

Window Cleaning magazine

April 2014



Being Steve Blyth

We look at JRC's history

Inside GrippaTank

A frank interview with the Stanton brothers

An interview with Shawn Gavin

Up close and personal

Industry spotlight: Xline

What is all the fuss about?

Is your website destroying sales?

7 ways to avoid it



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Window Cleaning Magazine

Editorial



Welcome to another issue of WCM. Have we got another packed issue for you? The biggest must read at the moment has to be the continuing article by Carl Phillips called 'Why most window cleaners will die broke'. An awesome read that will inspire you to grow your business.

We have a new column writer with us this issue, Mark Palmer. We welcome Mark into the fold with his series of articles, the first of which tells of 7 ways your website is destroying your sales.

We drill down into JRC, RHG and Xline to find out more about these companies. The JRC history is well worth a read because it goes way back. We even have a picture of a JRC customer invoice dated 1940 that states at the bottom, 'Due to present war conditions, all prices are subject to change without notice'. The invoice is for 1 dozen 18" rubbers at the massive cost of 1 dollar!

And we speak with the Stanton brothers from GrippaTank and find out more about the new products that they have to offer.

All your favourite regular writers and features are here.

Lee Burbidge

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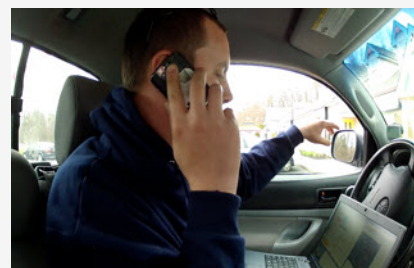
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Mitie signs 'ground-breaking' sponsorship deal with the Cleaning Show 2015



Rob Cattell - Mitie

Mitie, the FTSE 250 strategic outsourcing company, has signed a ground-breaking deal to become Platinum Sponsor of the Cleaning Show 2015.

The Cleaning Show makes its move to London in 2015 following widespread industry demand, and Mitie recognised the impetus this relocation – as well as the organiser's plans to make this a true industry 'event' rather than just a trade show – will bring.

Rob Cattell, managing director of Mitie's Environmental + business, said: *"Mitie has been a pioneer in the FM sector for over 26 years and we're excited to be the first Platinum Sponsor in the Cleaning Show's history, as well as supporting our industry at the heart of its main event."*

The Cleaning Show 2015 takes place from 10-12 March 2015 at London's Excel Exhibition Centre. The event is organised by BCCE Ltd, a company jointly owned by the British Cleaning Council and Quartz Business Media.

Steve Diprose, VP of exhibitions at Quartz Business Media, said: *"Attendees at the Cleaning Show 2015 will witness the transformation of an ordinary industry exhibition into an exciting industry-focused networking event, and I am delighted that Mitie has taken the opportunity to place itself at the centre of activities. We already have details of additional events to run alongside the show, including a number of social events making the most of London's attractions, a parallel programme of lectures delivered in two theatres, VIP areas to ensure visitors get the most from their visit, a number of specialist 'zones' on the show floor, together with awards and competitions. And that's just the beginning. We will be announcing another significant development in the next few weeks that will draw even more key industry figures to Excel in March 2015. I very much look forward to working with Mitie to further develop our plans, and thank them for their generous sponsorship."*

Details of Mitie's sponsorship activities will be announced in the coming months, but in the meantime the company will be taking an active role, working with the organisers to ensure the visitor profile is enhanced, attracting attendance from contract cleaning businesses, FM companies, and property owners in greater numbers than at any previous Cleaning Show.

Further details about exhibiting at or attending the 2015 Cleaning Show can be obtained from Vanessa Martinet:
Tel: 01737 855041



Unger celebrates 50th this year

It seems to be a year for birthdays this year with the IWCA celebrating its 25th and Unger celebrating its 50th.

At the International Window Cleaning Association 25th convention and trade show at Memphis this year, Unger was honoured twice with a 50th Anniversary party thrown by J Racenstein and again during the IWCA Award Banquet.

The audience was touched by Barbara Unger Wales the widow of Unger's founder, Henry Unger, and her stories of how her husband work hard from nothing to make and help shape the Unger name and the global brand it is today.

WCM has the full interview with Mark Unger on how it all started and you can read that in our back issue July 2012.



Quality Tools for Smart Cleaning™



"SAFETY ACCREDITED MEMBER" (SAM)

FWC Executives have developed a bespoke window cleaning contractors Safety Assessment Scheme, the aim of which is to help member businesses find advice on managing their general health and safety risks which will be open to all members who have met pre-specified health and safety requirements.

Every month thousands of contractors and consultants apply for work with public and private sector organisations. In order to be awarded the relevant contract, the companies and individuals applying must meet health and safety standards and prepare all the necessary information to become a registered accredited contractor which can be an extremely tedious and lengthy process.

Accredited Members of such a scheme generally benefit by being considered for proposed tenders by these organisations - quite simply - more organisations will work with you.

SAM is a pre-qualification scheme that allows local authorities and other organisations identify that you have the minimum standard required under the scheme. FWC invites you to stand F4C at the Facilities Management 2014.pdf

WHAT THE SAM SCHEME ENTAILS:

There are certain standards that everybody has to achieve; the main criteria being recognised IOSH Accreditation - unless a higher alternative IOSH accreditation is in place, the minimum requirement is the FWC IOSH Accredited courses; "Cleaning Windows Safely" using waterfed poles & portable ladders and "Risk Assessment" for cleaning windows, gutters and external facades.

WHO CAN APPLY?

- Self Employed
- Limited Companies
- Companies large or small

HOW THIS ACCREDITATION CAN BENEFIT YOUR COMPANY

- When a client knows you are a "Safety Accredited Member" you will be considered for proposed tenders by Government bodies and other major organisations.
- SAM will show you are compliant with health and safety laws and help improve your business productivity.
- you can display the Accredited Logo and Certificate on your website; vehicles & stationery to demonstrate your professionalism.
- You can market your SAM achievement through Window Talk and other trade magazines.

WHAT WILL IT COST?

- £25.00 joining fee
- Level one (Sole Trader) Annual Accreditation charge £75.00
- Level two (Employers) Annual Accreditation charge £225.00

HOW TO APPLY FOR SAM?

Registration is open to all paid-up members who meet the SAM criteria.

Sole-Trader applicants will need IOSH accreditation, or undertake & pass a minimum of FWC IOSH "Cleaning Windows Safely" & "Risk Assessment" courses, Unless a higher alternative IOSH accreditation is in place, employees of a company will also need to have "Cleaning Windows Safely" accreditation, and the forman / Safety Officer would need a minimum of FWC IOSH "Risk Assessment"

Should the company applying for SAM sub-contract their window cleaning - the sub-contracting company must also comply with the IOSH accreditation requirements. All persons applying for Safety Accredited Member need to provide a Health & Safety Policy, Risk Assessment, Accident report, Enforcement report, toolbox talk and all training certificates based on the particular type of work the company undertakes and the type of equipment used. these documents must meet the required accreditation standards..i.e. NEBOSH/IOSH/IPAF/IRATA/CIEH etc

The application can be completed in Word format below and saved to your desktop, or download the pdf. Return the application with the required payment & supporting evidence to the FWC- either electronically or in portfolio format in the post...until such time our website is reconstructed to enable online filing of documents and applications.

- Applications are processed and evaluated by a qualified person

APPLICATION LEVEL ONE APPLICATION LEVEL TWO

Successful applicants receive a certificate, SAM logo & ID card

Window cleaners and teachers - the 'bravest' professions of WW1

Apart from the requirement for scaling often daunting heights, it is not a job usually associated with fearlessness. But new research shows that window cleaners were among the most likely of all professions to be awarded for bravery during the First World War.

The study involved an analysis of the records of hundreds of servicemen decorated for valour during the conflict, to establish the ten lines of work which were most heavily represented among the medal winners. It found that those most likely to be awarded were teachers, followed by window cleaners and cotton mill workers. They were followed by doctors, fishermen, servants, barbers, merchants, policemen and bankers.

The study, released today to mark the start of the family history show Who Do You Think You Are? Live, at London's Olympia, was carried out by Ancestry, the archive research company. It involved an analysis of the pre-war backgrounds of hundreds of soldiers awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal, Meritorious Service Medal and Victoria and Military Crosses for their actions during the conflict.

The data was then cross referred with the results of the 1911 census, to establish how common the different jobs were. Overall, the most decorated jobs were miners and agricultural workers.

Among the teachers to be awarded the Victoria Cross, the highest decoration for battlefield valour, was Frederick Youens, who received it posthumously, after he died trying to help a machine gun team under German attack, near to Hill 60, a prominent landmark on the Western Front, in July 1917.

J.H. Stanley Coates, from Hulme, Manchester, had worked as a window cleaner before the war. He received the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Miriam Silverman, from Ancestry, said: "While teachers, doctors or policemen may have had skills or leadership qualities that could have prepared them better for the front line, what this data really tells us is that it was the ordinary men with everyday professions that made some of the most extraordinary heroes."

As well as establishing the professions most likely to be decorated, the study also discovered several medal winners from more unusual walks of life, such as the Victoria Cross winners William Angus, a professional footballer, Edward Warner, a straw hat finisher, and Jack White, a waterproofer.

The Route to Prosperity

By Stuart Webster PART 2

The two most obvious ways to earn money from window cleaning is to employ or set up a franchise. Franchising is becoming a more popular method of expansion. You don't have the issues of employment but you do have control over the client base.

To put it in simple terms, let's say you have £2k's worth of work spare. You sell a franchise as a turnkey business, ie. the purchaser can start earning from day one. They buy the business and the right to clean and increase the work in that area. Let's say they pay £10k. For that they get training and equipment but generally need to source their own van.

They own the business can re-sell if they like. The ownership of the work remains with the franchisor/original owner and the franchisee pays a monthly fee to service the work. They build up the work together and increase the value of the business. If run correctly the franchisee can increase the value of the business and make it's re-sell value much greater than what they paid for it. Conversely they can run it into the ground and make it worthless. It is generally up to the franchisee to re-sell and get a good price for the business. The franchisor continues to collect from the new franchisee

Stuart from WCM spoke to Andy Etchells from Buxton in Derbyshire. Andy started window cleaning nearly 20 years ago after having to put up with Stuart calling in to his Post Office in the village of Chelmorton for a cup of tea and chat about Derby County and Manchester City for a year or two. They worked together for some time until Andy set up Central Window Cleaning in Buxton

WCM: You had spent a few years working with me, set then having taught you all I know you set up on your own and increased the work to a level that you needed

assistance. You had Curt working for you as a full time employee, what made you look at the franchise route?

AE: *Curt and I went down to a trade show in London and Ian Lancaster was doing a seminar so we went to listen to it thinking it might be something for the future. I lodged it in my mind as I didn't think it was for me at the time, as I couldn't see how I could get someone who was a paid employee and had holiday pay etc. to go for a franchise. Then down the line I had two more employees, Arik and Dave. I was VAT registered by then and Curt came to me one day out of the blue and said "I'm thinking of leaving". He was happy but said that he could do what he was doing himself and earn a similar amount of money on his own and have the time to please myself. His mind was made up!*

It was a bit of a disaster really because when went on holiday Curt would run everything for me. Then I remembered Ian's seminar so I asked him what he was going to do. He said door knock and canvass and build up that way. I asked if he was aware how long it would take to build up a round....

WCM: *I may have been something of a catalyst as I had suggested that I was going to sell up, at the time I had serious issues with my shoulder and had mentioned it to him.*

AE: *....so it's all your fault then! Anyway I remembered the trip to London and decided to pitch the idea of franchising to him and to my surprise he said yes. I got in touch with Ian Lancaster and took it from there.*

Then Dave left, he went back into printing. I had another franchisee but he had little grasp of money and it proved to be a nightmare.

WCM: *So what makes a good or bad franchisee?*

AE: *The worst sort is someone who hasn't got an idea about*

“...UNRELIABLE STAFF CAN BE A NIGHTMARE..”

how to run a business, someone who thinks that they can spend all the money they earn. The best franchisee is someone who can see the potential that they can earn good money. For example they start with an initial % royalty fee and when the business grows the % fee pales into insignificance as the business grows.

WCM: What did Ian Lancaster provide for you?

AE: Everything that you need to set your franchise up, all the information you need the contracts and documentation. You get a watertight contract which is very important. You need to be protected as you are in essence giving away your work to someone else, it always remains your work but you don't want anyone running off with it either.

WCM: So how did it develop?

AE: Arik then came to me and said he would like to be a franchisee, he'd worked for me for 5 years by then and is a cracking worker, I knew the work would be in safe hands. He was franchisee number two.

I still had loads of work and coincidentally a customer asked if I had any work going, her boyfriend was moving up and looking. I told her I no longer employ and explained the franchise arrangement. He went for it and was franchise number three.

That left me with too much for myself but not enough for another franchise, that's where the hard work comes in because even though I now have a 4th franchisee I'm conscious that I don't have enough work for him. I really need to get more, I've obligations to him as part of the agreement.

WCM: What do you do to get work?

AE: Website, leafleting and canvassing mainly. I've used Whizzbiz for canvassing.

WCM: How did you get on with him?

