



Multi-store Owners Open First High-Speed Laundry

By Haley Jorgensen

A new, 9,000-square-foot laundry recently opened in Rockford, Ill., bringing a high-rental, low-income area renewed vitality and customers a quicker, more pleasant laundry experience. Kevin and Cindy Olson, who own three 24/7 Laundromats, went bigger and better on their newest store by investing in soft-mount over hard-mount washers, adding ozone, maximizing store efficiency and customer rotation rates, and tripling square footage.

The Olsons, who opened their first laundry in 2015, also own eight gaming cafés, a construction company and several properties. Through the years, their portfolio has included gun and pawn shops, gas stations, restaurants and pack and ship businesses, among others.

Renovating a Public Library Building

Doing their own construction on these projects is par for the course. To house their newest 24/7 Laundromat, they renovated an old public library in a dilapidated Rockford neighborhood. It's much improved over its predecessors thanks to careful research and due diligence. "My wife and I were looking for something better," said Kevin Olson. "We try to find better ways to build using more efficient products so our businesses takes less energy and labor to operate after construction."

The fully attended laundry, which is open around the clock, also offers full-service wash/dry/fold, drop-off dry cleaning and alterations, and amenities including free WIFI, large-screen televisions, vending machines and a children's area.

Choosing Genius Washers — Soft-Mount, High-Speed Machines

This time around, they ditched the hard-mount washers for soft-mount Continental Girbau Genius® Washers in 23-, 30-, 45-, 60- and 80-pound capacities and ExpressWash® Washers in 90- and 130-pound capacities. The large-load ExpressWash machines feature



automatic chemical injection to eliminate the need to lug and load detergent. Thirty-three ExpressDry® 45-pound capacity stack dryers round out the store's equipment mix.

Customers Complete Laundry Fast

At 24/7 Laundromat, the Genius Washers offer an easy-to-install, freestanding design, and deliver 450 G-force extract speeds for greater load moisture removal. By comparison, a typical vended hard-mount washer generates speeds between 100 and 200 G-force.

"It's a significant difference in performance," said David Gradle, of Laundry Concepts Inc., in Addison, Ill. Gradle worked closely with the Olsons on the laundry project, providing equipment recommendations and installation, as well as store layout and design services. "Laundry dries more quickly coming out of the higher extract Genius machines. This cuts natural gas usage on the dryers, helps eliminate dryer bottlenecks, and allows customers to complete laundry in less than an hour," said Gradle. "The other bonus is quicker customer rotation rates for more revenue per square foot."

Features that Set 24/7 Laundry Apart

The Genius Washers feature the industry's largest touchscreen user interface and a 360° Vision Corner Status Light. The touchscreen offers customizable programs, Extra Wash and Extra Rinse options, and allows owners to upload their own advertising, photos or logos.

"I like the fact that as I get more into this, I can put promotional pictures or ads on-screen," said Olson. "Customers also like that they can select an Extra Wash or Extra Rinse, which vends for an added 24-50 cents, depending on the machine."

The corner status lights illuminate in different colors to match





load status. "Customers can be located across the laundry and easily see when their laundry is done," said Olson.

The Genius machines and ozone work together to set 24/7 Laundromat apart. "We have five or six laundries within a two-mile radius of us," added Olson, "but none of them compare."

CCI Laundry Card Payment System

Making things easy and convenient is important, so the Olsons stayed with their Card Concepts Inc. Laundry Card payment system. At in-store kiosks, customers load value onto loyalty cards using cash, debit/credit, ApplePay/AndroidPay or Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT). They start machines using the cards and can take advantage of in-store promotions.

Simultaneously, using the system, the Olsons manage the laundry remotely and run promotions. "I like the fact that the kiosks are right there; it doesn't matter if the Internet is running. Using Laundry Card, we run rewards programs where customers can earn anything from silverware to a Louis Vuitton purse with points," said Olson.

Convenience of Automatic Chemical Injection

The laundry's large capacity ExpressWash soft-mount washers, located at the front of the store and visible from the parking lot, draw customers with large, bulky loads. These machines automatically inject commercial detergents, softeners and brighteners — creating the ultimate in convenience.

Open just a few months, 24/7 Laundromat is quickly growing clientele and revenue. Moreover, it's positively impacting the neighborhood, as other local businesses are working to upgrade their facilities.

Moving forward, the plan is expansion. The Olsons hope to open a fourth laundry soon; this one with more large-capacity machines.

To discover more about Genius and ExpressWash soft-mount washers, visit gnalaundry.com or call 800-256-1073.



Laundry Concepts, founded in 1999, has over 35 years' experience in the laundry industry and have built over 400 new stores in the Chicagoland area. With relentless work ethic and extensive experience, the team ensures clients success in their new business ventures. The Laundry Concepts philosophy is simple: provide your customers with the best products available, stand behind your work and keep your word.