

Window Cleaning

magazine

July 2012

Window Cleaning
Resource.com

This issue...

All County Window Cleaning
How they roll...

Big Fish in a big pond
We interview FISH

Wagtail Flipper
Reviewed by Wagga

Andrew Willis
Talks training

Unger's story
Mark Unger talks to Lee

and much, much more...





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Window Cleaning Magazine



Editorial

I really don't know where I find all of the time to put this stuff together. If I'm not window cleaning, I'm working on the Window Cleaning Magazine.

This issue is 58 pages long and in the end we had to leave some articles out for the next issue. We have been considering the idea of increasing the regularity of the magazine. It is looking more likely that a bi-monthly issue is what might be in store for WCM in the future.

Let me know what you think about that and email me.

The weather has been dominating the news of late with record-breaking rainfall and storms across the UK and indeed over many parts of the world. Here in the UK it has been the wettest few months, with June having the least amount of sun light for decades. This constant rain will have impacted many residential window-cleaning companies across the country and work loads will be late with monthly targets not completed.

My advice would be to leaflet during the rain for new customers if you are wanting to grow more, put in the hours on the good days (including the odd Saturday morning) if your life and bills rely on that 2k per month target.

If you are one of the lucky one's, that do not need to do (or want to do) any of the above, then enjoy the time off. Your customers will understand anyway.

In this issue, we look into franchising with FISH Window Cleaning. FISH is the biggest window cleaning franchise company in the United States. The information they give us may help some of you out there that may have thought about franchising out your own window cleaning business.

We also look at Ionic's new Zero PPB System and Wagga reviews the Wagtail Flipper.

Be sure to cast your vote for the Best Residential Water Fed Pole 2012. Voting is open on our website.

Lee Burbidge

Visit our website and blog at www.windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk

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Window Cleaning Magazine

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2012 Reach and Wash Roadshows from Ionic Systems!

Ionic has released dates of its Road Show for the summer. Make sure you go along and check out the new Zero system.

Lee Burbidge will be at the 11th July Ionic Road Show in Leicester, so come down and say hello.

Ionic says: *We will be embarking on a new series of Reach & Wash Roadshows this Summer 2012. Not only will we be showcasing our new ZERO systems, but we will also have our full range of water fed poles to try. With 31 different venues in so many towns around the UK, there's bound to be a show near you!*

WCM says: *The shows in June have passed so the dates published here are for what is coming up next:*

SOUTH & NORTH OF ENGLAND & THE MIDLANDS

Bournemouth, Bridgewater, Guilford and Swindon, Carlisle, Aberdeen, Broxburn, Glasgow, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne had the road show visit in June.

WORCESTER: Tuesday 3rd July at the Premier Inn, Wainright Way, Warndon, Worcester, WR4 9FA

CARDIFF: Wednesday 4th July at Ocean Business Supplies, Unit C4, South Point Ind Est, Foreshore Road, Cardiff, CF10 4SP

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD: Friday 6th July at Price Cleaning Supplies, Unit 2, Chipperfield Business Park, Tower Hill, Chipperfield, Hertfordshire, WD4 9LH

THURROCK: Tuesday 10th July at the Premier Inn, Stonehouse, Lane West, Thurrock, Essex, RM19 1NS

CAMBRIDGE: Wednesday 11th July at the Premier Inn (J32 on the A14) Ring Fort Road, Cambridge, CB4 2GR

PETERBOROUGH: Thursday 12th July at the Premier Inn (Hampton) 4 Ashbourne Road, Off London Road, Hampton, Peterborough, PE7 8BT

MAIDSTONE: Tuesday 17th July at Capital Cleaning, Paragon House, St Michaels Close, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7BU

BRIGHTON: Wednesday 18th July at the Premier Inn, Charles Avenue, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 9TQ

PORTSMOUTH Thursday 19th July at the Premier Inn (Port Solent) Binnacle Way, Portsmouth, PO6 4FB

HULL: Tuesday 3rd July at the Premier Inn, Ashcombe Road, Kingswood Retail Park, Hull, Humberside, HU7 3DD

HUDDERSFIELD: Wednesday 4th July Sparkling Glass Unit 38, Marsh Mills Luck Lane, Huddersfield, HD3 4AB

BOLTON: Thursday 5th July Walkden Group Unit 10, Watermeads Works, Off Slaters Lane, Bolton, BL1 2TE

SHEFFIELD: Friday 6th July Ace Janitorial Supplies, 694-698 Attercliffe Road, Sheffield, S9 3RP

LINCOLN: Monday 9th July at the Premier Inn, Lincoln Road, Canwick Hill, Lincoln, LN4 2RF



NOTTINGHAM: Tuesday 10th July at the Premier Inn, The Phoenix Centre, Millennium Way, West Nottingham, NG8 6AS

LEICESTER: Wednesday 11th July at the Premier Inn, Heathley Park, Groby Road, Leicester, LE3 9QE

NORTHAMPTON: Thursday 12th July at the Holiday Inn Express, Northampton (M1, Jct.15) Loake Close, Grange Park, Northampton, NN4 5EZ

BIRMINGHAM: Monday 16th July at Dowding & Plumber, 17 Stockfield Road, Acocks Green, West Midlands, B27 6AP

STAFFORD: Tuesday 17th July at the Premier Inn, Stafford Road, Shropshire, Newport, TF10 9BY

LIVERPOOL: Wednesday 18th July at the Premier Inn, Queens Drive, West Derby, Liverpool, Merseyside, L13 0DL

LEEDS: Thursday 19th July at Air Force Pneumatics, Airforce House, Springwell Road, Leeds, LS12 1BH

YORK: Friday 20th July at the Premier Inn, White Rose Close, York Business Park, Nether Poppleton, York, YO26 6RL

We look forward to seeing you there!

Window Cleaning Magazine

**Water fed pole nominations
Voting is now open.**



Readers have been aware of the nominations for the best residential pole 2012. The nominations have now closed and voting is open on the WCM website at www.windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk.

You can only vote once and voting is open until September 2012.

So, what are you voting on? I was asked recently: "Surely you would have to use every pole to give a fair opinion." And, "I'm not sure how accurate these results will be."

By default the winner will be the pole most used by window cleaners and by default a window cleaner has made his selection based on looks, value and ease of use, everything this poll is aiming for. If a pole was of poor standard, then that window cleaner would move to a pole that was of a higher quality. This would be the pole that window cleaner would vote for.

I know my personal favourite and I have already registered my vote.

Poll's have the habit of throwing up surprises. The indications are showing this already, so get voting.

How Chris and Alex *roll* at All County Window Cleaning, NJ.



Chris and Alex Lambrinides are the masterminds behind the Window Cleaning Resource.com website based in New Jersey US. The website includes an Association that window cleaners can sign up to offering heaps of benefits. It also includes their magazine called Window Cleaning Business Owner (WCBO). On the same site, they run their window cleaning supplies store. Whilst managing these ventures the Lambrinides brothers run a successful window cleaning company called All County Window Cleaning.

WCM decided to catch up with the guys and ask them about their window cleaning business. We also ask them: what is the secret of a successful window cleaning business?

Therefore, in the spirit of WCBO we check out how Chris and Alex roll.

WCM: Thank you for taking time out to speak with us, guys. It appears you have the same ethos, goals and ideas about our industry as our editor, Lee Burbidge. You began your window cleaning company also in the same year as Lee Burbidge in 2000. Tell us about the beginning of All County Window Cleaning.

Chris/Alex: The beginnings were a lot of fun. For the first year or so, we considered it a temporary situation. I was killing time, while I finished school. There was not any pressures or overhead costs. We put out fliers and worked when we felt like it. I miss those carefree days quite a bit sometimes. I was addicted to the freedom of the business and never even considered getting another job after doing it for about a year.

WCM: It is safe to say that the UK has a strong market in WFP systems. You started out on ladders just as all window cleaners. When did you find out about WFP systems?

Chris/Alex: We bought our first set up in 2002, a 45' tucker pole and DI tank. Shortly after that, we got our first full-blown RO/DI system from the late great Don Chute. That is still in operation in our company today.

WCM: Are you using WFP more than ladders these days?

Chris/Alex: Not yet, we are in a bit of an older area outside of New York City. There are still lots of jobs with triple track storm windows that make WFP work useless. That will most likely change a bit in the future, as people replace the older windows.

WCM: Why do you think WFP has not taken off as well in the US as it has in the UK?

Chris/Alex: Probably a combination of factors:

We have less window cleaners. You guys have the ladder restrictions that we do not. But primarily the frequency of cleaning you guys have, makes it much more viable. They are getting more and more popular everyday.

WCM: Why doesn't the US have ladder restrictions?

Chris/Alex: I'm not sure; maybe there have not been enough deaths yet.

WCM: Do you still go out on the tools?

Chris/Alex: It has been about 8 years since Chris has run a crew and about five since Alex stopped. Chris was on a kick about 2 years ago where he did a commercial route once a week. That lasted for a few months. We both still do the windows at home and around the warehouse though.

WCM: What squeegee do you prefer?

**Chris: Unger Ergotec
Alex: Slayer**

WCM: How are your teams managed?

Chris/Alex: We have six levels of employee in the field:

**Senior Supervisor
Supervisor
Lead Tech
Tech
Pressure Washer
Commercial Route Cleaner**

Each job has a supervisor or two on site, but everything is co-ordinated in the office. Scheduling, drive time, billing etc.

WCM: At peak season you can have as many as 60 window cleaners. How do you source these and how do you weed out the non-performers?

Chris/Alex: We have actually made some pretty serious operational changes this year and now only have about 50 window cleaners in peak season (3 – 4 months) The rest of the year we get by with 35 or so, and a few less than that in the winter.

It is nice because we have been able to grow consistently this year at 18% each month, while doing it with less people. It makes things a lot easier and more profitable. We are doing a lot more with a lot less. Its nice to be able to shave 10 people off the machine and actually make more money.

WCM: For this many operatives, are they using their own trucks? What is in your fleet?

Chris/Alex: We run all company trucks, we have 13 Toyota Tacomas. Our commercial sales rep drives a separate company Lexus.

WCM: What training do you give?

Chris/Alex: We do two days of in-house orientation. It includes company policies, safety procedures and hands on squeegee training. After that, they work with a senior supervisor for two weeks to get a feel for how the company works with some squeegee time. After that, we put them right into the mix with the other guys and they work on a crew everyday.

WCM: Tell us about your integrated vehicle tracking system and how it helps with payroll?

Chris/Alex: Our GPS system serves several purposes, aside from the obvious tracking and monitoring, we use the reports to firm up pay roll. If you think about it the GPS works like a punch clock, so we look at it in that aspect for overtime compliance. Then we use the time on site to reconcile our percentage pay. Having 50 guys on commission pay gets very difficult to keep track of, the GPS helps a lot.

WCM: How does your commission basis pay work? If I went out on a crew with you today and clean 15 properties, what percentage of pay would I get and do you use other incentives?

Chris/Alex: It's all based on billing so lets say you were in a crew of two guys and you made a \$1,000.00 for the day.

If you were the man in charge of the crew you would get 20% - \$200.00

If you were the tech you would get 10% - \$100.00

This is the simplest math scenario; there are a couple dozen different ways to split it up. But it always breaks down to – we always have 30% of the job to split and the lead man charge gets the biggest cut of the 30%



WCM: How are your window cleaners contracted in terms of holiday entitlements? How do you manage the pay if your guys are rained off work? A week worth of rain and 60 crewmembers keeping dry has got to be expensive, right? We have had a month worth here in the UK!

WCM: Well because of our commission pay structure, we only pay in relation to how much work they complete and bill. Therefore, if they do not work they do not get paid.

We work very long days on average they work 4 days a week in 10 – 12 hour shifts. So, if they get rained out they can just catch a shift the next day.

WCM: A large part of All County Window Cleaning is residential work?

Chris/Alex: About 90% of our work is residential.

WCM: How does your sales campaign work?

Chris/Alex: We run multiple campaigns through out the year there is constantly something happening.

- Direct Mail goes out weekly 9 months out of the year
- We do one e-mail a month to customers
- We have a residential sales team phone room of three, so when the phone is not ringing the ladies are placing calls to old customers and getting them back on the schedule.
- Then on the commercial side, we have our commercial sales manager who hits the streets daily signing up storefront route work. He also is in charge of acquiring larger commercial projects.
- Our website ranks very high and we also do a little PPC.
- We do other stuff like little trade shows, lawn signs, newspaper ads etc.

“WHAT IS THE SECRET OF A SUCCESSFUL WINDOW CLEANING BUSINESS?”

WCM: How do you persuade people to put lawn signs out? Is there an incentive?

WCM: We usually just ask the customer if they are happy with our service that day and if we can leave it there for a few days. They can throw it out when they are sick of looking at it.

WCM: What type of 'little trade show' do you go to in order to sell window cleaning services and what do you do? Do you set up a booth or some thing?

Chris/Alex: Well some of the nicer towns have "town days" where local vendors put up a booth. We will put a sales woman with a laptop in the booth. She will give estimates and book appointments right on the spot. Usually at some sort of discount. There will also be a window cleaner in the booth with her doing a little demo on a mobile window.

WCM: Which marketing strategy has got you the most response?

Chris/Alex: Direct mail hands down.

WCM: Have you ever tried a marketing strategy that totally bummed out?

Chris/Alex: Yeah we have had some big marketing flops for sure, but nothing bombs harder than direct



mail in the winter. I never learn for some reason, I keep trying it. I tried all sorts of crazy stuff the first few years, but its pretty refined now. We stick with what works.

WCM: What was the best-paid job you ever got?

Chris/Alex: Our best-paid job is a local college we do every year. Our most profitable is this ladies atrium window that we do monthly, it takes 5 minutes.

WCM: How would you round up briefly the secret of becoming a successful window cleaning business owner?

Chris/Alex: You need to study business and not just window cleaning. Most window cleaners think it's important to be the best window cleaner in town. I think its best to have the best window cleaning business in town. Its also important to be able to let go of the idea that no one can be trusted to service your customers other than you. Letting go is one of the best things you can do. In my case, our window cleaners are able to service our customers better than I ever could alone.

WCM: You plan to target work that is more commercial? What is your game plan?

Chris/Alex: We hired a new commercial sales person to line up appointments via the phone for our commercial sales manager to go look at. Right now, we are targeting specifically schools, and universities. We want to layer up our slow months of late July, August and September with work.

WCM: Have you taken your residential window cleaning as far as it can go? Have you considered franchising?

Chris/Alex: We thought about franchising once but I don't really believe in them so we didn't pursue it. I think we are getting pretty close to tapping out our local residential market, but only time will tell.

WCM: Why would you recommend window cleaning as a job choice to others?

Chris/Alex: Its complete freedom, you get to see amazing homes, you get a super flexible schedule and the pay is damn good.

I try to get people into it all the time. I have been working on getting my father-in-law set up with a little window cleaning business. The guy sits at a desk all day; he's getting out of shape and hates his job. Check back with me next year and I should have him signed up cleaning glass for himself and loving life.

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Big FISH in a big pond

FISH Window Cleaning Services Inc. is the biggest window cleaning franchise in the USA. We decided to talk to FISH on their business growth and talk to some of their franchise business owners.

WCM: Thank you to the FISH team for speaking with WCM.

FISH: We welcome the opportunity to share our background with other members of our industry. It is heartening to see that our international community is becoming increasingly connected.

WCM: Mike Merrick founded Fish Window Cleaning Services Inc. back in January 1978. What was Mike's set up at this stage? Did he have a small team? What is the history before the FISH franchising?

FISH (Mike Merrick): The window cleaning business was a one-man show when I first started. As time went on I hired employees and built the window cleaning business, but initially just my wife, Linda, and sons, Matt and Nathan, were working with me. I had structure for this business including an operations manager, but I was not structured for franchising at this time.

WCM: In 1998, you decided to franchise the business. What gave you this idea?

FISH (Mike Merrick): I always thought franchising was a great idea, but really did not know anything about it. I always wanted to do it and so I did it. Money was not the primary objective. I thought about it for ten years before doing it. I figured this was a good business for others,

too, since it had family-friendly hours and low overheads after start-up.

WCM: So how did you go about doing this?

FISH (Mike Merrick): After I read an article on franchising I followed up with some of the resources in the article and worked with a man who helped me get started and sell my first two franchises. I learned a few lessons from that including what not to do and applied this experience to refining my franchisee recruitment process.

