

Finish Line

QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE MIDWEST CARWASH ASSOCIATION

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Lansing, MI 48933
Phone: 800-610-4512
www.midwestcarwash.com



2017 Golf Outing
September 26th
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MIDWEST CARWASH ASSOCIATION

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MCA is a membership organization that promotes the interests of Midwest Carwash Operators through interaction, education and information. The Finish Line is a quarterly newsletter published by the MCA. Opinions expressed by guest writers do not necessarily reflect views of the MCA. Acceptance of advertising does not imply endorsement or approval of the product or service advertised. All articles submitted will be considered for publication and accepted at the approval of the editor and MCA Board. The MCA reserves the right to edit submissions for accuracy, clarity and length.

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

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



By Paul Coffman, Breton Auto Wash

FUN, FUN AND YES, MORE FUN

I would like to thank all of the operators and vendors who attended the Expo this year and for making it such a success. A huge thanks also goes out to all of those people behind the scenes that helped make not only the Expo, but the East Side Bus Tour something to be talked about for months to come.

Shine up the clubs and dust off the balls, the Annual Bill Boal Golf Outing is just around the corner. Foursomes, pairs and individuals of all skill levels are welcome for fun, food and prizes. If you haven't registered already, see page 13 for further information. I hope to see you there!

Are you an operator that would like to share your opinions and make a difference in the Association? We are always accepting inquiries for operators interested in becoming a part of the Association Board. We need to have our Association operators participate and be heard. If you are interested in making things happen, contact the Association office at: 800.610.4512.

~Paul

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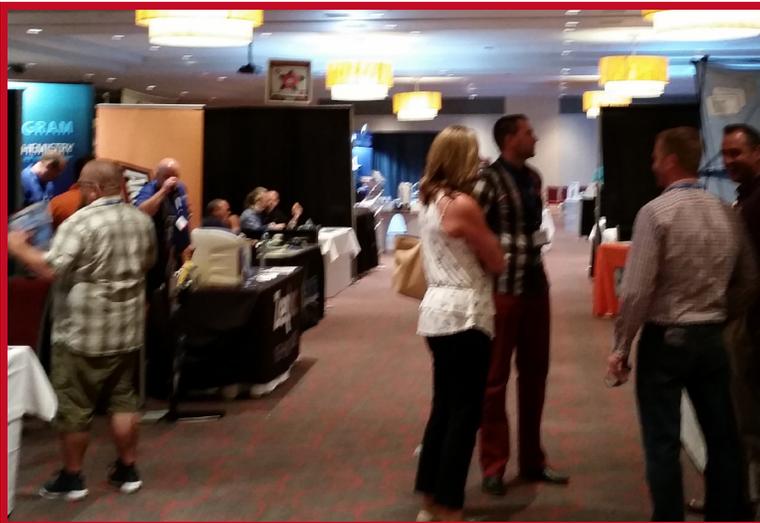


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Expo & Bus Tour

Thank you to those who joined us for our 2017 Expo in the Motor City! The event kicked off June 20th with attendees networking with vendors on the show floor. The day ended with MCA's annual dinner with more than 60 in attendance. Then on June 21st operators and vendors hit the road to visit four of-the-moment area carwashes: Canton City Car Wash (Canton), Paul's Auto Wash (Clawson), Jax Kar Wash (Southfield), and Pro Car Wash (Troy).



SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR 2018 EXPO!
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2017 Expo continued

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Windtrax East, LLC
Zep Vehicle Care





WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE?

By Roger Buys, General Manager (retired), Cascade, Jenison & Greenville Car Washes

Customers expect to receive good service -- but what is customer service? Every retail business has a responsibility to interact with and serve customers in a positive way. From the restaurant wait staff to vehicle repair shops, a professional and accurate level of service is important. No matter its age or level of technology a car wash business can and should still keep service at the forefront of its mind.



Greeting every customer provides a personal touch that is even more important in today's digital world.

