

## ATTENDED OR UNATTENDED – THAT’S THE QUESTION

*One of the biggest decisions an owner will make concerns their coin-op’s style of operation. Potential laundry investors often ask about the pros and cons of various operating styles, but it’s also important for existing owners to examine their stores occasionally, to make certain their present style of operation is as workable and profitable as possible.*

**Fully Attended:** Most coin-ops fall under this category. A fully attended store is one where someone opens it in the morning and remains there during business hours. They help the customers, make change and keep the coin-op clean. This style of operation is labor intensive: a typical laundry is open around 100 hours per week and the owner must pay the attendants for this time, work the laundry themselves, or a combination of both. However, **many customers prefer an attended laundry.** They like having someone who can direct them to the proper machines and give them change or an immediate refund if a machine is out of order.

Owners prefer this style primarily for the additional income attendants provide by servicing the wash dry fold orders and dry cleaning orders. Many customers like the convenience of dropping their clothes off on their way to work and picking the completed order up that evening.

**Unattended:** This option requires no attendant and offers no drop off service to the customers. Many owners refer to this style of operation as “all coin” and it is literally that. All of the income in an unattended coin-op stems from self-service customers. **Ease of operation is the biggest advantage to this method** of running a laundromat, which is often favored by owners with several coin-ops. There is none of the time required to hire, train and

supervise attendants, no salaries to pay and very little paperwork. Bill changers give customers their quarters. The only labor required is janitorial – someone to visit the laundry a few times daily to give it a thorough cleaning. While most unattended coin-ops close each evening, some are 24 hour a day operations. Many customers with unconventional work hours appreciate the convenience of doing their laundry when it suits them. Unattended 24-hour coin-ops work best on a safe, well-lighted, much traveled and highly visible street.

**Partially Attended:** Some owners feel this style offers them the “best of both worlds.” Most partially attended laundries are opened by an attendant who does wash dry fold, helps customers and keeps the store clean, just as in a fully attended laundry. However, at 5 or 6pm she leaves, locking just the office portion of the laundry. For the rest of the evening the store operates as an unattended self-service laundry. At the end of the day someone cleans the store and locks it for the rest of the evening. **A partially attended laundry lets the owner save money on labor costs.** Drop off customers still have this option available during the day, while self-service business, always heavier at night, has use of all the machines. This style of operation also offers flexibility on holidays, weekends or when an attendant is on vacation, because it can run as 100% coin with no advance preparation.

*If you do decide to adjust your present style of operation, be sure to use clear, professional looking signs to let your customers know your hours of operation and the services you offer.*