WCM: Was it a hard sell at the beginning?

FISH (Mike Merrick): The probability of any new franchise succeeding is like any new business start-up. It is much easier to attract new franchisees once you have ten or 15 franchises up and running successfully. Then you can have validation calls for prospects.

WCM: Talk about the set up for a FISH franchise? What is involved for somebody wanting to buy in?

FISH (Nathan Merrick): We have a detailed investigative process that the FISH franchise development staff leads each candidate through. This includes discovery of the business, validation with existing franchise owners and face-to-face meetings with the headquarters support staff and the executive team.

WCM: How do you train the franchise owners?

FISH (Nathan Merrick): We draw on 34 years of experience owning a window cleaning business for our

training, which is a four-part process:

1. —In-depth pre-training webinars and manuals.
2. —On-site training at FISH headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri
3. —On-site support and training in the franchisee's market
4. —On-going training and support in the field, annual franchisee conference, weekly webinars, technology and telephone support.

WCM: What benefits does a franchise owner have compared to somebody just starting out off his or her own back?

FISH (Nathan Merrick): A FISH franchisee has the advantage of 34 years of window cleaning experience, a large support staff available to work with them daily, and a franchise community that openly shares information and supports one another. In addition, we have regional meetings for franchisees with guest speakers and industry updates. We leverage our buying power to provide our franchisees with preferred pricing on window cleaning equipment and tools. We also have marketing and branding materials online and in print, as well as targeted marketing campaigns that franchisees can customize for their individual needs.

FISH provides a comprehensive safety-training program for our franchisees to utilize with their employees on a weekly basis. This program covers all window cleaning safety basics; it is OSHA compliant and in some cases exceeds those regulations.

Most importantly, we have a proven business model for franchisees to follow.

WCM: During the growth period at the beginning, did the company ever creak under the stress of growing pains?

FISH: (Mike Merrick): There was financial stress and work stress because of the demands, but there was no turning back. There was lots of work and lots of pressure and a steep learning curve, but my wife, Linda, and my sons, Matt and Nathan, worked with me, and the company's growth picked up speed quickly. It was like a moving train, either get on or get off the track.

WCM: Why was the first FISH franchise opened in Florida?

FISH (Nathan Merrick): We opened in Florida because that is where our first qualified candidate was.

WCM: What was the game plan from this point?

FISH: (Nathan Merrick): We knew we had a great business model that could be franchised. Our objective



was to find more good candidates who could become good FISH owners.

WCM: Today the company has over 240 franchises in 43 states? Did you get any trouble from local window cleaners in these areas?

FISH: (Joe Merrell): Whenever we enter a market there can always be the possibility of a competitor who may feel threatened by a new window cleaning company. We see competition as opportunity for both companies. For one thing: there is plenty of glass to go around. Secondly: there are competitors out there that do not provide some services that we offer and there are services they offer that we may not provide. In many cases, we can work with these cleaners to move both of our businesses forward while providing what the customer needs. Competition should be seen as a reason to get better at what you do not as a threat to your business.

WCM: What was your selling strategy in order to fill these franchises with a customer base?

FISH: (Joe Merrell): Each franchisee is responsible for growing their business from day one. The strategy is straightforward: go out and meet every potential customer that exists in your market and get them on the schedule! Here at Headquarters we have strong relationships with facility maintenance companies across the country as well as with some national and regional companies who utilize us for their window cleaning needs.

I also should mention that the franchisees help each other locally, regionally and nationally to grow each other's businesses through contacts and information sharing. Some of our larger markets work together exceptionally well to provide not only leads, but also business-to-business support for one another.

WCM: We note that FISH has won many awards from Entrepreneur Magazine Franchise 500 to Inc. 5000 America's Fastest Growing Companies. What type of person is suited to a FISH franchise?

FISH: (Nathan Merrick): We have successful franchisees from every possible background. We look for individuals that are a good fit based on their willingness to follow a proven system and to work hard themselves and have a passion to succeed.

WCM: Your Company has tens of thousands of customers across the states. Which sales technique works best for you?

FISH: (Nathan Merrick): We go out every day and sell services to the public. Face-to-face always works best for us.

WCM: FISH provides a service to more than 120,000 commercial and residential customers nation wide. You specialise in cleaning: ground level store fronts; one, two and three story office buildings; restaurants; banks; churches; schools and homes. What equipment do you use? Which water fed pole system and water fed poles do you use when not carrying out traditional work?

FISH: (Joe Merrell): One of the advantages of having a Home Office location is that we can test equipment in the field with actual cleaners before it gets out to our franchisees. Doing so provides us with the ability to tell the owners about great new pieces of equipment or technology and not so great pieces of equipment or technology, and this saves them time and money.

For ground level work, we utilize the standard mop and squeegee as well as a 12' pole. Most of our recommended equipment is made by Ettore although everyone seems to have their own taste oftentimes, so there is a wide array of brands and types being used out in the field.



We are using the 50' Gardiner Carbon Fibre Pole and the Ettore 4 stage RO/DI system for water fed pole work. These tools are included in the initial kit for new franchisees so that they can hit the ground running once they open their doors.

WCM: What percentage of work do you think is ladder work across the different franchises?

FISH: (Joe Merrell): Over the last few years we have tried to reduce this type of work as much as possible. Whenever we can, we will use a long pole or the water-fed pole system.

That said the majority of our ladder work is still performed on residential jobs, which typically comprise 10-25% of our total production on average.

WCM: You offer a wide range of services too, such as storm windows, construction clean ups, screens, mirrors, chandeliers, ceiling fans, gutters and skylights. Here in the UK, solar panel cleaning is just taking off. Tell us about the solar panel cleaning side of your business.

FISH (Joe Merrell): Solar panel cleaning also is just starting to get off the ground here over the last couple of years. One of the reasons is that in many cases the consumer is not as educated as they should be about the importance of keeping their solar panels clean. In the past, this was more of a requested type service; it has since grown to be more top-of-mind for the franchisees.

To clean the solar panels we will use the water-fed pole system whenever possible.

WCM: Is the company still a family concern?

FISH: The Company is still family-owned and operated. S. Michael Merrick, the founder and CEO of FISH, continues as the chief executive. His wife, Linda Merrick, is the executive vice president. Their son, Nathan Merrick, is vice president of franchise development, and their other son, Matthew Merrick, is the general manager of the company-owned FISH franchise headquartered in St. Louis. All four are active in the daily business.

WCM: Looking at your list of other services, could you explain Emergency clean ups and cement rejuvenation?

FISH (Joe Merrell): Emergency clean ups can be anything from a last minute request for service to construction clean up work including the removal of paint, stains and debris from the glass once construction on a home or business is complete.

“... I WANTED NOTHING TO DO WITH THE WINDOW CLEANING BUSINESS”

We started offering cement rejuvenation last spring & fall using a new product available through our vendor called Concrete Powder. When properly applied this product will remove dirt & oils from the concrete to make it look almost new! This is a great alternative to power washing for many locations. Because there is no wastewater runoff. It is not an environmental concern as is power washing.

WCM: Which companies have the FISH franchise attracted that have a national requirement? Could you give us some scope on the type of client and how that would roll?

FISH: Here are three examples of national accounts serviced by FISH. The names of these customers are proprietary but business descriptions are included.
LADIES SPECIALTY STORE – expanding quickly throughout the US with approximately 300 locations. FISH began by servicing several locations throughout the country. As this store's corporate headquarters began seeing FISH invoices from several states, they contacted FISH corporate headquarters to ask for our services at additional locations. As the company expanded, FISH collaborated with a facility maintenance company to cover 100% of this store's locations, with FISH being the service provider wherever possible.

MENS SPECIALTY STORE – with over 420 locations. We were contacted by their corporate headquarters to provide bids for all the locations that FISH could cover directly. FISH now services over 325 stores throughout the country, with each FISH office billing the store's headquarters monthly. We continue to add locations as FISH opens new locations in previously unoccupied territories.

DENTAL GROUP – with over 300 locations began working with FISH in 2009. FISH currently services over 85 offices. FISH headquarters is contacted whenever a new location opens to determine if FISH can provide service in the new area. We have also taken over the servicing of locations at which the previous window cleaning contractor did not provide the level of service that this company has become accustomed to from FISH.

WCM: What are the plans for the future? Where else can you take the FISH franchise?

FISH (Nathan Merrick): We plan to continue to build the FISH brand, find additional qualified franchisees and expand in our open territories, and continue to provide a high level of support for our existing franchisees to help them grow their business. We are encouraged to see that many of our existing franchisees are expanding their current territories, and several of our earliest franchisees have already renewed their franchise agreements.

WCM: Many thanks for talking with us.



WCM talked to FISH franchise business owners to get their personal stories.

'I whispered to my husband, "no way!" I couldn't get past the idea of window cleaning'
Bridget Gilding,
Owner,
FISH Madison

I'm married with three young children...ages 5, 7, 9. We were looking for a business that would allow our family a great quality of life.

I worked as an Allocation Manager for Famous Footwear Corporate offices. My husband and I had been looking into different types of franchises for a couple of years before we came across Fish Window Cleaning.

We had been working with Franchoice, and they brought us Fish Window Cleaning, along with a few others.

At that time also, it had been announced that Famous Footwear Corporate was going to be relocated to St. Louis, MO, so it felt like the perfect time to take a chance and step into our own business. I have to be honest... originally, I wanted nothing to do with a window cleaning business!

Funny story...when Franchoice presented us with FISH over the phone, I whispered to my husband, "no way!" I couldn't get past the idea of window cleaning, but my husband was very intrigued by the business idea, so we moved forward with our research.

After a couple weeks of digging in, we were quickly drawn to the Fish Window Cleaning business model. We loved the idea of scheduled, repeat business and the idea of being in charge of growing the business.

I attended 2 weeks of training in St. Louis prior to opening. This training definitely prepped me to hit the road running. I hired two employees immediately after returning home, and utilized them to help me grow the business.

Our highest priority was to grow the business as quickly as we could. Running every aspect of a business was a big challenge in the beginning. Coming from the corporate world, I was accustomed to specific roles/duties. I now had to learn how to balance my time between HR, sales, operations, etc.

Joining the Fish Window Cleaning team is one of the best decisions we've ever made. After two years, my husband joined me in the business, and we couldn't be happier. We have such a wonderful quality of life with our kids, and that is exactly what we were striving for.

'Sales cures all ill's'

**John Gran,
Owner,
FISH LA**

I'm married and run the business with my wife, Cynthia. We purchased our Fish Window Cleaning franchise in July 2008. We live in Los Angeles, CA, just south of LAX airport, in an area known as the South Bay. We are both California natives; have a very sassy poodle named 'Velvet' and three cats.

Prior to entering the window cleaning business, I was a VP of Marketing and Product Development for United Healthcare, and I had also founded and ran several smaller health care administration companies. I have a degree in Information and Computer Science from the University of California, Irvine.

My wife, Cynthia, is an actress and also played bass for, and toured with the 80's band Go West. I'm an entrepreneur and, as a product development and marketing executive, I'm the guy you call to build a product, department or business. I have built national departments and very successful start-up companies.

In the VP job with United Healthcare, on Christmas Eve, 2007, I was laid off with my entire department (about 240 that I had to "let go" before closing the door behind me). This was just as the economy was starting to fail, and I realized most companies will not be investing in anything new, and new product development will not be supported for a number of years.

We looked for a business that we could build and my wife could run if I re-entered the corporate world (or, God forbid anything happened to me) and so we decided to purchase a franchise.

My previous career was focused on evaluating companies internally and externally, and we looked at 10 different franchises, realizing we did not want automotive, food or a lot of inventory. We looked at them all and window cleaning was always at the bottom. I did not want to clean windows.

When we looked at all the rest, and we did our due diligence, we realized that window cleaning (and Fish Window Cleaning in particular) is a great business. Everyone you meet on the street has glass at home and at their work place. Therefore, everyone is your customer! Also, the way Fish Window Cleaning is set up, I do not clean many windows - I sell our service and build a great reputation! And we are very happy with our choice.

Everyone is our customer. At work and at home, everyone has glass and it gets dirty often. It's built in re-occurring jobs, and if you do a good job, they will use you again. Also, we are able to go out and sell every day and make sales, we don't have to wait for the jobs to come to us. We are 75% commercial and 25% residential, and we are growing every day. We bought a franchise so we could focus on building the business and not have to figure out every aspect of the business.

In most businesses, the first year or two you are figuring things out, we jumped right in and were up and running and growing during this critical time. Also, because it's a system, we can train personnel quickly and easily, and our franchisor helps us to train and do things better. We don't have to figure stuff out!

Lastly, our national presence and pooled Marketing/Advertising is quite helpful. If you Google Window Cleaning in my area, you see ads from Fish and also our organic search rankings - it all helps. I love having a full system behind us and 220 other franchisees we can talk to with questions.

In my area, three competitor window cleaners have gone out of business – and we are still growing and getting stronger every day. My franchise is responsible for this good fortune (also, we are pretty great ourselves!)

We were trained to clean windows and make the business happen. We followed the system and we are now very successful, and growing even in a tough economy. What was drilled into us is that "sales cures all ills!" and we have to be selling every day. We keep our priorities straight, follow a business plan that we wrote and execute ourselves and we love what we do.

The most important ingredient though: We hire good people to work with us - it's really all about whom you hire. If you hire excellence, you get excellence. If you hire questionable people, you get questionable results. It's very simple.

We use our water-fed pole system every day. We understand that WFP technology is really driven by you folks in Great Britain because of your ladder laws.

**“ ... THANK YOU, GREAT BRITAIN FOR
SHOWING US YANKS ... ”**

When window cleaning in our area, when you get closer to the beach, our houses get closer and closer together and sometimes ladders are just not safe to use. So, we began removing screens and using our WFP system to get the windows cleaned.

We've now got it down to cleaning an entire home about 25% faster and with great results (while being safely on the ground the entire time) and our customers love it. So, thank you, Great Britain for showing us yanks how to effectively use technology in the window cleaning business!

As a corporate executive, I was never home and there are many stresses that you take on, but cannot control. For instance, losing your job and constant travel.

We wanted a life balance and owning our business has allowed us to find this balance. It is hard work but it pays off in feeling solid with the customer base we've built and our positive impact on our local businesses and residents. I now do not work on the weekends, and I'm home every night at 5:30. We have a thriving business that's fun and growing – window cleaning has been very good to us and Fish Window Cleaning has made it happen.



Sometimes I hear, “its just window cleaning. Couldn't you have done this yourself?”

**Eric Silver,
Owner,
FISH Texas**

My name is Eric Silver. I am 38 years old and married. My wife, Joanna, and I have a son, Elijah. We have two small dogs, Marty and Chuck. We live in Hickory Creek, Texas (part of the Dallas/Ft Worth Metroplex).

My wife and I have known each other since we were 10 years old. We grew up in Iowa, but both moved to Texas (at different times) for careers. The better weather didn't hurt either!

I have been in sales and marketing for most of my career including time as a Marketing Manager for a software company and an Account Manager for a creative agency. Before I opened our franchise I worked for a yellow page publisher as a District Sales Manager. I spent a lot of time talking to small business owners learning about their businesses. I learned a lot about different types of businesses and how they make money.

I have always wanted to own my own business, but I never really knew what I wanted to do.

During one of the classes I was taking for my MBA (Masters of Business Administration) degree we talked about franchising. I started researching the concept of franchising and liked, especially for my first venture into business ownership, the idea of working with someone who had as much interest in my success as I had.

Sometimes I hear, “its just window cleaning. Couldn't you have done this yourself?” While I feel I could have built a window cleaning business and been successful there are some very important factors that a franchise, especially Fish, provides:

1. They have already learned what not to do, so I don't have to. There is no reason to reinvent the wheel. I don't feel I would be at the level of revenue I am seeing right now without being part of the franchise.

2. I agreed with their business philosophies and practices.

3. There is a very large network of other people just like me that have been in the same place I am in with my business. These people provide an extremely rich resource for assistance. I look forward to helping others that are newer to the system.

4. While I pay a royalty, there are several things that I don't have to pay for and manage:

a. Web Site development

b. Creative development for marketing materials

**“ ... I LOVE BEING A PART OF A
FRANCHISE CONCEPT ... ”**

- c. Brand management
- d. Development of internal processes
- e. Development of a network of similarly minded window cleaning business owners

I opened our franchise in the Fall of 2008 about a month before the U.S. economy really took a big hit. Luckily, in Texas we didn't feel it as bad as some other parts of the country. While the economy was the topic of a lot of negative conversations it provided a lot of focus for me.