AE: Great, he's an honest guy is Mark and is very good at what he does. We gave him an idea of the price and he goes in higher and gets them.

WCM: Would you say growing the franchises is the difficult bit then.

AE: To a large degree yes, it depends on the area and saturation of window cleaners.

WCM: What are your views on employing?

AE: The money is good for sure. The pitfalls can be staff, unreliable staff can be a nightmare. That said reliable staff can suddenly have family issues and you need to make allowances for them. Childcare issues at the last minute for example. VAT takes a chunk out of your money. Statutory pension for small businesses that will be coming in. Paternity leave and endless legislation.

The best models, discounting franchising, is either the model you have. On your own and continually sifting out the best work or to go really big.

WCM: Can you put your feet up now?

AE: Not yet, I still work part of the week but it has made life easier, it's more of a top-up pension to me. I can take things a bit easier and work three days a week. I have the best work obviously!

WCM: Who controls the price of the work and price increases?

AE: I would normally do that but do go on what they say about what the customers feel about it.

WCM: Can the franchisee go off and do their own work?

AE: In theory no. There has to be a level of trust. I try to be as honest as possible with them and hope they are in return.

WCM: So you prefer it to employing then?

AE: Absolutely

WCM: Who is responsible for H&S?

AE: They are, I'll help out where I can but it's up to them to deal with it.

WCM: Are they responsible for tools as well?

AE: Yes, it's amazing as well that when you employ things break and when the franchisee owns the tools they last much longer. Another advantage.

WCM Finally, what are your thoughts on the FWC?

AE: ... (Watch this space for the special issue on the FWC) Thank you Andy.

As it transpires one of the franchisees is leaving to travel abroad so there is a position available.

If you are interested please call Andy on 01298 24836

The most often road travelled for increasing the turnover of work is to employ. There are two ways this can be done. For many they simply employ a friend for 'cash' and knock the amount from their daily takings. This route, while popular, is fraught with problems. H&S and tax issues just two among many. If you are building a business, build it correctly deal with the paperwork and it will flourish. Try to take shortcuts and problems will ensue. There are many aspects to employment, for this reason we will investigate it in depth in a future article.

Another route is to gather national contracts and sub them out to various cleaners.

Steve Williams has taken the leap and successfully sub-contracts not window cleaning but solar panel cleaning.

We caught up with Steve to ask him how he did it.

"CURRENTLY, WE HAVE AROUND 20 CONTRACTORS"

WCM: How did you get started in the industry, give us a brief history?

SW: I got started in the industry the day after I left school. I set up a window cleaning business at age 16 and walked around my hometown of Wellington, Telford, with ladders on my shoulder and bucket in hand. I continued like this until I learned to drive at 19 and what a relief it was to have a car!

I developed the window cleaning business and when I found out that the work at height regulations were due to change in 2004, I invested in a WFP system the year before. Many of my customers then asked how I would clean their guttering without using my ladders. So I bought a pressure washer and adapted an attachment so that I could pressure wash them out. Not the most glorious way of cleaning gutters, but efficient nonetheless!

Having the pressure washer opened up the possibilities of cleaning patios and driveways for customers and come 2010, I attended a training course for sealing all types of flat surfaces used on driveways and patios.

During 2007 though, there was much talk of solar panels becoming popular during the years to come and one forward thinking window customer of mine had them installed in 2008. I started to advertise solar panel cleaning as a service at that point and researched the American, Spanish and German solar panel cleaning industries to see where the UK was likely to head. I discovered the potential was huge. This motivated me to research in depth this industry, especially the health & safety aspects, research which I still continue with.

The solar panel cleaning expanded in 2013 to the point where I felt it necessary to form our latest company, Clean Solar Solutions Ltd.

WCM: When did you move into subbing out work, how many subbies do you have now?

SW: I have subcontracted work for a few years now, but on a small scale. It is only during the last 12 months that it has become an integral part of our business model. Currently, we have around 20 subcontractors.

WCM: What is the greatest challenge in sub-contracting out work?

SW: The greatest challenges we find are cash flow and educating contractors in the health and safety aspects of solar panel cleaning.

WCM: What is the best thing about sub-contracting?

SW: The best thing we have found with subcontracting is that we can say with confidence that we can cover any solar panel cleaning job anywhere in the UK.

WCM: Where would you be now in comparison if you had not gone down the subbing route?

SW: If we had not decided to subcontract, we would still only be covering work in our main area and the effort I had spent researching this new field may not have been worthwhile. Now though, I feel our team can cover any job of any size.

WCM: What does the future hold for your company?

SW: The future is very exciting for our company. The solar industry is going from strength to strength, panels are being put in everywhere. The 2020 Renewables Roadmap put in place by the government means that solar installations will be a key feature across the UK for years to come. Our company is at the very forefront of solar panel cleaning and we have a broad knowledge of the industry. We are now consulted prior to installation, providing advice on the design of arrays so that cleaning the panels can be done safely and effectively. I will be speaking at seminars across the UK during 2014 explaining the financial benefits of solar panel cleaning. We are sharing our experience to a training company who are putting together the UK's first solar panel cleaning training course.

And of course, we continue to clean solar panels on a large scale. In 2012, we estimated that we would clean around 2,000 panels during 2013. In reality though, we have cleaned over 53,000 solar panels during 2013, which far outweighed our expectations. During 2014, we have estimated cleaning at least 75,000 panels, though based on projects in the pipeline, this number could rise to nearly 250,000, so our future looks very exciting indeed.

Thank you Steve Williams.

Is sub-contracting the way forward? How well does it work with window cleaning? For many sub-contracting is a real issue. Unlike with Steve's Solar Panel company, with window cleaning you can have a national company subbing to a regional company subbing to a large local company subbing to a 'one man band'. By the time the 'one man band' gets paid he can be cleaning a store front for literally pennies!

Prosperity will never come to the 'man on the glass' with a sub-contracting model based on multiple layers of contractors. A model based on a single main contractor subbing out to a local window cleaner just might.

We can often become narrow minded with just how we choose to make money. We could expand to having a supply shop or offering various services. We could even grow our business organically and employ or franchise. How about earning an income from a totally different field that would work in harmony with our current window cleaning work. Is it possible to earn a 'passive income' in an area that complements our current situation?

Find out next issue in part 3 of...
'The Route to Prosperity'

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Why most window cleaners will die broke

PART 2

By Carl Phillips

In the last issue we discussed my hitting rock bottom and we also discussed the topic of which type of window cleaner are you? To read Part 1 click here: [insert WCM mag link](#) and open the last issue January 2014.

So here is the ugly truth....

The truth is, there is a serious down side to window cleaning; you are self-employed. Most of us know how precarious self-employment is. You don't have to be a genius to work it out and many of us have already had firsthand experience of it, but what makes it so precarious? What is this Achilles heel? It's simple; Self-employment relies solely on you. That's why you will always remain poor if you continue the way you are.

Let's take a closer look. I was young fit and healthy. I ran twice a week, and hit the boxing gym three times a week. But I still got ill a couple of times a year. Guess what? No money came in. I wanted holidays occasionally and when I was away, guess what? No money came in. Then there were the two car accidents in my family that I needed to take time off for and that's right! No money came in... well you get the idea, things happen, things that get in the way of your plans and perfect scheduling and when that happens - 'you no get paid signor'.

Taking the odd day off or not being able to work for a little while is not a problem until a couple of these things mount up. You could have taken a couple of days off through no fault of your own, then two days behind, your breaks fail or tyres need doing or your boiler goes on the blink, then your chasing your tail. Sometimes you catch up; sometimes you are just

getting there when something else goes wrong. Life has a way of doing that don't you think?

Now I know most of you know this. Every window cleaner I know has had the same problems all in different forms, one recently had his father pass away quite suddenly, another window cleaners wife became seriously ill, a few more have had divorces, others have had children unexpectedly (although the bump would give it away for me...) all of which affected work and income. These things don't mean you lose the farm, but they do stop you getting ahead and staying there. It adds to the pressure and stress and forces you to constantly choose between what you want and what you can afford. I knew deep down that window cleaning is quite precarious even before I became homeless. We all do. It's obvious, even if we don't like to admit it and even deny it to ourselves. But that doesn't stop us from trying to do something about it.

So what have we tried to do about it? Well we try and get help. Grow the business a little, it will cover the extra expenses allow us to put some more money in the bank for a rainy day and even help us to get a private pension, because none of us are getting younger.

Grand idea and I guess I'm not alone? I don't know how many people will read this, I hope every window cleaner does, but if we all read it and then I was able to ask for a show of hands, how many do you think would say that, at one time or another, they have tried to take someone on? A friend, a relative a neighbour, a friend of a friend, wives, sisters, brothers, postmen and fire fighters have all worked the rounds with window cleaners up and down

"BOBS ROUND SLOWLY DIES.."

the country at some point.

Now... how did that go for you? Most of the time this is how it went for me. My friends just thought it was cool to work with a mate and never took it that seriously. Again, hindsight is wonderful isn't it? Obviously they were there because of me, they were my mates and wanted to spend time working with me. It wasn't about the job for them and so when asked to work solo or to fill in, the excuses came, then it got awkward just asking them, and then the whole thing died a death.

Then came family members, but family, while they automatically have your trust, they also demand more leniency and so picking up the kids from school, going shopping early on a Friday, days off without booking the time, were all 'perks' of the job for them and you can't run a business like that. It's just too stressful.

Occasionally though, I had a good one! Lasted a long while. But eventually they would move on. The good ones work hard but need the full time work, so it's hard if you like the flexibility of the job to then tie yourself into the full time work just for them. The problem comes when you are called upon to go out and work all day then have to canvass in the evening for something you don't really want to do, take on more work to fill up more of your days, not for you, but to cover the new boys wages and give him more hours to keep them there. It's even harder if you are more money motivated, because as hard as your new guy works, he won't ever work as hard as you do. He has no emotional attachment to your work or your customers or the outcome of it all. He just wants a job.

And don't think for a minute that paying them more will solve anything. It doesn't. Everyone will say they want more money, but studies show money is the least effective method of staff retention. Most people will drop a high paying job they hate in a heartbeat. Learning what really keeps staff happy is a real eye opener.... (A little more on staff later)

This should be sounding really familiar to you if you've been window cleaning any length of time. If it doesn't, it will. If it does, know you are not alone in your frustrations. So what do we do then?

This is where there is a difference between us. There are times, I'm not going to lie that I could do what most window cleaners do; just slip back into the self employed mode and think it's not worth it, it's too difficult to find the staff, it's just easier and less hassle to do it myself. After all it's not that bad is it and I've survived this long. This is where most window cleaners live. Stop and talk to a few. Most will have tried to take someone on, most would have gone through a few before deciding it's too much like hard work and that it's not that bad, they'll do it themselves or with just one lad and he'll take over when I retire. Some don't even think about the future at all. Too much hassle, worry about retirement when you get there!... Really?

Well to be honest, secretly, I wanted to as well! But I just couldn't. Remember I was homeless. I felt firsthand how

precarious window cleaning as self-employed business owner was. It had bitten me. I had promised to never let it bite me again. I knew it would only be a matter of time before the next thing would happen, a fall, an accident more family issues, another cheaper window cleaner, a bad bout of snow or some other bad weather etc. Putting me further behind again, piling up the worry and stress in my life. This is not where one should stay.

Besides, I had seen what happens when window cleaners stop trying. You may know some in your area. They have their set rounds, take on very few new clients but rarely lose any either. They may have one other person working with them, but only ever one. They have a very good client list with lots of nice work close together and reasonable prices too. They have a reasonably nice home and a reasonably new vehicle as well as a work van or car.

But have you noticed the next stage, what do they turn into? Well let me tell you what you already know. They work until they can't work anymore. They hope they can trust their rounds to the lad they have had working with him, but soon after the owner stops, the worker starts slacking a little. The customers notice the owner has stopped and are suddenly more critical of his helpers work. The complaints increase. 'It's not the same since old bob left...'

Bob has a word, but his helper is already doing more than he ever has and thinks it's kind of unfair already. He worked fine on the wages he was on before, he was happy to work for that wage and just do the amount he was doing. That's when he worked best, that the way he liked it. Now Bobs left, he has more work, more responsibility and is rewarded with money over and above his requirements. He was never motivated by money.

Bobs round slowly dies, he has lost faith in his helper, both Bob and his helper know it's just a matter of time before the relationship ends, so Bob needs to decide, is he going back out or is he going to sell the work? His bank balance decides that. If Bob has been very good, paid all his tax and found the extra cash for a nice private pension he may have enough to scrape by. If not, back out he goes...

How do I know this is how it pans out? Window cleaners surround us in this phase of their businesses. Everywhere you look there are old window cleaners that should be retired but you see them out in all weathers cleaning away, with crooked hands full of arthritis. Next time you see a window cleaner above age 50 stop and ask him if he thinks you should take someone on. He'll tell in no uncertain terms to leave well alone, and if you're lucky, he'll go on to tell you a couple of horror stories about how he doesn't speak to his family anymore after his cousin stole half his work...

The serious side though is that I didn't know one, not one, single window cleaner that retired on anything close to what I view as wealthy. They all stopped or are still struggling on poor. Let me help you with my definition of poor. My definition of poor is if you stopped working today, right now, would your current standard of living continue unchanged?

