



City Cleaners Successfully Expands into Profitable Laundry Sector

By Haley Jorgensen



Vended
Laundry Profile

Jeff Sitz comes from a long line of family members invested in the dry cleaning business. He owns City Cleaners, a fourth-generation dry cleaner in Akron, Ohio. He not only operates a robust restoration and dry cleaning business, he runs two high-speed laundries — branded Laundromat City — which are even more profitable.

“I really enjoy the self-service laundry business,” said Sitz, who in addition to the laundries, owns a dry cleaning plant and five satellite retail stores. Dry cleaning and laundry are run as separate businesses, yet comingle nicely ...

“Once you’ve owned a dry cleaners, owning a laundromat is pretty simple,” he said. “We want to be top of the market and for people to know we are different. Our customers probably pay more for it, but it’s a better experience than they can get anywhere else.”

All told, the vended laundry side of his business not only complements the dry cleaning side, it outperforms it. “There’s a lot less labor involved in vended laundries when compared with dry cleaning,” said Sitz. “It’s a major unexpected upside.”

Sharing Resources Between Businesses

Moreover, certain areas of crossover make for improved efficiency and lower overhead costs. For example, all wash/dry/fold (WDF) from the dry cleaner is processed at the laundromats; the dry cleaning and laundry sides share delivery routes and point-of-sale software; and both the dry cleaner and the laundries are often co-marketed.



“People want to get in and out faster. At my laundries, it takes just 17-20 minutes to wash and 20 minutes to dry. This time-savings elevates customer service, while allowing for more turns per day.”

— Jeff Sitz, Owner, City Cleaners



Plus, all dry cleaning retail work — bed linens, bath towels and casual clothing — is processed after hours at one of the City Laundromat locations, between 2 a.m. and 7 a.m. “We use more than 50 percent of our first laundry’s equipment for this purpose,” Sitz said. “The laundries also allow us to handle additional growth at the dry cleaner or we would have had to move to a larger plant.”

Enter the Laundromat City Brand

Sitz expanded into the vended laundry business with his first, fully attended store in Akron, in 2019, adjacent to the City Cleaners plant. His second, 5,000-square-foot laundry debuted in May 2023 in Canton. Both were born from extensive renovations to owned real estate.

Although Sitz coordinated and performed a lot of the renovation work himself, Advantage Equipment Inc. (Advantage), a Continental Girbau (Continental) laundry equipment distributor, in Akron, was key to creating a successful end-product designed to stand apart. Advantage assisted with store layout, design, equipment selection, installation, and more, according to Sitz.

Vended Laundry No. 2

For the most recent Laundromat City, Sitz purchased and extensively renovated an old dry cleaning plant. He mimicked the first store’s high-speed, super-service mantra and expects a full return on investment in 4-5 years.

“It’s about differentiating ourselves from the competition and delivering a better product to the consumer,” said Sitz. That’s why both laundries are equipped with Continental ExpressWash® Washers and ExpressDry® Dryers. The soft-mount washers, which range from 20 to 80 pounds of capacity, don’t require bolt-down like hard-mount machines and generate much higher extract speeds. Spin speeds reaching 408 G-force remove more moisture from laundry, and in turn, cut resulting dry time in half. The added bonus? A subsequently reduced utility bill.

Completing Laundry in an Hour

“People want to get in and out faster,” said Sitz. “At my laundries, it takes just 17-20 minutes to wash and 20 minutes to dry. This time-savings elevates customer service, while allowing for more turns per day.”

Plus, the high-speed washers bring more washing options and cycle features to the customer. In addition to the primary cycles, Superwash, Hot, Warm and Cold, customers can add an Extra Wash, Extra Rinse or Extra Spin. Each “Extra” adds to overall vend price — contributing to the bottom line.

“On our 20s and 40s, two-thirds of customers select some type of upcharge,” said Sitz. “On our 60s and 80s, 75 percent do.”

Every cycle and “Extra” can be customized for a specific vend price, water levels and temperatures, number of baths and rinses, extract speeds and cycle times. This allows Sitz to tweak cycles according to market and customer needs. To operate machines, customers simply load value onto their FasCard loyalty cards with debit/credit or cash.

In turn, the FasCard payment system allows Sitz to monitor and manage the laundries remotely. He can view downed equipment, daily turns and revenue, alter washer programs and run promotions.

The Laundromat City brand — offering premier service and convenience — is something worth replicating, said Sitz, who plans to invest in a third store. Its mission? Empowering dignity through unparalleled service: transforming laundry into a personalized experience where every customer and employee feels valued and respected.

To find out more about Laundromat City and City Cleaners, visit citycleaner.com. To discover more about Continental laundry equipment — backed by industry-leading warranties — visit gnaundry.com or call 800-256-1073.