

EMBRACING THE EXPRESS LAUNDRY CENTER™

APRIL 2013 • By Haley Jorgensen

As seen in: Planet Laundry www.planetlaundry.com



Rob Maes, a corporate sales and marketing veteran of 20 years, extensively researched the laundry industry before giving it a spin. Ultimately, he developed two high-speed Express Laundry Centers in the Houston area. Highly successful and located just 11 miles apart, the branded Express Laundry Centers were financed and developed simultaneously as unique area offerings.

Express Laundry Center— A Branded Vended Laundry Solution

Express Laundry Center™ is a turnkey vended laundry solution developed by Continental Girbau. It is a complete store concept and brand touting high-speed Continental ExpressWash™ laundry equipment; a 60-minute wash and dry; marketing services and products, including signage, brochures, websites, direct mail and ads; branded services such as Load & Leave™ and Drop & Shop™; as well as templates for operational and employee training manuals.

“Continental debuted Express Laundry Center in 1997 as an in-store lane of four or five high-speed machines and a ‘60-minute wash and dry,’” said Joel Jorgensen, Continental vice president. “As a result of growing market demand, Continental ultimately brought the Express Laundry Center brand into a full-store concept. That full-store Express Laundry Center solution has since taken hold and spread across North America.”

“Owning an Express Laundry Center is like having a franchise without having to pay a franchise fee.”

The Value of a Brand

Maes’ decision to exit corporate life and get into vended laundries keyed on the Express Laundry Center brand. It not only differentiates his laundries from the competition as places where customers can complete laundry sooner, it is recognized across the country.

“As a marketing person, I appreciate the value of a brand because it creates familiarity,” said Maes. “People natu-



The Express Laundry Center in the Houston area pictured above is just one of two successful laundries owned by Rob Maes.

rally gravitate to branded products and services.” Adding power to the punch, the Express Laundry Center brand, which is backed by a successful business model, provided added credibility for acquiring financing and negotiating favorable lease agreements, according to Maes. In the end, the Express Laundry Center brand provided the framework banks and landlords sought.

“Owning an Express Laundry Center is like having a franchise without having to pay a franchise fee,” he said. “A lot of banks don’t like franchise royalty fees,

but they do like a franchise concept.” Ultimately, a single bank gladly financed both laundries.

Wash & Dry in 60 Minutes or Less

Via an Express Laundry Center – and its high-speed ExpressWash Washers – customers can complete laundry in less than 60 minutes.

And that’s what customers want. At the Express Laundry Centers, in Houston, customers generally complete wash cycles in 20 to 30 minutes, and dry cycles



available exclusively from



2500 State Road 44 • Oshkosh, WI 54904
920-231-8222 • Fax 920-231-4666
800-256-1073 • www.continentalgirbau.com/exlc



Shane and Rebecca McKinney, owners of the Express Laundry Center in Miles City, Montana, maintain that their high-speed equipment gets customers' laundry done in a shorter amount of time.

in 21 minutes, according to Maes.

Meanwhile, in Miles City, Mont., Express Laundry Center owner Shane McKinney maintains customers wash laundry in 19 minutes and dry it in 24 minutes. "Customers are in and out faster," said McKinney. "Typically, in less than 50 minutes, laundry is washed and dried."

Extra time is a commodity that most people don't have in today's busy society, according to Jorgensen. "The Express Laundry Center model caters to a customer's need to quickly complete laundry within a pleasant and convenient environment."

At Express Laundry Centers, laundry takes less time to complete—freeing equipment for the next paying customer. Higher customer turnover coupled with dryers running less often results in improved store capacity and profit potential—especially during busy weekend hours.

ExpressWash High-speed Equipment

Express Laundry Centers™ harness high-speed Continental ExpressWash Washers – in 20- to 90-pound capacities – engineered to significantly reduce utility usage. Because the washers are freestanding, they are installed easily without bolts or concrete foundations—even in second-story buildings and unconventional

locations. They slide into place, deliver unrivaled efficiency and most operate on single-phase power. ExpressDry Dryers in 30- and 45-pound capacity stacks; and 30-, 55- and 75-pound capacity, single-pocket models, complement the washers.

Unlike traditional hard-mount washers, which reach extract speeds between 75 and 200 G-force, freestanding ExpressWash Washers generate up to 381 G-force extract speeds. As extract speeds increase so does the amount of water removed from each load—dramatically reducing dry time.

"Our customers think we have the world's greatest dryers," said Maes. "But, it's really our washers that cut dry time. Customers use the equipment and are surprised by how they can dry loads so quickly."

Because ExpressWash Washers remove more water per load than hard-mount washers, laundry loads dry 40-50 percent faster. This boosts customer turnover, cuts utility costs and catapults profit potential.

"A 3,500-square-foot Express Laundry Center can theoretically save up to \$11,000 annually in water costs and \$22,000 in natural gas costs compared to store with only hard-mount washers," said Jorgensen. "The store would also save an additional \$2,000 in water-heating costs."

Lower utility costs are universal

at all Express Laundry Centers. At McKinney's Express Laundry Center, utility costs make up a miniscule 8 percent of revenue. That's a far cry from the national average of 26 percent, according to the 2012 Coin Laundry Industry Survey.

Branded Services

Still, the Express Laundry Center brand encapsulates more than just high-speed equipment, a 60-minute wash and dry, and low utilities. It includes marketing and advertising assistance, as well as branded services that contribute significantly to bottom-line profits.

McKinney put branded Drop & Shop and Load & Leave services to work at his store. Additionally, he tapped into drop-off drycleaning.

"We keep one of the 20-pound capacity washers and one of the 30-pound stack dryers in the back, reserved for heavily soiled wash-dry-fold," he said. As a result, his Express Laundry Center generates a whopping 40 percent of its revenue through drop-off services.

Marketing Tools & Support

Helping boost revenue further is a host of marketing, advertising and public relations tools explicitly for owners of Express Laundry Centers. This includes interior and exterior signage and extends to the development and execution of direct mail campaigns, press releases, brochures, websites and more. "The Express Laundry Center package offers owners in-store and out-of-store marketing designed to bolster profits and revenue beyond the initial grand opening," said Jorgensen.

Results: Return on Investment

The Express Laundry Center brand delivers the full package—offering investors a proven model encapsulating a 60-minute wash and dry, highly efficient ExpressWash laundry equipment, marketing support, branded services, and the potential for unbridled profits.

Learn more about the Express Laundry Center opportunity. Visit www.continentalgirbau.com/exlc or call 800-256-1073.