

Finish Line

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 3 President's Message
- 4 MCA Member News
- 6 Keep it Clean
- 8 Bill Boal Recap
- 11 Run for the MCA Board
- 12 Hog Wash
- 15 Acquire More Carwash Business



**GOLF OUTING
RECAP
Page 8**

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Please send address changes, membership inquiries, and advertising requests to the address listed above.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



By Paul Coffman
Breton Auto Wash

Building Your Car Wash Operation Sales Using a 12-Month Marketing Plan

One of the age-old challenges facing car wash operators today is how to get more vehicles into their wash business on a consistent basis. We all have our busy and slow cycles. The key is to get more people to think about and use our car washes during those slow cycles on a consistent basis.

Over the years, we have all used various ways to market our businesses. Some of the ways we have used have worked so well we stopped using them. One of the reasons, I have found, that we have stopped using some marketing promotions in our wash business was because we did not have a way to put it on auto drive. In other words, if your marketing plan is out of sight, it's out of mind.

One way I have discovered to prevent this from happening is to create a 12-month marketing plan. Here is how it works: Call a meeting with your managers and all pertinent employees and brainstorm all the ways you have marketed your wash business in the past and new ways you could market it in the future. Some of the ways car wash operators have been marketing their business include:

- Direct mail
- Radio advertising
- Website advertising on other company websites
- Specials and promotions on your marquees
- Stuffing mail boxes
- Fusion marketing –Example: You provide coupons that promote a local auto parts store and they provide coupons that promote your car wash
- V-card customer loyalty programs
- A fresh flower to all mothers on Mother's Day
- Weekly "Manager's Specials"
- Coupon printed on the back of other business' receipts –Example: coupon on back of a local grocery store receipt

Once you come up with a solid list, prioritize the ones you really want to use. Decide when and how often you want to use them. For instance: You may want to run your Manager's Special every Tuesday, your Mother's Day

flower program on Mother's Day weekend and a direct mail campaign three times per year.

The key is to post all of the promotions you will run for the year on a laminated 12-month wall calendar. Remember what I said, if your marketing promotions are out of sight, they will most likely become out of mind. You simply won't use them if you are not reminded to use them. A 12-month wall calendar is a handy tool that will help you make this approach a reality. When you use it, you will create a distinct advantage for your car wash operation.

My suggestion is to post the calendar on your office wall or to place it where you can see it every day. At your regular manager's meetings you can review which promotions are scheduled to come up that month. Make sure that you delegate the actions that need to take place and follow up to ensure those specific promotions are successfully executed. What worked? What didn't work? Why didn't it work? What would work better with an adjustment?

If you want to get more vehicles into your wash operation on a regular basis, create and use a 12-month marketing plan.

That's all for this month. Until next time –

Paul Coffman, MCA President

Judy Dunn
Regional Account Representative



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MCA Members in the News



John Sorenson

MACNEIL WASH SYSTEMS NAMES JOHN SORENSON AS CENTRAL REGIONAL SALES MANAGER

Barrie, Ontario, Canada – July 1, 2013 – MacNeil Wash Systems, the 30-year leader in conveyor car wash engineering now supported by its parent company Ryko Solutions, the largest manufacturer of car wash systems in the world, is pleased to announce that John Sorenson has joined its distinguished sales team as Central Regional Sales Manager. Sorenson will be responsible for supporting MacNeil's distributor and sales network throughout the central region of the United States.

Sorenson has an impressive background in the car wash industry, including 15 years as General Manager of Arizona Car Wash Systems where he successfully led the company's sales growth, strategic planning, project development and management of daily operations.

"John's extensive knowledge of our industry-leading products and services, past presence as a distributor, and comprehensive understanding of the car wash business will be a valuable asset to our entire company," explained Anthony Antonis, Vice President of Sales for MacNeil. "His placement is yet another example of the investment being made in MacNeil

and our commitment to infusing new energy from very talented individuals who both understand our business and can focus on creating new growth for the operation."

"I am extremely excited to be joining MacNeil because I've longed believed they engineer the best tunnel equipment in the industry and I totally believe in the product. It's easy to work for a company when you can stand behind its products," said Sorenson. "I enjoy every aspect in the development of a tunnel project - from working with the owners, to each individual vendor –beginning to end. It's incredible to start with a piece of property and watch it turn into a prospering business."