PRESENTATION

To achieve good customer service it takes more than opening the doors and turning on the equipment. The staff and the facility make a significant impression on a customer even if there are very few words exchanged. The overall cleanliness of the facility from the drive up to the wash bay itself should be neat and tidy and free of debris. We believe that our staff should be neatly dressed with proper uniform and suitable clothing. Each one of our managers wears a name tag to easily be recognized by the customer for assistance when needed. We appreciate the invention of the smartphone as much as anyone, but have needed to put rules in place to ensure that staff only use them at appropriate times as not to distract for the focus that is the customer.

TECHNOLOGY PROS & CONS

Technology has made a big impact on the car wash business. Portable credit card processing allows quicker transactions and offer more choices in payment for customers who were used to a cash only industry. Barcode scanners which indicate if a customer has prepaid for their wash allow for more timely movement through the line. While the overall impact of the technology is a positive one it makes it easy for a car wash to lose direct customer interaction. Our organization has always felt that keeping a personal touch has been vital, and today it is even more important to us. Each customer is greeted by a friendly attendant as they drive in. Even if they have a barcode on their windshield we still invite them to lower their window to receive a free dash wipe, just to say "hi", or to let us know about any special concerns they have.



Prepping cars prior to sending them through the wash adds another layer of service.

ELBOW GREASE

Even with the latest wash equipment our company still believes that machinery can't see all of the hard to clean areas, especially in the winter. Snow and ice make it tough to clean a car well. It is our practice to remove most of the snow and ice with hot water and high pressure before sending the vehicle through the wash cycle. Our staff takes the time to prep a car properly even if the technology would otherwise allow them to speed the cars through.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES

Other services also give the customer reason to come to your business. We have offered free vacuums for many years and recently have doubled the amount available. We also offer free air to our customers which helps them avoid paying to top off their tires for a fee elsewhere.

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

The most difficult part of customer service is when the customer returns with a complaint. This can be from a wide range of concerns. The customer may not have gotten the package they paid for, the vehicle could still be dirty, or worst of all the vehicle could have some type of damage. When a customer is visibly upset the manager on duty needs to take the time to listen to that person and let them explain their concern fully. If the problem is simple and can be solved easily then we strive to do that without hesitation. Each customer is given a customer complaint form which has two copies. If the manager on duty needs to refer the incident to his or her supervisor they can schedule another time for the customer to return so the issue can be resolved.

VEHICLE DAMAGE

Michigan winters can be tough on vehicle exteriors and in the spring time customers often notice that their car may have some issues. Ice scrapers, snow shovels, shopping carts, and gas hoses can often be the culprits. If the car is damaged but it seems clear that the damage didn't happen at the car wash, then it is the manager's job to help educate the customer on what may have caused the problem. With video cameras watching the customer's vehicle going through the wash cycle we can sometimes determine whether the customer is at fault. It may show that the customer put their vehicle in drive, used their brakes, or was backing up. These issues can sometimes cause a chain reaction. If the carwash is ultimately responsible, even if not at fault specifically, it is important to acknowledge to the customer that their issue will be taken care of.

All those things can help establish a loyal customer base, and keep them returning for years to come.



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Todd Klismet
Independent Carwash Owner
Waupaca, WI

I have a spotless reputation.

Running a car wash isn't easy. I've got picky customers, competitors trying to undercut me—and don't get me started on the weather. So yeah, sometimes I can get a little stressed. It comes with the territory.

But one thing I know for sure: my customers keep coming back to my PDQ-equipped car wash because it's the best in town. All they care about is getting the cleanest car possible, and my wash delivers, week after week. And that puts a smile on their faces and mine.

DRIVE | CLEAN.



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WHICH CAR WASH PARTS SHOULD I KEEP IN STOCK?

By Elissa Tennant, Diamond Shine

Spare parts play a HUGE role in the car wash industry. There are a lot of durable or high wear and tear items involved in running a car wash. Having the right inventory of car wash parts and understanding how quickly you can get critical components locally will help you maximize uptime and keep the cars coming!

WHAT SHOULD I STOCK?

Trent Walter, of National Pride Equipment, gives some tips on what parts he recommends stocking and why.

The list of critical parts recommended to keep on site will vary depending on whether you have a self-service, automatic wash, or a tunnel wash.

“Start with a big picture question,” says Trent. “If this breaks, am I’m shut down?”