If you can answer yes, congratulations, you're not poor. If

"I WAS FORCED, KICKING AND SCREAMING TO FIND THE ANSWERS"



however, your standard of living would drop if you didn't work from today on, well then your poor. I too was poor. I was fighting to get enough money to pay off some debt just so I could get a deposit to rent somewhere. Then I had to get enough money to save a deposit, and then I had to buy a house again and run the blighter. Could I stop working? Not a chance, could I ever see a way of stop continuing as I was? No chance, I was going to remain poor and so will you.

I was forced, kicking and screaming to find the answers that would make my window cleaning work like a proper business. Like I said, I made a promise to myself and my wife this would never happen again. I didn't have the luxury of just sitting back to see what happened or hoping something would turn up. This was my goal; try to find a career, a 'proper job'. So I became a fire fighter while my wife carried on the window cleaning.

Let me tell you before you start the whole process that once you have been self employed, especially window cleaning, you are unemployable. You see ways that things can be done better, faster, easier and you can't do it that way. It becomes very frustrating. Oh and the money is pitiful, I was

earning in a week, what I would have taken me a day to earn window cleaning.

And so, I had to make window cleaning as a business work so this became plan B:

- Find a way to grow my business so that I could employ staff to run it, meaning whether I worked or not, I would earn enough money to choose the standard of living I wanted not the one I had to settle for. More important to me, was to make sure that never mind what I had to do, the money would still come in regularly with me or without me.

Sounds simple yes? Not to become a billionaire playboy, not to own yachts and islands, just to be able to pay all my bills, have enough left over to choose where I wanted to live and not worry about money again.

Well let me tell you this, it has taken 8 years to find the formula. Why so long? Because I didn't know anything about business and had to learn everything from scratch. There was no help from anyone because no one I knew had done it before. There was plenty of free advice from other window cleaners, but can you take advice from someone who hasn't done it themselves? Would you take dietary advice from John Candy? (Maybe directions to the best cake shop...) No. So, if you're not looking at someone's business and don't want to be where they are, please for the love of god, don't listen to their advice unless you want to end up just like them!

So did I do it? Well my window cleaning businesses at the time we launched concept2o in 2005 were pulling in between 32-38k per month. The best bit was that I didn't clean a single window, canvass a single customer, or deal with a single complaint. You'll also be glad to know we now live in a four bed detached home, no more sofas for us!

Was it easy? No. Was it straightforward? No. Were there hard confusing, irritating times? Yep, yep and yep. But now that it's done I can replicate the formula, at anytime, anywhere and that is much easier.

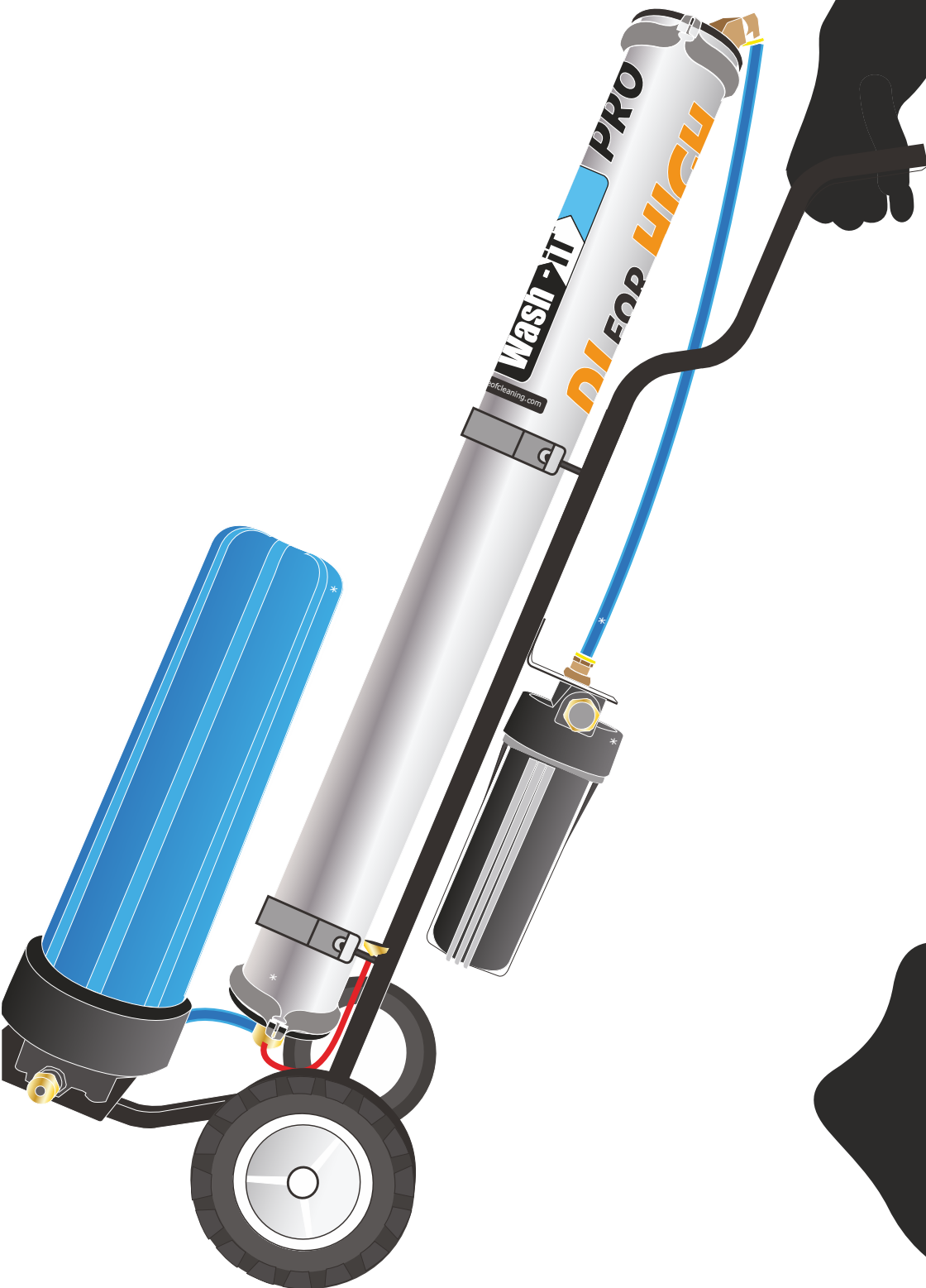
I answered all the questions I needed to about window cleaning. Yes you can stay in the warm and dry while others go out to earn you your money. You can organize it so well that you don't collect money; you can keep your customers, not just happy but really loyal too. And for the group 1 window cleaners, yes the profits are also very good.

NEXT ISSUE: Read Part 3, where Carl tells the secret of success in window cleaning.

"The real lesson in all of this came as a bit of a surprise for me. In fact I swear there is a conspiracy to keep this secret from the masses"

-Carl

Whatever -iT is,



Does commission really pay?

by Peter Artusa

16



Employees of window cleaning companies are paid by a varied selection of payment structures. Some pay hourly, some pay day rates and some are paid by gaining points allocated to a job.

Window cleaning companies will use pay structures like the examples above or a combination of one or two.

But what is the most efficient pay structure? What pay structure gets the results you are looking for?

If the company crew does not go out to work, the money does not come in and if they work slow or take their time the money per day that the company earns is less. Your overheads will always take the lion share before profit so how can you stop that profit being eaten away?

Having a window cleaner up to speed is real crucial for the bottom line and can make the difference between having to drop staff or not.

Accountability is also important, staff that do not care will work slower, produce poor work that will lead to increased call back numbers and ultimately affect the companies bottom line and customer service.

Isn't it enough that the guys are being paid for a job? I hear you say.

Well it depends, because at this moment in time your employee might not care that you loose that customer because it does not affect his pay. He gets paid anyway.

To transfer that accountability to the tech requires a tight hungry payment structure. A structure designed to increase profit for the company and increase pay for the tech.

A win-win structure is not for those guys that want to take their time. In window cleaning, time is money.

We speak to Peter Artusa who has experience in this field. Peter is man with a plan; with business focused so tuned and sharp he should have been a police marks man!

WCM: Peter your window cleaning company works on a commission structure. Why?

Peter: Our commission based structure works very well for reducing call backs and also for reducing over time rates that is usually associated with employees getting paid hourly.

WCM: How does the payroll tree work? Who gets paid what?

Peter: Each truck has a 2 person crew that consists of a supervisor and a window tech. The supervisor gets paid 30% of the job. IE: If a job was \$400.00 he will get \$120.00, out of that he pays his tech.

WCM: Explain how you reduced call back numbers.

Peter: Three years ago when employees were getting paid hourly, the call back rate was approx. at 30%. Ever since instilling the commission based pay we dropped our call back rate substantially. For 2013 the call back rate was approx. 4%. We made the supervisor accountable. If the office receives a "Valid" complaint or call back then that crew loses their commission and only gets paid New Jersey minimum wage. So the supervisor really makes sure that the job is correct before he leaves.

“ ACCOUNTABILITY IS CRUCIAL ”

WCM: Let us talk about call backs. What are the top 5 call back reasons?

Peter: Top 5 call back reasons:

1. Missed window
2. Streaky window
3. Dirty sills
4. Forgot to put a screen back in
- and 5. WFP issues/spots bad rinse

WCM: How do you handle these top 5 if you get them?

Peter: Simple, send the operations manager to correct and the crew loses their commission.

WCM: You have a strong company policy of customer satisfaction. Tell me your vision for your company on this.

Peter: Vision is simple: Make the customers and senior staff know why we stand out as the leader in window cleaning by making them understand the uniqueness and value that we deliver and letting EVERYONE know that WE are the TRUE Professionals in our field! Educate the supervisors about the expectations that I expect, how to achieve etc so that their sole responsibility is to the customer.

WCM: You have an assistant operations manager that has the Job of quality control and he is there to enhance the customer's experience. Tell me about this post. Why?

Peter: The assistant operations manager's sole responsibility is to spot check the crews through out the day, they never know when he will show up. When visiting the homes/business etc he is to introduce himself to the customer. Make them feel at ease and that we are checking the work performance of our employees. He also uses that time to up sell our different services. IE: "Hello Mrs Jones, I am from ACWC. I noticed that your roof has a lot of algae; moss etc. would you like to learn more about what the causes of this will do to your roof and how we can take care of this?" Close the sale; move on to the next customer and crew.



WCM: Why is it important?

Peter: It makes the crew accountable. They never know when he will show up. This hopefully produces better quality control.

WCM: Does the upselling here have a target?

Peter: He does upsell with a target. While visiting the home or business he will point out to them if they need gutter whitening/roof cleaning/chandelier cleaning etc. If they book on the spot he will offer them a pre determined discount. He also has sales goals that he is required to make every week.

WCM: How important is accountability to you?

Peter: Accountability is crucial. EVERYONE is accountable for his or her own position. The sales manager is accountable for her team, Operations/asst accountable for the crews, finance to me. And ME to everyone, it starts with ME! If I do not set the president/goals etc. then how can I expect our operation to run smoothly. They have to know, taste and desire my vision!

WCM: Do you think your pay structure makes your staff hungry?

Peter: No, I think it makes them more accountable for their actions in the field.

WCM: You have systems for everything your tech's do. Can you explain what you have put in place?

Peter: Lee, way too many systems to even think about sharing, lol. But I can give you a taste, for example... How to clean a window, this starts from exiting the truck... How to clean the truck and the end of the day... How to use a phone.... How to check voice mail... The list goes on and on and on!

WCM: I agree with you Peter that 2 crew in one vehicle

“..SO THEY GO OUT AND KICK SOME BUTT!”



is the optimum set up? But you don't stick to that do you if a big job comes in?

Peter: No, if we have a very large house or commercial property we might send 2 or 3 crews right down to the entire company.

WCM: It then becomes worth it to throw everything at a job, right?

Peter: Yes if the job is big enough, then yes!

WCM: What do you want your trucks to earn? Does setting targets work?

Peter: Targets are a great tool for ensuring revenue. Each truck we send out has a sales goal. We pre determine this during our winter planning sessions. This is developed when we do our budget for the New Year. And we do not deviate, even if the work is there. Sometimes due to weather/emergencies etc. we might, but normally we stick to the plan. Reason is, if the phones are ringing and we over book, then the following week/month etc. might dry

up. My sales manager is so very well versed on how to handle large call volume... (System for that) She knows how to put the customer into another spot so we stick to the projected revenue goal.

WCM: In peak time, how do you manage the newbies? New guys are really going to bring down your earning rates?

Peter: We have a very extensive 2-week training program that our new techs go through. This goes over every aspect of window cleaning, procedures and manual that we have from ladder placement, how to treat the customer, how to treat our equipment etc. including a 10 hour OSHA safety course. The supervisors are also well versed and skilled to assist and train the "Newbies"

At the beginning of season it is a little slow so this gives them time to train and learn. It might affect the production a little but once they are into it for a month or so they go out and kick some Butt!

End.

Window Cleaning magazine

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We would like to invite all our readers to get more involved with the topics and issues featured in the Window Cleaning Magazine.

Have your say on whether you think traditional or water fed pole window cleaning is the best method to use, and why.