If I was to make this venture work I needed to work hard and be diligent with my time. There is a lot to be said for ignoring the “noise” and just continuing to work and do the things it takes to grow your business. With time good things happen.

The first day I opened the office at 7 am. I worked on a couple little things to prepare for my day. By 8:05 the phone rang. It was a neighboring franchisee that had someone that called him from my territory with an “emergency cleaning.”

This soon-to-be new customer didn't know we were in business yet. I packed up just about every piece of equipment I had and went to the site. I estimated it, sold it, and spent a good part of the rest of the day cleaning it. The job had solar screens, which are used in Texas to help reduce the effect of the sun inside a dwelling. The weave of the screen is very tight compared to a regular bug screen. We hadn't gone over how to clean these in training so I had to improvise a little. I made a call to the franchisee that gave me the lead, made a trip to the hardware store and finally wrapped everything up.

There have been a lot of good days and some pretty bad days. On the worst days I am still glad I made the move to invest in myself and open this Fish Window Cleaning franchise. I am looking forward to growing my business and helping the Fish brand reach new heights.

‘Once I made the decision to join Fish Window Cleaning, everything else was easy.’
Randy Cross

I am 42 years old with a wife of almost 16 years and an eleven-year-old son. I love to spend time with my family, fish, golf and hunt. Now that I own a business I have a lot more time to do those things.

I used to be in the technology sector, managing people. I loved what I did and the people I worked for but wanted to own my own business. When I started looking, I was not necessarily looking at window cleaning. I worked with a franchise consultant and they led me to Fish Window Cleaning and three other concepts that I investigated. I chose window cleaning because it truly was a Monday

through Friday 8 to 5 business leaving me plenty of time for family and friends. I had no idea how to market the business, run the business or even how to efficiently clean a window.

Becoming part of a franchise concept was the easiest decision I had to make. There was no doubt that I would join a franchise to get a business off the ground.

Actually making the decision to leave my job and start this or any other business was a whole different story.

Once I made the decision to join Fish Window Cleaning, everything else was easy. Just follow the franchisor's instructions. I am not kidding, follow the instructions as closely as you can and it all happened, just like they said it would.

The challenge was to keep following the franchise system and

never deviate from it. There were no challenges beyond that. I had absolute trust in the system, which made it easier.

There is no greater feeling in my business life really. I love first and foremost to be able to spend time with my family on my terms. I love being able to provide a nice place to work for my employees. I love hearing customers talk about finally finding a reliable and reputable window cleaner. I love being part of a franchise concept where I can help others like me in the Fish family achieve their dreams.

‘This is just the beginning of my journey’
Tom Schwab,
Owner,
FISH Mt

I am a native Montanan 40 plus years in age, married for 17 years and have two children. Graduated from college with a Business Degree. I grew up farming and ranching. While attending college I always had a job.

Hobbies include camping, hunting, fishing, and golfing with my family.

Before window cleaning, I worked for a printing company in sales. Like some people I have always wanted to be my own owner/boss. I looked into window cleaning because I wanted to stay in the service industry. Window cleaning can be performed pretty much year round (weather). I can monitor work and customer satisfaction with good Quality Control. Window cleaning also allows us to diversify into other services that compliment window cleaning.

Yes people could go out and start up their own business from scratch, but why not take advantage of something as successful as Fish Window Cleaning. This allows you to minimize errors/mistakes/risk and maximize growth and customer satisfaction potential. The Fish Window Cleaning Franchise already has a system, tools,

marketing and equipment in place, plus 33 years of experience. For example I could go and buy a baby calf and raise it for beef (expensive -- corral, feed and vaccines, risk -- could get sick and die or it takes too long and I starve or go broke) or I could go to a local farmer/rancher feedlot and pick out a nice fat beef and eat sooner.

My journey started in January 2010 when I started researching local businesses and franchises. In May 2010 I went to discovery day and signed with Fish Window Cleaning. July: Fish Window Cleaning holds its annual convention where I met with other Fish Window Cleaning franchisees and built a network of support.

August: went to Fish Window Cleaning franchisee training and September 2010 I opened my doors.

On February 2011, I paid all my bills without using my capital. This is just the beginning of my journey.

Learning curves of the window cleaning business, start when the day you sell a window cleaning job, hire and train

a window cleaner, experience weather (windy, raining, snowing, or below freezing temperatures) or all the above at the same time. Every day I learn something in the window cleaning industry and this allows myself and the business to grow. The best thing is I have an instructor from Fish Window Cleaning to guide me and other franchisees assist.

To be a business owner feels wonderful for so many reasons. Myself as a business owner allows me control on services to provide, earning potential and flexibility to spend time with my family. Each one of these reasons change on the length one is in business and how successful your business is.

The other positives of being a business owner is I can provide jobs/employment with in my community. I get to work with other businesses, homeowners, and individuals with in the communities Fish Window Cleaning operates.



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My thoughts on the Aqua-dapter by Richard Lingford

Having been a regular user of the Mk2 Aqua-dapter, I was kindly asked by Lee Burbidge of the Window Cleaning Magazine to have a look at the new Mk3 and to write a review looking at the advantages of using this device and the comparisons between itself and its predecessor.

We filmed a short instructional video, which can be viewed on the WCM web site. Lee traveled up in his lovely Porsche all the way from Leicester to film the footage at my home in Morpeth and afterwards left me with the Aqua-dapter to play with for the next couple of months....

I am in no way completely biased towards the Aqua-dapter for I also use a belt tap on a daily basis. I myself use the Aqua-dapter on a DIY backpack/trolley system as a water saver where water control is paramount. For those of you who are not familiar with the Aqua-dapter, it sits on top of your pole before the brush and you are able to turn the water flow on and off with a simple pull of the pole hose, eliminating the need to look for a tap, pinch the hose or have a trigger loop.

I have always felt the Mk2 to be a good product. Before its discovery we were using pole taps and after treading on them, losing them and getting wet leg syndrome, I decided to try something different.

Well...one things for certain, you wont step on the Aqua-dapter!

Using the john guest style push fit fittings it wont leak on you and after putting one on your pole it will probably stay there so there is little chance of losing it!

On a daily basis the Mk2 performed very well, making a noticeable saving of water in the backpacks over the aforementioned alternatives.

You should use the pole hose that comes with it as the softer pole hoses can pop out during the day, where as the Aqua-dapter hose seems to have more body to it, oh and if your not using hot water go for the orange hose and not the red as the red is designed for hot and when cold is not very flexible.



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So, the Aqua-dapter Mk2 is a good product, what about the Mk3?

Well, if you're like me and are very proud of your shiny and expensive pole, I don't like to damage it's image by pinching a pole hose, or having dangling taps, or having a huge great loop of pole hose leading to a trigger, mounted to the end of the pole like an old fishing reel.

Here's where the Mk3 steps in, everything down to its sleek packaging is class, the device looks extremely robust, shiny and well built with the companies logo proudly displayed down one side. It looks more compact than the Mk2 and all round a more ascetically pleasing product.

The Mk2 had a metal tube on the end of it and to fit it, you had to push your pole hose up the base of your pole with a push fitting connector already on the end and then place the pole on the ground (to stop the hose moving) whilst you navigated the metal tube into the push fit connector.

This could be quite a pain at 6 in the morning -2 degrees outside and all you want to do is change the pole! Also, you had a tightening clamp to stop it coming lose on your pole, which of course did the opposite and constantly came lose!

The Mk3 has no such metal tube, it has the push fit connector already on the device so all you have to do is push your pole hose up the pole, out the end and straight in the Aqua-dapter...now this may sound like a small change, however this adjustment makes it immeasurably easier to fit and is a quality addition, also the ugly clamp has been done away with.

The streamlining of this fine machine has also made the Aqua-dapter a lighter product than it was before, (they are both very light) and even though neither of them are really noticeable on the end of your pole, every little helps, right?

Performance wise, both Aqua-dapter Mk2 and Mk3 do exactly what they say on the tin, they both work very well and turn the water off and on with a simple tug of the pole hose, however, with the ease of fitting, the look of and the lighter weight of the Mk3 makes it, in my opinion, a far superior product.

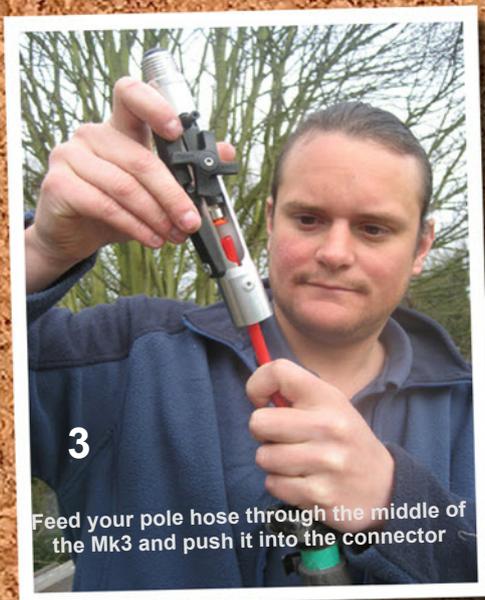
These are well worth getting and of course if the higher price tag puts you off a little, you will still be getting a great product with the Mk2's

Thank you for reading.



This page features the new Aqua-dapter Mk3

Here's a step by step guide in pictures for fitting the device



WCM are on the hunt for the best looking or even damn right interesting or unusual window cleaning trucks.

Send in pictures of your window cleaning trucks to lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk



Hi, my name is Richard Hyndman, I am 39 from Plymouth. I have a window cleaning business called Panes & Frames Window Cleaning Services.

What got me into window cleaning?

Well, back in 2004, I was working for an old school friend. He had his own company that delivered the raw ingredients to Chinese takeaways. The work was hard graft with a lot of hours behind the wheel.

My friends company got bigger and bigger and so did the rounds, however' the wage packets stayed the same. There was a lot of badgering that went on about a possible rise and we were told that there was no money in the pot for it.

Then out of the blue a bay liner boat and range rover came on the scene, this got backs up as you can imagine!

The straw to break the camels back then arrived; he came to work in a Ferrari 360!!

This was the morning that saw him lose 3 drivers. The next day it hit me. What was I going to do? How was I going to earn money once my notice was worked?

All I had was my trusty old 'Beemer' with a roof rack. The local job centre had no jobs on offer.

So, I went to B&Q and spent £50 on a set of ladders, then to a janitorial shop for a bucket and hand tools. It wasn't such a bolt from the blue as it sounds, I had done builders clean work for a company many years previous, and I was going to be a window cleaner!

I did the door knocking in my chosen area and it soon became clear that I was in great need. I must have hit the area that nobody went to and within two months my round was built, albeit with some not so good work, but I saw it as a living none the less.

2005 came and it was time for the van and WFP. I had an old Astra van for years at the top of the drive doing

nothing so a few weeks of welding and bodywork in my spare time soon got things moving.

Next I took the plunge and spent £732 on a DIY WFP system.

2006 came and the WFP system had transformed the business. There was space on the round, but more annoying was having to refill my 175-litre tank every day by dinnertime!

I took another plunge and got the transporter, which made things easier.

2010 saw work and myself suffering. Burnt out and far too much on the books, I decided on a second van and worker to ease things a bit.

I went through countless workers that started well and ended not so well, all bar the last one, he only left, as he was offered what I could not compete with.

2011 came and I was at breaking point, me in the VW and a combo van sat idle and still a large amount of work not getting done. Also at this time, a massive amount of new window cleaners began to appear. They were all with white vans and blue signage.

It was at this point that I decided to paint the van pink to stand out a bit, my customers will not get confused if I should by any chance drop a clean.

This was also the time to sort out the combo. It wasn't doing much so I decided that the best course of action was of course to get the grinder out and cut it in half!! I must sound really mad by now, but the idea was to create a trailer.

My only reason for doing this was to save myself from loading and unloading the pressure washer and gutter vac that I had for ad on services to my window cleaning. When it needed to be used, I just hitch up and go when the mood takes me.



2012 is proving to be a much nicer year for me; I have given lots of work away and have sold some too!

End result is, I am no longer running around like a fool, but I am always on time and not earning any less.

If I could give one piece of advice, it would be don't paint your vans pink and more importantlybuild the round well from the outset.

Cheers all Rich



Take a look at these trucks in our gallery. Do you own any of these trucks? Again, email lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk and claim ownership.

Gallery





What does
'Window Cleaner of the Year'
feel like?

By Neil Caden

I first began window cleaning at the age of just 11. I used to tag along with my dad during the school holidays for some extra pocket money.

My dad, Tony Caden, had run the family business for a number of years and had a predominantly residential round that spread for miles, including Leeds, Roundhay, Horsforth, Wetherby and surrounding areas. He did not drive at the time and he had many staff to help cover the work. He would clean windows for some well-known TV stars and footballers.

Eventually, (after some fierce winters) he decided to let the lads take bits of the round for themselves. My dad was moving into a managerial role with another company, so when I left school at 16 in 1982 I had a decision to make. Should I go into one of the Youth Training Schemes that the government had set up to get young people off the dole or should I follow in my dad's footsteps and begin to build the business?

As most of my mates had gone down the YTS route I thought that becoming my own boss sounded better than working for £25 a week. I left school on the Friday and I was working on the Saturday where I began to build up a local round that was in the Woodhouse and Little London area of Leeds.

I was getting 30 pence for back-to-back houses and a massive 50 pence for the bigger through terraces. As I did not drive at the beginning, I stuck to the same area. However, as soon as I passed my test and got my first car a year later I was expanding over to bigger areas and eventually getting jobs that are more commercial. The commercial side really took off and I handed over the residential work to another window cleaner in the area so

I could concentrate on building the more lucrative side of the business.

After years of hard graft up and down the ladders in all weathers and having got through a number of lads that fell by the wayside (most of whom thought window cleaning was an easy job) I had a good client base and worked on some big buildings in Leeds.

We also do work using Hydraulic Platforms, Cradles & Abseiling along with a maintenance division.

By 1996, Health & Safety was already beginning to make many changes (for the better) and soon as a new way of cleaning windows had come on to the market a lot of my acquaintances had said that they could not or would not change to the new Water Fed Pole Cleaning.

'How can you clean windows on the fourth floor of an office, leave it wet and it dries clean??' they would say. Nevertheless, I decided to take the plunge and invest in a small new state of the art Reach and Wash system from Ionic.

I was cleaning the ICI chemical plant at Huddersfield at the time and as you can imagine the Health & Safety was a big thing on site and the best way to access some of the windows was with the R & W system. Once I started using it and explained to the HSE on site what it was and put together a full Risk Assessment and Method Statement they were very impressed and said it was the best work they had had done in years.

So I started doing all my high level work with the pole moving on to the bigger 650 ltr version from Brodex BMS for the vans and a built in static system to make filling up fast and easy.

Since then I have never looked back, I have always tried to stay ahead of the game with the latest techniques and

gadgets and send staff and myself on different training courses. As I had been a member of the Federation of Window Cleaners since 1996, we decided to do the IOSH course with them along with some others. Beryl and Brian and the staff at the Fed were very helpful and got us looking at more courses to add to our CV.

Cadens window cleaners now hold certificates in; IOSH, Safe working from ladders and water fed poles, City and Guilds QVC in window cleaning, working at height, IPAF and First Aid.

As well as been members of Safe Contractor, Federation of Window Cleaners, CHAS, British Window Cleaning Academy and the Clean Safe Partnership (www.competencychecker.com)

It was while doing the NVQ with Impact 43 that we got involved with the Window Cleaner of the year award. We were doing the course run by Andrew and David Willis and unbeknown to me they had put me forward for the award of outstanding company for the North East region (for demonstrating safe working procedures, RAMS paperwork and all round good practices in the industry)

So it was with great pride that I accepted the award at the Windex 2010 exhibition along with candidates from other companies from different areas winning a range of awards from best newcomer, youngest, long standing and 6 other areas.

It was a big surprise then at the end of the awards to hear Andrew Willis announce me as the overall winner of the National Window Cleaner of the Year, which was presented by Martin Scott of Quartz publishing. It was a very proud moment knowing that it is not only the big companies that can win awards but usually, as in the case of Cadens that the smaller companies can give that little bit extra and the personal touch that makes all the difference.