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Do you know of an MCA member who deserves recognition? Contact Hillary Walilko at 800.610.4512 or walilko.h@gcsionline.com with the details and we will feature it in a future edition of *MCA Members in the News*.



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Housekeeping – More than Being Clean

By Joe Clifford, MBA - Regency Group, Administrator of MI Cleaning Fund

You're probably thinking: "Here it comes. Keep the place clean. I've heard it a hundred times." Too many supervisors automatically connect housekeeping with merely sweeping the floor and wiping dirt off machines and equipment. Cleanliness is a part of housekeeping, but it falls far short of actual housekeeping. The most critical and most overlooked part of housekeeping is order. Many work areas may be clean, but they may not necessarily be in order. Order has a very special meaning in this case.

A place is in order when there are no unnecessary objects about and when all necessary objects are in their proper places.

Why worry so much about real order? Why is it so important anyway? Here are a few things order can and does accomplish:

1. Eliminates accidents and the causes of fires. If you don't believe this, review some accident investigative reports and see how often accidents and fires were caused by objects being in the wrong place at just the right time. The major cause of fire, for example, is disorder or, more accurately, failure to do proper housekeeping.
2. Prevents wasted energy. How much time is spent working around congested areas or moving deadwood items to get at needed material?
3. Maintain greatest use of precious space. How much space is taken up by objects that are rarely used or unnecessary? Does your area really look more like a stockroom than a production area?
4. Keeps inventory at a minimum. Why store a year's supply of materials that are used a day at a time unless you're in charge of a storeroom?
5. Helps control property damage. Not only does congestion foster property damage, but why expose material to damage in a production area if it is not necessary?
6. Guarantees good overall appearance. Orderliness is the first thing visitors to an area notice.
7. Encourages better work habits. Are you more careful and conscious of your actions in an orderly work area, or in a dirty, cluttered, and congested area?
8. Impresses the customer. Where do you prefer to do your buying? From a neat, orderly store or from a dirty, cluttered, disorderly one?
9. Reflects a well-run business. In visiting other areas, do you usually feel a neat, orderly area is better managed than a dirty, disorderly and apparently disorganized one?
10. Minimizes janitorial work. Which area requires the least effort to deep clean? One that is neat and orderly or one which is cluttered, congested and in disorder?

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Two final qualities of order that are frequently overlooked should be mentioned. First, order is 'maintained,' not 'achieved.' You cannot put an area in order and then forget it. Order must be maintained by the daily, conscious effort of everyone in the area. Second, order can only benefit you if you have it throughout the workday. If you wait until the end of the day and then get everything in order, what good is it for the productive segment of the day?

One of the greatest personal benefits a supervisor gets from orderliness is the impression it makes on higher management. The appearance of a supervisor's area of responsibility is one of the indications management has of that supervisor's ability. When confronted with an area of exceptional orderliness, management cannot help but feel that the difference is attributable to the person in charge.

A program of orderliness carried out by supervision and individual employees can bring big reductions in accidents, stored inventories, and wasted time and energy. The sure

result of order is greater and safer production of better products at lower costs. Improved production and lower costs mean increased business and prosperity for the company and its employees.

While housekeeping depends on daily effort and attention, the planned safety inspection provides a good opportunity to rate the area in this respect. It will help you determine how successful your efforts have been and point out areas where extra attention is needed. Just as order must be part of housekeeping, housekeeping must be part of safety. Material used in this article was supplied by Safety Certified, a provider of employee safety solutions.

The Michigan Cleaning Fund has additional information available to assist in establishing an effective housekeeping program. If you're interested in learning more about employee safety or about the benefits of being a member of the MI Cleaning Fund, contact Regency Group at 800-686-6640.

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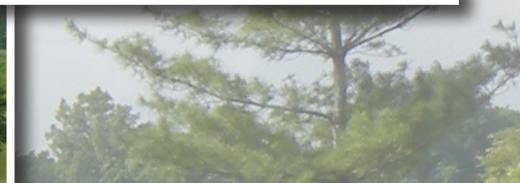
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From left: Sean Ellis, Mark Ellis, Dawn Feldpausch, and Shane Anderson



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The MCA would like to offer you the opportunity to serve your association and you industry as a member of the MCA Board of Directors. Each year MCA polls its members seeking individuals who are willing to dedicate their time and energy to advance the agenda of the association, provide expertise toward developing our future goals, policies and services, and act as an ambassador to grow the MCA membership and represent our organization.

