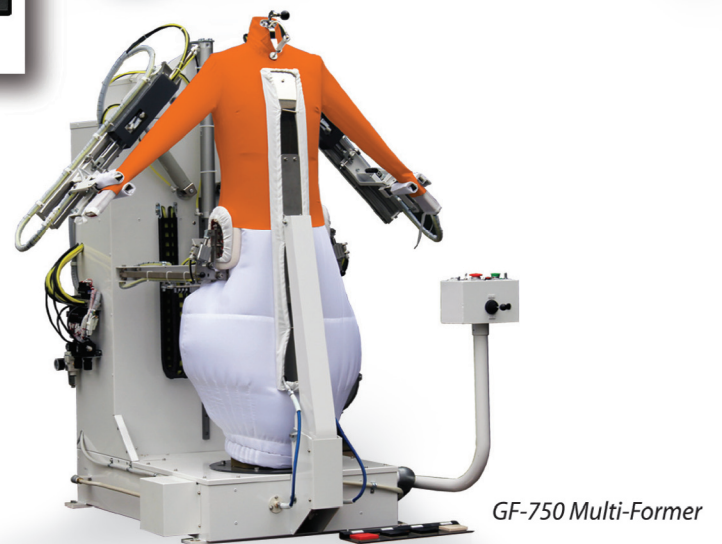
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NEWSMAKERS

During **InterClean** in Amsterdam last month, **CINET** announced a trio of winners who have been granted **Lifetime Awards** for their support and contribution to the betterment of the international development of the professional textile care industry: **Deborah Rechnitz**, **Charlie Betteridge** and **Sudhir Batra**.

Betteridge is an honorary member of European Textile Services Association (ETSA) with three stints on their board of directors and has been president of the UK Textile Service Association since 2017.

Rechnitz has been a professional international business consultant for over 45 years spanning four continents, advancing the development of management bureaus including **Methods for Management**. She is also



the author of *Success in Small Business*.

Batra is a partner at **Mercury Drycleaners** in Kanpur and has contributed to the drycleaning industry over decades with dedication, innovation and trust-building.



He trained in the U.S. and Europe and was actively involved in CINET activities for over a decade.

Metalprogetti recently announced the appointment of **Heath Bolin** as national sales manager for the U.S. Bolin brings a unique combination of hands-on operational experience and executive leadership to the role. He is the owner/president of Sparkle Cleaners Inc., a Tucson-based company operating 16 retail drycleaning locations, making him one of the most experienced owner-oper-



ators to transition into a national leadership role within the automation sector.

With decades of experience managing multi-store operations, Bolin has firsthand knowledge of the challenges facing modern drycleaners, including labor efficiency, workflow optimization, plant layout and return on investment for automation technologies.

In his new role, Bolin will oversee U.S. sales strategy over multiple industries and customer engagement initiatives. "Metalprogetti has long been recognized as the industry standard for automation equipment," said Bolin. "I have been a customer of Metalprogetti for over 20 years and I am excited to represent a company whose people are incredibly talented and whose solutions directly address the real-world needs of drycleaning operators."

Continental Laundry Solutions (Continental) recently welcomed new team members, including **Cody Kopplin**, parts order processing lead; **Jordan Quade**, operations manager;

Nancy Seidler, controller; and **Aliyah Sherman**, digital marketing specialist.

"We are pleased to report that Continental is growing by leaps and bounds in both our product and service solutions," said **President Mike Floyd**. "This growth allows us to bring new talent to our team. We are thrilled to have Cody, Jordan, Nancy and Aliya onboard and look forward to watching them grow with the company."

Kopplin has 15 years of experience in customer service, order processing, record maintenance and printing, and signage project execution for a major health care provider.



Quade brings six years of supply chain and logistics experience to his new post as operations manager.

Seidler brings 30 years of experience in accounting, budgeting, forecasting and financial modeling, along with a background in public account-

ing, service industries, privately held manufacturing companies and distribution.

Sherman develops website content, digital campaigns, front- and back-end coding and analytics reporting in her role as digital marketing specialist.

Since 2005, **Anton's Cleaners** has used its professional expertise to clean and distribute thousands of prom dresses, ensuring that financial obstacles do not prevent high school juniors and seniors from attending their milestone events with confidence.

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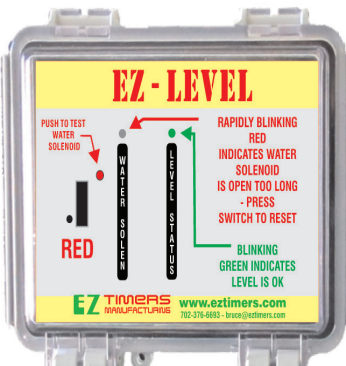


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The screenshot shows the National Clothesline website with a navigation bar, a main banner for 'NATIONAL CLOTHESLINE' and 'SERVING THE DRYCLEANING INDUSTRY FOR OVER 60 YEARS', and several article teasers including 'NCL Profile Life goes on', 'Industry balancing act to continue in 2022', 'FallFest EXPO pushes date back', 'Light always follows darkness', 'Don's wishlist to St. Nick: 2021 edition', and 'A Tribute to James Peuster'.

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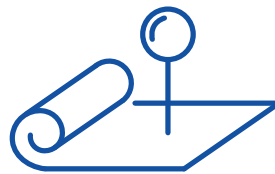
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