Tell us about the equipment you use, what you use it for and why you chose it.

Discuss relevant issues such as expanding your business, where to get good deals, trade events, your opinions on the state of the industry and any other subject that you would like to discuss with like minded individuals in our window cleaning community.



Window Cleaning magazine

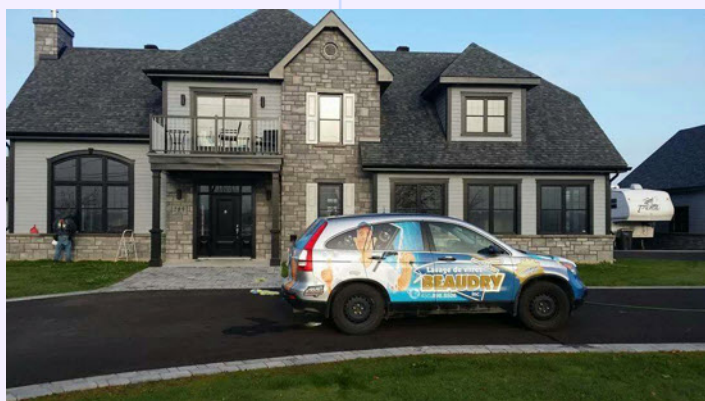
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- and much, much more...



This issue we feature Danick Beaudry from Canada ...



My name is Danick Beaudry, I live in Quebec. Quebec is a province in east-central Canada. It is the only Canadian province that has a predominantly French-speaking population, and the only one to have French as its sole provincial official language.

I started window cleaning 15 years ago, I started out by purchasing a small run and kicked around in a small Toyota. I worked hard on my own for some time and learned on the job as I went along. Quoting jobs was a learning curve and with each quote I became more experienced at getting it right.

Do you remember your first quotes when you got it really wrong? You learn fast!

Eventually, I hired help to grow the business and we found our place in our territory. We learned what customers really wanted in a service and gave it to them. I am proud to have built my business up to three trucks and 5 staff.

I still consider myself a small company but we have a plan to add one crew per year over the next 3 years. We have bought wfp and have recently bought a gutter

"I HAVE BEEN INSPIRED TO MAKE CHANGES IN MY BUSINESS"

vacuum so we are excited to use these this 2014 season.

Here in Quebec we have experienced the worst winter for 20 years. I am hoping the snow disappears quickly and let the 2014 season begin.

I would like just to add one more thing. Thank you to the Brits and Lee Burbidge for I have learned so much on window cleaning. I have been inspired to make changes in my business.

Long live the Window Cleaning Magazine and Lee Burbidge!!



More van pictures from the UK...



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



The Serial DIY enthusiast

By Wagga.

“ ... JOB DONE! ... ”

When I first started window cleaning in 1986, it was a very basic state of affairs. I was buying my round from a guy that was retiring and there really wasn't much to it. He had a set of wooden ladders, a bucket, some scrim and an applicator and squeegee and not much more. Even the 'T' bar was homemade from a broomstick. There was no 'bucket on a belt' to hold your gear, instead we would rest it on the sills while we detailed around the edges.

Sometimes, when I look back, I wonder if it was better with such simplicity. Not much broke because well, there wasn't much to break (except yourself). There was very little to do in the way of preparation or DIY. You just got on with the job.

In those early days, I think the most DIY I did was to change the rubber a round and I think that went a round several times! A major advancement was a bungee in the boot of the car to stop the bucket falling over and I suppose that this is how it all started.

My Father was always fixing or bodging things and I think this is where I get my DIY skills from. At first I was not so good at DIY but it's one of those things that if you keep at it, you will improve. You learn as you go along.

Moving on to the present day, I can only wonder at how things have moved on. The equipment that a modern day window cleaner can acquire can be very impressive, especially in comparison to those early days. With the advent of Water Fed Pole systems, the increase in equipment and complication is obvious. Not that I am fazed by the amount of equipment, it's just that it requires more time and more knowledge to operate efficiently. If you're new to all this though, don't let it put you off, it's really not that bad.

I think that the biggest jump in progress early on was when I acquired a "Bucket on a Belt". I remember feeling really pleased with myself showing off to other window cleaners without this high tech piece of equipment. But when I saw another window cleaner with a Water Fed Pole system, I suddenly felt like I was out of the loop.

My first foray into Water Fed Pole came about 8 years ago with a really good trolley system from Freedom. I had picked up an office block and I decided to take the plunge and go all out with WFP. I bought a 30' fibreglass pole to go with it and my very first big DIY project began



with fitting a hose reel, which of course leaked, not much but just a bit.

That first day I turned up at the office, I had six 25ltr barrels in the car and my 14 year old son for moral support and although I had never cleaned anything apart from my own house with it, everything went remarkably well. The windows of the office looked really clean already but I assumed that this was because I had been taken on instead of the other bloke.

Then I get a phone call to tell me that a mistake had been made and that there was already a contract on the building and they could not get out of it. I had spent £1200 on a system for nothing and that's how I felt. I tried it out on domestic houses but the pole was much too heavy and everyone was wondering just what the hell I was doing, including me.

So I carried on with my ladders and hoped that I might just get some more commercial work but I could see the potential of WFP systems. I think it was at this point that my DIY career took off big time because I realised that I could modify and swap and change things around. The Freedom Trolley is a good system but there is scope to adapt it. The pole was the most obvious change I could have made and it was not long before I had the good old Harris Pole (a decorators pole) set up for WFP. This was a revelation. It was light and cheap and easy for domestic work.

Then I had the bright idea of buying a backpack. This I still own (although like Trigger of Fools and Horses fame, I have changed the battery and pump several times over) this also proved to be a revelation but not on my back! The wife's shopping trolley was commandeered. This is where it all got serious and I began to spend large amounts of time in my shed.

"DIY IS NOT EVERYONE'S CUP OF TEA"

I began to make videos of what I was doing and discovered that others were shed dwellers like me. This is where I began to really take an interest in what I was doing and began to develop a sort of passion for my work. I would develop a modification and like a child could not wait until I could try it out at work the next day.

After the pump failed in my backpack I nervously removed it and scoured the Internet for a replacement. Once this was up and running, I thought that it was quite basic and so I got the idea of building my own WFP trolley system the results of which can be seen on YouTube. I still use this trolley to this day.

Now my son is interested in building up a window cleaning business, we have acquired a van and built a the whole van mounted system from scratch. It's been largely reliable and we have no regrets. The beauty of building your own stuff is that when something goes wrong, you usually know exactly what it is and can fix it within seconds. Of course, at this level of complexity, even with the best intentions in the world, it may be best to seek professional advice before embarking on such a project.

There are so many ideas out there, especially now that social media has taken off such as Facebook. Now that

communication has improved to the extent that it has, there will be no stopping the multitude of great ideas coming from all those dedicated window cleaners out there and progress has been rapid.

DIY is not everyone's cup of tea, but it has given me a lot of satisfaction and saved me a lot of serious cash but if you can't do DIY, there is so much stuff out there and so much help, you can't go wrong. All you need to do is ask.



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What's hot and what's not?

WCM speaks to Kevin Dubrosky

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2012 Revised **Expanded** Expert Edition

WCM: What's hot and what's not in marketing right now?

KD: I see an increasing obsession with blocky colour palette sketchy designs. The hand-drawn video thing was big for a while, but those are now invisible, due to mass adoption and the copycat effect. I'm seeing lots of companies with slick word press websites that use stock glossy imagery. Three years ago it would have been game changing, but now it just makes you look the same as everyone else. If I was to predict the next marketing trend for small service businesses, it will be the use of high-quality *custom* imagery and video, showcasing the actual crews delivering products and services to the actual clients of the company in question, but in HD, with more intelligent use of depth of field, creative composition, and similar proven tricks, with high-grade accompanying audio tracks.

WCM: What would you rate the top marketing techniques?

KD: Deliver relevant value. Be different. Manufacture scar-

WCM: What ROI averages on them?

KD: ROI depends on so many factors that it's impossible to separate and quantify without referencing a specific case study. But if you fail to deliver value in a way that resonates with my specific preferences and needs, I'll keep looking for a brand that does. If you fail to convince me that you're different from the other competitors in your space, then I'm only giving you my money if you're the cheapest. And in the absence of urgency, I'll procrastinate and put off giving you my business as long as possible. Without each of these three steps, your business is boring, replaceable, and struggling. And it's your own fault.

WCM: Have you seen Street Bidder?

KD: No, but I've heard of it, and watched a couple of their videos.

WCM: Your books are awesome but can be a little outlandish to some people with quirky rhetoric. Is that the

"DON'T COPY THE COMPETITION"

way to get across marketing material to customers?

KD: The ugly and uncomfortable truth is that you never really know what's going to work until you let it loose into the market, and see what happens. Flint McLaughlin from MECLABS put it perfectly when he said 'he doesn't believe in expert marketers, only experienced marketers, and expert testers.' Sometimes outlandish works, sometimes boring works, sometimes cheesy works. You have to test and find out.

WCM: Why does it work?

KD: Sometimes we just don't know, because we don't have access to the answers. While we might discover that the photo of woman A works better than the photo of woman B, knowing *why* it works better is a whole other ballgame. In many cases the people giving us their hard-earned money can't even put their own finger on why exactly they picked us. We're all driven by forces not easily accessed by our conscious mind. Why do humans do what they do? Thankfully, the answer doesn't matter, as long as they keep doing it (buying our stuff). All we need to know is *what* works, not *why* it works.

WCM: How important is branding? And why?

KD: Branding is the box that holds all of the market's feelings and beliefs about your company. It's the short-hand for how your company either adds to our delight or removes our pain. If I can't put my finger on what makes

you valuable and special to me, then your brand is invisible, and prone to substitution without remorse. I'm looking for products, services and people that make me feel important and special. If your brand doesn't do that, then I don't care about you and I'll kick you to the curb the moment a comparable option at a lower price becomes available.

WCM: Why do flyer campaigns deliver the smallest ROI? Can this be improved?

KD: I don't believe this is true. Sometimes flyer campaigns can generate amazing ROI, since the distribution and production costs are so low. The flipside however, is that the low costs can make the results seem more grandiose than they truly are. If you spend £100 on a flyer campaign that generates £1000 in new work, you've generated a 1000% ROI (10 to 1), but in reality, the gross payoff wasn't substantial. Scaling up winners doesn't always deliver corresponding performance, either, so testing with incrementally large quantities is the best approach.

WCM: What are the top five things you should not do in marketing?

KD: Don't take advantage of people.
Don't copy the competition.
Don't get lazy in tracking individual campaign performance.
Don't assume you know why your clients give you money.
Don't assume a marketing tool will or won't work if it hasn't been tested.

WCM: Do you believe in mission statements?

KD: Yes, as long as they're customer-centric, and provide a clearly differentiated value proposition. Most mission statements fail this simple litmus test. "Service beyond expectations" is pure rubbish. So is "excellence in customer care," "superior results every time," or similar nebulous nonsense.

WCM: A brand needs a voice. How should core messaging be tackled?

KD: From the outside in. You'll never be able to resonate



with your market unless you first get into their heads and hearts. While it's true that all relevance is obsession, not all obsession is relevance. We don't care what you love. We want what we love. There's usually a big difference.

WCM: How easy is it to turn marketing ideas like the type in your books into reality?

KD: Download a free trial copy of Photoshop, design a flyer on your home computer, create two variations, print off 500, and pass them out. See what happens. Iterate from there. Test, track, tweak, and repeat.

WCM: Do people market enough?

KD: The answer depends on the people we're talking about. Among small business owners who do much of the work themselves, there's an overwhelming belief that marketing is only useful if they're looking to expand their infrastructure and hire more people. This isn't true. If you're a one-man shop, marketing can turn you into the most in-demand window cleaner in your town, and unleash levels of revenue you never thought possible. You want people to line up and beg you for the opportunity to do business with you, especially if your availability is severely limited. When you only have 15 appointment openings a week to deliver your service, imagine what happens to your pricing and income when 1000 people are fighting over those 15 spots. Even if you never hire another person, this can do wonders for your business and your personal freedom. In time, your brand's desirability and exclusivity become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

WCM: How much is enough?

KD: I'm not big on introducing unnecessary complexity where it isn't needed. But I am big on playing the game as intelligently as possible, and business is a game, make no mistake. I recently met a woman in St. Thomas who was selling homemade trinkets and necklaces on the beach. They were typical and ordinary, so the best she could do was sell them for \$15 each, allowing her to enjoy a simple life. I'd encourage someone like that to make her stuff a little more interesting and unique so she could charge twice as much and therefore work half as much. She won't get money-rich, but she will get time-rich, which is worth far more. Enough is enough when you're extracting the maximum value from the market (with a clear conscience), working as little as possible, and enjoying a life that's focused on the people and things that truly matter to you.

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Being Steve Blyth: A look at JRC and its history.

There isn't that many window cleaning supply houses that can say that they have been around for well over 100 years, but J Racenstein (JRC) is certainly one of them with a large share of the US market.

JRC opened its doors back in 1909 in Manhattan NY.

It was a time of progress in 1909, workers strikes such as the New York Shirtwaist Strike helped to improve working conditions, pay and hours and the decision to build a long distance telephone line from Boston to Omaha to the tune of \$35 Million Dollars was made.