Figure out what components you absolutely need to be up and running and work backwards from there. Then, think about what the plan of action is to replace each part if any do break down.

Two questions to ask yourself are:

- **Do you keep a spare part on the shelf?** Maybe it's too high of an investment to own two of something. Is there a local store that you know carries that part at all times? Make sure you are aware of who they are and how far they are from you.
- **Can you ask a vendor to stock it for you?** Don't be afraid to ask distributors to stock items for you. They may be willing to maintain an inventory of a couple items in case of emergency.

COMMON PARTS TO KEEP ON HAND

For any wash, an air compressor is a critical component. Many wash owners keep two on site in



case of emergency, or know of a big box store where they can access one quickly if needed.

With automatic washes, photo eyes and proximity switches (which are used to measure where the vehicle or machines is in the wash process), are great parts to keep on hand. They can typically run about \$30-\$60, so keeping some extra ones around is a fairly small investment that allows for a quick and easy fix.

Similarly, many car wash owners also keep splice kits on hand to make temporary repairs to hoses. Some low-pressure lines and hoses are also inexpensive to keep in stock. A roll of hose can go for around \$50-\$60 for several hundred feet, making this another small but good investment.

Some tunnel wash owners stock an extra conveyer hydraulic motor or gear box because if those go out the wash becomes inoperable. However, they may not stock a wrap or top brush motor because while it's important to have on hand, you can still run your wash and put out a clean car for a day or two without it while you wait for one to come in.

Trent recommends that if you are running a high-volume site, you should carry more parts because

there will be more wear and tear on your machines. For a lower volume wash you can probably get away with less on hand and rely more on planning to know when you need to start thinking about purchasing replacement parts.

THE EXPECTED LIFE OF YOUR PARTS

Really understanding the expected life of each component is a great way to plan ahead. Work with your supplier to make a list of every part you have in your wash and its life expectancy. Then create a system to track this data.

If a motor typically lasts 10,000 cycles, you can keep track of its use and when you get to 60-70% of the life expectancy, purchase a new one to have on hand. Some owners use this method to replace parts before they fail, too! No need to wait until an emergency – if you are tracking properly you should be able to gauge when to make the switch.

This method will also help you understand if you have a faulty part. If a piece only lasts 50% of its expected life you know there's a problem. Understanding these kinds of metrics can help you grow your bottom line and make better decisions when it comes to purchasing new parts.

GENERAL TIPS FOR ORDERING AND MAINTAINING

Creating a relationship with your supplier isn't just a nice thing to do, it's a great business move. If you cultivate this ongoing relationship your supplier can be a helpful partner in keeping your business going and your wash running smoothly. Take the time to understand their technicians, their capabilities, and what inventory they keep in stock.

You can do this by checking how much inventory they keep on their service trucks, understanding what they keep in their warehouse, learning and asking about on-call procedures, and setting and understanding expectations from both sides. This will help create a strong relationship and allow you some flexibility to best utilize the supplier as an asset to your business.

Car washing in general can be very reactive. Planning can help you save money and be more productive, leading to a better wash for your customers and more uptime for you and your team.

For more information visit info.diamondshine.com.



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Diamond Shine

BILL BOAL MEMORIAL GOLF OUTING

Tuesday, September 26, 2017
Hawk Hollow Golf Course



LOCATION...

HAWK HOLLOW GOLF COURSE
15101 CHANDLER RD., BATH, MI 48808
PH: 517.641.5944

9:15 A.M. CHECK-IN. COFFEE & DONUTS
10:00 A.M. SHOTGUN START
LUNCH AT THE TURN
3:00 P.M. DINNER (APPROXIMATE)

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Includes: foursome and sign with sponsor's name at one "game hole."
- Dinner \$400** (two available)
- Beverage Carts \$300** (two available)
Each player will receive a drink ticket with your company name or logo redeemable for one beer or soda.
- Golf Carts \$275** (Signage on each cart)
- Lunch \$250** (two available)
- Coffee and Donuts \$125** (two available)
- Tee \$85** (multiple available)

I will donate a prize for the give-a-ways

PLAYER REGISTRATION:

