

Insider Info

Industrial Laundry Solutions
with Seth Willer



Value in Automated Folding

The most labor-intensive area of a laundry is on the finishing side because it involves folding. The good news is that there are machinery options out there that can significantly reduce those labor hours, while upping production, quality and efficiency. Even better? While you might think investing in automation will break the bank, it won't. Most folding systems pay for themselves in two years or less. And if you look to finance, the money saved in labor typically makes your monthly payment.

Value #1 — Labor Savings & Bolstered Productivity

The leading reason to add a flatwork ironer or folder is to decrease labor costs and quadruple production. By adding automation — ironers and folders — laundries drastically cut labor and operational costs while catapulting throughput. Check out the following examples.

Hand Folding vs. Towel Folder

Laundries processing 250-500+ laundry pounds per hour should consider adding a towel folder. Generally, a typical laundry operator can sort, fold and stack different-sized towels by hand at a rate of 120 pieces per hour. By adding an auto-sorting towel folder, that same operator can fold and stack 800-1000, with just one operator. If you do the math on 120 hand folded towels versus 800-1,000 machine folded towels per hour, the savings is more than eight labor hours per day!

	Hand Folding	Auto-sort Towel Folder
Items per Hour	120	800
Labor Hours	8	8
Pieces per Day	960	6400

Hand Folding vs. Towel Folder

Saves over 8 Labor Hours per Day!

Hand Folding vs. Ironer with Sheet Folder

Starting with no automation as a baseline. One person is able to hand fold about 60 large dimension sheets per hour.

Folding efficiency can be increased using a flatwork ironer with an integrated primary folder, the X-Series ironers from Girbau have an integrated primary folding function. An actuating drape bar performs an accordion fold, so on discharge, the sheet is the same dimension left to right, but front to back it's 14-17". Once the sheet is delivered back to the front the operator manually performs the crossfold and stacks. Using (2) operators a laundry can produce 60-120 per hour.

Now let's go full automation with the Compact+ All-in-One Ironing System. With the single station spreader-feeder option, a single operator can produce 180-300 sheets per hour. Using compressed air blasts and pinch rollers, the Compact+ is able to process large dimension sheets with machined precision.

If you do the math on 60 hand-folded versus 300 machine-processed sheets, the savings is more than 5 labor hours per day!

	GOOD	BETTER	BEST
	Hand Folding	X-Series Flatwork Ironer w/Integrated Sheet Folder	Compact+ All-in-One 32" Ironing System
Items per Hour	60	120	300
Labor Hours	8	8	8
Pieces per Day	480	960	2400*

Hand Folding vs. Ironer with Sheet Folder

*Adding a spreader/feeder boosts production even further.

Saves over 5 Labor Hours per Day!

Value #2: Gains in Quality

Some laundries, especially those processing hospitality laundry, require a high-quality finish, fold and stack. This uniformity can only be accomplished using automation — towel folders and flatwork sheet ironer/folders. These uniform folds and stacks not only look better, they take up less space in storage areas.



Value #3: Return on Investment (ROI)

Remember there are always two costs when you buy: the cost of the machine may seem like a lot, but what is its operational impact? Compare your finance payment to operational cost savings. Many times, the difference in labor costs will make up for your financed equipment payment each month! Check out the estimated ROI for a GI towel folder and all-in-one ironing system below:



DAILY DEMAND
1500 towels
per day

ROI
less than 2 years

GI Towel Folder



DAILY DEMAND
2300 sheets
per day

ROI
2 years

All-In-One Ironing System



Seth Willer holds over 15 years of experience in on-premise, commercial and industrial laundry design, equipment, workflow and productivity. As Girbau Industrial (GI) national sales manager, he works closely with laundry facilities to develop highly efficient and productive laundries for an array of industries, including hospitality, vacation rental and healthcare. Please contact Seth with any questions at swiller@cgilaundry.com.