Telephones were still considered a luxury back in 1909! The Queensboro Bridge was also opened linking Manhattan to Queens and a little known fact that the car industry was in a pitch battle for market share between gasoline and electric cars!!!

Against this backdrop, Joseph Racenstein initially started the business selling cleaning products directly to office buildings.

Joseph started like any other new business owner taking orders during the day, then returning home to fulfil the orders and then delivering the goods to the business owner the very next day. Joseph it would appear was most comfortable in the distribution side of the business.

Joseph ran the business with his two sons, Irwin and George Racenstein but in 1930 George bought Irwin out and then went on to run JRC for the next 40 years. George focused mainly in the New York area at that time.

In 1950, George's son Marty joined JRC as a sales rep for the company. Marty would love the window-cleaning customers more so as he went out on the road selling JRC wares. It would turn out to be this love that would mould the JRC Company, as we know it today as one of the biggest in the US for window cleaning supplies and tools.

George spent so much of his time on developing customer relations that a new operations guy was needed. In 1978, Bob Ertel was approached by George to work with him to improve the operations side of the business.

Then in 1980, Bob bought out George and became partners with Marty. The dynamic duo was set. George would be the operations front man and Marty would be the sales front man.

With Bob's previous retail experience he felt that JRC could benefit from a company catalogue and this concept kept the business flourishing through the 80's and 90's.

Finally, Bob retired in 2005 selling the business to long time friend Cameron Riddell and Steve Blyth.

Since then JRC has grown with a sales office and warehouse opened in California back in 2005.

In 2006, Jim Willingham joined the team of JRC whom formerly ran a window cleaning company back in 1988 called New Day Window Cleaning in Lubbock, Texas. Jim organised the only 'South West Cleaners Seminar' back in '88 and it was here that the International Window Cleaning Association was born (IWCA)

"STEVE IS A BUSINESSMAN, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT"

What an impressive history. I got to meet Steve Blyth for the first time at the IWCA Convention in Florida 2013.

He offered to pick me up from the airport and take me to the hotel, unfortunately, there was a delay issue with my connecting flight from Newark and so I missed him.

Since then I have had dinner with Steve when he was last in the UK. We drank British beer and discussed selling techniques. I got a good insight and understanding of the man.

What I love about this guy is his extensive knowledge on 'selling' and people.

Steve is a businessman, no doubt about that and he absorbs his surroundings and applies what he learns to his business progression.

So what is it like being Steve Blyth? How did he come to be the person he is today at JRC?

WCM: Hi Steve, thanks for chatting to WCM.

SB: Thanks Lee for spending some time with me!

WCM: Wow, JRC has some history to it. What were you thinking when you took the opportunity to get involved in this company?

SB: We knew quite a bit about the company having known the prior owners for a number of years as J.Racenstein distributed our bird products from our other business, Bird Barrier. So I was excited to be in a position to be able to provide a retirement to the prior owners and work more closely with the window cleaning industry.

WCM: How did the deal go down?

SB: We got the bank involved and bought the business with their help.

WCM: You had no experience of the industry at all when you started. How come you are so knowledgeable?

SB: I enjoy getting out in the field with our customers and the manufacturers, as I was able to learn more, and was willing to do the research to understand the issues, our customers started asking me to look at their most challenging work. Often this required more research and testing. Working with on these has provided a rewarding and wide breadth of learning and experience.

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"WE ACCOMPLISHED A LOT IN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME"

WCM: What is the most important thing to remember when selling?

SB: That there is no single right answer and each customer wants what is right for him or her.

WCM: What changes did you make to the company when you took over?

SB: We accomplished a lot in a short period of time, we put in place new computer systems, moved from Manhattan (13th floor overlooking Penn Station/Madison Square Garden) to a proper warehouse in NJ, opened a warehouse in California, went to full color with the catalog, expanded the product offering and added window cleaners to the sales staff.

WCM: Does the JRC history help?

SB: I think so, everywhere I visit someone is sharing great stories of how their Dad, Uncle or themselves have been ordering supplies since way back when. (Name the decade)

This really means a lot to me and I know that we have a lot to live up to meet the customer expectations derived from all those happy years.

WCM: What is your biggest market?

SB: The next person to call in or come by the store with an order... Did you mean geography maybe? I think we are strongest around where the company was founded.

WCM: Do you think when supply houses create an exclusive deal to sell a certain product, does this give value to money back to the customer?

SB: There are no exclusives on the volume or everyday products.

Exclusives are done for a number of reasons. We try and establish them on new products that we feel we can help bring to market, we will spend time, energy and money developing the product, in exchange we enjoy 2 or 3 years of product exclusivity. The way I look at it is this... It is hard for a new product from a new manufacturer to get off the ground and start selling, no matter how hopeful the new guy is or exciting the product ... somebody needs to pioneer the product and if everybody has it, then effort of all of the distributors will often not add up to much as those initial sales are split up amongst them, gaining little interest at any of the distrib

utors. Most exclusives will run a course where if the product has legs, is successful, then the exclusive will not be renewed to allow the manufacturer to continue to grow sales. When they work exclusives should help a product gain acceptance in the marketplace faster.

WCM: What sells big now?

SB: Rubber...

WCM: What sold big in the 1930's?

SB: Rubber, but a very different style then. Thanks to Ettore and the bulb rubber design using a squeegee is much easier now.

Order No. _____ Sept. 5 1940

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Due to present war conditions, all prices are subject to change without notice.

WCM: Who is on your team now? JRC has had some rock stars of the industry in the past.

SB: We have lots of great people and they all love to work with the customers. Jim Willingham sadly passed in 2008; he was the Grandfather of the IWCA.

WCM: What can you tell us about Jim?

SB: I miss Jim; he was a great person and loved window cleaning and our business too. It was great hanging out with him because everyone was his friend, maybe not when he first walked in the room, but certainly when he left. I remember the good times and the "Jimisms" here are some of my favorites that Jim would say:

"I don't like jumping to conclusions because I have nowhere to land"

"I finally got all my ducks in a row, but they are all facing in different directions"

"I have the patience of a stepped on rattlesnake"

And the best one that I carry around on the back of an old business card:

"Everyone doesn't really care what you know, they really want to know that your care."

WCM: What changes have you seen in the industry over the years?

SB: Many window cleaners are cleaning many other things, roofs, siding, driveways or fences, earning more revenue from the same customer and being able to work a smaller geography.

WCM: Describe an average day at the office?

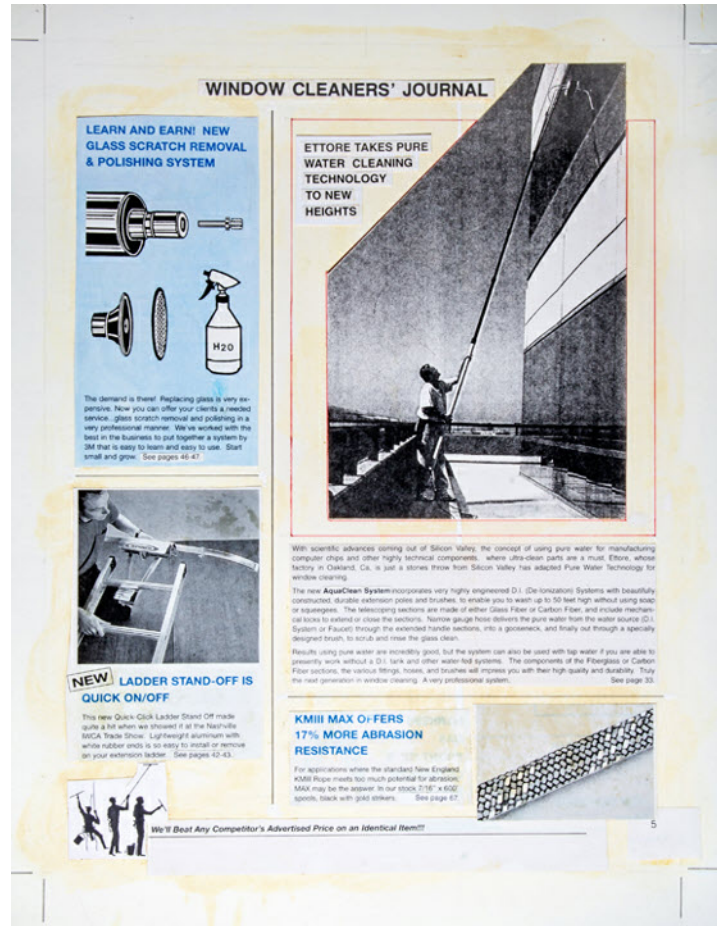
SB: I don't know that there is such a thing. Everyday brings a cornucopia of new and interesting things.

WCM: How many shows do you attend?

SB: J.Racenstein exhibits at lots of shows, I probably only get to half of them, I also attend shows that offer an opportunity to learn something, I am probably at 2 or 3 a shows month. I am looking forward to getting to the WCP Roadshow and Festival in May this year. My daughter lives near Cardiff and works at the Uni. It looks like a lot of fun.

WCM: What has helped JRC become a brand to trust?

SB: We focus on All the Best Brands, all the Time, and work hard to be there for the customer, anything from simple questions, to issues with products or repairs needed, we want the window cleaner satisfied with the products and services we represent. We try and sweat the little stuff to make a customer life easier.



WCM: Did you ever meet any of the earlier Racenstein family members?

SB: I knew Marty Racenstein and have met his son David for dinner a few times.

WCM: What has been your biggest challenge to date?

SB: I have had a hard time with the passing of the friends you make in this business.

WCM: What was your biggest coup to date?

SB: I think we play small ball, more singles and doubles vs swinging for the fences. So hard to pick a particular thing...

WCM: You have a daughter living in the UK, Wales. How do you connect with the UK?

SB: My wife and I love Wales, England, Scotland, even before Wendy went off to Cardiff for her junior year at University 6 years ago. We had spent many vacation weeks in the UK. Wendy has spent 5 of the last 6 years in the UK and in February this year she became a UK citizen, so I expect many more trips across the pond.

"I ENJOY WHAT I AM DOING.."

WCM: What other countries does JRC sell too?

SB: We sell all over the world. Not so much into the UK or Europe as window cleaning is well developed there but Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, the Middle East, South America, Norway, Sweden and Russia. We don't sell very much to these places compared to our USA trade.

WCM: What do you think about training?

SB: We are a big advocate of training and support the organizations that help train the window cleaners. Good training is the best way to reduce needless injuries and deaths.

WCM: What do you think about Health & Safety?

SB: Let's be healthy and safe. If this is in reference to the difference in working methods in the UK and the US, then there is something to talk about. It has been interesting to watch how the regulations in the UK imposed by the HSE have changed the way the work is done and the tools that have been developed to meet the new needs in the marketplace. Poles, Lifts, Water have all been influenced.

WCM: Would you ever try high-rise window cleaning yourself?

SB: I have been up in a stage many times, though mostly

for bird work. I have cleaned a few windows on a stage and I have not been higher than 3 floors in a chair. I enjoy being outside though every time I work up high I tend to daydream looking out at the view...

WCM: What is it really like being Steve Blyth? When do you love your work most? Does your family get bored of you talking JRC shop over the dinner table?

SB: I enjoy what I am doing, the work is rewarding, (though I do try and sneak out for Golf during the week instead whenever I get the invitation) I like a being with a group of customers the best, get an open discussion going. As far as the dinner table goes, we just became the empty nesters; our son just started college this year up in San Jose. My wife (works in the business in A/R) and I try not to talk about work at dinner.

WCM: How many hours do you work?

SB: Depends on the week some weeks 80 hours, others 30.

WCM: Do you ever find the time to switch off?

SB: So far I have been able to do that for up to 4 days at a stretch, usually when I am in Europe or the UK. We have a Daughter that lives in Madrid as well.

End.



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Restoring Glass with Superabrasives

By Henry Grover Jr

“Integrating the polishing technology of the optics industry with window glass restoration”

To effectively remove stains or scratches from window glass we must create a new “precision surface”. The goal is to remove as little glass as possible, in the least amount of time, and end up with the most optically precise surface. This is done with a host of different super abrasive particles, which can be either bonded or loose.

Bonded super abrasives are held together within or on the surface of a solid matrix. Which could be metal, resin, or plastic. An example would be diamond-lapping film used in the optics industry. Such films are coated with diamond particles, and are usually applied with a proprietary liquid, water, or simple light oil. Loose super abrasives can be applied dry or mixed with water or a light mineral oil. Or we might create a compound where loose particles are suspended in a thick carrier fluid. The thicker the carrier fluid the longer the particles will remain in suspension.

For the product to be commercially viable they must remain in suspension for at least six months. One simple way to test a compound for shelf life involves the use of a centrifuge. I developed one with a variable speed up to 25,000 rpms, and an eight-inch diameter. One example of a commercial compound is polycrystalline diamond. It comes in different coloured oral syringes. Each colour indicates a different particle size.

The micro-abrasive machining process of the optics industry is accomplished by literally driving the particles into the glass surface so that they cut away small bits of glass. In so doing they become dull and create a smoother surface. Some are friable and will break up into smaller particles revealing new sharp edges. These will also generate a smoother surface. In general smaller particles result in a smoother surface. It really is all about the particle. Any particles chosen to resurface glass must be harder than glass.

