



Automation Launches Brubaker Linens from 'Stone Age'

By Haley Jorgensen

Parker Brubaker, of Brubaker Linens, in Phoenix, Ariz., grew his commercial laundry business from the ground up. He started by cleaning hair salon towels and capes at a local public laundry before delivering them to clients using the family van. He got the idea while in college when he made Brubaker Linens his capstone business school project. In the three years since, Brubaker Linens has grown exponentially — making expansion and laundry automation investments necessary next steps.

Moves into a Commercial Laundry Facility

"Once I had a full year of revenue, I got a loan to buy my own washers and dryers," said Brubaker. "I bought a 30- and two 60-pound capacity Continental Girbau E-Series Washers and three 90-pound capacity ProDry2+ Dryers. I got a 1,000 square-foot facility in Phoenix, built it out to house the washers and dryers, and gained three employees. All four of us operated the washers and dryers and folded the laundry. Then I delivered everything myself."

Brubaker Linens started by serving hair salons, spas and chiropractic offices by providing rental towels and massage sheets. The company has since expanded into hospitality, with customer-owned goods making up 75 percent of business and rental the other 25.

In April 2023, Brubaker landed a big account with a vacation rental management company overseeing 450 properties, which necessitated four additional E-Series Washers — two 80s and two 90s. He stuck with the workhorse machines he knew offered high-speed extract and flexible programmability. Continental Girbau West (CG West), in Tempe, Ariz., provided the equipment after analyzing Brubaker Linens' needs and future anticipated growth.

"E-Series Washers are soft-mount machines that generate

powerful extract speeds reaching 405 G-force," said Tod Sorensen, CG West vice president. "They also bring superior programmability for complete control over the washing process." Brubaker Linens' washers are programmed by item type and automatically inject the correct chemicals at appropriate times in the wash process. Moreover, the soft-mount washers aren't bolted down, so they are easy to move and relocate if necessary. When compared with hard-mount washers, which are bolted down, they generate greater extract speeds for more moisture removal, according to Sorensen. This shortens drying time by up to 50 percent, which results in maxed daily throughput.

They're paired with two 85-pound capacity ProDry2+ Dryers. The dryers are highly programmable, offer moisture-sensing technology and offer smart engineering so heat stays inside the dryer for shorter dry times and lower energy bills, according to Sorensen.

Expanding into a Second Space & Adding Automation

Next, Brubaker streamlined the folding process. "I realized I was paying a lot for labor because we were still in the stone age folding everything by hand. I needed to move away from that and automate."

In doing so, he leased a second building next door and installed a Girbau Industrial (GI) FT Maxi auto-sort, dry-goods folder. The wash



line occupies the original, 1,000 square-foot facility, while the FT Maxi occupies the new, 2,500 square-foot building.

The washers and dryers amp laundry production, while the FT Maxi sorts, folds and stacks. In an hour, the FT Maxi single-handedly processes what previously took four or five employees to accomplish in the same time frame. "The FT Maxi is a game-changer," he said. "It runs flawlessly all day with two operators and automatically folds pool, hand and bath towels as well as king and queen pillowcases. It has freed up three employees and saved \$1,200 per month in labor."

Plans for Doubling Production

Brubaker is now in talks with a hospitality account that would double volume — necessitating additional automation. In order to increase volume from 80,000 to 140,000 laundry pounds per month, he plans to add two 130-pound capacity EH-Series Washers, two 170-pound capacity ProDry2+ Drying Tumblers and a Girbau Industrial CompactPro All-in One ironing system.

The new CompactPro will not only launch production and enhance quality, it will significantly reduce labor hours and allow Brubaker to go after new business.

"If another contract comes in, we can start them immediately and pull the trigger on new jobs quicker," he said.

Enter the Compact Pro

Once installed, the CompactPro will automatically feed, dry, iron, fold and stack approximately 240 sheets per hour, according to Brubaker. "The sheets never go into a dryer," he added. "Once they come out of the washer, they go straight through the ironer and are dried, pressed and folded." The Compact is also configurable to run pillowcases, napkins and table linens.

Armed with the Compact, Brubaker will pursue premium hospitality accounts, while helping current vacation rental clients. "We'll be ironing their linens too, which will improve and add value to their guest experience," he said.

Three years in, Brubaker is thankful for his commercial laundry journey. "Did I know how to do 60K in laundry? No, but I told myself I'd figure it out," he said. "I'm not going to know everything, but CG West and Girbau North America have helped me out an insane amount. My business has grown dramatically because of quality equipment and automation."

To discover more about Continental Girbau and Girbau Industrial laundry equipment and automation — visit gnaundry.com or call 800-256-1073.

A Laundry's Most Impactful Machine

When it comes to taking the leap into automation, investing in one piece of equipment can significantly impact business through saved labor hours and catapulted productivity. 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.



800
Pieces
per Hour



180-260
Wash Pounds
per Hour



680 PPOH
(1 lb./towel at
85% efficiency)

Excellent Quality
up to **800** pieces/hour

200 PPOH
(1 lb./sheet at
85% efficiency)

*24" CompactPro
w/Stacker*
3+ sheets/minute
180+ sheets/hour

*32" CompactPro
w/Stacker*
4+ sheets/minute
240+ sheets/hour

FT Maxi Auto-Sort Towel/Blanket Folder

The FT Maxi is an extremely impactful piece of equipment because it automatically sorts, folds and stacks up to 800 pieces per hour with only one operator. An auto-sort folder makes it possible for laundries to cut labor hours by 87 percent over hand folding, which equates to a savings of more than 8 labor hours per day. And the added benefit is most auto-sort folders have an ROI of less than 2 years.

CompactPro All-in-One Ironing System

The CompactPro automatically irons, folds, stacks and accumulates. This all-in-one machine eliminates almost all hands-on flatwork folding and stacking. Using a basic flatwork ironer, operators must feed, catch and perform the cross folds. With a higher production all-in-one machine, operators feed sheets, but the primary folding, cross folding and stacking are all automatically performed for boosted quality and production. While an all-in-one is an investment, it's well worth it. It eliminates hand feeding, folding and stacking for an ROI of just 2 years.



Continental Girbau West (CG-West), a full-service laundry solutions provider, delivers local expertise, equipment, chemistry, parts, financing and ongoing technical service to vended, on-premise and industrial laundries throughout Arizona, New Mexico and Southern California. Visit cg-west.com.