We invite you to submit your name as a candidate for one of our open Board seats. To be eligible for Board service, MCA Board Members must be paid members in good standing of the MCA for both 2012 and 2013. You must be directly involved in operating or owning a wash or providing services or products specific to the car wash industry. Officers are elected by the Board from amongst its members.

If you have any questions or would like an application please contact Paul Coffman at 616.940.3752.



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Hog Wash!!!

Why a small investment in hog's hair foaming brushes at self-serve washes can pay off in more revenue, and reduced costs

By Del Williams

In the self-serve car wash industry, the owners and managers of each facility face a critical decision when installing the foaming brushes used by customers to remove surface dirt and debris. The choice: install low cost, coarse, synthetic brushes that customers suspect might scratch their paint jobs if applied too vigorously; or pay a little more for a higher end, natural foaming brush that is gentle and stands up to prolonged use.

Given that foaming brushes are the single most important item the customer sees and touches when entering a self serve, it essentially serves as a calling card for the business and speaks directly to the care and attention to detail the customer will receive. As such, many self-serve operators are paying more attention to the choice of foaming brush to keep customers satisfied, earn repeat business and word-of-mouth, and at the same time save money and time on frequent replacement.

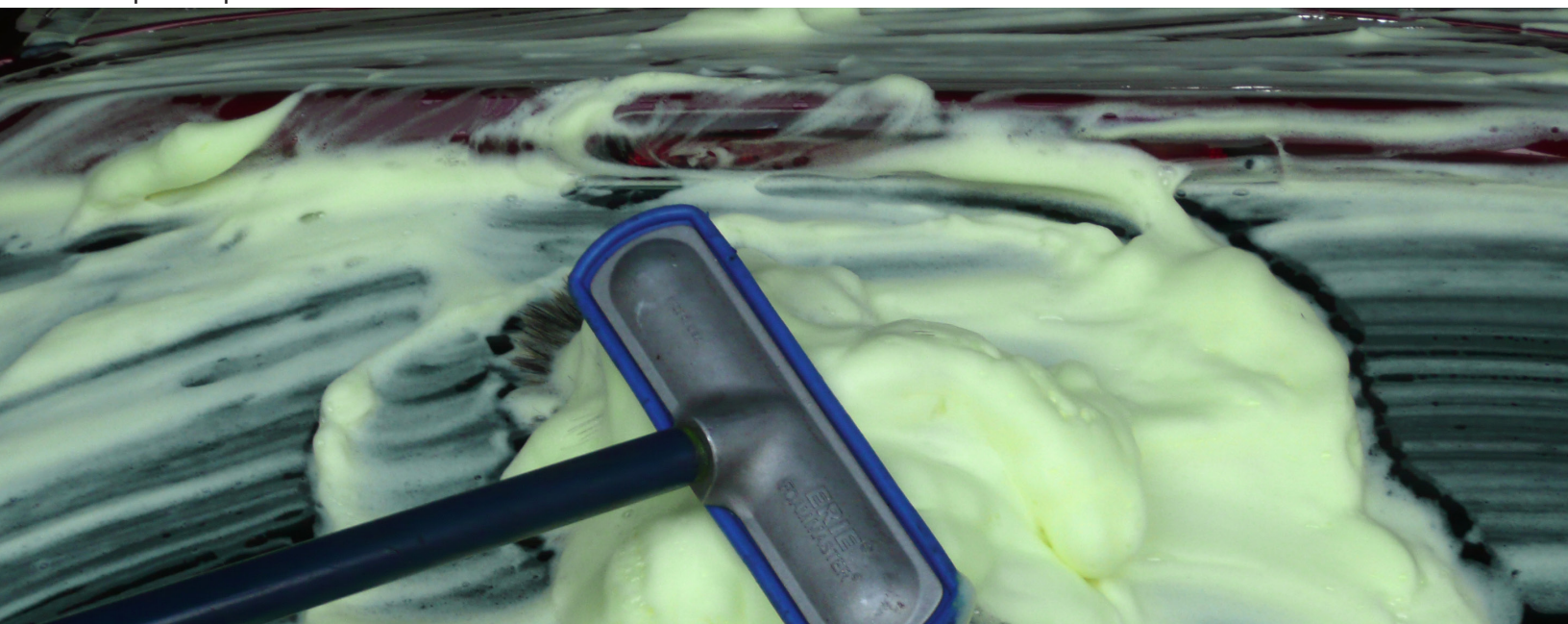
The Debate: Synthetic vs. Hog's Hair

On one side of the debate are foaming brushes constructed of nylon, polyester, and polypropylene. These less expensive options save a few dollars on the front end, but if they scratch the vehicle's paint are a sure-fire way to lose a customer for life, and even generate negative word-of-mouth. Because they are constructed of fewer, shorter, and coarser filaments per brush head, they wear out quickly, bend out of shape, and require frequent replacement.

