

COIN LAUNDRY NEWS



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Tacoma, WA Owner Builds the Store She'd Want to do Her Own Laundry in.

Part 2: Choices to be Made
BEFORE selling Your Coin or
Card Laundry



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RETOOLED LAUNDROMAT IS A CLEAN WIN OVER AREA COMPETITION

Editor's Note: A special thanks to Dawn Nagle of Wascomat / Electrolux for contributing this story. The News is always pleased to run success stories about laundry owners who've found a path to success worth sharing with our readers. Something that caught our attention right off the bat when reviewing this story for press, was just how much of the Boyd's and Mr. Bubbles' success can be attributed to the same tried and true principles that we frequently write about in the pages our magazine; cleanliness, an inviting atmosphere, plenty of great parking, etc. It's also worth noting that Rich Boyd is an experienced distributor and industry veteran. The take-away from this for our readers should be that, our Industry's Distributors and Manufacturers know what they're doing. In this case, the Boyds were simply following the same sound advice this industry's experts are happy to share with their own customers. They added in Susie's own solid instincts, and the result has been a laundry that's "cleaning up" in their area.

With five competing laundries in the Tacoma, Washington area, Susie Boyd knew exactly how she was going to make her Laundromat, Mr. Bubbles, stand apart from her competitors and win over clientele – by creating a sparkling clean laundry environment.

Susie's ideal Laundromat vision came to her quite effortlessly; she just kept on thinking – what kind of place would I want to do my laundry in?



“That was the easy part,” shared Susie, “I would want a good location with ample parking and the best equipment, of course. I also would want a Laundromat to have a comfortable atmosphere, friendly customer service, and to be *clean*.”

Retooling instead of building from scratch

After looking at more than 20 stores, Susie chose the perfect one that held true to her vision of the right location with lots of parking. It also came at the right price. *“I liked the idea of retooling an existing store, since it would be less expensive than building something new,”* explained Susie. *“Most of the utility work was already in place, plus, it had a small but solid customer base so the ramp-up time would be shortened as well.”*

Susie gave the store a complete overhaul – from replacing all the outdated equipment, to installing energy efficient lighting, to altering the layout of the 2,000-square-foot space to maximize every inch. *“We needed to accommodate the larger Electrolux equipment and make better use of the space,”* said Susie.

The Electrolux equipment offered energy efficient and fast cycles and allowed the aisles to be opened up, and also left extra space for roomy folding area. Picnic-bench style seating lent just the right touch, creating an appealing ambiance, while giving customers plenty of room to sit and read, or take advantage of the free Wi-Fi.

Now, just how clean is *clean* for this former owner of a commercial janitorial company and self-proclaimed “clean freak?”

“Well, I’ve installed hand sanitizers throughout the store,” chuckled Susie. *“And I guess you could say our motto is ‘Always Be Cleaning’. I’ve personally trained our attendants to keep the entire store spotless at all times, ensuring a fresh, clean space for our customers.”*



The perfect marriage – a mix of industry expertise and, well, marriage

As a first-time Laundromat owner, Susie knew she needed a laundry expert to help her re-tool and re-launch her store. She also knew exactly who to turn to – the 22-year veteran in the self-service laundry business who just happens to be her husband – Rich Boyd.

Rich is the owner and president of SeaTac, Washington-based CESCO Laundry Systems, a Laundrylux distributor. Prior to CESCO, Rich was the Western Regional Business Manager for Laundrylux.

“Rich has designed, installed and sold some of the finest large coin laundries in Southern California and Arizona,” said Susie. *“He also ran an office in Albuquerque primarily selling OPL washers and dryers to the hospitality industry, so even if Rich wasn’t my husband, I’d be breaking down doors to work with him. His working knowledge about choosing the right equipment mix alone is proving invaluable to the success of Mr. Bubbles.”*

And how was it for Rich working with his wife on the creation of Mr. Bubbles?

“We make a great team,” said Rich. *“Susie’s heard me talk endlessly about the laundry business for years and has seen many of the new stores that I had a hand in building. Actually, her commercial janitorial company was responsible for many of the new-store clean-ups. Susie has an excellent understanding of this business and was clear about what she wanted in her Laundromat.”*

Brand loyalty

It comes as no surprise that the only laundry equipment choice for Susie and Rich was the Electrolux professional brand. *“I could not be an Electrolux and Wascomat distributor, much less recommend these products to my wife of all people, if I didn’t believe they were absolutely the best washers and dryers in the business,”* said Rich matter-of-factly.