I would recommend all companies big or small to take more training and steps to improve their service. Window Cleaning has come a long way since the days of a lad with cut off denim shorts climbing ladders and doing balancing tricks to reach windows. We as window cleaners need to keep it that way and to keep improving the way we conduct our business and ourselves. New products are coming on the market all the time and we need to move with the times and not be left behind. This is a professional industry with many good companies providing a great service and Cadens are proud of our humble beginnings and will continue to provide a quality first class service to our valued clients new and old.

We are also looking forward to the next Windex in October and see who the new winners are in the awards categories and to see any new products out there.





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Ionic launch new Zero PPB System

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Ionic Systems have been a world leader since 1997 when it changed the industry by pioneering composite poles for window cleaning. The company went on to produce the first hot water Reach & Wash System called the Thermopure in 2002 and now has distributors in 30 countries and exports to over a hundred worldwide.

Ionic is celebrating its 15th year of quality without compromise.

We decided to catch up with the Ionic camp and find out about the newest product line that is on offer.

The Zero System was displayed at the last ISSA/Interclean show in Amsterdam in May 2012. Ionic promises the new system is at the cutting edge of pure water cleaning technology and incorporates several features that will enable window cleaners to work more efficiently.

Solar panel cleaning is also a trending service provided by window cleaners and is taking off both in the US and UK in a big way. We look at solar panel cleaning with Ionic and get their opinion as well.

We spoke with Richard Everingham.

WCM: Thank you for speaking with us. How did it go at ISSA/Interclean with the launch of your new system?

Richard: Our stand was very busy as usual throughout each day and the launch of the NEW Zero® PPB System and NEW Ionic waterfed poles was especially exciting to hear customer's feedback with many orders placed during the exhibition.

WCM: Tell us about the Zero System? Zero parts per billion? What does that mean?

Richard: Window Cleaners who use Reach & Wash® systems know that the purity of their water is of paramount importance. Even a relatively low TDS value can lead to spotting, as these dissolved solids are left behind after the water dries.

However, there is more to consider than the impurities in the water to begin with.

A certain volume of water has the capacity to dissolve only so much before it becomes saturated. For example, a glass of water can only dissolve so much table salt. If any more is added after saturation, it simply sits in the bottom of the glass in solid form. Similarly, the water used for cleaning can only dissolve a certain amount before it becomes saturated. If you have fewer impurities to begin with, then there is more dissolving capacity for cleaning. The purer the water used, the better it will be at dissolving dirt. This means less water is needed for rinsing, and a far greater certainty of spot-free results!

Some readers may wonder about the need for water of such high purity, and what the real benefits are. Those who have actually used 0-PPB water for window cleaning see the difference immediately. The cleaning power of 0-PPB pure water has to be seen to be believed!

When building owners budgets are squeezed, window cleaning frequency is often hit. This means dirtier windows, but no additional budget to cover the extra time needed to clean them. This is where the Zero® PPB system will prove invaluable. The higher purity water slices through baked-on grime, even on less frequently cleaned windows.

WCM: Why not hold out for the Zero part per trillion?

Richard: *Who knows what technology is around the corner, but it safe to say this is a few years away.*

WCM: There are seven stages of filtration, right?

Richard: Yes – let me just take you through them;

1) Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI)

UVGI is a disinfection method that uses ultraviolet light at sufficiently short wavelength to kill micro-organisms. Within water treatment, it is highly effective against water-borne hazards such as the Legionella bacterium.

2) Low Level Ozonation

Ozonation is a disinfection method that uses Ozone. Ozone is a gas with strong oxidizing properties capable of destroying a wide range of pathogens, including prions. Prevents biofilm and prolongs filter life.

3) Carbon

Carbon filters are most effective at removing chlorine, sediment, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from water. If not removed, these would damage the RO membrane. Activated Carbon neutralizes Ozone gas after it has done its work.

4) 5 Micron Sediment

5 Micron filters remove solid particulates larger than 0.005mm in size. Ensures RO membrane performance.

5) Water Softening

A type of ion-exchange resin is used to swap out calcium and magnesium ions and replace them with sodium ions, and prevents calcium deposits forming on the membrane. This type of resin may be regenerated with salt. Adding sodium to the water also instantly forms salt crystals on remaining impurities so that they become too big to pass through the RO membrane. Improving RO performance prolongs the life of the DI filter and reduces running costs.

6) Reverse Osmosis

An advanced water treatment process, where water is forced under pressure through a semi-permeable membrane. Highly effective and economical, RO will remove about 97% of the dissolved solids even in hard water areas. However, the membranes are delicate and easily damaged by chlorine and other impurities, which must be removed before this stage.

7) De-Ionisation

Two types of special ion-exchanging resins are used to swap out any remaining ions for Hydrogen and Hydroxide ions to give H₂O. Usually, these two resin types are mixed together to form “mixed bed” resin. A highly effective water treatment, but relatively expensive, and so often only used as the final stage in a water-treatment system.

WCM: Can you get a hot water version or does it have to be an upgrade?

Richard: Cold or Thermopure® versions are available and as always there is the option to add our Hotbox upgrade.

WCM: You have tested the system with window cleaners who have reported a 40% time saving in conjunction with the Thermopure heated water upgrade? What does that mean to window cleaners and their customers?

Richard: We anticipate as with the launch of the Reach & Wash™ Systems back in 1997, that mainly commercial window cleaners can instantly reap the benefits of using our New Zero® Systems. 40% saving on labour costs is huge and can not be ignored as we know its one of the largest costs of running a business.

WCM: We like the automatic flush cycle of the RO on this system. Tell us about that?

Richard: When connecting the system to be filled with Zero Pure Water the system will automatically discharge and automatically flush the RO filter optimising its performance. This is a key part to producing ppb water and removes any human error.

WCM: The filter housings are new?

Richard: As part of our Sustainability Policy we have removed the need to dispose of the whole filter and replaced this with a cartridge insert, instead. This offers savings on replacements, reduced waste, and improves each filters performance power.

WCM: Is this system available to buy now?

Richard: Yes and free demonstrations are available for those wanting to see the cleaning power, performance and discuss the benefits that the new Zero® system can offer their company.

WCM: Many window cleaners are seeing opportunities presented to them with solar panels popping up all over the UK. How is Ionic Systems reacting to this opening market?

**“... ZERO PPB SYSTEM WILL
PROVE INVALUABLE ...”**

Richard: Solar Panels are popping up everywhere and will become even more popular over the coming years. We have seen this effect in Germany, Italy and Spain, to mention a few, and already supply these countries equipment needs with advise and bespoke systems whether solar farm, industrial or domestic installs.

We recently launched our website www.ionicsolar.com to assist UK and Overseas developments in this industry.

WCM: Can cleaning solar panels in the UK really make them more efficient? It may be possible to reach 35% in hot arid countries such as Dubai.

Richard: If the glass covering the solar cell is dirty, not as much sunlight will be able to reach the cell, reducing the cell's efficiency by as much as 20%.

Dirt that accumulates on the surface of solar panels absorb the light and therefore prevents it reaching the surface of the cell, just like dirt on a window pane prevents you from seeing through the glass.

In order to maintain peak performance, it is essential that solar panels be cleaned regularly to remove this

layer of dirt. The period of cleaning can alter depending on the location of the solar panels.

Our experience tells us that more rural and industrial locations require more frequency of cleans annually than those in inner cities. However, they all need a regular cleaning schedule to maintain optimum performance.

To prove that we are not alone in our findings, Google have also researched and published this issue.

WCM: Does Ionic have any plans to come up with equipment dedicated for the solar panel cleaning market?

Richard: We are already designing and building systems solely for cleaning solar panels for our overseas clients who have a more mature market than in the UK. We see this developing more in the UK each year as more installations are completed.

WCM: Thank you Richard.

Please contact Ionic for a demonstration of their new product.

ionic
SOLAR CARE



The Evolution of My Water Fed Pole System by Kevin Dixon (Toronto)

I first became a window cleaner in March 2009 following redundancy (I saw this as an opportunity to do something for myself)

At the time, I did not know a lot about window cleaning and so I went off with a set of ladders, bucket, applicator, squeegee and some microfiber cloths. I began to build a round.

Within a few weeks of working, I met a guy who would help me get where I am today (A lot of you might recognise him as Wagga). I received a lot of helpful advice from him and he introduced me to the world of the window cleaning forums but what I liked most was the fact he didn't use ladders and instead used a wagtail on a pole.

I wanted to ditch the ladders too as it seemed both easier and safer, but boy was I wrong!
I bought a wagtail and I tried to use it on a pole and failed (I am still trying now and although I am getting there, I doubt I will ever be able to use it like Wagga).



This is when the forums came in. I decided that water fed pole would be the answer and all the information I needed was available at my fingertips.

I researched wfp systems using various forums, manufacturers' websites, YouTube and other online resources until I knew what it was all about and how it would work.

The first thing I needed was a TDS meter to find out what the water quality was for where I lived. I bought a cheap one for £13 off eBay.

It was 79ppm, which I figured, was soft enough for me to go for a DI only system, but what did I need?

I had an estate car at the time so I thought the cheapest and easiest method of entering into water fed pole window cleaning was a backpack. I then ordered half a dozen barrels, a back pack and an 11 litre DI vessel (filled with resin).

This was ordered along with a Vikan brush and a Harris decorator's pole (which I converted into a wfp).

When it all arrived, I went cleaning windows with my new water fed pole system and it was great. The only thing was that it was very heavy so in the end it went on to a sack truck.

I did not feel like I had enough capacity in the backpack and found the constant pouring from 25 litre containers a chore. Then I started reading about how good van mounts were. This is where I needed to be.

Buying a van (well originally a pickup, but eventually I changed it to a van) and fitting it with a 350-litre van mount. I thought this was the bees knees and that it would do everything I wanted. I knew that I always had the backpack for awkward back alleys.

It turned out not to be the bees knees! I had 100m of micro bore that was snagging on every little thing and it was not my idea of fun at all.

The mounted system was great on the front of houses, especially when there is a lot of work together, but try to go round the back and it becomes a pain.

By now, my round had expanded to the point where I could take on an employee. Rather than have him slowed up by the lack of capacity of the backpack, I took it to bits and made a trolley system in which I mounted a reel. The trolley system was for the new employee to clean the backs or the houses a bit further away while I used the van mount for the fronts and the easier access stuff.



It wasn't long before he was quicker than me, which made me think he wasn't doing a very good job until he was off one day and I needed to use the trolley for the back of some houses.

It was so easy and quick, no tangles no reeling in a hundred metres of hose, no snagging on every stone or car tyre. Just walk up, put your brush against the window and clean - easy, effortless and fast!

As soon as I could the van mount was removed and the van was filled with 2 trolleys and 20 x 25 litre containers and that's how we stayed working happily with little fuss until very recently.

Circumstances sometimes dictate what you require and when. The trolley system is by far the best system for most domestic work (in my opinion). It is a little restrictive for big jobs that require lots of water in one place.

We recently had to take on a second employee on a part time basis, mainly to help cover some large contract jobs that have come in recently. The nature of these large contract jobs mean that a van mount is the most suitable system.

Again, the setup had to be changed and this time it was for good (well at least till I build a hot system). I now only carry 3 barrels but have a 1000 litre tank that is set up to

accommodate three operators by either van mount or trolley or a combination of the two.

I have fitted a 1" outlet and hose to fill the trolleys out of the van, which will fill a barrel in around 20 seconds; so basically by the time you get the pole out the van and are ready to go you have a full barrel. It's really great not having to lift full containers in and out of the van (a real ease on the back).

To change from van mount to trolley or back again only takes a minute.

I do have to say that if I had bought a system and had it fitted by one of the suppliers I probably would have been a bit reluctant to try all the combinations that I currently now have.

I am capable and quite enjoy building things myself so finance wasn't that much of an issue.

If I was to recommend the way forward for someone just starting out with a domestic/small commercial round, I would recommend buying a pump box and a sack truck, put the two together and you have a simple trolley system.



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Andrew Willis

talks training



Andrew Willis of Impact43 talks about the future of the City and Guilds QCF (Qualification Credit Framework) in Window Cleaning, and raises a fundamental problem at the heart of the Window Cleaning Industry.

Let us face facts. There are people who work in the Cleaning Industry who have mixed feelings regarding occupational training – even when that training is government funded and can demonstrate real, practical benefits. Amongst that group, a small minority have highly sceptical views. They don't see the point. They feel the money could be better spent elsewhere – and could be put to a more practical use.

Why is that?

Well, from what I have seen in my professional role as a trainer, such individuals often did not have a good experience with general education in their schooldays – and as everyone knows, poor experiences early on usually cast long shadows.

I don't blame people for feeling like this. I hated school, and left at 15 with no qualifications whatsoever. But I was one of the lucky ones. I saw the need for training and learning if I wanted to make my way in life. So, I later attended Merton College in South London, and took advantage of the excellent opportunities on offer at that time. I gratefully accepted all the support available, and took City and Guilds 764-1 in Cleaning and Science, then 764-2 in Supervision and Management

I was doubly lucky, because I had a great tutor, Mary Schramm, who inspired me to take on other training. We now work together as she heads up and runs the City and Guilds Programmes at South Thames College.

I'm not telling you this because I want to blow my own trumpet. I'm telling you this because my own journey has made me passionate about the value of training. Through my own life-experiences, and during 35 years in the Cleaning Industry, I've seen at first hand how important, how life-changing effective training can be.

Consider the City and Guilds Level 2 in Window Cleaning. I have seen such dramatic changes in window cleaners who have attended and completed these courses, and through them, the window cleaning companies they belong to have benefited. Students find themselves recharged and enthusiastic about what they have decided to do for a living. Many companies and cleaners who have taken advantage of funded training decide to expand, taking on staff and creating new employment. They are inspired, enthused with a fresh attitude, wanting to progress.

I am happy if a sole trader gets out there and improves on-the-job safety – if he or she makes subtle changes that bring progression and improvement. If my job delivered nothing but that, I'd still be delighted to get up every morning, drive around the country, and teach this qualification to my fellow cleaning professionals. Over the last three years, over 1500 window cleaners have taken advantage of it. I am proud of that.

So what does the course actually cover?

The key stages in the training programme to date have included:

- Health and Safety
- Controlling Hazard and Risk
- Communication
- Appearance and Brand
- Development
- Water-fed Pole
- Facade and External Cleaning
- Working at height

There are plenty of opportunities to re-confirm, share and endorse the knowledge and experience many window cleaners already have. This is a key factor in the City and Guilds programme. So, if you are already experienced, the course will enable you to demonstrate this and provide you with industry-recognised certification. If you are new to the industry, you will find a full programme of training and assessment that will help you to meet industry standards.

And of course, our workshops give companies and individuals the commercial advantages of promoting themselves as competent trained and certificated cleaners.

I feel all who have taken part and shared their experience and knowledge with others attending have found the experience valuable and rewarding.

But times are tough, and Government cutbacks have resulted in a serious reduction in funding for Window Cleaning City and Guilds Qualifications for 2012-2013. This is the latest in a series of financial blows, starting with the withdrawal of Train to Gain three years ago. One of the main reasons for such reductions across all industries is lack of efficient delivery. In some cases, I'm afraid performance has been disgraceful, and many training providers, including large national companies, failed to manage the delivery of training effectively. A recent report shows this sad state of affairs continues with new funding available for apprenticeships being fraudulently delivered.



The latest changes to funding begin this August, and by the time this article goes to print companies and sole traders will no longer be able to secure 100% funding for level 1 or Level 2 qualifications. This will have a dramatic effect within the window cleaning industry, as companies will be reluctant to supplement costs.

However, IMPACT43 and South Thames College have worked hard to ensure that course delivery can still go ahead. We've developed a programme that will attract funding, enabling us to continue to deliver it with 100% funding support

For August 2012 - 2013 we have 600 funded spaces to be delivered on a nationwide basis. Locations include: Bristol, Crawley, Exeter, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, London Central, London East, London South, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Newcastle, Nottingham, Norwich, Oxford, Peterborough, Preston, Sheffield, Southampton, Yeovil.

The new course is called QCF Plus and it's aimed directly at sole traders and small businesses.