"When foaming brushes first appeared in self-serve bays, the nylon type brushes were coarse, harsh to the vehicle surface, and tended to bend out of shape," says Tom Hoffman Jr., CEO of Hoffman Car Wash, an operation with 19 car washes throughout upstate New York that was started in the 1960s by his parents. "Painted vehicle surfaces have become much softer in recent decades, so it's even more important to use a gentler brush to wash cars today."

The other choice comes from a surprising, but natural source – hogs. Hog's hair, it turns out, is the perfect material when made into a brush. Hog's hair is very soft and gentle. Since the hairs are tapered, they are much softer at the tips for gentle washing, yet retain stiffness for washing up close if scrubbing is needed. At the same time, it is durable and resilient despite bending and prolonged use. As such, one hog's hair brush can outlive 3-4 less expensive options.

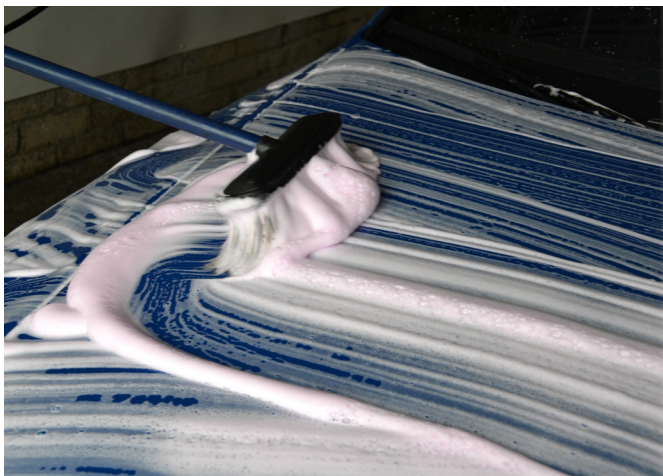
"The hog's hair brushes are noticeably softer than our previous brushes, and provide our self-service customers with a much better, safer wash. Customers can feel the difference, and they appreciate the extra gentleness," says Hoffman, who purchases them from long time industry brushes and detailing supplier Erie Brush. In business since 1948, the Chicago, Ill.-based Erie introduced hog's hair foaming brushes many years ago and offers a patented design for better foaming.



According to Hoffman, he has installed the hog's hair foaming brushes in 58 self-service bays. He also purchases non-foaming hog's hair brushes for supplementary washing at 13 conveyerized car washes.

While hog's hair foaming brushes cost a bit more than traditional brushes, they offer 43.2% more brush life. In part, this is due to an ability to quickly recover their natural shape even when bent 90-degrees. In contrast, once traditional brushes are bent, they remain out of shape and at some point have to be replaced.

"The hog's hair brushes offer us about 50% longer brush life than traditional foaming brushes, which lowers our cost of ownership," says Hoffman. "A small investment in hog's hair brushes can pay off big in the long run. This foaming brush from Erie has helped us grow from our beginning to 19 car washes today."



The choice: install low cost, coarse, synthetic brushes that customers suspect might scratch their paint jobs if applied too vigorously : or pay a little more for a higher end, natural foaming brush that is gentle and stands up to prolonged use.

Proper Brush Lubrication Prevents Damage

In any self-serve car wash, it is also important for foaming brushes to properly distribute soap foam to cleanse the customer's car and lubricate the brush for washing. Doing so can not only improve the customer experience but also helps prevent damage to the car's surface from improperly lubricated brushes. But traditional foaming brushes typically offer only 2-3 foam holes per brush, which can make this difficult.

"With few foam holes per brush, traditional brushes don't always provide proper lubrication between brush and car, or between the brush hairs themselves," says Freddie Seniw, owner of Easy Clean Car Wash, with seven locations in the greater Chicago area. "Large diameter

nylon filaments may also carry larger foreign objects such as sand that could damage a paint job if the brush head is not properly lubricated with soapy foam."