They might however have a different hardness (one from another), sizes, shapes, chemistries, purities, and even surface functionalities. All of these different characteristics can be exploited to attain different results. Not to mention the different ways they are employed whether bonded or loose.

Further, different abrasives might be blended together. Certain compositional abrasives, which are typically softer than glass, might even be added to obtain different results. The possibilities are virtually endless!

Lets begin with cerium oxide. According to The Vision Glass Detailer this particle/powder, “reacts with glass to create a complex new surface of cerium, oxygen, and silicon. This is softer than a soda lime glass matrix, and is therefore more easily removed by the abrasive action of the polishing particles”. As of recent this super abrasive has become rather expensive.

Most all of the commercial hard water stain removal products sold to the window cleaning industry are not based on cerium oxide. Rather they use crude silicas. A pure optical grade cerium is very effective at removing most stains and light scratches. It is however critically necessary to use the correct application method.

“ THIS ‘ABRASION BURN’ IS COMPLETELY INVISIBLE”

Some people will use a hard felt pad on a rotary drill motor. They will dip the edge of a wet pad in a pail of dry powder. Then they will rip into the glass 'edge on'! This creates very intense waves of zillions of microscopic scratches. This 'abrasion burn' is completely invisible except in direct sunlight at just the right viewing angle. The solution lies in creating the correct 'pad interface'. It is true that we want to attain the highest stock removal rate possible. Yet we can't overlook the fact it is quite easy to do serious damage to the 'optical surface'. Enough damage at least to win a lawsuit.

While there are many pad interfaces to choose from my favourite to date is a hard felt ring on a special aluminum-polishing wheel. I developed this system, which is based on what I call the Gyro Wheel. It uses a universal joint and a failsafe collar. The hard felt pad remains totally flat on the glass at all times preventing what I have described here as abrasion burn. This process is fully explained in the Vision Glass Detailer entitled, " Polishing Glass with the Gyro Wheel and Pure Compounds".

Just like the Window Cleaning Magazine the VGD is a free online digital publication.

There are many other pure super abrasive polishing powders available to both the optics industry and ours. Such as cubic boron nitride (BN), silicon carbide, iron oxide, chromium oxide, aluminum oxide, optical grade silicas, polycrystalline diamond, etc.

Not to be left out would be the varied compositions, which are naturally occurring organic products such as walnut shell, macadamia, corncob, and more. Also with plastic powders of different micron ranges, all of these can be used as bonded or loose.

I personally find fascinating some of the more recent technologies, which have blended, both bonded and loose. Such as that which has created a solid matrix of cerium oxide that is water-soluble. The product 'is' the pad interface. First the glass is wet with water. Then the pad is applied to the glass using a random oscillating machine. I prefer a rotary. Nonetheless the glass is polished as the cerium is released from the water-soluble pad/matrix.

Cleanup becomes very easy as very little cerium is used. All that is required is to soap the window and squeegee it clean. I would like to develop a product similar to this using a variety of different particles suspended in a paintable coating that could be applied to any type of pad of any shape or size. The coating would be water-soluble. This would make glass restoration very 'green'! Also very efficient.

I have been curious about those technologies too that have blended particles such as diamond with others like cerium oxide. These two seem to go together well. Diamond removes stock quicker, and cerium does a better job at preventing an abrasion haze. This has been done. So I have been thinking about using a diamond lapping film along with a loose wet cerium. Or blending the two into a water-soluble coating product for the pad interface.

Either way it is absolutely necessary to look at the chemistry and physics of whatever particle we choose to use. Hardness is therefore a very necessary property to consider. However there are others. I will again quote from the VGD, "There is also morphology (shape) which is typically controlled by the crystal structure. Which in turn is controlled by the chemistry. The property of agglomeration is something to consider as well. This simply means that the individual particles tend to 'ball up'. Such larger agglomerates can create scratches.

Then there is the purity rating. Powders rated 99.9 percent pure are not at all uncommon. Next to be considered is the friability of the particle. In other words, will the particle break up when put to work? If it does, at what pressure and to what size? This is a very useful property since it allows the user to remove much surface initially then finish with a much smoother surface. It is also true that friable particles will have new edges for better cutting and refinishing. There is also the property of chemical reactivity, which requires knowledge of what type of surface the powders will be used on. Even if the particles will not react directly with the surface forming covalent or even trivalent bonds; they still could be adsorbed onto the surface ironically. In other words they could be affected by what is otherwise called hydrogen bonding. One more question to be answered is, have these particles been functionalized?"

I think you can see from this that there certainly is much to look at when developing abrasive products for the grinding and polishing of optical glass lenses, or the restoration of window glass surfaces. Much more than just finding something that effectively removes scratches or stains in the least amount of time possible. It is equally important that we pay close attention to the brand new surfaces we are creating. These absolutely must be precision surfaces!

WCM: "Henry Grover Jr. writes an online newsletter for the Window Cleaning Industry called the Vision Glass Detailer. It is available free for the asking as a PDF. Just write to him at henrygroverjr@gmail.com".

Glass Smart Services
www.glass-smart.blogspot.com

Full steam ahead for GrippaTank

We first met Oliver and Ross Stanton of GrippaTank back in early 2013 to film the GrippaMax System up close. These were the earlier days of WCM TV and we were yet to refine our editing skills for film. You could say that they were also our first training grounds for video production.

GrippaTank's philosophy at the time was simple. To provide an alternative cost effective choice and still retain the highest quality of install and product.

This was simple, but not a lighthearted task at all. When you consider the preparations in getting this product to market, the time, effort and investment is staggering. For a start, testing systems to see if they would hold up in a vehicle crash is not cheap. GrippaTanks motto is; 'Our systems are designed to STOP when you STOP'.

WCM first broke the story of this system with an exclusive interview with Alex Gardiner in our April 2012 issue (this is available to read for free on WCM's website).

The GrippaMAX System was put through its paces and tested by MIRA (UK). MIRA has been crash testing stuff for well over 50 years, working with customers from all over the world. Their crash labs provide state of the art services to help development towards a vehicles safety performance at the very highest standards. Jeez - they even do stuff like testing Tornado fight turn around time for the MOD!!

So then, with impressive backgrounds like this, what is on offer by GrippaTank and their GrippaMax System?

The GrippaMax System come in 400, 650, 850 litre sizes and they offer a next day delivery service for those who wish to build their own kit. Yup, that's right you can build this yourself, if you wanted to save some money.

Alternatively, if your like me and can not even put up a picture hook then there is the take advantage of GrippaTank's UK wide fitting service.

Kits are available in 1, 2, 3, or even 4 man versions. Delivery, DI Polisher, or RO systems are available. All packages are suitable for use with the HydroHeat diesel hot water system - which includes an intelligent frost prevention feature that will automatically kick in should 2 Celsius be registered, pushing hot water through your reels and back into the tank. No more wrapping up your system in winter with the wife's best duvet!

GrippaMAX has optional extras too that include the Liquid Logic V-Series Controller. This features the latest technology including intelligent split relay, continuous system, and vehicle battery monitoring, delivery pump control, multi-point TDS reading and automatic RO tank shutoff to make sure you don't flood your van overnight!

The design of the GrippaMax was born out of the Gardiner Pole Systems camp and with all GrippaMAX systems they include specifically designed tanks for your vehicle. Gardiner's background really shines through with the quality and design of these tanks. As standard each tank is supplied with a honeycomb baffling, which helps to break up the water movement during transit and preventing 'sloshing'. This greatly improves the driving experience. No more traffic-light seasickness!

The system modules have the option of a 'Fit It Yourself' price or a 'Professionally Driveway Fitted' price. It's your choice. However, the hot water systems have to be



installed at a fitting centre, but the price does include a driver to collect your vehicle from your premises and return it to you once completed for training and handover.

The GrippaMAX system includes industrial grade RO filtration systems and can run with a pressure as low as 2 bar (7lpm). By running on an average mains water feed you will achieve 500GPD (92 litres per hour). The kits are also available with a 12v booster pump - typically filling a 650 litre tank in just under 3 hours!

This system looks 'sexy' and attention to detail is obvious



with the lack of cheap plastic connectors and stainless steel couplings as a standard fit for the under ports.

GrippaTank promise exciting new features coming soon for their GrippaMax System - not yet seen on any other system on the market! Stay tuned to WCM TV and look out for these in your favourite Window Cleaning Magazine.

We interviewed Oliver and Ross, to learn a little more about their background.

WCM: You have your own window cleaning company? How did you get into window cleaning?

Ross: Our family started offering window cleaning and other contract cleaning back in 1987 and it was just a natural progression for us to become involved in the family run cleaning business.

WCM: How did you move into building stuff for window cleaners?

Oliver: Our initial concern were the amount of cleaning businesses that had a water tank in the rear of their vehicle with no securing cage. Further research showed it was often down to affordability. We felt that there was a niche in the market for a safety approved, high quality cleaning system. We really wanted to help raise awareness of the importance of professionally fitted crash tested tanks in a vehicle and the benefits that come from doing this.

As far as our other products are concerned, the GrippaVAC range of high-level vacuum equipment was originally designed for use in our own family run cleaning business. It quickly became apparent that our products could be developed and sold commercially.

I guess you could say, at GrippaTank, our mission is to manufacture products that improve safety whilst making the work process easier.

WCM: You trial things for about a year in your own window cleaning company first, right?

Ross: Yes, we've always tried to understand a product

first before selling it to the general public. By trialing a product we soon find out whether it can withstand the rigors of day-to-day work. A product can be tweaked and revised numerous times before we commence marketing.

WCM: You are a grass roots company, we like that. How did it all start?

Oliver: Our business was born when we purchased new vans for our cleaning business and wanted to install new water tank frames and systems into them. At the time, we were shocked by the high costs of a crash tested system – and with our family background in engineering we soon started to talk designs and development.

WCM: How did you become involved with Gardiner Pole Systems over the GrippaMAX?

Ross: We actually started working with Gardiner Pole Systems originally on our GrippaVAC vacuum equipment. These were featured at The Cleaning Show (NEC) March 2011. We soon found that Gardiner Poles have the same focus as we do in that they are seeking to improve the cleaning market by producing high quality products at sensible prices. Because of this, we started to work very closely together to design and manufacture a premium crash worthiness tested system that doesn't leave the client seriously out of pocket.



WCM: What makes the service you provide different?

Oliver: As a family run business, our aim is to always be friendly and approachable. We feel it is really important to listen to what our clients have to say as they are on the 'frontline' so to speak.

As far as our business model is concerned we have a team

“.. OUR GRIPPAMAX IS RIGHT UP YOUR STREET”

of engineers now working for us across the UK offering mobile fitting and servicing of our systems at the clients premises. Each engineer will produce a certificate at the end of the fit that can then be presented to the client's insurers as proof of professional fitting.

WCM: Give us a taste of your pricing for the readers.

Ross: The GrippaMAX 400 starts from £1295 + VAT for the tank and frame. You can then add the relevant Delivery, DI & RO modules as required – including a hot water diesel system if required.

WCM: Your appealing to the DIY window cleaner too, right?

Oliver: The GrippaMAX can be brought as a complete system, fully fitted. However, we realise many of our customers prefer to buy specific components or are maybe working to a budget. That's why all our systems include a 'Fit It Your Self' pricing option and that's also why we have a range of entry-level products.

WCM: What is available in the range at the moment?

Ross: Our key ranges are the GrippaMAX Cleaning Systems and the GrippaVAC High Level Vacuum

WCM: Tell us about the bolt on 'goodies' for the system?

Oliver: Time is money for our clients. That's why the 'goodies' have quality and quantity written all over them.

The new remote control add-on gives you the ability to turn your delivery pump up and down as you wish from 125 metres away!

The RO systems are 4 stage as standard. Our membranes kick out an impressive 500gpd of pure water, that's 92 litres per hour. If you upgrade to our booster pump sets, you can look to generate anything from 200 litres per hour, right up to 800 litres per hour!

Delivery systems can include a DI polisher module for particularly hard water areas.

Depending on the model, the GrippaMAX includes the charging and monitoring of the system battery. Our split relay kit has become renowned as being very reliable – so much so, that we often fit to competitor systems where customers have had problems in the past!

Our HydroHeat hot water system add-on runs from your diesel fuel line and is temperature adjustable per user, and has a system frost prevention mode as standard.

With all of these components we have tried to maintain a simple quick reference interface, so that you can get the information you need quickly from the system without it severely impacting on your work.

WCM: You mentioned a new feature coming on the website?

Ross: Yes, it's taking about 2 years in the making, but we are about to release two very important tools, which will be available to our customers free of charge.

1/. Payload and Gross vehicle weight of your vehicle can be checked by typing in your vehicle registration number and searching the DVLA database – why is that important? Well that's an article for another day....

2/. A system configurator – are our packages not right for you? No problem, just build the various features on the system, as you want them, at the price that's affordable to you.



Systems (for gutter cleaning and fine dust cleaning). We also manufacture bespoke static water systems that can be installed at your premises with full training – the largest being a 30,000 litre water tank!

Ultimately, as mentioned already, if you are looking for a high quality, excellently designed, reliable cleaning system that won't leave you reeling with the price, then our GrippaMAX is right up your street.

