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TEXTILE CARE — REAL LIFE EXAMPLES

PEERLESS CLEANERS CATAPULTS BUSINESS WITH ECO-FRIENDLY EQUIPMENT

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"I believe there's as much money to be made by controlling expenses as bringing in more sales," said Steve Grashoff, president of Peerless Cleaners (Peerless) and CRDN of Northern Indiana, in Fort Wayne. "Some dry cleaners are so concerned about what's coming in the front door, they don't realize what it's costing them in the back."

Purchased in 2000 by Grashoff and his wife, Laurie, Peerless draws from multiple revenue streams, including commercial laundry, fire restoration, wedding gown preservation, household laundry, dry cleaning, laundered shirts, alterations, and Easy Cycle wash/dry/fold. Making it simple, Peerless offers free pickup and delivery. "We don't turn anything away," said Grashoff. "In our small market being able to handle it all is crucial." Similarly, so is cost control.

When first purchased, Peerless operated from a leased space while utilizing perc dry cleaning machines and several used pieces of equipment. But, in 2015 Grashoff moved the business into a new, 32,000-square-foot facility. That's when Grashoff and Michael "Stucky" Szczotka, of Eagle Star Equipment, put their heads together ... Szczotka is an experienced dry cleaner owner/operator and provider of dry cleaning and laundry equipment in Troy, Mich. He helped Grashoff outfit his new plant with eco-friendly equipment that set the stage for improved production, efficiency and quality.

That equipment mix includes two 90-pound capacity K4 alternative solvent dry cleaning machines, a 60- and two 90-pound capacity Poseidon soft-mount wet cleaning machines, three 60-pound capacity Poseidon Dryers, and a 20-inch Poseidon Flatwork Ironer with integrated folding system.

Peerless hasn't been the same since.

Business catapulted. The company gained new accounts, significantly grew commercial laundry services, became more effective in its fire restoration work, and effectively lowered utility and labor costs.

A More Effective Fire Restoration Business

Peerless has performed fire, flood and mold textile restoration as a franchisee of Certified Restoration Drycleaning Network (CRDN) since 2003.

Prior to moving to the new building, Peerless successfully restored 90 percent of all incoming textiles impacted by fire and smoke. "Our restoration percentage was excellent," said Grashoff, "but we still struggled with heavy-smoke items and the dry cleaning process. I wanted to learn more about the best methods for removing heavy-smoke so we could apply them at the new facility."

After digging into best practices and talking with Szczotka, Grashoff made wet cleaning his go-to restoration method. "I found that wet cleaning is more effective and productive than dry cleaning when it comes



Peerless relies on a mix of Poseidon Wet Cleaning Machines and new-technology Poseidon Dryers to process textile restoration and commercial laundry work. The Poseidon Dryers cut dry time by 50 percent, according to owner Steve Grashoff.

to heavy-smoke restoration," said Grashoff. "Dry cleaning involves extra steps to remove smoke odors that wet cleaning doesn't."

That's why, since the move, textiles with heavy and medium smoke levels – even when dry-clean only – are processed through water using the plant's Poseidon Textile Care System®.

In order to properly clean a huge variety of fabric types, the Poseidon Wet Cleaning Machines are programmed with 45 unique wash programs. Each one delivers complete control over rotation action, fill levels, number of baths and rinses, water temperature, G-force extract speeds, and automatically



Left: The Poseidon Flatwork Ironer features an integrated folder that's significantly improved production and quality, according to Grashoff. It irons damp bed and table linens straight from the wet cleaning machines and automatically performs pre-folding. Right: The plant's Poseidon Wet Cleaning Machines are programmed with 45 unique wash programs. Each one delivers complete control over rotation action, fill levels, number of baths and rinses, water temperature, G-force extract speeds, and automatically injected chemical formulations.

injected chemical formulations. This makes it possible to restore textiles that could only be dry cleaned before, according to Grashoff.

"It's amazing what we can wet clean," he said. "We restore shoes, stuffed animals, clothing, drapes, pillows and even luggage. If needed, we can dial down rotation action to a gentle sloshing."

After 30 to 45 minutes in the wash cycle, damp goods are transferred to a Poseidon Dryer.

Offering phased programmability, Poseidon Dryers, like the wet cleaning machines, are programmed with 25 unique drying cycles to perfectly dry virtually anything - wool, synthetics, silk, taffeta, velvet, etc. "We are adding programs daily," said Grashoff.

Each dryer program offers a number of phases in which every variable of the drying process is precisely controlled, including drum rotation speed, drum rotation interval, moisture level, timed reversing, input air temperature, drying temperature, vent output temperature, drying time and time limit. "There's nothing like this dryer on the market today," said Grashoff.

The Poseidon Dryers work by removing moisture very quickly, added Szczotka. "They hit high drum temperatures extremely quickly in order to evaporate moisture without as much tumbling," he said. Then, programmable moisture sensing ensures items dry to correct moisture levels, which prevents shrinkage and over-drying.

Most items come out of the dryers in 15 minutes with 10 percent residual moisture, according to Grashoff. "These cut drying time by 50 percent over the other dryers I have on the floor," he said. "I have three Poseidon Dryers

and eight regular dryers," said Grashoff. "With Poseidon, it's like getting two dryers in one."

Moreover, when compared with dry cleaning, the Poseidon system more effectively removes fire contaminants, according to Grashoff. "That's good for us, the insurance company and the homeowner," he said. "Thanks to our wet cleaning system, our heavy-smoke salvageable rate moved up from 50 to 90 percent."

Boosted Commercial Laundry Revenue

And textile restoration isn't the only surging revenue stream. Commercial laundry is up 75 percent. The plant's new Poseidon Ironer has opened doors to new business, including military bases, restaurants and hospitals.

"We service all three hospital networks in the area and process everything from lab and barrier coats, sheets and towels to curtains," said Grashoff. "We do them all in the Poseidon system to treat them properly and ensure no contaminants get back to the hospital." Anything that requires ironing is also processed using the Poseidon flatwork ironer and integrated folder.

Before, Peerless used an older ironer to iron sheets and pillowcases. "We did all the folding, which took a lot of time," he said. Now, the new ironer's integrated folder automatically pre-folds linens for significant time and labor savings. "When items come out of the ironer, all we need to do is perform another flip," said Grashoff. Moreover, with the new Poseidon ironer, linens are ironed while they are damp, straight from the wet cleaning machines. This eliminates time-consuming dryer preconditioning. All told,

the Poseidon Ironer has sped up processing time by 25-30 percent.

"We've branched out to new revenue streams within the commercial sector, including restaurants and catering companies," said Grashoff. "There is no way we could have served catering with our old ironer because of a lack of quality. Now we can and we are picking up accounts all over the place."

Balancing Production with Equipment on the Floor

While the Poseidon equipment could be used to clean anything that comes through the front door, it isn't. Rather, good management involves balancing production with the equipment on the floor. "I have a lot of capacity in dry cleaning, so I need to use that as well," said Grashoff. Thus, he carefully picks and chooses what's wet cleaned and dry cleaned based on production schedules and item type and condition.

One thing is for sure, the Poseidon system has dramatically benefited business. And it's done so at a third of the cost of dry cleaning. "As I look back on spending \$100,000 on dry cleaning equipment, I wonder if I would have been better off with more wet cleaning machines instead," said Grashoff. "The soaps are less expensive and I believe flexibility is greater in wet cleaning than with dry cleaning."

Discover more about Peerless at peerless-cleaners.com or call 800-514-9689. To find out more about Poseidon Textile Care Systems, call 800-482-3400 or visit poseidonwetcleaning.com.