

Insider Info

Vended Laundry Solutions
with Tod Sorensen



The Profit Power of Incrementalism

How Small Offerings Add Up

In the vended laundry world, there are ways to boost profit and revenue simply by giving customers what they most want. In this column, I'll detail tried-and-proven service additions that enhance customer convenience, as well as new, trending offerings that help you stand apart from your competition. Both contribute to stronger revenue and profits.



Vending Machines

Whether these machines vend bleach, detergent, soda, snacks or high-end coffee, they cater to your laundry's captive audience. All require maintenance but can be very profitable.



Uniformed Attendants

Helpful, uniformed attendants make your customers feel safe and welcome, in addition to answering questions, cleaning the store, providing equipment function information and issuing refunds. Customers prefer to do laundry at fully attended stores.



A Big Washer

If you don't have a 90- or 130-pound capacity washer in your laundry, you should put one in. No floor space? Consider removing two smaller machines to make room. It's worth it. A big washer helps your store stand apart from competitors. Plus, large-capacity washers are otherwise not accessible to homeowners and renters. In my experience, the 90s and 130s bring big revenue, and more often than not, are used by customers more than any other machine on the floor.



Automatic Chemical Injection

While not all vended washers have the capability to automatically inject detergents, softeners and disinfectants, some washers do. If your washers have this capability, then consider activating this feature, especially on your larger machines. There are new chemical injection products on the market designed specifically for vended laundries that automatically dispense specially formulated detergents, brighteners, softeners and disinfectants into compatible washers. The result is excellent, consistent cleaning results in less time. Use automatic injection on your biggest washers so customers avoid lugging and loading detergents. Pearl Laundry, in San Diego County, added automatic chemical injection to a 90-pound capacity washer for great results. Ever since, it's turned 8-10 times per day during the week and 12 plus times per day on weekends, according to Owner Mark Mariani.





Ozone Sanitation

Store owners have seen a dramatic increase in business from adding ozone sanitation. It works with a washer's automatic chemical injection capability to introduce ozone gas into the wash cycle. It naturally eliminates nearly all viruses, molds and bacteria from laundry. Sanitization is something customers can't get at home (without bleach), at their apartment's central laundry, or at other vended laundries. It's also a differentiator if you offer drop-off wash/dry/fold service. Add it to an entire laundry, or just to a couple of machines. Heather Valconesi, co-owner of Evans Express Laundry Center, in Evans, Colo., believes ozone delivers peace of mind. "Our customers want to know that their laundry, and our machines, are sanitized," she said. "They don't have to worry about who used the machines before them and the ozone leaves laundry fresh smelling, bright and clean."



Upgrade Washer Controls

Give customers more options and control over how they wash their laundry. There are two ways to do this; invest in new washers with controls offering extra wash options, or upgrade existing washer controls so they feature these "extras." Customers will appreciate customizing the wash process to better fit their needs, and as an owner, you'll make more money on every vend.

Continental, for example, offers the ProfitPlus® Control. It's standard on all new Continental vended washers and it's available as a retrofit kit for most older model Continental washers. It offers four primary cycle options, plus allows the customer to add an EXTRA WASH, EXTRA RINSE/SANITIZE and/or EXTRA SPIN. Each time customers choose an "extra," the vend price goes up — contributing to increased revenue. Plain and simple, if your washers don't offer extras, you won't benefit from additional income.



Wash/Dry/Fold

With the addition of drop-off wash/dry/fold service, laundries create another revenue stream that typically makes up between 15-40 percent of total store revenue. This service must be carefully managed, but makes smart use of idle equipment and attendants. Plus, wash/dry/fold service can set the groundwork for also adding commercial laundry service, and possibly, pickup and delivery.



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