WCM: Thanks guys for talking to WCM. As always, it has been a pleasure.

Watch a
Grippamax
installation



Watch the
Grippamax
system up close.



[CLICK TO view videos](#)

Jet Systems: New kid on the block

A new, innovative and high-quality water-fed pole (WFP) manufacturer has recently launched in the UK offering outstanding results for professional window cleaners.

Jet Systems is an exciting new company that aims to provide innovative WFP systems to the industry that offer enhanced value for money through applying the latest, cutting edge technological developments in control and usability as well as delivering enhanced purity and reliability - all backed up by exceptional standards of service and customer care.

Both its founders – Richard Everingham and Mark Atkinson – have a wealth of experience in providing a fresh approach to WFP system design that will meet the needs of the cleaning industry, and have teamed up to create a formidable partnership that will take their business venture from strength to strength.

Jet Systems is targeting, focusing on the crucial requirements need of customers to have complete confidence in how to operate and maintain their investment. Underpinning this design feature is the use of rigorous manufacturing processes and high quality components to drive reliability and longevity in all of their products.

Jet Systems will launch new products that represent the next generation of WFP systems during the summer. With a loyal customer following already, Richard and Mark will be touring the UK with roadshows this year, giving help and advice on their products and free demonstrations to potential customers.

Water-fed pole systems allow window cleaners - on a residential and commercial scale – to clean windows safely, easily, and to a high standard. Using purified water and a soft-bristled brush, the WFP approach leaves windows with a gleaming streak-free shine. Many more window cleaners are changing their ways and opting to go down the WFP based future of window cleaning; so protect this key business investment by buying a product that has been designed from the outset to ease the operation and ensure its efficient maintenance with the added confidence of top quality products and support.

Sign-up to the free Jet Systems newsletter to get information on roadshow dates, product launches and advice as well as benefiting from special offers. Visit www.jetsystems.eu for more information.



Jet Systems products



The Flow

Value of Flow controls to your Business

In this article we look at how an electronic flow control can add value to a WFP system. Looking at control of water flow and why almost all cleaners using WFP will use a flow control for water delivered to the window. Together with some of the costs associated with setting up a WFP business and examine how an electronic control can save you money, also covering in brief the following:

- What is flow control
- The effects of running a pump at maximum
- Can you work more cost effectively and efficiently?
- How a controller manages a system
- Costs – can these be reduced?

I often hear the comment “ I do not use a flow controller”
In reality how accurate is this statement?

when taken in the context of window cleaning with a tank based water fed pole system. Or where managing water resource is required.

Commonly a cleaner with a tank based WFP will use a 100PSI pump capable of moving 5.2 litres (1.3 gallons) of water a minute. These pumps also have a maximum current rating of 8 amps. The pump has the potential to draw 8 amps of current an hour from your battery, while moving up to 5.2 Ltrs a minute of water.

Lets examine then a system with no means of flow control based on the above pump.

Unrestricted the pump could in theory pump 5.2 litres of water a minute (5.2 x 60 minutes) = 312 litres (68 gallons) an hour

This is clearly unsustainable in a pump and tank system. The reality is WFP systems use a jet to restrict the water flow and reduce the amount of water that reaches the glass.

The Jet commonly 2 -5 mm do act as a basic form of flow control. The jet restricts the amount of water by creating Back Pressure and increasing the velocity (speed) of the water. Dependent on the set up and expansion rates of the hose the 5.2 Ltr per min produced by the pump will be reduced at the brush head.

Job done, we are managing the water resource or are we, what is happening with the pump?

- The pump is trying to push 5.2 litres a minute, In reality the jets restrict this plus the back pressure means the water is trying to travel back down the hose.
- System pressurized to maximum at all times
- Pump working at maximum drawing 8 amps an hour
- Add pencil jets and you have a 3 to 4 meter jet of water hitting the glass

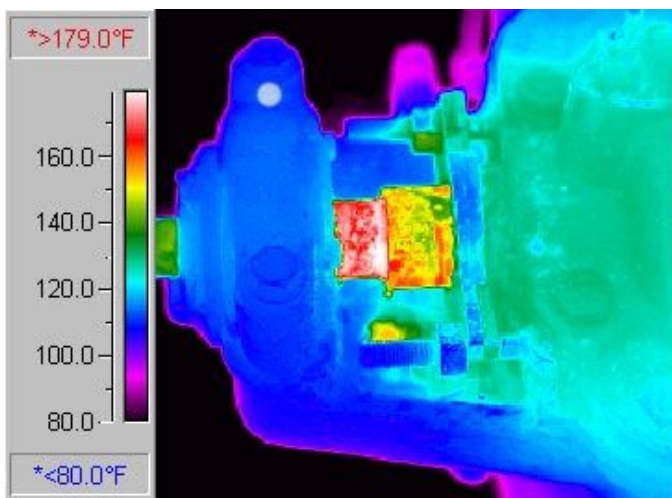
Lets also examine the effect on a pump and battery

We have a pump that is working at maximum with the motor under maximum strain.

In running the pump until it hits the pressure switch you are running the pump as hard as it can possibly work. This means that the pressure in the system will be at its absolute maximum. This puts strain on the hoses, on the fittings and on the pump. It therefore increases the chances of split hoses, leaking joints and increases wear on your pump, shortening the pumps life.

As you stop the flow relying on the pressure switch to stop the pump, as it cuts out, the pump is at maximum, working as hard as it possibly can and therefore drawing maximum current from the battery. Hence as the switch opens it is under great strain. The high current and the fact that the pump is under high inductive load (with stored energy) meaning that the pressure switch contacts are likely to arc and eventually they will fail.

Running the pump at its maximum capacity means the pump will get hot, the hotter the pump becomes the less efficient it becomes at moving water. As the pump tries to maintain the high pressure and flow it draws more current from the battery. Resulting in the pump becoming hotter.



Drawing 8 amps an hour is going to flatten a battery very quickly, As the voltage falls the load on the battery increases meaning, that higher voltage is required to maintain the high ampage output. This in turn leads to a combined rapid fall off in both amps and voltage available from the battery. You will likely get three to four hours continuous work and there after the battery will rapidly be depleted.

Constantly depleting the battery to low levels will damage the cells and the batteries ability to hold a charge. This cycle described above will rapidly destroy a battery.

So why control water flow? In short water management with a tank based WFP is a factor due to the relative cost of producing pure water. There is also physical limitation of how much water can be carried. This in turn limits the amount of work that can be achieved per tank of water.

Clearly then using over 300 litres an hour is not sustainable.

Also the question needs to be asked, do you really want 5.2 litres flow of water delivered to the window all the times?

Perhaps for rinsing hydrophic glass or even on first cleans it may be useful, however for the average maintenance clean, it is over kill.

So what types of flow control are available?

1. Manual taps
2. Aquadapter or Aquatap
3. Kinking the hose
4. Radio remote on pump
5. Electronic pump constant flow regulator

While points 1,2 and 3 above give limited control of water volume to the brush head, allowing a start/stop of flow. You are, however, still left with a pump that is running at maximum trying to push 5.2 litres of water to the glass. The actual amount of water is being restricted by the jets and tap, e.g. only 2.6 litres a minute or 50% of the potential flow rate produced by the pump.

In short, the pump is operating at 100%, generating 100% pressure and is using the maximum current draw of 8 amps, yet only 50% of the available flow reaches the glass.

Although the volume of water has been reduced the pump is still working at maximum, drawing maximum current as outlined above.

If working with a fast flow of water helps clean faster why not use a 10 litre per minute pump? Why use a tap to restrict the flow?

The answer is simple, fast water on its own will not allow you to clean quicker, because if the fastest you can clean a window to a good standard is, for example, 30 seconds, fast water alone will not reduce this. Physical limitations of the site and of the person doing the clean will limit improvements in time.

It is clear that with practice and improved technique, this time will likely be reduced. However it is practice that makes perfect not fast water.

Is this efficient use of your resources?

Would you drive a car at 30 mph an hour in 1st gear? Of course not, because you would be straining the engine and gear box and using a huge amount of fuel. You would change into a higher gear to allow the engine to operate at lower revolutions, but still give you the

“ HOW CAN A PUMP CONTROL MANAGE MY SYSTEM?”

required speed for the conditions.

So why would you not do the same with your WFP pump? Use of a manual tap can be a benefit. However in isolation it will not allow you to use and manage your system in an efficient way. Why reduce the water volume without reducing the speed of the pump?

I do actually feel that an ideal is a pump controller used with a pole tap provides an excellent combination.

The controller ensures the pump is working only as hard as needed producing the required water flow efficiently.

The tap gives the stop/start capacity to save water as you move between windows. The controller simply sees flow has stopped and dead-ends the pump. Stopping the pump this way means less pressure in the system, less strain on the pump and less current draw. There are of course many other features and functions designed in to a controller as outlined later in the article.

Use of a pump controller and tap combined is a way to create an efficient and managed system

Using a radio remote will avoid the instance of arcing across the pressure switch as the pump is stopped by switching the power off. You are however as above left with a pump running flat out with maximum pressure in the system again giving 5.2 litres of water a minute to the brush head.

So how then do you improve efficiency, protect your pump and increase battery life?

An electronic pump control not only reduces the strain on the pump by slowing it down It will give the flexibility for you to increase that flow when required. Surely it makes sense that if you only require 30% of the available water volume that you operate the pump at 30% and so on.



A control provides real value for money it can help you manage your entire system. The controller will provide a range of information to you from battery voltage – pressure switch detection and Dead end detection, among others.

Manage a system is a bold statement: How can a pump control manage my system?

Pressure switch detection: The control monitors pressure in the system yet does not activate the pressure switch. If the pressure switch activated due to very high pressure, the control is telling you that something is causing the high pressure, it could be a twisted or kinked hose, dirt or grit in the hose line or jets, an air lock, a failed connector or possibly worn cable or a poor connections.

The Spring control is engineered to operate with the pump pressure switch and monitor it. The common misconception is that the control activates the pressure switch. In fact it is high pressure that activates it.

Why then do we engineer the control this way? Simply we feel the additional level of protection is justified. On the rare occasion the control does not DE the pump the pressure switch activates and prevents possible damage and even flooding.

Auto calibration: The control while being a very technical piece of kit is easy to use, Follow the steps or online video to set the calibration to your system. Once calibrated the control will detect when the water flow has stopped and shut down the pump well before the Pressure switch activates.

You can also manually calibrate the control if necessary just to tweak the calibration. By calibrating the unit we are allowing the control to see the normal operating pressure. Simply use the auto cal feature and in moments you are ready to work. It works with any hose or Microbore.

Voltmeter: We have added the voltmeter to our controls over the last 4 years as it makes faultfinding over the phone very easy. Spotting high levels of volt drop – worn batteries and cables or perhaps poor connections.

Auto adjust Once correctly calibrated the control will automatically adjust the pump speed to ensure the selected water flow is maintained as the pole is extended or retracted, ensuring the desired flow of water is delivered at all times to the window.

Low Battery cut off Similar to a number of controls on the market the low battery warning and cut of protects the battery from long term damage, Our latest control has an easy to use over ride feature selectable from the main menu, Complete the days work then re charge as normal.

Note: It is not recommended that the low battery cut off permanently disabled, as the pump will completely drain the battery damaging the cells

Advanced Micro DE retest: Once the control detects the water flow has stopped it, will shut down the pump. However the control needs to know when to restart the pump so the controller re tests for flow stopped every few seconds by turning the pump for a fraction of a second, The test checks for restored flow however it does this without any increase in system pressure, meaning the control could be left in DE for long periods of time with no risk to the system

12-month manufacturers warranty; We offer a full 12-month warranty together with online support and advice services both via our distributor network and directly if necessary. We believe ongoing support is essential as it keeps you earning together with regular updates. You can be assured you are dealing with an established UK manufacturer with a long history in electronics.

Lets examine the claim that a pump controller is expensive, they can commonly cost between £70 - £90 for a standard unit and a little more for Full radio remotes and other variants.

All our digital controls have all the features listed above as standard. The analogue controls do all the above with the exception we cannot display battery voltage or provide a low battery cut off override. Additional features can also allow you to....

- Auto fill a water tank
- Monitor TDS
- Protect a system against frost
- Monitor water temperature in a hot system
- Provide full radio remote
- Trickle charge a leisure battery
- Mains powered units for static systems

The current controller range represents 8 years of research and development listening to window cleaners and the features they are looking for, This represents a large cost in time and money to produce a unit that has more processing power than some mobile phones, yet is a fraction of the cost. Used within its design parameters a controller will far exceed its warranty period.

Note: Control must be fitted and used according to manufactures instructions – failure to do so may invalidate your warranty.

While cheaper electronic controllers are available they do not have the features and management capability of our controls. Yes you can buy a controller for £20 this is of course reflected in the quality of the components, reliability and no warranty. Will the overseas supplier provide support and advice to keep you working? A repair service? Can you contact them when the unit fails? Chances are you will replace the cheap control 2 or 3 times a year, as it will burn out. In some cases buying the cheapest unit is a false economy

So do you spend £80 - £90 on a state of the art designed for purpose control with full manufacture warranty and support that will give years of reliable service?

