

BACK TO THE BASICS: COMMON SENSE TIPS FOR A WELL-RUN COIN LAUNDRY

I am frequently asked by prospective coin laundry investors to explain what it takes to operate a successful coin-op. Coin-ops are a simple business which can be very profitable if you select a good location – and if you pay attention to the basics.

Hours of Operation

Successful coin-ops need to be open long hours. Most customers work during the day and use the laundry at night or on the weekends. Take advantage of early morning wash dry fold and dry cleaning business by opening at 7am – no later than 8am. I recommend staying open at least until 10pm or even later, depending on your location and the hours of other stores in your plaza or shopping center. Opening 24 hours a day is a good idea only if you are in a busy, well lighted, high traffic location.

Cleanliness

I can't stress this enough. Keep your coin-op sparkling clean! A neat, tidy laundry demonstrates your pride of ownership, attracts customers and is also safer for your employees and your customers. Make sure your attendant knows that mopping the floor, wiping down machines, cleaning the restrooms and keeping the front walk swept are part of her job description. Even if your store is unattended, it should still be kept clean. Stop in a few times a day to clean, or employ a janitorial service or a local resident to do this job.

Pricing

Be competitive with your pricing. Check out your competition to be sure your laundry offers good value. Maintain a meaningful pricing ratio between your top loaders, double loaders, triple loaders and larger washers. Don't forget to monitor the time you are giving per quarter on your dryers. Price your drop off services competitively as well.

Friendly Service

Insist that your attendants are always pleasant, cheerful and courteous to your customers. You are in a service industry, and customers can easily switch to a nearby coin-op if they are not treated well. Prompt refunds, assistance with machine selection, helping carry loads in and out, making change with a smile, and a cheerful hello and goodbye will pay big dividends.

Don't overlook customer service if you operate a self-service coin laundry. Self-service customers need an easy and reliable method of receiving refunds when a machine or bill changer does not function properly. Provide your self-service customers with a way of contacting you – using a wall mounted mailbox for refund slips and for suggestions or comments works great and shows customers that you value them.

Machine Upkeep

Keep your equipment running properly. Don't have out of order signs all over your equipment. Promptly repair even the smallest things to prevent larger problems later. Never bypass safety devices, lid switches, door locks, etc. Customers don't like to contend with washers that only work on hot, others that don't spin out properly, dryers that only work on certain selections, etc. Keep your machines safe and working properly.

In summary, don't try to complicate a simple business. Keep your laundry spotless, price your machines and services competitively, treat your customers great, keep your washers, dryers and vending machines working properly, and finally, keep your laundry open during the proper hours, to maximize your sales and profit.