

SECOND-STORY LAUNDRY SPINNING SUCCESS



MAY 2009 • By Haley Jorgensen

Super Clean Lavanderia delivers more to customers than a 60-minute wash and dry. Super Clean—a super center for families—features high-speed laundry equipment, a café/convenience store, 10 Internet computer stations, a large children's play area, six flat-screen televisions and multiple attendants giving white-glove customer care. The 7,000-square-foot laundry, which occupies the second story of a rental property in Langley Park, Md., opened for business in January of 2009.

Retail developer and owner Danny Lee, who immigrated to the area from South Korea years ago, says Super Clean's location is ideal for business, thanks to a dense Hispanic population of renters. Already, store revenue is significantly higher than expected ...

A Family Oriented Laundry

Unique from its competition, Super Clean caters to his Hispanic clientele with bilingual signage, multiple services and products, as well as attendants offering unmatched service. "We have five attendants at the laundry at all times who help customers immediately," says Lee. Upon entering the store's parking area, attendants greet customers, unload their laundry and place it inside the store next to an appropriately sized washer-extractor. "When our customers leave," says Lee, "attendants take their laundry to their cars for them."

At Super Clean, mothers feel safe and children are entertained. "Moms with kids want to come here," says Lee. "Their kids have a place to play while moms focus on laundry and visiting with friends." Around the clock, music fills the store. "Our customers can sit outside on the upper balcony and enjoy a coffee from our cafe," says Lee. "Many laundries are dangerous with cars going by in front of the stores. Ours is safe and moms with kids want to come here."

From the back of the store, customers enjoy ample parking; and from the front, a second-story balcony and 106 linear feet of windows overlook busy University Blvd. "Our visibility is great," says Lee. "When designing the laundry, we spent a lot of time trying to save all of the windows."



Careful Development of Second-story Laundry

But, because Super Clean occupies a second story, it required careful planning and freestanding laundry equipment. "At first I wanted to put a sports bar in the space," says Lee, "but the building owner didn't want to hassle with a bar. He suggested a laundry, but I didn't think it would work on a second floor with an existing business downstairs. I thought the equipment would create too much vibration."

Nonetheless, Lee checked out the idea with Fowler Equipment, a laundry equipment distributor in Baltimore. David Giguere, a laundry industry veteran, suggested Lee install Continental E-Series freestanding, soft-mount washer-extractors in the space because they

don't mandate thick concrete foundations or bolts. Rather, they can be installed in unconventional locations, and literally slide into place. As an added bonus, E-Series Washers provide more energy-efficiency than traditional hard-mount washers and reach extract speeds of 354 G-force, which allows customers to wash and dry loads in less than an

"The building owner suggested a laundry, but I didn't think it would work on a second floor. I thought the equipment would create too much vibration," says Lee.



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

hour. The high extract of the E-Series removes more water per load than hard-mount washers, which only generate extract speeds between 75 and 150 G-force. As a result, laundry loads dry 40-50 percent faster using considerably less natural gas and electricity.

"Utility costs make up 18-20 percent of our revenue," says Lee of Super Clean. "In this area, utilities typically make up 25 to 33 percent. I'm saving a lot on my utilities thanks to the equipment."

"Overall the utility costs are 5-7 percent less than the average in this area. At this pace I expect a full return on my investment in four years—three years earlier than planned," says Lee.

Freestanding Washers Key to Installation and Efficiency

Because Lee chose the freestanding E-Series Washers, he gained a way to differentiate his store from the competition with a 60-minute wash and dry; lowered utility costs; and was able to develop a second-floor laundry, according to Giguere.

"I relied on David 100 percent and hired a structural engineer to be sure I could put the machines in the space," says Lee. Ultimately, Super Clean was outfitted with 74 E-Series Washers: 16 EH020s, 30 EH030s, and 28 EH040s. The store also features 20 Continental 45-pound and 10 30-pound capacity dual-pocket stack dryers.

"The difference between Super Clean and our competition is that we attract families because we offer family oriented services and large machines," says Lee. "Our most popular washers are the 40 pounders because customers are washing large loads of laundry. They are looking for immediate service and can wash in 28 minutes and dry in 24 minutes," Lee adds. "Our customers are generally done with laundry in 52 minutes and can fold and go."

A Quicker Wash & Dry—Good for Business & Customers

Because customers get in and out of Super Clean so quickly, machines are open sooner for another paying customer. That's a good thing, according to Lee, because the store is very busy. "Some customers are asking us to provide wash/dry/fold service," he says. "But we don't have open machines or idle attendants to be able to offer the service right now."

Contributing to the Bottom Line

With multiple offerings under one roof, Lee enjoys several streams of revenue. In turn, his customers appreciate the ability to use the card system to purchase anything from a video game, Internet access, a wash or dry, to laundry soap, or a snack. Everything in Super Clean is operated via the card system. All offerings contribute to Super Clean revenue and profits.

Specifically, the self-service laundry generates 80 percent of total revenue. Meanwhile, the café contributes 15 percent and the vending machines and Internet stations bring in five percent. By themselves, the store's five video machines bolster Super Clean's bottom line by \$800 per month!



Danny Lee, owner of Super Clean Laundry, attests that he is saving a lot on utilities thanks to his Continental washers.

Lee is thankful for the laundry's early success, and believes in giving back to his customers regularly. Each month, he runs promotions to reward and thank them. "We offer a free dry on Mondays and Fridays. We gave away a 42-inch flat-screen TV last month in a raffle, and this Saturday, we're giving away 25 cooling fans. We try to give away \$700-1,000 items each month. I've got to give back to my customers. All my businesses are run that way."

At this pace, with anticipated revenue already exceeded by 25 percent, Lee expects a full return on his Super Clean investment in four years – three years earlier than planned.

"I'm a retail developer and own a discount store and a flower shop," says Lee, who is working on the development of his second self-service laundry; this one located about 30 minutes away. "I was attracted to the laundry business because it's easier to manage with multiple stores."