Under the QCF Plus programme, window cleaning companies and sole traders can apply for 100% funded training – and optionally take additional training opportunities with 50% funding. For example. A full day Ladder Training Course is offered to learners completing their QCF Plus qualification at £65 instead of the rate card price of £130

The QCF Plus programme includes:

- Evaluation Process
- Registration
- Four Exciting Workshops
- Four Optional Workshops (part funded)
- Workshop Practical Training and Assessment
- Two Workplace Assessments



The programme provides the following Certification:

- City and Guilds Level 1 Window Cleaning (basic entry level)
- City and Guilds Level 2 Window Cleaning
- Working at Height Awareness Certificate

This Certification includes:

- Health And Safety And Industry Relevant Legislation
- Hazard And Risk Assessment
- Producing A Risk Assessment
- Understanding Risk Management
- Communication
- Appearance and Brand
- Development and Information on Types of Training Courses in the Market Place
- Writing a Training Development Plan to SMART Objectives

The optional (50% funded) courses include:

- Water Fed Pole Manual Handling and RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury) Awareness Certificate
- Ladder Selection, Inspection and Safe Use Certificate
- Advance Risk Assessment and Risk Management for Supervisors and Managers (includes a full range of templates)
- Marketing and Brand Awareness (includes Website SEO, and social media marketing and networking)
- Bid to Win - How To Improve Your Chances When Quoting And Tendering
- Contract Start Up - How To Set Up And Run Commercial Contracts

Window cleaners will need to check eligibility with David Willis, and some cleaners will see only one course in their area between 2012 -2013.





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Mark Unger of Unger Global speaks with Lee

Interview with Mark Unger

Unger Global sells its window cleaning tools to over 80 countries worldwide. A lot of you will have used or own right now some form of Unger product. Lee Burbidge spoke with Mark Unger on the phone about the start of this iconic company.

WCM: Hi Mark, thank you for giving us this interview. So, what is your story?

Mark: Let me start back with my Father who was American and born in the Bronx New York. When he graduated from high school he went to Burbank California, where he then started a window cleaning company and so he was a professional window cleaner in Burbank, which is the home of Edwards Air Force Base.

Up in the high desert of California he ran his window cleaning company. He was married, had two children, my sister Teresa and my brother Dane and at some point he was separated and divorced from his wife.

He was doing well with his window cleaning company but he decided to get out of his situation and take a trip as a tourist to London and visit a vegetarian convention. At the time, he was a vegetarian and so he went there with a buddy of his and they attended the convention and like most window cleaners do, they looked around and saw what window cleaners were doing in the UK.

WCM: What did he find in the UK back then?

Mark: At the time and that was probably in 1962/63 he saw that most Brits were using scrim, chalk, and all kinds of odd methods to clean their windows. He did not see a whole lot of squeegees in the UK, which is what he was using in the States, and he was kind of intrigued by that and talked to some of the window cleaners. But he went there with the intention of spending most of his time at the convention which he did but during one of the evenings he met my mother who was also vegetarian attending the convention, Barbara.

Barbara came from Hamburg Germany and I guess dad swept her off her feet and they fell in love at the time. When the convention was over they left it that my Farther would visit her in Hamburg after, which he did.

Therefore, he came back home then went to Hamburg. In Hamburg he also noticed they were not using squeegees. They were only using chamois and all sorts of other tools to clean windows.

WCM: You can imagine the German market not being far off from the UK in way of tools.

Mark: Correct, they were using some Chicago style squeegees and old style squeegees but not the modern type, which in those days was a brass squeegee.

WCM: Did they stay in Hamburg?

Mark: My parents decided to pack up at this time and they moved to California USA. This is where they got married. After thinking about it more and more he decided he was going to sell his window cleaning business and pack up once they had got married in California and move back to Hamburg to start a business, basically going on the streets showing window cleaners the modern window cleaning squeegee that he had been using in the US.

WCM: That must have been a real big decision for you're farther to make. To sell up the window cleaning business and move into pastures new. There must have been a lot of doubt or was your farther headstrong and knew exactly what he was doing? Did he have a good feel as to whether he would make a success of a business in Hamburg selling window-cleaning tools?

Mark: He was always a very determined and stubborn man in terms of when he made his mind up on something. I am sure there were some doubts although when he re-told the story he was always confident in the fact that it was what he wanted to do. It was a challenge for him all the way round but he found his new partner, my mom, and she knew a lot. She had done training in the German Trade School for import and export and office management, so she knew all about invoicing and exporting and the things they needed to know in order to do business.

WCM: Tell us how this new start went?

Mark: My farther was a showman and he was an inventor. In those day's it was not that easy, I think they went back and forwards on a coal ship to save money. My farther did not have a lot of money at that time and they were taking a big risk but they decide to give it a go.

He initially brought over rubbers and squeegees from the US to try to sell into the European or German markets. My dad would every morning go on the street and take a squeegee with him. He spoke no word of German and so he would demonstrate the equipment instead. He would show how much faster and better the quality was from using their current tools.

It took some time but obviously the product and the demonstration was very convincing and the window cleaners started to adapt this new window cleaning technology. Some of them discovered they were able to make more money per square foot of the job and that is how the business got started back in 1964. Where my dad lived in the attic of my grandmother's house where they kept their stocks. It was a real humble start.



Mark Unger

He would sell to window cleaners directly from this attic. He started to buy the stuff in from the US and put a sticker on it with his name on to tell people that it was his product that they were purchasing.

WCM: In 1965/66 the business started to grow and your farther went all over Germany from Frankfurt to Munich, in fact all the major cities.

Mark: That is right, showing his products. Then he started to talk to some distributors at that point in time. People that were selling ladders or selling chemicals, sponges and things like that started to stock my father's products. Some of these are still our customers today. They too are in their second generation. The owners of these business' still remember fondly the time when they went with Henry all around the country selling his products and my farther always believed in showing the product in order to sell it. There is nothing like showing something first hand to try and see how easy it is and how effective it is at the same time he thought that quality was very important in his products. So, people felt they were getting good value for their money and came back again to buy it once they were out of it or it got lost or it was broken.

1966 my farther and my mother with my brother who was born in 64 and I was born in 66 they move to Solingen in Germany which was near Duesseldorf, the industrial heartland of Germany.

My dad settled here because there was good access to manufacturing and he was logistically, from a transport basis, centrally located in Europe. He could get steel, rubber and aluminium, plastic injection moulding. Everything he needed was within 20 kilometres of the factory he initially set up.

He then designed his first squeegee, which was the "S" Squeegee. It was not made of brass because brass was too expensive, he thought stainless steel was a better material and in Solingen it was well known for its cutlery that had been manufactured a little like industry in Sheffield UK. And so, he decided to opt for stainless steel to produce his squeegee and put a rubber grip on it for the winter. He designed a spring mechanism called the S spring, that is why it was called the "S" squeegee. This was his first original made squeegee that he had a patent for. He then began to sell that product instead of the brass product.

WCM: What other ways did Henry get his products to market?

Mark: Right, initially he went to every window cleaner directly. Window cleaners he met on the street that he showed the product first hand on the job. He would go out early in the morning when window cleaners had their route work in the shopping streets.

After that, he would appoint distributors. These were distributors that he had met and he would go with them to these various different markets in the morning and then he would start to do trade shows, local and regional trade shows. In Germany, there were many of them and he would set up a small booth and demonstrate his products to these more industrial trade shows.

WCM: How were these products initially received?

Mark: The response was good.

WCM: It was not a tough sell then?

Mark: I think there is always people in our industry that see the value and that buy right away and then there are other people that would never change, so I think you will always have your share of customers that will adapt to new products today and others that won't because they will enjoy the status quo.

One of the things my dad did do which he told me frequently. There was an industry magazine in Germany, a professional cleaning magazine; he used to take out advertising of his product. He commissioned a cartoon about two people cleaning windows, one with the old way and one with the new way and they were fighting each other in a kind of funny way about the new technology. He came up with some clever marketing as well.

WCM: People could relate to him as he was a window cleaner himself?

Mark: That is right and that is why he did a good job demonstrating the product and getting the image across in advertising.

So continuing in 1966, he began to expand geographically beyond Germany and so he went to trade shows in France and Holland, UK as well as other European countries. He thought that these countries were viable places and so he would demonstrate at trade shows in these countries. He would try to pick up a distributor or some one that would import his products to those countries and was successful particular with my mother who spoke 5 languages. And so, he initially had one customer in France, Holland and the UK. These were exclusive relationships that were selling Unger exclusively into those markets.

Those were the days when Europe is not how it is now. They had their own currency and it was more difficult to do business across border. He had grown his manufacturing base and he had more volume. In 1972, he built his first factory and set up production to sell internationally and then he got on with developing new products.



“ THERE WAS A BIG CHANGE AT UNGER ... ”

The new products he developed were a succession of things like a trim scraper, strip washer that he developed and designed and telescopic poles. So he developed a whole set of tools based on his knowledge of window cleaning that would create a high amount of efficiency for window cleaners. He again would demonstrate these products at the trade shows and go on the streets and advertise them as innovative new products which window cleaners would associate as higher productivity that would lead to more money for them.

WCM: Everything was ploughed back into the business.

Mark: That is right, it was innovation and quality that helped us get those products seated into the market and it helped my father get a broader customer base and more sales and with that he would invest straight back into the business to help with expansion and further product development.

Because in those days tooling up a new product was very expensive, the tooling and machinery and all the things you needed. He had always tried to manufacture everything himself as much as he could.

WCM: Unger is known as a Global company. Tell us of your expansion globally?

Mark: The story continued as the business grew my father needed to expand globally and so he was taking trips to the Far East and met customers in Japan and Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand. Again, all distributors who were selling chemicals etc. were convinced to stock my father's products.

He was now represented; he had grown his business and grown his product line.

In 1975, he started to sell to a customer called Racenstein in the US. They are the largest distributor of window cleaning tools. Although he knew that Ettore and Steccone had the dominant share of window cleaning tools.

He continued to grow his business in Europe but at some point decided to move the family to the US and build the business from there but also to get back to the country of his roots.

WCM: What did your father do with the business in Germany?

Mark: 1978 he hired a general manager to manage the company in Germany and then moved to the US to Connecticut where his brother was a builder as it just so happens. I guess if he were a builder in Chicago, we would probably be based in Chicago right now (laugh). He set up shop in Mount Vernon, New York where they imported products from Germany and started to sell them to the US market.

He continued to use the same type of innovation and quality to build the business in the US, although the frequency and

culture of window cleaning in the US is not as great in terms of the cleaning frequencies in the UK.

The UK has a unique position with people having their windows cleaned once per month, this just does not happen in the US. They have their windows cleaned once per year maybe twice per year.

Therefore, the frequency was far less and Ettore was well established although when we came to the US in 1978 they only had a brass squeegee with rubber as their sole product. We already had a whole set of tools.

We were marketing a full range rather than just a product. That helped although Ettore quickly caught up with us realising that they were going to be at a disadvantage if they did not do anything.

The business grew and grew moving East to West in the US and getting into Latin America. We were always trying to export the products and become a global company.

WCM: There was a big change at Unger where your father took a back seat.

Mark: In 1992/93 my parents were beginning to feel that the business had outgrown them and they called my brother Dane, who had already been working in the business and my brother Jan and myself to a family meeting.

I had been outside of the business working in the shipping industry for 3 years and my brother Jan had been working for BMW and a couple of places outside of the family business. My parents had made the decision to sell the business to us if we were interested or to another company that wanted to buy it. We developed a transition plan and so I decided to come back to the business with Jan and Dane. The three of us jointly purchased the business from our parents and over a 3 year period did the transition from my parents to us.

In 1995, we acquired the company fully and took it on. We decided to refocus and move the business into a growth mode and so we did that in 1997. I moved back to Germany to run the German business and to reorganise it and revive it again.

We made many changes in Europe where we had exclusives. We began to break those up and bring in our own distribution. You may or may not recall we had an exclusive importer called Unger Equipment in the UK for many years. One of the things I was looking at was building our marketing and distribution in the UK. At the time, we had a very small market share and this was because our importer was charging high prices for our products. We needed to lower the pricing and broaden our customer base.



It was also leaving the UK market open for many competitors such as Ettore and Scott Young.

We felt that the UK was a viable market, people liked our products but they felt at the time it was very expensive and they really couldn't get a hold of it so after a lot of back and forth we started to open our own business with Dave Rogers as the General Manager. This started out of Dave's garage essentially in a small unit in Wolverhampton and we changed the entire pricing, went directly to the distributors and end users, and started to promote our products. By doing this, we went from a very small market share and grew our position to a good place, which was 50/60%. We then continued to grow again based on innovation and quality.

Like the Ninja and pure water products we bring out products, that we feel the market wants and drive on productivity.

WCM: I am sad to hear that a bad period hit your family.

Mark: Over that period my dad was diagnosed with ALS and passed away in 1996. It was a big hit to me personally; my dad was only 67 years old. It was a hit to the business too and it was sad for the industry as well. He was going to continue to be the chairperson, he was known as Mr Window Cleaner, and an icon in the industry so when he passed it

was a big blow to everyone. That was a long time now. My mother is doing well but is no loner in the business at all.

In 1996/97, we had a lot of competition come out of the woodwork. There was Vileda, which came up with a competitive range to try to take us out. We had a few employees that started competing companies so we had a lot of competition and a lot of stress on the business all over the place because people thought we were vulnerable with the second generation coming in. Fortunately, we managed to bring out new products at the time. The Ergo Tec Squeegee that again positioned us as the leader in innovation and quality in the industry. Other products soon followed. We went from one distributor to three hundred in the UK. This helped spread risk and broaden our customer base.

That strategy worked and we were able to fight through a lot of the competition and we continue to grow the business going forward.

WCM: You concentrated on ergonomics a lot at this time. Was this innovation born out of the extra competition or a need to think out of the box?

Mark: Ergonomics came from a desire to continue to make products better for the user. How many different squeegee does somebody need is the question? Is not one brass squeegee enough? The answer is, 'it probably is', for most people but if you are true professional, you will know that its heavy, its cumbersome it can wear on your wrist its cold in the winter period so we always look at how we can make our products easier for the user.

Saving time. Time is just not how quickly you can clean a window. Time is, 'gee, I don't have to go into the bucket as much because Unger invented the bucket on a belt', or ' gee, I don't have to use a bores hair brush which is heavy and sashes water, I can use a strip washer that Unger has made', and 'oh, which I can also put on a pole. I have a pole so that I don't have to go up on a ladder', so that saves time but ergonomically its obviously not only much more beneficial for the user but its also a huge safety factor. Therefore, when we designed the Ergo Tec squeegee the primary reason was to make it more comfortable for the user.

From where we were all we had at the time was the S squeegee and the Pro squeegee which were kind of standard stainless steel squeegees and so we took a lot of time designing the product with some ergonomic specialists. We then came out with a squeegee that was a big hit. Now we can use the same ideas and technology for the Ninja squeegee that takes ergonomics one-step further.

“PASSION, INNOVATION AND QUALITY ARE UNGER'S VALUES”

WCM: What of development?

Mark: We try to talk to our customers and we ask them what they like and what they do not like. Many of the times, they do not know.

Therefore, the idea is obviously to continue to do what we know with any input we can get from our customers. I was a window cleaner back in high school when I was in the US. I had a business in the summer time during our long breaks and did very well, so I know what its like being up on a ladder and doing small window panes and when I take the Ninja squeegee in my hand and work with it and I work with our R&D department. I know what feels right and what does not. You then make those adjustments with them.

Pure water is a no brainer. You take a system and a WFP and use it on a house. It is better than getting up on a ladder and doing small windowpanes. The time and effort is so much less. It is truly a breakthrough technology.

Its also about finding the right answer to a problem or a product that people need but didn't know they needed it and then create that product and bring it to the world.

WCM: What words of advice could you offer the readers of WCM?

Mark: If you have strong convictions and you are willing to invest in your business, you can absolutely accomplish what you desire to do whether its building your window cleaning business beyond one person or start a company that makes window cleaning tools, it is important that you understand the dynamics of how business works.

A business takes a lot of time and a lot of hardship to build big. My father and mother did not have much for the first 5 or 6 years of their business because they put every single penny back into the business to make sure it was funded well for growth and that takes a lot of patience.

Its so much easier being the employee if you choose because they don't have any risk and you can find another job if your let go.

If you are an owner operator, then that is a good choice too, because all you need to do is meet your own requirements and your families and as long as you clean enough windows and people pay you, you can make a living. As you want to get bigger, it requires a different set of business skills and those can be acquired both through learning on the job, going to school and talking to others. Nevertheless, it is a long haul and the rewards usually come after a few years slog. Diligence and perseverance also come to mind.

