

'GREENED' LAUNDRY GENERATES HIGHER NET PROFIT

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Our impact on the environment is undeniable," says Jim Whitmore, Coin Laundry Association (CLA) National Board Member and owner of Sunshine Express Laundry Center, in Salem, Mass. "I feel I have an obligation to minimize that impact. That's why I wanted a state-of-the-art, 'green' laundry."

Whitmore recently renovated and "greened" his 19-year-old coin laundry—now Sunshine Express Laundry Center—following a devastating utility room fire. The result is a fully insulated, 2,500-square-foot coin laundry complete with Continental E-Series ExpressWash high-speed washers, high-efficiency drying tumblers, 75- and 125-pound capacity L-Series Washers; an on-demand water heater boasting a net 95 percent efficiency; T-5 lighting with step ballasts; low-flow toilets; fully insulated dryer rooms; and new, double-glazed windows.

The entire store—from walls and floor to equipment and windows—is not only new, it's geared toward efficiency. "I worked through all the options of equipment choice and settled on Continental. We went a full year after the fire before switching in the new equipment," says Whitmore. "Then we replaced it bulkhead by bulkhead."

Bill Reed, of Daniels Equipment Co., in Auburn, N.H., helped Whitmore with equipment selection and installation. "Jim never shut the laundry down," he says. "We did a total of four or five installations, with each one spaced out by a couple of weeks."

High-speed Washer-extractors Critical to Boosting Volume

The laundry's new equipment mix includes seven 20-, six 40-, and four 55-pound capacity ExpressWash high-speed washers; one 125- and two 75-pound capacity hard-mount L-Series Washers; 10 toploads; five 30- and 11 45-pound capacity dual pocket stacked Continental Drying Tumblers; and two 75-pound capacity single-pocket Drying Tumblers.

Whitmore installed Continental ExpressWash high-speed washers in the place of hard-mount and top-load machines. The switch was simple because ExpressWash

are freestanding and slide into place without bolts and concrete foundations. Because they are also high-speed washers that get customers in and out in less than 60 minutes, the laundry significantly increased customer turnover and reduced utility costs, according to Whitmore.

High-speed Washers Cut Dry Time and Improve Turnover

"The new washers spin at 350 Gs—four times greater than our prior hard-mount washers, which spun at 85 Gs," says Whitmore. "As G-force gets higher, more water is removed during extract. So, laundry goes into the dryer with much less water in fabrics, which shortens the evaporation process and cuts dry time. We've gone from a 1.5-hour wash and dry to a 45- to 50-minute wash and dry. That's substantial."

"Many laundry owners are afraid of cutting dry time because they think they will be cutting into their profits," says

Reed. "The reality is that because it takes less time to dry loads coming out of the ExpressWash Washers, the dryers use considerably less natural gas and electricity, significantly cutting utility bills. Since they run less often, the dryers also experience less wear and tear and last longer. More importantly, the high-speed washers get customers in and out of your laundry faster, which is especially critical during peak business hours."

"With the high-speed washers, I can do more turns in the same amount of time," says Whitmore. "My store has roughly gone from a maximum potential of 12 turns per day to 20 turns per day—an increase in capacity of more than 60 percent. Nights and weekends are crunch time and the increased capacity pays off."

Changing from low- to high-speed extract machines, he maintains, is like comparing night and day. "Whether the customers understand it or not, they clearly understand their clothes are get-



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ting done more quickly and drying faster. They think it's the good dryers, but it's really the washers. The bottom line is that they appreciate saving money and time."

As a result, client volume has catapulted 20 percent over prefire volume, according to Whitmore.

But not every washer is high speed. He left a few toploads for customers unaccustomed to change.

"We leave our customers the option of using a topload and charge them accordingly," he says. "They get a better deal with the front-load washers, but some people are reluctant to change."

Bringing Large-capacity Washers into the Mix

To attract large families and draw people from a distance, the laundry is also outfitted with two 75- and one 125-pound capacity L-Series Washer. These are mammoth hard-mount washers offering high efficiency and the capability to wash large, bulky loads of laundry, according to Whitmore. Along with the high-speed machines, the large-capacity washers set Sunshine Express Laundry Center apart from the competition. No one else in the area offers a 60-minute wash and dry, or 125 pounds of laundry capacity per load!

Vend Prices Mirror Efficiency

Vend prices reflect the efficiency of the washers. "We discount going up to the larger machines, so by the time you get to a 125-pound washer, customers are only paying \$1 per 10 pounds of wash, compared to the toploads where they are paying \$2.50 or \$2.75," he says.

Whitmore programs the Express-Wash machines for heightened efficiency as well. Thanks to the programmability of the washers, he can customize extract speed, mechanical action, wash temperature by degree and water levels, as well as wash and rinse time by minute. The control's flexibility also allows him to establish multi-level vend pricing. Whitmore has his ExpressWash Washers programmed for 23-minute wash cycles. But, customers can pay more for hot water or a 33-minute SuperWash. "Basically, I charge incrementally, which promotes conservation.

If people want to save money, we encourage them to use the cooler wash," he says.

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'Greening' the Laundry

Beyond installing efficient equipment, Whitmore tweaked the laundry in a number of ways to gain greater efficiency. He replaced a 40-year-old water heater with on-demand units offering a net 95 percent efficiency, and installed T-5 lighting with ambient light sensors. If there is light com-

ing into the store from the windows, the sensors automatically reduce the artificial light by as much as 50 percent. When closed, the store is lit with LED lighting. "We cut energy costs specifically for lighting by 60 percent," says Whitmore.

Low-flow toilets, efficient windows and a fully insulated store, round out the laundry's green focus. All are changes that have paid off.

The Bottom Line

Since the new equipment was installed last September, Whitmore has tracked significant changes in the laundry's bottom line. Thanks to the introduction of the new, high-speed laundry equipment, customers can complete laundry in under an hour, which has bolstered customer turnover, satisfaction and volume. Moreover, the laundry consumes significantly less water, natural gas and electricity – contributing "to a 300 percent leap in net profit!"

Jim Whitmore's "greened" laundry has realized a 300 percent increase in net profit since equipped with Continental ExpressWash Washers last year!

