



# Washing Smart with Paul Hansen

## Enhancing Laundries to Benefit Community

By Haley Jorgensen

Industry veteran Paul Hansen is in the business of buying, renovating and running laundries. His most recent laundry project — Wash Smart Laundry, in Chicago, involved a major renovation and retooling in order to return it to the community in peak operating condition. His goal? To provide customers the best possible laundry experience and services.

Hansen knows laundry. He grew up in the business — co-owning five Chicago area Su Nueva Lavanderias with his father, Chuck. He later sold the stores to Laundry Growth Partners, a multi-laundry operator in Chicago, and transitioned as member of the Board of Directors. Hansen, who is committed to laundry best practices and working to improve the communities where his laundries are located, also serves as a board member for the Laundry Cares Foundation and Coin Laundry Association. On the full-service side, Hansen owns a Chicagoland pickup and delivery laundry service — Drop & Dash — which operates from a central commercial laundry.

### Gut & Reno Process

On his most recent Wash Smart gut and renovation (and there are 14 Wash Smart stores throughout Chicago), he transformed a tired vended laundry into an amenity-rich, fully attended and tech-smart store complete with full-service wash-dry-fold (WDF), a children's literacy and learning space, free WIFI, big-screen televisions, sanitizing ozone, charging stations, vending machines and more ... Andy Marcionetti of Laundry Concepts Inc., a laundry solutions provider in Addison, Ill., provided the equipment and assisted on the project.

On the equipment side, Hansen ousted the store's hard-mount washers for quicker, high-speed soft-mount Continental Girbau

(Continental) Genius® machines, which remove more moisture from laundry loads — shortening drying time. As a result, customers are in and out in 60 minutes or less.

"We provide a free dry here, so high-speed washers are crucial," said Hansen. "They get people in and out quickly so we have more paying customers per day and no bottlenecks." Plus, dryers operate less often, cutting utility costs. A win-win.

"I replaced hard mounts with soft mounts in another store in 2020 and we realized a significant savings in gas and water," he added. Hansen is confident the same will hold true here.

### Harnessing Genius High-Speed Washers

All told, Wash Smart harnesses Genius Washers in 23-, 45-, 60- and 80-pound capacities; high-speed Continental ExpressWash® Washers in 90- and 130-pound capacities with automatic chemical injection; and 37 45-pound capacity stack dryers. Plus, Artic Clean sanitizing ozone is included on every cold water rinse, resulting in sanitized laundry that's fresher and softer, according to Hansen.

The soft-mount Genius Washers reach sustained extract speeds of 450 G-force and the ExpressWash Washers generate speeds up to 387 G-force. By comparison the old hard-mount machines maxed out at 200 Gs.





high-speed machines, even those giant loads are washed, dried and folded in about an hour.

### LaundryCard Streamlines Management

Behind the scenes a Card Concepts Inc. LaundryCard system makes it simple to streamline the management of multiple laundries, according to Hansen. "It's a solid system I've used for 20 years," he said. "It makes it simple for customers to operate machines and they can add value to their cards at in-store kiosks using credit/debit card or ApplePay/AndroidPay."

For customers preferring full service, Wash Smart provides drop-off wash/dry/fold for residential and commercial accounts. Once again, every load is sanitized. Each customer's washing preferences are carefully followed, laundry is folded by item type and packaged for pickup.

### Status Light & User Interface

While significant, Genius Washer benefits don't end with high Gs. Hansen maintains the washers' stainless cabinets, 10-inch touchscreen user interfaces and 360° Corner Status Lights combine to set the store apart.

The lights illuminate in different colors based on load status. This means, rather than having to walk up to the washer, customers can simply glance up and see its status from a distance, according to Hansen.

Meanwhile, the 10-inch touchscreen brings flexible programmability and owner control over every variable of the wash process. It displays up to three languages and offers four, six or eight pre-set cycle options, with each one being customizable.

After choosing a wash cycle, customers can also opt for an "Extra Wash" and "Extra Rinse" to further customize the wash process. Each addition adds to vend price — boosting revenue. Plus, "Extras" can be created/custom designed by laundry owners in order to appeal to their own unique market. "We like the touchscreen's variety of pricing structures and the ability to offer an 'Extra Wash' or 'Rinse,'" said Hansen.

"We try to continually improve our stores and giving customers more washing options is part of that."

Out of 638 starts during Wash Smart's first month, customers selected an "Extra" 45 percent of the time, according to Hansen. "This equates to a 4 to 5 percent increase in vend price," he said.

### Large Loads and Automatic Detergent Dispensing

Wash Smart not only saves customers time, it makes washing the largest loads easy. The laundry's 90- and 130-pound capacity ExpressWash Washers automatically inject detergents, brighteners and softeners — eliminating the hassle of lugging and loading detergent. And because the washers are

### Community Commitment

And all of this — the 60-minute in-and-out, sanitization, ease of payment and mammoth-sized Continental machines — helps enhance the communities that Wash Smart serves. No wonder the laundry showcases a Family Read Play & Learn space that encourages literacy and family interaction. It offers a quiet, comfortable space with books and activities specifically designed to encourage the development of young minds. "Kids are encouraged to take a book home with them," said Hansen. "I'm a big proponent of LaundryCares and children's literacy. It's good for customer relations, which is good for business. They go hand-in-hand."

*Discover more about Wash Smart at [washsmartlaundry.com](http://washsmartlaundry.com). To find out more about Continental Genius and ExpressWash Washers visit [gnaulaundry.com](http://gnaulaundry.com) or call 800-256-1073.*

