

Let Technology Improve Your Laundry and Your Life

I encourage you to embrace technology in ways that result in easier record keeping for your store, more efficient time management for you, better store security and excellent customer service to keep those machines turning.

Record Keeping – Much time is spent on maintaining the necessary books and records for your business, and these records are necessary to get top dollar when you are ready to sell. If your store does any over-the-counter sales (wash and fold, drop off dry cleaning, vended products) you should have a professional point-of-sale system. **A POS system is not expensive and has many advantages** – eliminating math errors and illegible writing on drop off tickets, eliminating the need to manually tally the weekly or monthly totals of your over-the-counter sales, more professional presentation and ticket tracking for customer's drop off orders, etc.

To digitally scan and store purchase receipts consider downloading one of the receipt scanning apps which are available for smart phones. End of the year reporting is simple using this type of app and you will no longer lose out on any deductions from lost or missing receipts.

Recording sales and expenses on an Excel, QuickBooks or other digital program is a great way to keep books organized and easy to retrieve, but a note of caution – **be sure to hold on to all of the backup material for the digital sales and receipts you record.** A buyer will require these when you sell in order to confirm that the digital records accurately reflect real sales and expenses.

Time Management – If your laundry is unattended you might benefit from installing automatic doors to allow the laundry to open each morning and close at night without need for you or anyone else to be there to do this manually. These doors typically allow someone to enter and exit the laundry after opening in the morning, but at night they will only allow someone already in the store to exit after the time you specify.

Making supply purchases online and at your convenience is another good time saver. If you use Walmart for any of your supply needs, check out <http://www.walmart.com/grocery> which allows you to order and pay for the items you need online, then arrange a time of your choosing to park outside the store. A Walmart employee will deliver all of your order to you and load it into your vehicle. There is no charge for this service and if the store is out of an item you've ordered, they will upgrade the item to a better one at no additional cost.

Norton Supply is also an excellent source for coin-op supplies that allows you to order and pay online, then the items will ship to you for free. Check them out at <http://www.nortonsupply.com/laundromats>. Fabric Supply is an additional source for online ordering, and though they don't offer free shipping, they do have a local location in Sunrise where you can pick up your order: Check them out at <http://www.fabricleansupply.com/index.jsp?path=to&ID=,Coin.Laundry,dept-1OW>.

Store security – Establish a separate alarm code for each employee, and opt to receive a text from the alarm monitoring company whenever your alarm is turned on or off. This technology lets you know who has entered your business and what time your employees open and close the store daily. When an employee leaves simply eliminate their code from the system, so even if they duplicated your door key they cannot enter the laundry after hours.

Also install and monitor security cameras at key locations in and around your business. Monitor all exterior doors, the front desk including the cash register, the bill changers, and the floor areas. **Make sure your cameras are recording and the recordings are digitally stored someplace secure**, like a hard drive plus the cloud as backup, for several days. If there is any type of claimed slip and fall, suspected employee theft, vandalism or robbery, you will be very glad to have the incident recorded for your viewing or to turn over to the appropriate authorities.

High Tech Customer Service – We are in an age when your customers and laundry attendants use cell phones almost exclusively over landlines. This is perfect for implementing promos and alerts via text to stay in touch with customers in an efficient yet personal way.

Promos – Have a sign at the laundry asking self-service customers to text their phone number to your cell to receive coupons and flash sales. Let them know they will receive their first coupon for doing this. Have preset text language in your cell and send a quick reply – something like “Thanks for registering with Wash-A Rama. Show this message to the attendant today for a cold soda or box of soap, your choice. Watch for our flash sales and promos that make wash day fun, and thanks for being our valued customer.” Establish a contacts group in your smart phone with these numbers as they arrive, and **send a group text each week with a promo for your slow days**. Here are some ideas – free coloring book and box of crayons for all kids on the first day of summer – free laundry soap Tuesday 5pm to closing – one lotto card for every wash Wednesday 5pm to closing – all washers 35-lb and up ½ price tonight 7pm-9pm.

Alerts - Have preset text language stored in each attendant's cell phone, and as soon as their wash and fold or dry cleaning order is ready the attendant should text the message to the customer, such as “Your clothes are ready for pickup. Wash-A-Rama is open daily 7am to 10pm. Thanks for your business!” Track your

drop off customers by their phone numbers and **if you see a customer has not been at your laundry in three weeks send a text** such as “Flash Sale: 20% off your next drop off order. Wash-A-Rama is open daily 7am to 10pm. Thanks for being our valued customer.”

These are a few of the ways that technology can improve how you operate your laundry. Use them as a jumping off point, and always be on the lookout for new ideas that work for your particular situation. Doing so will keep your business on the cutting edge and make operating your laundry interesting and fun.

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