We at Unger still work under the premises of working hard and putting the money back into the business and not living high on the hog but really trying to do what is best for the company first instead of what is best for the owner or individual.

WCM: Passion, innovation and quality are Unger's values. What is next on the horizon for Unger?

Mark: After the recession, I think every business out there woke up with a sense of the world being different. We now live in a time where changes and upheavals just seem to come out of no where economically, politically, you name it, there is just stuff happening that you don't expect. All of this has an impact on the financial stability of the globe.

So, it has made us look at our business carefully and ensure that we have good planning and good people running them. Afterall a business is made up of the people – so you have to get the best you can afford.

We have spent a lot more time in the last few years hiring the right people that fit our culture and we continue to invest into R&D and producing new products. Particularly in the UK where the pure water trend started, we think that the pure water business is one that is here to stay and it is certainly a more productive and safer way to clean windows. Therefore, this is an area we will continue to invest in.

We have lots of great ideas and new product pipelines that go out 5 years. One thing you can be sure of, you will always see great new products from Unger.

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• Inhalation: Move to fresh air. If symptoms persist, seek medical attention.
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• Storage: Store in original container. Store in a cool, dry place. Shelf life: 12 months.

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• Kann die Haut reizen.
• Gründlich nach Anwendung waschen.

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Lagerung:
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• Temperaturbereich: 10 bis 40°C max.

Entsorgung:
• Entsorgung erfolgt gemäß gesetzlicher und nationaler Vorschriften.
• In einer für Wasserstoffperoxid geeigneten Behälter sammeln.
• Nicht in Wasser entsorgen.
• Nicht in die Hand nehmen.
• Nicht essen, trinken oder rauchen.
• Nicht in die Hand nehmen.
• Nicht in die Hand nehmen.

FR **NL** **ES**



Wagtail Flipper

reviewed by Wagga

The Wagtail Flipper is really an old friend since I have been using it for several years now. I have been banging on about it for years, as most people will know.

Right at the beginning, when Willie the inventor first brought out the Wagtail, there was one with a fixed pad on it, very much like the Swoop we see today then came the Flipper, which I have been using ever since.

The Flipper so named because instead of a fixed pad, it has an applicator pad that will 'flip' back and forth. Though this is not a 'one pass' tool, it will only take a split second to flip between applicator mode and squeegee mode. Of all of the Wagtails, this is the one that I prefer the most since it is the most practical and adaptable one.

If you have never tried a Wagtail, then it might be something of a learning curve to get used to it. As I started using the Wagtail long before Water Fed Pole was a viable option, I soon discovered how adaptable it was on the end of a pole. Don't for one minute imagine that this was easy but I persevered and eventually found that I was able to do some work without ladders.

At first I would use the Wagtail in a completely unmodified way but soon discovered that fixing the pad on TOP of the Wagtail instead of underneath (only on a long pole) I could get better results. Modified versions stay on the pole.

On the unmodified version, I also found that by using a BOAB (bucket on a belt) I could place it in the space that was normally used for the traditional applicator mop. This catches all the drips but I don't fill the BOAB with water.

Many people have commented on the Wagtail Flippers inability to retain enough water. This would at first, seem to be an insurmountable problem but if you are prepared to experiment, then carrying a Bottle on a belt will alleviate the problem.

If you still carry a bucket then you can still leave it at the front of a property and just use it to rinse out the Flipper pad. Personally, I have done away completely with the bucket. Most of the time this works fine since my cleans are virtually all maintenance cleans. I just find a tap to rinse out if I have to or even change the pad. I just use the bottle to apply solution to the pad whenever and wherever I am and it works.

Depending on what type of Wagtail you are using, the pad is attached by either clips or Velcro. I don't like either of these methods and prefer to attach it my own way. You can see this on my videos.

The ergonomics of the Flipper are the same throughout the Wagtail range and the swivel or the 'wag' if you like, can be more useful than you might imagine. The main advantage that some will notice right away, is the extra reach that this tool will give you because of the swivel. The other benefits come more over the long term with less wear and tear on the wrist.



The other immense benefit of having a pad that flips is that when it is used for pole work, then the pole does not have to be brought down to change tools. Other tools spring to mind apart from the Wagtail here but it's not until you get to know the Wagtail that you realise that there is nothing that can compare.

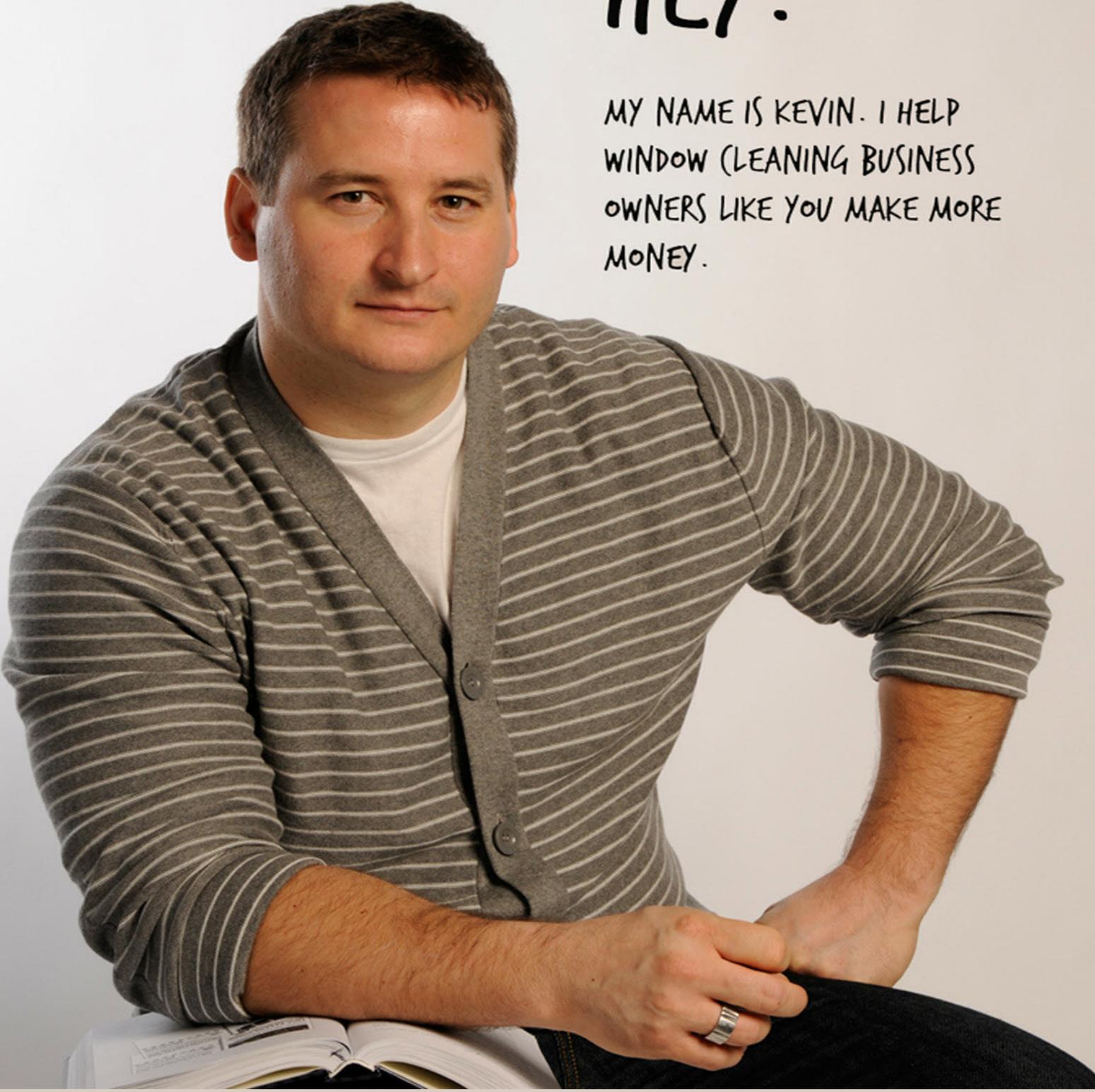
The swivel or wag, is another thing that can be used to great advantage on a pole and that is when you can not stand directly in front of the window you are cleaning, the Wagtail will automatically swivel into the right angle without having to pre-set it in any way but this all takes practise to get right.

It won't be long before the Flipper pad will wear since the surface area that is pushed against the glass is mainly from the edge of the rubber blade. Wear is not excessive, but be warned, the pads are on the expensive side for what they are.

Whilst we are here, I will mention that shrinkage of the pad can be a factor. You will not be able to work correctly unless the pad is cut to the right length but you *may* come to find that it will shrink, leaving the ends of the rubber squeegee poking out which in turn means you can't quite soap the edges and the rubber will wear out quicker.

The lightness of the Flipper is also a factor especially when it's on a pole. Because the traditional applicator weighs so much because of water retention, it can feel a little heavier than the Wagtail and the chances of me dropping the tool are less likely since I have only one tool and don't have to keep swapping over all the time.

All in all, I would recommend the Wagtail Flipper but unless you are going to go the whole hog with a pole, then the advantages of just using it over a traditional squeegee may not be enough.

A man with short brown hair, wearing a grey and white striped cardigan over a white t-shirt, is sitting and looking towards the camera. He has his hands clasped in his lap, which is resting on an open book. He is wearing a silver ring on his left hand. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

HEY.

MY NAME IS KEVIN. I HELP
WINDOW CLEANING BUSINESS
OWNERS LIKE YOU MAKE MORE
MONEY.

The Canadian, Kevin Dubrosky, has been helping window cleaners make more money since 2007.

Over the next few years, he was retained by well over 100 international window cleaning companies as a private paid marketing consultant, with window cleaners in the USA, Canada, UK, Australia, Spain, and Poland.

In 2008, he released his first 210-page book, called "Why Everything You Think You Know Is Probably Totally Wrong".

Two years later- in 2010 - he published a second book, the 255-page "\$600/hr".

In May 2012, he released a newly revised and expanded expert edition of "\$600/hr" that's now bursting with 495 pages, and is available in hardcover only. Shipping is available to the UK.

To mark the arrival of the latest edition Kevin has kindly allowed us to serialize the book starting in this issue.

We look at Chapter 4 of the book, which explores the emotions related to marketing your window cleaning services.

But first let us find out a little more about Kevin...

WCM: Is it safe to call you a Guru of marketing?

Kevin: I shy away from the word guru. I would prefer enthusiast. Consultant also works.

WCM: Why this book?

Kevin: Too many guys in this business work extremely hard but only earn an average income. By finding a way to deliver more value, they can not only capture more market share, but also do so at a higher price point, increasing their profitability. Then they can work less, while earning more.

WCM: Tell us about Paneless Perfection?

Kevin: I started Paneless Perfection in 2003, from scratch, here in the highly competitive market of Toronto, Canada. In its first month of business - May 2003 - it earned a measly \$130. By May 2007 - it made many tens of thousands of Dollars, despite the myriad mistakes I made along the way, and only working at it part-time.

Looking back, all of the success I experienced was directly correlated to specialized marketing efforts. I sold Paneless Perfection in March 2010.

WCM: Where did you learn your marketing skills?

Kevin: I was extremely fortunate to have a close friend from the marketing world mentor me in the earlier years.

He was a specialist in hotel marketing, but he also provided solutions for clients in other industries.

He was five years younger, but leaps and bounds ahead of me with the marketing stuff. He was a self-made expert, and learned through intensive study and hands-on experience. He also displayed exceptional work-life balance, and only ever worked part-time.

Within a surprisingly short amount of time, he co-owned an international marketing company, and worked mostly out of its office in Barcelona, Spain. He also travelled a bit through Europe delivering seminars to the hotel industry as a private paid marketing consultant. Sadly, a deadly form of cancer struck him with fury at the young age of 28, and he passed away within 10 months, in July 2007.

From that point forward, I really got serious about studying from the masters. I became a ravenous student, and have personally studied around 15,000 pages of marketing text over the past few years alone. Contrary to some perceptions, I don't seek to be original, and I've never claimed to have special insights or fanatical ideas - I seek only to migrate proven marketing expertise into the

industry and services of my clients. I suppose that makes me more of a "marketing migrator" than anything else. Man, that's a long answer, isn't it?

WCM: What was your most profitable window-cleaning job? Why? How?

Kevin: My most profitable window cleaning job generated \$3,310 for 27 minutes of work. That worked out to an hourly rate of around \$7,355/hr. Of course, I had other people actually do the window cleaning work (and trimming a few vines), so those 27 minutes involved me simply meeting with the client, renewing the annual contract, choosing a date, and sipping an iced coffee with them for a few minutes. The job paid around \$7,400 in total, so after everyone was paid, \$3,310 ended up in my pocket. My company serviced them for four years in a row, and then I sold them as a client.

As for the how, I killed the unicorn, embraced the koi, and used the herd. I did a few other things, too. That's what "\$600/hr" is all about.

WCM: Are you using WFP's? What is in your tool kit?

Kevin: Although I recently opened a brand-new window cleaning company, I no longer do the actual window cleaning myself, so I don't personally use any kind of equipment anymore.

That said, I'm not 100% convinced that pure water cleaning is foolproof, and as a result, I still tend to support and recommend traditional cleaning methods and tools, and lean toward the Italian and German stuff. I will probably be raked over the coals by my UK squeegee brethren for saying that, but that's how I feel.

Caveat #1: Where I'm located in Toronto, pure water cleaning is impossible for at least 3 months of the year because of the extreme cold temperatures. It's impractical for an additional 2 more months of the year. So even if you're a die-hard WFP guy in this area, you're forced back to traditional methods for almost half the year for climate reasons alone.

Caveat #2: I've personally never purchased or tried a WFP system.

WCM: What is the biggest mistake in marketing that people make?

Kevin: They fail to deliver relevant differentiation to the their target market. They also try to beat companies at their own games, instead of trying to change the rules altogether.

[Read a chapter from Kevin's book](#)



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“All people ever buy are good feelings”, according to expert copywriter Joe Vitale.

They buy to feel happier, to feel relieved, to feel special, confident, in control, responsible, generous, pampered, and safe. To feel loved, admired, and respected.

They buy because they want to *feel* something in their heart.

Clinical Psychologist Paul Ekman explains that “we organize our lives to maximize the experience of positive emotions and minimize the experience of negative ones.”

Revlon Founder Charles Revson famously admitted to this connection when he described his cosmetics and perfume products as “hope in a bottle.” Think about that for a moment.

How much would you pay for hope?

In *Shoptimism: Why The American Consumer Will Keep On Buying No Matter What*, researcher Lee Eisenberg similarly states that “according to a study in the *The International Journal of Cosmetic Science*, a man’s alteration of his natural body odor makes him *feel* self-confident, which induces others to perceive him as such.”

Eisenberg explains, “We buy because we are prisoners of desire. Effective selling is selling that gets us to unzip, to slip out of our own emotional hangups into something that promises to be more comfortable, powerful, and sexy.” Joe Vitale agrees: “the *only* reason people do anything is for the feelings they expect to get.”

Scott Stratten, author of *Unmarketing*, tells you to “position yourself as the bringer of the emotion that your market wants to feel.” Psychologist Daniel Gilbert eloquently opines that “feelings don’t just matter - they are what mattering *means*.”

As a window cleaning business owner, you’re inclined to make a mistake with this stuff. Somehow, somewhere, you’ve been tricked into believing that the consumer with money in hand is a rational, logical, analytical creature, immune to the rushes and pitter-patters of the emotional heart.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

People do business where they *feel good*, not where it logically makes sense to complete a transaction.

Consider: Of all the burger places in your town, why do you eat where you currently do? How do you *feel* when you’re there? Of all the clothing stores where you shop,

which one is your favorite? How do you *feel* during your shopping experience at that particular one? Of all the places you go to get your haircut, why do you patronize the one you go to now? How do they make you *feel* when you’re there? How about where you take your pet to be cared for? How do they make you *feel* at that particular vet clinic or pet spa?

If we have options, we always choose to do business with companies that find a way to make us *feel good*.

How does it *feel* to be a customer of your window cleaning company?

Researchers Robert Brunner and Stewart Emery put it this way: “People are seeking a great experience of being alive. Human beings do whatever they do based upon the expectation that their experience will be the better for it. We want things that are engaging, fun, personal, useful, productive, and desirable. And emotionally rewarding.”

