



Small Town & Rural Laundries: Advantages & Tips for Success

Many industry naysayers don't believe small town and rural laundries can be successful; I know differently. Not only do rural laundries realize many perks, including lower real estate/rent and utility costs, they also enjoy support from their local municipalities so licensing is less costly and simpler to obtain. Even so, careful consideration of equipment mix, services and customer convenience are crucial for solidifying success. Read on for suggestions on how to make your small-town laundry a valued and successful part of the community...

Analyze & Appeal to Your Demographics

As a small-town laundry, it's important to draw from your entire demographic to maximize revenue potential. Start with a call to your equipment distributor. Your distributor understands your local market and will gladly offer insight into your demographics and possible services.

Your distributor will likely run a demographic report, which details your area's income level, gender, race, education level, homeownership, occupation, marital status, among others. Once you understand your demographic profile, it's easier to develop services to appeal to those markets. Keep in mind, not everything is revealed by that report. Be sure to consider local businesses — farms, vacation rentals, salons — and how you might serve them.

Finally, design your services (and equipment mix) to meet the needs of your identified markets. Consider drop-off drycleaning by contracting with an established dry cleaner; drop off wash/dry/fold (WDF) to appeal families, professionals and businesses; and pickup and delivery for the ultimate in service for residential and commercial accounts. An added bonus? Pickup and delivery can also extend your laundry's reach and revenue potential.

Point-of-Sale System (POS)

If you go after WDF and full-service business, invest in a quality POS system for managing that business. A good POS manages WDF from beginning to end; allows customers to schedule, track and monitor orders online; allows owners to view and print revenue reports; and



sometimes includes a website or marketing assistance. Moreover, many are available for a monthly fee — making it easier to budget.

Choose High-Speed Washers with Hybrid Controls

Look for two qualifiers when choosing equipment, especially when offering multiple services. The first is high-speed extract (300-450 G-force) for a quicker wash and lower utility costs. Remember, higher extract speeds correlate to higher moisture removal. Loads with less moisture dry sooner using less natural gas. This gets customers in and out of your laundry in as little as 60 minutes or less.

The second is a hybrid control. There are washers on the market with controls, like the GS Series with a Genius Control, that switch from customer-facing washing programs to more sophisticated programs used for WDF and commercial account orders. Keep in mind that most vended washers don't offer commercial programming that allows for higher water temperature options, automatic chemical injection, delayed soaks and breaks between baths. But these features are a must for processing commercial account laundry!

Go Big

Install a few large-capacity washers and dryers to handle big, bulky loads. Invest in 90- and/or 130-pound capacity washers with complementing single-pocket dryers. Why? Large-capacity washers appeal to homeowners and renters wanting to clean everything from large loads to sleeping bags, comforters, blankets and rugs. Large



machines placed near the front windows of your store will attract anyone without a big machine at home. Moreover, they can draw customers from as far as 50 miles away!

Ozone Sanitization

Many store owners see dramatic increases in business from adding ozone sanitization. The same holds true for small-town laundries. Ozone injected into the wash cycle delivers natural sanitization and 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 WDF service. Add it to an entire laundry or just to a couple of machines for a strong revenue impact.

Invest in Your Community

Consider adding a Family Read, Play & Learn Space in your laundry to help improve childhood literacy. While you might not get immediate rewards, your customers will thank you. "Family Read, Play & Learn" spaces (www.laundrycares.org) come in a variety of sizes and can be ordered as kits to fit your needs and budget. They feature literacy-rich materials and free books for children. To take these services to the next level, coordinate with local librarians to hold scheduled "storytimes" at your facility.

Enjoy the Experience

Many laundry owners say there's nothing more rewarding than serving their community and customers. For owners of small-town and rural laundries, this seems especially true. While it's important to make a profit, it's equally satisfying to provide needed laundry services to the community you love. So, if you're looking to develop a laundry in a town without one, enjoy the experience and know you're making difference along the way.