- Member (Single) \$100
- Member (Foursome) \$400
- Non-Member (Single) \$115
- Non-Member (Foursome) \$460

Player package includes:

continental breakfast, 18 holes of golf, cart, lunch and dinner

Questions: Contact Hillary Walilko at 800.610.4512 or walilko.h@gcsionline.com

Name _____
Company _____
Address _____
City, State Zip _____
Email _____
Player #2 _____
Company _____
Player #3 _____
Company _____
Player #4 _____
Company _____

Total Sponsorships \$ _____
Total Golf \$ _____
Total \$ _____

Method of Payment: Credit Card Check Enclosed

Credit Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____ Sec. Code _____ Zip Code _____

Signature _____

The MCA office must receive this form no later than Monday, September 19th.

Mail this form to: Midwest Carwash Association
120 N. Washington Square, Suite 110A
Lansing, MI 48933
Or fax to: **517.371.1170**

MCA Member News

DRB Systems and Unitec Open West Coast Office

Trusted car wash leaders have offices coast to coast

DRB Systems and Unitec have recently opened its new West Coast office in Fontana, CA. The new office will provide sales and service support for the West Coast, as well as extended shipping hours for customers throughout the United States. This new location is particularly well suited to support the continued growth that is occurring in the car wash industry in southern California.

The car wash industry leaders also have offices in Akron and Canton, Ohio and Elkridge, MD. Since the acquisition of Unitec in September 2016, the DRB Systems organization has grown to include 300 employees; adding sales, engineering and technical personnel in the Akron and Canton locations. Having recently been selected as one of the top 100 work places in northeast Ohio, DRB Systems is dedicated to its staff, its customers and continuing advancements in new product innovation and support infrastructure. DRB Systems and Unitec serve a combined install base of more than 14,000 car washes. The organization is positioned to serve every car wash segment in the United States with superior technical and production capabilities and knowledge.

“One of the most important focus points of our mission at DRB and Unitec is to create opportunities for our customers and employees. It’s a very rewarding moment when an expansion effort, like the addition of our California office, serves both our team and customers. We look forward to expanding the capacity and resources in all of our locations as we continue to build the world’s leading technology company serving the car wash industry.” said Bill Morgenstern, CEO of DRB and Unitec.

About DRB Systems

DRB Systems (Akron, Ohio) for more than 30 years has been the leading point-of-sales software and business solutions company in the car wash industry, providing technology and marketing support to enhance customers’ experience and operational

efficiency. DRB Systems strives to help operators unlock their hidden potential needed to enhance their businesses, revenues and lives.

See www.drbsystems.com

About Unitec

Unitec (Elkridge, MD.) founded in 1983, is a high-performance manufacturer of advanced hardware and software solutions for the car wash market. Unitec products combine state-of-the-art technology, user-friendly operations and dependable, rugged construction. Unitec’s staff is dedicated to unsurpassed customer service, advanced product design and superior quality standards.

See www.startwithunitec.com

MCA CLASSIFIEDS

Have items to sell? Interested in what other members might be selling?

The MCA is interested in starting a classifieds section on both the website and in *Finish Line*. If you have products you would like to post contact the MCA for more information. There is no cost for members and \$50 per ad for non-members.





CLARKSTON AUTO WASH Co.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

MCA Member, Clarkston Auto Wash Co. is pleased to offer a tuition reimbursement program for student employees who work during the school year.

For each hour worked during the term, Clarkston Auto Wash will reimburse \$1.00 (up to a max of \$500).

To be eligible for tuition reimbursement you must:

- Be employed the first and last day of the school term
- Abide by all policies and procedures of the Clarkston Auto Wash Co.
- Work a minimum of 15 hours per week
- Attend an accredited university, community college, or trade school
- Be working toward a degree or certification
- Maintain a 2.0 G.P.A.
- Be willing to schedule classes in such a manner as to maximize your availability for daytime working hours
- Provide tuition receipts and transcripts at the end of the school term

This program is applicable to tuition only and not books or room and board. The amount reimbursed may not exceed 100% of actual tuition. The Clarkston Auto Wash Co. reserves the right to rescind this policy at any time.

For more details contact Fred Ritter (MCA Past President) at 248.625.2500.


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