In *Brand New World*, marketing expert Max Lenderman suggests “looking at marketing as a way to help people achieve their existential dreams.”

Joe Vitale reports in *There’s a Customer Born Every Minute*, that when professional idea man Stanley Arnold wanted to present a giant idea to the Continental Baking Company, he went to the Ripley’s Believe It Or Not Collection in Manhattan, obtained the contact information for a giant, and hired the giant to help pitch the idea to the client.

When he wanted to convince a different client that his ideas were confidential and wouldn’t be leaked to the competition, he hired a Wells Fargo armed vehicle, complete with armed guards, to drive and accompany him to the business meeting.

When he wanted to secure Macy’s as a client, he legally changed his name to Stanley Macy’s Arnold.

When asked what his secret to success was, he answered, “I’ve built my entire career on putting carts before horses, and *feelings before logic*.”

How about you? What are you focusing on? Where are you trying to reach people?

Are you going after their head or their heart?

There’s a big difference, and only one of them will lead your prospects to actually *doing* something.

Neurologist Donald Calne explains: “The essential difference between emotion and reason is that *emotion leads to action*, and reason leads to conclusions.” Please note that only one of those things involves people giving you their money in exchange for your window cleaning services.

Far from being *thinking machines* that *feel*, it's actually the other way around. Human beings are *feeling machines* that *think*.

We're emotional creatures that factor logic in afterwards. "When people fail to change, it's not usually because of an understanding problem", report Chip and Dan Heath in *Made To Switch*.

Of course, most window cleaning companies get this wrong. Most companies - period - get this wrong, because it sounds wrong.

It sounds like we're painting human society as some wishy washy, feel-good hippy movement that spurns rational thought. Well, we sort of are. It's not that people don't want to hear about the logic behind decisions, it's just that we aren't interested until we understand how the logical stuff is connected to things we want to *feel*, or that we *care* about.

So what kind of feelings particularly move us, anyway? According to Kevin Roberts, CEO Worldwide of Saatchi & Saatchi, emotions can be divided into two groups: primary and secondary.

Primary emotions can be felt by an isolated individual, but Secondary emotions require another person for them to exist.

The six main Primary emotions are

Joy
Sorrow
Anger
Fear
Surprise
Disgust

The six main Secondary emotions are

Love
Guilt
Shame
Pride
Envy
Jealousy

All of them are powerful in driving human behavior. And since consumers make buying decisions based primarily on experiencing good feelings, the negative ones mentioned above are best used as feelings that can be *avoided* by purchasing your services.

For instance, you can point out how having windows cleaned prior to the in-laws coming over next month will help the woman of the house *avoid* feelings of **shame** that would be felt when her mother-in-law chews her out for not keeping her house as clean as it should be. See figure 4-2

Draw a straight line from neglecting an essential gutter-clearing service, to experiencing the **sorrow** that would come from having to deal with an expensive and frustrating repair bill. This kind of sorrow is closely related to fear of financial loss. More on that in a moment. See Figure 4-3 below

The lesson: Use negative emotions to drive people away from behavior that doesn't include using your services.

Fear is similar. Countless studies have proven that people are more inclined to move away from what they hate than to move towards what they love. *Neuromarketing* reports: "Humans obsess over destroying pain more than gaining comfort." Behavioral Economists Ori and Rom Brafman report in *Sway - The Irresistible Pull of Irrational Behavior*, "We experience the pain associated with a loss much more vividly than we do a joy of experiencing a gain."

The Brafman brothers even discovered that "the word *loss* alone, in fact, elicits a surprisingly powerful reaction in us", and added "the more there is on the line, the easier it is to get swept into an irrational decision."

How can you *ethically* use fear as a motivator? When it comes to window cleaning, fear can have a few different iterations, all involving fear of *loss*.

Fear of opportunity loss.

Will they miss out on an amazing deal if they don't act in the next 3 days? When crafting a deadline, keep in mind this important rule from marketing expert Bill Glazer, from *Outrageous Advertising That Works Outrageously*, "When possible, never give people more than two weeks to respond."

Fear of financial loss. Will they risk allowing \$5,000+ of damage to their home if they don't properly clean their gutter and downspout system before winter hits? See Figure 4-4

Fear of physical loss. If they try to clean their windows all by themselves, and end up falling off their ladder and breaking a bone in the process, how would that affect their quality of life? Interestingly, psychologist Daniel Gilbert reports that "when people find it easy to imagine an event, they overestimate the likelihood that it will actually occur."

Tell any of those stories, and you're tapping into the power of fear as a powerful emotional driver of human behavior. You're also being truthful and honest in doing so.

People do incur financial losses when they deal with bogus contractors. And they do break their legs and ruin their Summers when they fall off ladders in their own backyards. Lara Trifiletti, Ph.D., a researcher with the Center for Injury Research and

Policy at Columbus Children's Hospital in Ohio, along with colleagues, examined federal statistics on nonfatal ladder injuries that sent people to emergency rooms.

Ninety-seven percent of those cases happened in what Trifiletti calls "non-occupational" settings like homes. "Maybe a lot of people are doing do-it-yourself home repairs," Trifiletti said. "That may be one explanation why we see such a high rate in homes."

"Most people like to think of a ladder as a fairly benign piece of equipment, but the injuries that result are very serious," Trifiletti continued. "We should treat ladders like a potentially dangerous tool, like a power saw or razor-sharp plane."

Michael Mello, M.D., director of Injury Prevention Center at Rhode Island Hospital, said the findings appear to be valid. According to him, ladder injuries should not be taken lightly. "Many of these fractures are very complex and require extensive surgery. That's only part of the problem. These fractures of hands, wrists, ankles and feet can require future surgeries, rehab and lifelong arthritis or chronic pain," he said. "I see patients frequently who are still bothered by pain from complex fractures after falls many years ago."

You're not making this stuff up, or suggesting that they be afraid of the bogeyman. This is reality. So tell the story. See figure 4-5

One more thing.

In the remarkable *Yes - 50 Scientifically Proven Ways To Be Persuasive*, brilliant researchers Dr. Noah J. Goldstein, Steve J. Martin, and Dr. Robert Cialidini provide this caveat regarding the use of fear as a driver of behavior: "Campaigns that inform potential customers of the real-world threats that a company's goods or services can alleviate should always be accompanied by clear, specific, effective steps they can take to reduce the danger."

It concludes: "Simply scaring customers into believing that a product or service can help with a potential problem might have the opposite effect, potentially cementing them into inaction if there is a failure to provide specific, achievable steps that they can take to avoid such a threat."

In other words, fear only works if you show them how to protect themselves from it in clear, specific ways, and ideally if you convince them that your window cleaning company is *uniquely qualified* to help them do so. Otherwise, you are putting money in your competitors pockets, too, with your interchangeable services.

In summary, the same feeling that motivates your target market to put on a seatbelt, look both ways before crossing a road, turn off the stove before leaving the house, and hit the gym before bikini-season can also bring more revenue into your window cleaning company.

Why not try using fear in your next flier design?

The same thing can be done for the 8 other primary and secondary emotions, too. See Figure 4-6

When considering how to tap into emotion, just ask yourself 2 important questions:

How is this feeling felt when the prospect *doesn't* use my services?

How is this feeling felt when they *do* use my services?

The answers will supply you with the creative direction you need.

Which emotions will work best for your business? It really depends on the kind of people you are doing business with in your local market, and the specific offer that you've put on the table before them.

That being said, there are some constants. P.T. Barnum once said that "People will spend their last nickel to have fun."

"Consumers are bored out of their minds", muses Sergio Zyman, former Chief Marketing Officer for Coca-Cola. Look at how many billions of dollars are being spent on entertainment and recreation. According to www.boxofficemojo.com, James Cameron's *Avatar* earned over \$2.73 billion dollars in the first 6 months it was released, and its not done yet. People gladly spend hard-earned money in their quest of fun. They crave any escape from the drudgery of their regular routines.

So, incorporate some fun into your window cleaning service offering! Try to add some sunshine to your clients day, and they'll love you for it. See Figure 4-7

Joke around with them a bit. Smile when you speak to them, even if it's over the phone (you can tell, and so can they).

Write emails in a light, breezy, conversational style. Leave them little unexpected gifts. Send your favorite clients a little \$5 starbucks gift card, and don't do it at Christmas, when everyone else does.

Make little videos of your crew having fun (in a safe and professional way) on the job, upload them to youtube, and embed them onto your site.

Be thoughtful, and treat your clients like you would a friend. Find a way to make their day a little easier and brighter. See figure 4-8

If your express purpose was to make your clients smile every time they did business with you, how would you pull it off? Why not start doing that from today on? I know one window cleaning business owner who printed his tasty homemade chili recipe on the back of his invoices. Great idea.

Get serious about your visuals, too. With resources like istockphoto.com, it now costs you less than ten dollars to incorporate world-class imagery into your marketing pieces.

Pictures make people's hearts beat.

Are you still using cheap clipart? Quit it. It's not 1998 anymore, and no one besides your Mom thinks it's cute anymore. Do you believe that words alone sell better than imagery? Experiment with a mix of the two, and do some split-testing to challenge your theory.

It's quite common to hear window cleaning business owners complain that "fliers and postcards just don't work, because people are sick and tired of being bombarded with them."

Well, the bombarded part is definitely true, but people aren't really sick of fliers and postcards. They are sick and tired of *boring* fliers and postcards.

Same goes with TV commercials. People aren't sick of commercials, they're sick of *boring* commercials, and they TiVO right through them. The *great* commercials they happily watch, over and over again.

There was a brilliant Old Spice commercial on TV not too long ago that everyone was raving about. It was unexpected, interesting, and different. People even recorded it, and uploaded it onto Youtube, they loved it so much. More on that campaign later.

TiVo does what it is supposed to do - filter out the nonsense, not the good stuff. Same goes for the TiVo's in your prospects heads. See figure 4-9

Don't give up on flier and postcard campaigns. Fun, interesting, captivating fliers are harder to make, require careful thought about imagery, and earn you money.

They arrest attention, and make people *feel* something.

Still feeling stuck?

Try starting the process from the end, and work backwards, instead. Start with your prospect's desired emotional response, and work backwards from that point, trying your best to reverse-engineer the service experience that would manufacture it.

If, for instance, you want them to feel special, loved, and pampered, start with a blank piece of paper and write down everything that your shopping and service experience *must include* to create that strong emotional outcome. See figure 4-10

Next, write down everything that you believe it *must exclude*. Choreograph the entire customer experience, across every

possible point of contact you can find. Now you have a blueprint. Go make it.

Crave objective input. Invite it, and fight the urge to take it personally.

It's possible that despite your best efforts, you're still not creating the experience that your customers want to feel. Consider asking a trusted friend from outside the industry for some feedback on the customer experience you have created, and what your company feels like and looks like from their point of view..

Scott Stratten soberly reminds us, "even though [your] customers are current, this doesn't mean they're happy."

If your customers are ever generous and thoughtful enough to tell you what they think could be done better for them in your customer service experience, then be grateful, and listen carefully. This unsolicited input is invaluable, and should be taken very seriously.

Feedback is a gift. Treat it like one. Listen carefully, and make adjustments.

Are they irritated about something?

Do they wish you would do something a little bit different?

Belief is also a big part of this emotional marketing stuff.

Unless you truly believe that you can *monetize* a positive customer emotional experience, chances are you're going to default to the same old stuff you've been accustomed to producing up until today.

"Recent research has shown that customers who are only 'satisfied' with a company's service are far less likely than customers who are 'extremely satisfied' to remain loyal to the business", warns Joseph A. Michelli, in *The New Gold Standard*, his fascinating exploration of the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company.

"Customers who reported they were 'extremely satisfied' with a business were two and a half times more likely to make future purchases from that company when compared to customers who rated their overall satisfaction as 'average'."

What does it take to move someone from 'average' to 'extremely satisfied'? Jeannette McMurtry - chief strategy officer for The Hanson Group - explains that you need to forge a "memorable and emotional connection with your client."

It really is all about emotion.

Do a little soul-searching to see where you stand on this emotional approach, and find some guts to at least test an emotionally-oriented marketing piece.

What if your customer base just doesn't seem to care about window cleaning at all, though? Are you out of options? Not necessarily. Try connecting some dots from what they already have strong feelings about. As researchers Chip & Dan Heath explain in *Made To Stick*, "The most basic way to make people care is to form an association between something they don't yet care about to something they they do care about."

These same people clean their cars regularly. Why?

What emotion is driving (pardon the pun) that decision? How does it make them feel when they are driving around in a clean car, or even just parking it in front of their home?

They clean their clothes regularly, too. Why?

What's the feeling they get from doing that?

Connect some emotional dots for people, and show them that those same good feelings they experience from their current purchases can also come from investing in your professional window cleaning services. Help them visualize how having their windows cleaned will make them *feel*.

You're not selling window cleaning, gutter cleaning, or pressure washing. What you're actually selling is the emotional transformation of your client. The client is the product.

In short, understand the pivotal role of emotion in driving purchase behavior. Realize that people buy based on the feelings they hope to experience, so help them to imagine feeling those emotions by investing in your window cleaning services.

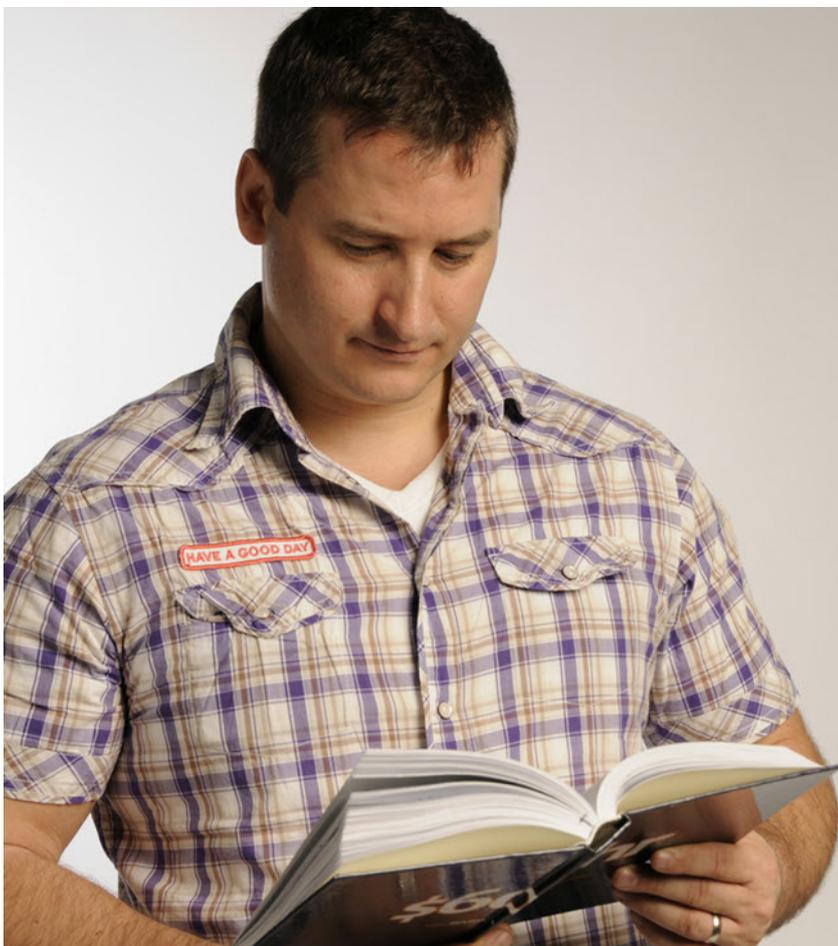
Once you've got their heart feeling something, your prospects now need you to take the next natural step.

*They need you to **persuade their mind**.*



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AND THAT FIGURING OUT WHAT
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Soapbox

50

If you wish to write in and share your knowledge or experience or you would like to respond to any letters here or to any article or subject discussed in this magazine, then feel free to send your copy and/or pictures to info@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk

Hi Lee,

I have a quick question about Safe Contractor (SSIP). I notice that many of the larger window cleaning teams around my town have this on their vans. I would like to know what exactly it is and how do you get approved by them? Is it just a pay scheme that awards you a sticker?

Also, how do you get your workers to be efficient and do a proper job, to take pride in their work like you or I would do? Whenever I have had someone working with me, they always seem useless and stay useless. Even when I show them exactly how to work the techniques. They slow me down, as I have to check, recheck, and then redo everything they have done. I also receive complaints from customers on a regular basis. I really have a hard time finding someone suitable.