Consequently, Seniw has relied on Erie FoamMaster hog's hair foaming brushes for decades. Since these brushes have 6 foam holes on a typical 9-inch brush, this spreads the soapy foam more thoroughly than brushes with fewer foam holes. It also lubricates the brush so it cleans better and glides over the car surface.



The hog's hair brushes are noticeably softer than other brushes and provide self-service customers with a much better, softer wash. Customers can feel the difference and they appreciate the extra gentleness.

"With more foam holes per brush, there's better lubrication between brush and car surface," says Seniw. "The continuous flow of soap foam helps to cleanse dirt, sand, and foreign objects off the brush, keeping the brush head cleaner so it won't scratch. The hog's hair brush has the smallest diameter tapered filament, which helps to make it the softest. Customers come back because they know they can depend on my brushes and equipment to take care of their cars."

Seniw has found another type of hog's hair brush to be effective in his automatic, conveyor car washes. For a soft, safe detailing touch up of tough-to-reach spots such as around headlights, license plates, or around rear wiper arms, a hog's hair brush called an All Rounder does a better job than typical brushes without pinching any tight areas, according to Seniw.

Article continues on page 14

Hog Wash - continued from page 13

The brush manufacturer's 3-for-1 guaranty on all its hog's hair brushes – if the product is sent back and a manufacturing defect is found, they will replace it with two additional brushes at no cost – comforts Seniw, though he has never had to use it. "In 30 years, I've never had to use the guaranty, but it helps ensure that my brushes always perform for my customers," he says.

More Repeat Business

Car wash owners are recognizing that a satisfying foaming brush experience can be key to self-serve customers judging car wash quality. "Since the foaming brush is in customer's hands while they wash their car, you need to make sure it feels good," says Dave DuGoff, owner of

College Park Car Wash in College Park, Md., a high volume location with five self-service bays and three automatic bays.

"I decided years ago that I'd use hog's hair foaming brushes because their longer, denser bristles are more inviting to customers," concludes DuGoff. "While they cost a bit more than standard brushes, they've helped us earn a reputation for quality that's brought us repeat business and allowed us to remain a high-volume operation."

This article was submitted by Erie Brush and Manufacturing Corp. Del Williams is a technical writer based in Torrance, California.



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Start Thinking Differently and Grow Your Car Wash Operation

By Tom Borg

One of the challenges for most car wash operators today is they think inside a box.

They refuse to step outside the boundaries of this imaginary prison. A better way is to disintegrate that box. Start thinking without a box at all.

In order for this to happen for your car wash business, you must change your paradigms.

Paradigms are "problem solving systems". With an outdated or ineffective paradigm, your small business could be headed towards extinction. With the right kind of paradigm, your small business will grow and thrive in today's economy.

The way you see the world determines whether you respond or react to what you encounter. It is safe to say that many of today's small business owners have not

experienced anything like what they are experiencing in today's market place.

In the state of Michigan, the market has shifted and the economy has changed.

The old saying "if you keep on doing what you have always done, you will keep on getting what you always got" has been changed to "if you keep on doing what you have always done, you will get a lot less of what you always got; you might even go broke".

As surrounding circumstances change, you need to adapt, or in some cases, completely change your approach to serving your car wash customers. This all begins by changing your perspective on how you see your problems. Once you change the way you look at your problems, you can choose to use different problem solving systems.

Here are some things you can do to change the way you look at solving your business problems.

1. Start asking other successful business owners for one idea that can help you grow your business.
2. Ask your employees the question: "If you were the owner of this company, what would you change to improve the way it is being run?"
3. Stop saying no to new ideas you learn about, and start thinking about how you can implement them.
4. Start reading one good book or listening to one good audio program on how to make your car wash more successful.
5. Quit complaining about the economy and do something about your own business economy.
6. Start doing some things in your company that makes it a more attractive place to work.

Remember, start thinking without a box and start changing the way you think about your business problems. When you do this you begin creating new solution-orientated possibilities that can help you improve and grow your car wash business.



Tom Borg is president of Tom Borg Consulting LLC in Canton, Mich. He is a business development consultant who works with small and mid-size businesses. He shows them how to think without the box and maintain a profitable business. Contact him at www.TomBorgConsulting.com.



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