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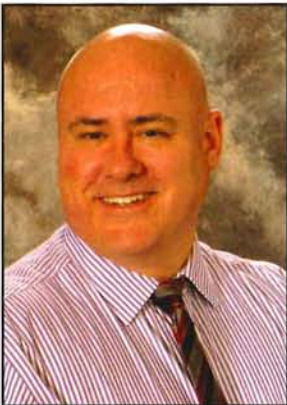
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Laundry

Magazine of the Coin Laundry Association

What Made Milwaukee Famous

Founded More Than a Century Ago, Huebsch is Just One of the Things That Put the Wisconsin City on the Map



**Huebsch National
Sales Manager,
Gary Dixon**

Huebsch was founded in 1907 by brothers Joseph and John Huebsch in Milwaukee. The company received national recognition early on for its inventions, particularly tumble dryers. Huebsch was the inventor of the stack dryer, the Huebsch Twin, and it was the first company to market coin-operated dryers.

Today, Huebsch is a brand of Alliance Laundry Systems, a global manufacturer of commercial laundry equipment and technologies based in Ripon, Wis. As an Alliance brand, Huebsch's equipment is manufactured in a world-class facility and is supported by some of the best resources in the laundry industry, including a state-of-the-art test lab, a cutting edge research and development team, laundry design services and a best-in-class customer service initiative known as Customer One. Huebsch also offers in-house financing through Huebsch Financial.

This year, Huebsch will continue to provide innovative product advancements for its customers. The company also will continue to increase its open line of communication with customers to gather insights, while providing them with up-to-date company, industry and sales information.

In addition, Huebsch will expand its social media participation as another way to reach out to customers. For example, the company's Facebook and Twitter pages share laundry maintenance tips, new products announcements, industry articles and help the Huebsch staff start discussions with its customers.

The company also has developed a direct

customer question-and-answer program through its "Huebsch is the Answer" page, which can be found on the company's website; visitors to the site can submit a question and receive an expert answer within 24 hours. Huebsch posts a sampling of frequently asked questions and their answers on the page, in case others have the same questions. Being accessible to its customers using various channels of communication allows Huebsch to collect their thoughts on the business. And, as a leader in the commercial laundry industry, the company vows to continue to invest in product development and distributor training as well.

Huebsch National Sales Manager Gary Dixon recently shared his views on the laundry industry with *PlanetLaundry*:

What is the most pronounced trend you're currently seeing in the industry?

Laundromat owners are switching to larger-capacity machines. This is a shift from the past 10 to 15 years. Store owners are realizing the revenue potential larger machines can offer. Larger machines draw in new customers who may not be able to wash their oversized items at home. They also help a laundromat differentiate itself from other stores in the area. Increased capacities allow customers to get larger loads done quickly. For example, I know a woman who has four kids and, instead of it taking all week to do the family's laundry, she takes all their clothes to the laundromat and it is done within an hour.

Huebsch offers vended washer-extractors with capacities ranging from 20 to 125 pounds. These machines offer customers the option of washing extra-large items, such as quilts, sleeping bags and rugs. In addition, coin laundry owners looking to offer wash-dry-fold services to offset those less-than-busy days can use an extra-large capacity washer that can handle pounds of linens and towels from restaurants, child care facilities, spas and health clubs.

What are you most excited about, heading into 2012?

Technology continues to evolve in everything we do today, and laundry is no different. New controls are changing the way owners manage their laundries and the way customers use machines. For example, Huebsch's Galaxy 600 control offers owners a variety of ways to increase revenue. Owners are able to charge a premium for warm and hot water, extra rinses and more. This control also generates advanced management reports that provide details on machine usage and maintenance reports that allow owners to catch problems quickly, reducing downtime and repair costs. The Galaxy 600 allows customers to gain complete control over their laundry and make their own decisions on exactly how they want their clothes washed.

What are you most concerned about, as we face this new year?

If you turn on the news, you hear how the economy is not doing well. But with the coin laundry business, most owners have stayed pretty steady with their revenue or have even increased it

due to the rise in renter population. Unfortunately, some owners respond to a poor economy by not reinvesting in their business.

Right now there are great investment packages for owners looking to add an additional store or for an investor looking for a new investment opportunity. It's a buyer's market due to the real estate and low interest rates available.

Where do you see the coin laundry industry headed?

It's all about new technology and the options are limitless. One day soon, we all may be able to scan our cellphones to pay for a load of laundry. Of course, there will be even more advanced data reporting, higher efficiencies, greater capacities and better looking equipment.

What's the biggest reason for coin laundry owners to be optimistic in 2012?

There are several reasons laundromat owners should be optimistic this year. As I previously mentioned, rents, leases and real estate prices are all low, and there are great financial packages available. This is an optimal time to invest in the future and expand your business or investment portfolio. The business environment is a lot better than it has been in the past couple of years, and construction is starting to pick up, bringing an influx of itinerant workers. Also, the population of the United States is estimated to increase by about four million this year. With a growing population and new construction, there are more opportunities for laundromats looking to add customers.

What are the keys to successful laundry ownership today?

Don't take your business for granted. A lot of store owners only spend a few hours a week at their business, and while flexible work hours are a huge benefit of our industry, owners need to interact with their customers and maintain their stores. It's important to spend a few extra hours a month looking at who your customers are and finding out what their needs are. Equally important is knowing the store's retention rate and consistently looking for ways to improve customer satisfaction. Understanding what the customers want and what the competition offers is essential to success. Customers will feel appreciated, and even small changes can give your store an advantage over the competition. At the end of the day, the store must be clean, inviting, secure and have working equipment with fair prices.