Robert

Hi Robert

Thank you for emailing in. Please find answers to your questions:

1) Safe Contractor can be found at Safecontractor.com. There is a process and audit before you can be accredited. It is a proven system that is trusted by the commercial sector, some of which give out huge contracts. Government contracts may also be won from demonstrating your commitment to H&S in this way. The other good thing about entering the process is that if you are not sure about what your Health & Safety system should have, Safe Contractor will educate and help you.

2) In any industry it is sometimes hard to find the right staff. I have had the same problems in the past. The trick is to let go of the time wasters quickly. Don't get desperate and hold on to them because of your work load. Advertise the job again and put the hours and odd Saturdays in for the short term in order to take up the slack. Nobody will ever work like you, but every now and then you get someone that comes along who loves his job, totally loyal and a company man. The type that gets just as excited as you do when the latest wfp you ordered turns up.

I found another employee like this recently.

When you find them, treat them to curry and beers paid for by the company on regular basis to show your appreciation and pay them well.

Hope this helps

Hi Lee

Well I was in the army for six years and got medically discharged. I had to think of another job so I thought of window cleaning because I like the sound of being my own boss. I have got all the traditional kit and water fed pole trolley. The reason why I bought the trolley was because I was looking on eBay and basically got it for a good price. I also have a van with a power washer ext. I would like information on getting commercial jobs i.e. who to speak to etc. I have very little experience in this sort of thing. Thanks in advance

William

Dear William,

Good to hear from you. We can help. Can you give me a little more info? How you came to the decision of window cleaning? What made you get water fed pole? What other kit you do you have? Have you got any customers yet? But I will add this. Welcome to a job where you can have as much freedom as you want or grow as big as a business as you want. Very few have ever looked back and the trade is with you always. Getting commercial work is a lot harder than getting residential work. (See 'How to start a window cleaning business' for rookies in WCM)

It is always a numbers game; the more you put in the more you get out. I advise you to ring companies if you want to get to speak to lots of companies in a short space of time or walk into the reception of companies local to you and ask for the person in charge of the window cleaning contract. Don't be afraid to sell yourself. The company you approach has to carry out sales in the same way as you, so do not apologise for wanting to grow your business as well.

Hi,

I like the WC Trucks section very much and I think people like cars. So it should do well.

I have a Land Rover Discovery at the moment. Pick up's are good because they can be used for work as well as personal and great in the snow!

I'm aiming for a 4 door pick up like a Nissan Navara.

I really like the personal stories in the magazine as it helps you get the inspiration to start. I have not started my window cleaning business yet but at the stage of looking at equipment and learning how to build a round. I think your magazine will help me a lot.

Many thanks, Paul

Hi,

I wanted to say how much I enjoyed reading your new magazine; it's a fantastic idea.

I just wanted to comment on your article (Issue Oct 2012, page 34/35 Has Perry Window Cleaning of Ohio discovered a secret?) on bronze wool making glass hydrophilic.

For starters, the quote you used:

"Just tried this today, thought I would use a fine grade steel wool as that is all I could get hold of. It worked very well. I just soaked the glass with water, and then kept rubbing an area of glass until the water 'stuck' to the window. I repeated the process until the entire window was covered. Afterwards the entire piece of glass was 100% hydrophilic. Great discovery! This will help my brother in law who uses the wfp. I just wonder how long the glass will remain hydrophilic."

It was me who wrote this, and it was indeed my experience. The thing in the article I disagree with is the comments of Daniel Capon from British Glass. He suggested that the bronze wool was leaving a coating on the glass, which was making it hydrophilic. I can almost certainly tell you that this is not the case.

What was actually happening was that the abrasive nature of steel/bronze wool is grinding and smoothing out the glass surface at a microscopic level. Much like sand paper on a skirting board.

This is actually the first step in putting a hydrophilic self-cleaning coating onto glass, like Nano-ultra for example.

The only difference is, they use a polishing pad and cerium oxide, a mild abrasive, powdery paste; but the effect is the same. It smooth's the surface, resulting in a hydrophilic piece of glass. The sealant is applied afterwards, only to protect the glass from becoming porous again.

While we're on the subject of hydrophilic "self-cleaning" glass, I'll just add that I have used Nano-ultra and it made the windows dirtier more quickly, the opposite of what was supposed to happen.

My opinion on why this happens is because in order to make glass hydrophilic, you need to raise its surface tension, or in other words give its surface more friction, otherwise the water wouldn't spread out evenly. You can test this by running the back of your hand down a piece of self-cleaning conservatory roof glass, your hand won't glide over it.

The problem with this is that the more friction a surface has the more readily dirt sticks to it, and the harder it is for it to become dislodged. Really, there is no such thing as self-cleaning glass, only glass that stays clean longer, but hydrophilic glass does not achieve this. Very hydrophobic glass on the other hand does. I am currently experimenting with some new methods to efficiently implement this into traditional window cleaning, which would add value to the service. If you want to be updated on the results let me know.

In summary though, hydrophilic glass is only really useful for WFP users in that it reduces the chance of spotting. Using steel/bronze wool on 'problem' windows for WFP users would work well for their needs.

Regards, Gary

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Interview with Chato B. Stewart (cartoonist)

Are you an awning cleaner or window cleaner – which do you prefer?

I did window cleaning route work in the Boston area from 1987 to 2001. My store front routes were compact. So that each time I stopped to do a job, I was actually cleaning, in some cases, the whole city block. Awning cleaning fell into my lap around the time my son was born 1999. One of my clients asked me to clean the awning and I used my strip washers and squeegee to do it. That was the first time I realized I could make a few extra dollars cleaning awnings. I moved to Florida in 2001. That's when my business shifted from window cleaning to mostly awning cleaning. In fact, I cleaned more awnings in six months then I did the whole-time working in Boston.

Do you still clean windows & clean awnings?

In Florida the window cleaning business is much harder to maintain profitable routes with so many people willing to cut corners and prices to make a buck. I never wanted to get back into residential cleaning. So, I only focused on awnings as a niche market. My business is called Awning Cleaning Specialist. The business was flourishing up until a few years ago when the economy tanked. I lost my business overnight...Accounts were not saying no don't do our windows or awnings, they were just closing up left and right...going out of business.

Are you mainly residential or a commercial service business?

With this economy taking a turn for the worst, I had to figure out something to make ends meet...I did pressure washing, window cleaning, awning cleaning, carpet cleaning and even a few office cleaning jobs... But when that dried up, I started to teach myself search engine optimization and began my online career.

What got you into drawing cartoons?

Many of your readers may recognize some of my cartoons or clipart online and not even realize that it's from me. I started drawing window cleaning cartoons for Tom at the Window Cleaning Center website. There's a bit of a fun history there I won't get into, however, the end result was window cleaning cartoons exclusively for our industry. Quite frankly, I did not know how to draw cartoons back then. It was a whole new learning experience.

What was your inspiration to start drawing?

My inspiration to begin cartooning was due to a need of trying to put a little humor into window cleaning. Poking fun at some of the situations we window cleaners find ourselves in regularly...From people telling us: "you missed a spot" or asking: "what do you use?" 1000 times a day lent to a lot of humorous situations that I wanted to try to capture in cartoon media.

How long have you been drawing for?

I love drawing! It is been one of my favorite past times since I was a small child. Yet I never felt I could draw, and I still feel I can't, but I use it today as a form of therapy.

Which is your favorite cartoon & why?

One of my favorite cartoons pokes fun at Death... Instead of him holding a sickle, he has a pole and squeegee. I still laugh when I see it!

Which was your last cartoon with a window cleaning theme?

Recently, I had the privilege of drawing a cartoon for Willie Erken WAGTAIL CLEANING TOOLS.



So you must have drawn hundreds of cartoons, do you keep track?

Yes, I have drawn a lot of cartoons and I try to keep track of them...wasn't so good at doing that in the beginning. I put as many as I could find on my windowcleaningcartoons.com blog.

What's the most difficult part of drawing cartoons, especially when it comes to window cleaning?

One of the most difficult things I find now about drawing cartoons about window cleaning is the industry as a whole has changed. With more and more people moving towards water-fed poles and using different techniques to expand their business, sometimes you spend more time trying to keep up with changing trends than you can with drawing them.

I see you draw a lot for "mental health humor." What is your affiliation?

More of my focus has been helping people living with mental illness. It is becoming a passion, since I too live with a mental illness; bipolar disorder. I've seen some very dark times in my life because of it. I also have seen how something as small as a cartoon was able to brighten the day of my fellow window cleaners. I took that knowledge and applied it to helping people with mental illness to find a small, little glimmer of hope or even sometimes offering them an opportunity to smile! This led to the creation of mental health humor cartoons back in 2008.

I loved your "improved window tinting" cartoon – have you done any high-rise work yourself?

No I never needed to do high-rise. I had work in communities where each town had tons of small businesses. My route work kept me so busy I didn't have to do high-rise. Yes, I know there's more money to be made in high-rise, and residential window cleaning, but the window cleaning I was doing allotted me opportunities that I would never had if I took on that type of work. For example, my wife and I did a lot of travelling. At one point, we spent three months travelling around Europe. All the while having two people run the window cleaning route business back home. Those are some great memories!

I recently sponsored a window cleaning cartoon and was amazed at your insight. How much research do you put in to your cartoons?

First, thank you for sponsoring my efforts for the mental health humor project...I try to research as much as I can. The Internet makes that part pretty easy these days. Everything else, I'll toss up to experience and dumb luck.

Most people don't realize that you donate your cartoon money to "mental health humor." How can window cleaners contact you?

The Mental Health Humor Project is a concept of using humor to heal. Living with serious mental illnesses such as Depression or Bipolar Disorder and Schizophrenia has a way of crushing the human spirit...Many times we lose the will to laugh and find humor in our lives. The mental health humor cartoons I started to draw while I was in the psych ward. When I came out of the hospital, I was offered a blogging position in 2008. For the last five years, I've drawn cartoons about living with mental health issues and giving them away online. I now blog for some of the most influential mental health networks online today: Psych Central, BH Hope magazine, and ShareChare now (affiliated with Dr. Oz and Web M.D.).

This is a labor of love! I would like to take it to the next level. In order to do so, I would need to get some financial sponsorship. That can be done by monthly or lump-sum donations.

What would you like to see in the future for "mental health humor?"

I would like to be able to share the concept of using humor as a healthy coping skill for mental health issues with the book that I would like to publish. But that requires sponsorship and financial support.

Are you kept too busy with the cartoons to have any other hobbies?

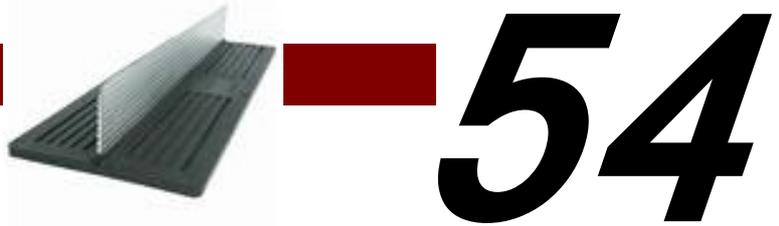
The cartoons and my search engine optimization business takes up a lot of my time, and my free time I spend with my four children!

Where do you see yourself in 10 years time?

I've done some standup comedy. In 10 years from now, I would like to see me still being able to draw up cartoons to help others. I would also like to put together some type of workshop and do more speaking engagements for mental health issues.

Related links:

www.windowcleaningcartoons.com
www.mentalhealthhumor.com
www.chatobstewart.com



Ladder safety

The Ladder Stopper has been on the market since the early 1990's. It is an anti slip stabiliser for ladders and comes in various sizes.

Whilst some potential customers see the Stopper as being just a rubber mat it is in fact an Aluminum T piece with rubber bonded to the cross part of the "T".

Because of this, the weight of the ladder and its user are spread throughout the Stopper over a large area. Not only does the upright aluminum plate help prevent the ladder slipping outwards it also helps prevent ladder flip where the ladder rotates due to overreaching.

It has been asked why we don't manufacture the Ladder Stopper cheaply in the Far East out of one piece of rubber? The thing is, this would be both false economy and dangerous. The upright needs to be hard but the foot needs to have a soft outer with a rigid centre. It would also weigh about 8 kilos where as the STO 18 weighs just 2.5 kilos and the STO 24 only 3.3 kilos. The Stopper is a lot more than just a cheap rubber mat.

Rojak Multi Stopper Stabiliser

The famous Stopper Base Stabiliser has been the first choice anti-slip device for many professional ladder users, including British Telecom and British Gas, for more than 20 years.

Over the last 22 years Rojak Design have had their stabilising products regularly tested but at this point in time there still isn't a Performance Standard for the Stability of Ladders.

As a company, Rojak Design has campaigned for this over the last 18 years when they first introduced their selves and their products to the HSE.

In that period they have had their products tested at Leeds Metropolitan University, HSL Buxton (The HSE's own Laboratory), AMTAC (now part of Bureau Veritas), Sheffield Laboratories, Bureaus Veritas, BSI, RAPRA, and Leeds University Department of Tribology.

For the last set of Stopper test results see Test Report 7181697 and Test Report 7141067



All of these stabilising products are innovative and in most instances patented, they are designed to help prevent ladder accidents by improving the performance of ladders. Present leaning ladder standards only measure strength and durability of ladders but there aren't any existing stability tests to measure ladder safety performance.

The makers of Rojak (for example) have had to design their own tests as well as products to see if they are "fit for purpose".

In 1994 the Health and Safety Executive's Test (HSL) laboratories at Buxton developed ladder stability tests which the Rojak/Stopper products passed but here we are 17 years on and the traditional ladder industry both here and Europe has still failed to accept these tests or come up with a robust alternative to truly measure the performance of a 10,000 year old product. Even today a standard ladder still has to be secured (tied off) to the building it is leaning against.

Safer ladders won't evolve until we leave behind the concept that they must consist of just rungs, stiles and feet.

Technical details

Code - STO18 Trade Stopper

Dimensions - 18 inches (475mm) long X 8½ inches (216mm) wide ladder stabiliser suitable for ladders up to 16 inches (406mm) wide. Weight 2.5kg

Code - STO24 Industrial Trade Stopper

Dimensions - 24 inches (609mm) long X 8½ inches (216mm) wide ladder stabiliser suitable for ladders up to 22 inches (559mm) wide. Weight 3.3kg

Code - STO30 USA Stopper

Dimensions - 30 inches (762mm) long X 8½ inches (216mm) wide ladder stabiliser suitable for ladders up to 28 inches (711mm) wide. Weight 5.2kg

Code - STO36 European Trade Stopper

Dimensions - 36 inches (914mm) long X 8½ inches (216mm) wide ladder stabiliser suitable for ladders up to 34 inches (863mm) wide. Weight 5.5kg

Code - MS24 Multi Stopper

Dimensions - 24 inches (609mm) long X 7 inches (177 mm) wide ladder stabiliser suitable for ladders up to 22 inches (559mm) wide. Weight 3.5kg



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Window Cleaning Resource Association



Why did I renew my WCRA membership when I don't even clean windows? I feel this has been one of the best investments my business has made. The access to the private forum, the post cards and flyers, and all of the people that I have connected with. Over the past year I have learned a lot and maybe one day we will actually offer interior window cleaning. Thanks to everyone for making this such a great forum and don't forget the PWR forum. Of course, I'm also a member over there!

TheWCRA.com

|

862.266.0677



Jared Barton

Bethany Associates Inc.

Hammonton, NJ

Alex and the team at WCR have shown exemplary customer service every time I have purchased from them. As a larger window cleaning company we have been purchasing our products and supplies from various vendors over the years. In an attempt to find better customer service I placed two recent orders with Alex. Both times the orders had certain complexities and lead times associated with them. Alex's knowledge of the equipment he sells was superior but his customer service was even better. With both orders he saved my company, Trusted Window Cleaning and Pressure Washing from NJ, PA, and DE, Bethany Associates money and provided a solution that exceeded my requirements. That would be sufficient for most businesses. However, In both cases the orders were delivered ahead of schedule and even at additional time and expense to WCR. As a business owner in a service industry I know when I am being serviced above and beyond. My hat is off to you Alex for providing superior solutions, savings and ahead of schedule. Your hard work has resulted in my company meeting our clients needs on time and with excellent equipment. Thank you for great products at excellent prices and unsurpassed service!

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