Susie couldn’t agree more. *“We didn’t even discuss it, we didn’t have to,”* added Susie.

“Electrolux Professional laundry equipment has a proven record in durability and offers the largest energy savings. Choosing Electrolux equipment was by far the easiest decision we had to make.”

For dryer selection, the couple went with high-performance Electrolux Stack Dryers. *“The Electrolux dryers have a larger capacity than competitive models,”* shared Susie. *“They use less energy and dry faster. The reversing cylinders also reduce energy consumption, and protect against wrinkling and tangling.”*

The Electrolux dryers also come with a unique innovation called EcoPower, which the manufacturer says will save up to 15% on gas. EcoPower technology determines when garments are dry and then automatically lowers the dryer temperature. With EcoPower, there’s less wear-and-tear on garments and no over-drying. Electrolux

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Professional stack dryers also use a simple and efficient filter system. *“Our attendant pulls the filter forward and gently swipes his or her fingers across the lint filter,”* said Rich. *“That’s it. It’s amazing that something so small can be such a huge time saver.”*

Another easy equipment decision for Susie was installing a card system that works with all payment types. *“Some of our competitors have card-only equipment, which isn’t a convenient option for every customer,”* said Susie. *“Mr. Bubbles has a loyalty card just like the competition, but we also accept credit and debit cards, and, of course, coins.”*

Family loyalty...

Susie knew her husband wasn’t the only family member she could depend on to make Mr. Bubbles a success – she knew she could count on her son, Wesley, as well.





“Actually, he was the main reason I wanted to get into the laundry business in the first place,” shared Susie. “Wesley is 17 and has a brain disorder. As a parent of a special needs child, I regularly found myself thinking about his future.”

Susie wanted Wesley to be financially secure, but more than that she wanted him to enjoy his work. *“Don’t we all want that?”* asked Susie. *“Wesley has a loving spirit and an outgoing personality. I felt that this business would be a wonderful fit for him.”*

Wesley helps Susie empty lint filters, refill the snack-vending machines and, his all-time favorite task – sort out the bills from the change machine. He also takes great pleasure in talking to his customers. *“I’m so happy he’s learning so much and having a*

good time doing it,” said Susie, smiling. *“We go to the store every Sunday. It’s become our family tradition.”*

After Wesley completes his schooling in the next few years, he’ll begin working full-time at Mr. Bubbles. One day, he will be its owner.

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“I feel so blessed to be his mom,” shared Susie. *“I learn from him every day. Wesley keeps me grounded and focused and has given me courage to take on any challenge, like opening a laundry.”*

Leaving her competitors in the dust

Since renovating and reopening its doors in February 2013, Mr. Bubbles has experienced an astonishing 400-percent growth rate. Susie can still recall the excitement of Grand Opening Day.

“We ran a month-long special discount on our washers, which proved to be a big hit,” said Susie. *“The store was bustling thanks to Google Ads, a social-media push, and good old fashioned word-of-mouth. We also mailed out 2,000 preloaded loyalty cards to people who lived in neighboring apartment buildings.”*

However, the most gratifying experience for Susie was donating preloaded loyalty cards to a local church to distribute to those in need. *“The biggest benefit in giving back is that it makes my heart feel good,”* shared Susie.

Today, the response from the community continues to be overwhelmingly positive. So much so that Mr. Bubbles recently received the 2014 Best of Tacoma Award in the Laundromat category.

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Each year, the Tacoma Award Program identifies local companies that enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and community. These exceptional companies help make the Tacoma area a great place to live, work, and play.

“With five laundries within a mile of each other, being selected for this award was an incredible honor for us,” shared Susie.

Susie is beyond pleased that her cleaning obsession, as well as the superior Electrolux Professional laundry equipment and friendly service, are being so well received. *“I think we’re on to something here,”* she shared.

“I am so looking forward to what comes next.”



Is Your Laundry Ready for Prime-Time?

Do you and your laundry have a success story to tell? We'd love to help you tell it. The **NEWS** is always looking for laundry success stories to share with our readers. If you believe your coin or card laundry is ready for prime-time, let your Equipment Distributor or Manufacturer's Rep know and have them contact us.