Or

Spend £60 - £80 every year on a poorer quality substitute with no additional features, no warranty, and no end user support? Plus the lost work time in buying and replacing burned out cheap controls.

So what other costs are involved in setting up your business?

- Vehicle, Fuel, Excise Duty, Insurance
- Public Liability
- System. Poles, Hose, Pumps, Battery, Brush, Jets
- Tank or trolley
- Pure water production Or Buy pure water
- Replacement Membranes, Filters, DI resin

Without doubt one of the ongoing costs is water production. The following figures are based on a five-day working week, 6 hours a day, using a 650-litre tank and assume 4 weeks holiday and bank holidays (Total working day 223 a year). We are also working with a starting TDS of 60.

- Filling the tank will use 217,425 litres of water a year
- Following process via an RO/DI 144.950 litres are produced
- Additional Polishing
- Cost £3551.79 a year
- 0.024p a litre

Note: The above do not include water rates or water charges via a meter. Also if the Initial TDS is higher a

higher frequency of resin and membrane replacements will increase the per litre cost.

A pump can cost £65 - £75 add in your prefilters Vat and delivery This cost quickly rises to £80.00 - £100.00, Common practice is to carry a spare pump so up to £200, A controller will help reduce the strain on your pump and extend its working life.

Recent anecdotal evidence suggests that a pump loses efficiency once it is driven beyond 80% capacity.

I have outlined why it is not efficient to run a pump flat out, benefits of slowing the pump by just 20% mean less current draw. Less strain on the pump. Less pressure in the system and ability to manage water resource to match flow to need on a job-to-job basis.

If on average a 4-bedroom house uses 20 litres of water. A reduction of reducing water use by 20% is 4 litres lets assume 2 houses an hour. Your saving is 8 litres an hour or based on our 6 hour day 48 litres a day.

This is a potential saving of up to £11.52 every day based on the figures above. The cost of the controller then can be recouped very quickly just in terms of more efficient water use. Add in the features and ability to manage a system a controller represents excellent added value.

In summery then a controller will add value to your business and help extend the life of your system. It will reduce your running costs as you only use the water required per job. Less water used means less to produce and in turn this extends the life of filters and resin. Reduced strain on your pump motor as it now works only as hard as it needed.

Reducing the stress on the motor bearing will also mean less heat is generated. Remember a hot motor will be less efficient.

Reducing current draw extends the life of the battery allowing you to carry out more work per charge.

Looked at in this context a controller is not a cost but an aid to building your successful business. The decision is of course a personal one, are you however working as efficiently as you could?

spring pro Water fed pole pump controller



A tried and tested design from pole-fed specialists, the eco flow has been developed by window cleaners in the field who know what they want from a window-cleaning product.

The use of a pump controller significantly reduces wear on the pump, especially when compared to a flow restrictor. Reducing pump speed reduces power used and mechanical wear.

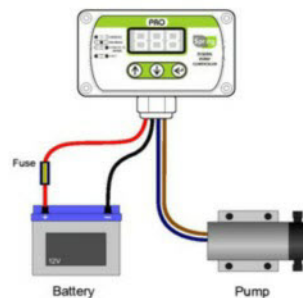
Dead end detection detects when water flow is restricted (i.e. when the pole has been disconnected from the hose) and safely shuts down the pump, further reducing power and wear. Simply reconnect the pole and the pump will start up again.

Fine control of the flow rates means water use is kept to a minimum, allowing you to complete more jobs on the same tank, as well as being eco friendly. Less water uses less resin, which extends the life of your resin cartridges.

The three button interface is simple and intuitive to use.

The battery voltage is available at the touch of a button. Advanced features will shut down the unit when the battery is too low, preventing irreversible battery damage.

- Copes easily with demanding daily use
- Extends the life of resin cartridges
- Controls water flow accurately and dependably
- Dead-end detection saves battery power and extends life of pump
- Displays battery voltage
- Unit is sealed to IP64, stopping water ingress
- Easy to use and simple to install



Electrical Specification	Value	Mechanical Specification	Value
Supply Voltage	7-18V	Enclosure material	ABS
Maximum drive current	10A	Water resistance	IP64
Typical drive current	2-3A	Dimensions (mm)	115x65x40
Working temperature	-5 to 40C	Voltmeter accuracy	+/- 200mV

I cleaned windows for 60p per house:

A London window cleaner's story

Cleaning windows can be hard but can also be rewarding, not just with job satisfaction but also with a comfortable living. So, you would be surprised to observe the title of this article, 'I cleaned windows for 60p per house', and wonder what the hell is this all about?

If I also told you, that this 'massive amount' of earning was achieved in Hull, you would tell me that I am crazy and then maybe you might just begin to worry that this crazy pricing was about to spread all over the country and into your neck of the woods.

Well, please don't throw away that water fed pole or pointer just yet. Yes, a window cleaner did earn 60p per house but rest assure people, he is now earning £600 per house in London!

London, such an attraction of wealth with the average house price of £405,000! This massive multicultural city



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was once one of the largest cities in the world before the early 1920's. This year, London beat New York and retained its crown for the second year running as the favourite city of the world's ultra-rich.

Known as the rainy city, you would actually think that window cleaners would steer away from the Capital but not so. London is a definite pull, showing its might over where the money's at. So, no wonder expanding window cleaning companies aspire to winning the biggest Blue Chip London contracts going.

But what of the stories, of smaller window cleaning companies that operate in and around the London area? That brings me around neatly to Mark Race of Race Team Cleaning, London. Mark has been cleaning windows in London for 25 years.

WCM first met Mark whilst filming the Reach-iT UK tour for WCM TV. We met up in central London right next to the American Embassy on Grosvenor Square postcode W1A and I was instantly drawn to his window cleaning life in the Big City.

WCM: You have not always cleaned in London have you?

Mark: No, I started at 16 after leaving school, back then I lived on Bransholme Council Estate in Hull. After that I then went on to clean windows in Bodmin, Cornwall.

WCM: Tell us why you earned 60p per house?

Mark: 60P was the price to clean a whole house back in the day. It cost 30p just to clean the top windows; this meant I would earn £30.00 in two days. It was the going rate at the time.

WCM: What made you move to London?

Mark: It made sense to go where the money is, right?

WCM: Where in London do you operate?

Mark: My company works predominately in Mayfair, Belgravia and Chelsea.

WCM: Is it just you in your business?

Mark: My business is essentially ME, Mark Race. I am



“ .. I USED TO GET STUNG FOR LOADS OF FINES .. ”

viewed as a trusted part of the family almost, here in London, you wouldn't want just anybody having the full run of your private home with priceless antiques and works of art dotted around. I just have one occasional sub contractor who is totally trustworthy. My customers are very loyal and I treasure the good will we maintain.

WCM: You use water fed poles. When did you change to pure water and what was the first reason for doing that?

Mark: Around 12 years ago, I decided I was not getting any younger and the Health & Safety regulations became tighter around working at heights. It was a no brainer that I should acquire the skills of this new method. I did find early on that you do need the correct pole. I have used ones as heavy as drainpipes made of fibreglass. Thank goodness for rolled carbon fibre.

WCM: Do you notice a difference in attitudes towards window cleaners from customers in the North from those in the South?

Mark: Well, not to be drawn into politics but Southerners are believed to be raking it in but I think its all relative to whatever the market and bare that dictates your pricing structure.

WCM: Today in 2014 do you still see many window cleaners in Central London carrying ladders?

Mark: I see a few A-frames but a lot more water fed pole users popping up. I never worry about the competition, as there is enough work out there if you look.

WCM: What's your business made up most of? Residential, commercial, pubs, hotels, shops?

Mark: Mainly residential town houses and mansions.

WCM: Does the congestion charge sting you? How do you deal with that? Do you just consider it a business outlay?

Mark: It used to be a nightmare, as I would forget to pay. I used to get stung for loads of fines but now I hook up to an automated service at £9.00 per day and it takes the stress out of it all. It does become a business expense that's easy to get back on the job.

WCM: What if you are rained off that day. Is the congestion charge a cost you could of done without?

Mark: You just have to wipe your lip and make it up another day, which is the perils of window cleaning outdoors.

WCM: Parking to carry out work must be a nightmare?

Mark: Yes it can be, but I am well known by many traffic



wardens and we have developed a certain understanding.

WCM: How often do you get a ticket?

Mark: RARE.

WCM: Have you bought a system from a manufacture or put your own together?

Mark: I have cherry picked a combined system that best suits me.

WCM: What water fed poles do you prefer and why?

Mark: For me it is the Reach-iT Pro, I have had it now for over two years. I first came across Perry Tait of Reach-iT on YouTube and I would now only buy his specialised make as I have been all through the rest.

WCM: How much outside traditional work do you do now?

Mark: Well I do a fair bit still, mainly insides tho. You need to know what your doing as cleaning internal windows with

".. IT STANDS TO REASON YOU CANT DO IT FOR CHUMP CHANGE"

pure white carpets everywhere can be a challenge. But exterior wherever possible I use my reach-iT Pro with extensions for up to 7 stories.

WCM: Have you cleaned any famous peoples houses?

Mark: Of course. I remember being 'star struck' when the 'Lovejoy' actor Ian McShane popped his head round from his fridge one day! Thoroughly nice man along with his dear wife, Gwen.

The actress who played opposite to George Clooney in 'Solaris' a Capital radio DJ and the man responsible for most of the theatre shows in London and worldwide along with Eastern Royal families.

Incidentally, I thought I would compliment a man practicing the flute in a house in Chester Square. One day I said, 'Your coming on well with that mate, it sounds really nice'. He just smiled politely. Then I was told it was only Sir James Galway OBE the famous flute player. Oh well.

WCM: Have you ever broken something expensive?

Mark: Yes. I cut a bespoke silk curtain when cleaning for Jordanian Prince with my window scraper. Insurance claim. Phew!

WCM: Have you ever cleaned an important place like an Embassy, for example?

Mark: Yes, I have cleaned Israelis, Colombian, Qatar, Egyptian and Mexican Embassies.

WCM: Do you avoid rush hour? I heard that the London rush hour in the mornings could be between 7.30am and 9.30am then 4.30pm till 7pm!! Not a long working day if you want to avoid it.

Mark: I try and get in before 7am, but I have to be flexible to keep clients happy. It's their money that keeps me in a job.

WCM: What if someone calls for a quote central London but you want to get a days work in too. Would you take your chances with rush hour and get the bid in or leave it till the weekend, congestion free time?

Mark: If possible I use Google Maps when doing quotes. This saves time and stress, another no brainer.

WCM: Has marketing your business changed over the years?

Mark: I only work on recommendations and referrals. I do not advertise. I have no need at the moment.

WCM: You are earning £600 on some houses, can you tell us why?

Mark: Well if you own a house in let's say Belgrave Square with a price tag of 100 million, yes 100 million! It stands to reason you cant do it for chump change.

WCM: What's the most difficult thing about window cleaning in London?

Mark: Traffic!

WCM: Getting around the back of these properties must be difficult too as well as finding parking to the front. Do you reflect this in your price? How do you deal with this?

Mark: I use a portable trolley from Omnipole Ltd. That usually sorts that issue out.

WCM: Railings seem to be very common in London to the front of properties guarding the drop to a properties basement area. Have you heard stories of window cleaners having accidents?

Mark: Sadly yes. Nothing can cut short your window-cleaning career like a forty-foot fall from a ladder or ledge especially if you land on railings. It happens so be careful out there guys.

WCM: Would you change your London life?

Mark: I am content for now In London. It is a fabulous place in which to work. For me it ticks all the boxes.

END



Seen an interesting picture online related to window cleaning?

Why not tell us about it and we'll try to feature it in a future issue of

Window Cleaning magazine

Contact: lee@windowcleaningmagazine.co.uk



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Industry Spotlight: RHG

WCM: Where did RHG start?

SG: *I started in my garage. Now we operate out of a really huge garage :)*

WCM: Where are you based?

SG: *We are based in Castle Rock, Colorado*

WCM: What market size you have in the US?

SG: *I suppose it's pretty tough to tell that and it's not really something I think about much personally. We consistently grow each year.*

WCM: How many countries do you supply too?

SG: *In the neighbourhood of a dozen.*

WCM: What is your current core business about?

SG: *We focus on delivering a consistently reliable product for our customers.*

WCW: RHG stands for Reach Higher Ground. How did you come up with this name?

SG: *As I recall my wife came up with the name. I was running a window cleaning company at the time and the poles basically enabled us to reach higher, from the ground.*

WCW: How did your business start? What is the history?

SG: *I was running a window cleaning business and got into water-fed poles as a way to access high windows. Soon after I began using the poles on our entire window cleaning accounts. At the time I believed that the spot free water systems on the market were far too expensive so I built my own. I took that product to a window cleaning event and carried out a demo for a group of window cleaners. I remember it like it was yesterday. There I was with Jim Willingham who was demoing a system for Ettore, AquaClean at the time. I did my demo, he did his, and one of the window cleaners at the event bought my homemade system off of me. So, I kept making them and kept selling them. We've gotten better over time and a few years after*

I bought that original unit back from the customer and gave him a new one for it.

WCM: What was the first product you sold and why did you decide to sell that product?

SG: *We sold Facelift poles before anyone really knew anything about them. This was in the beginning of the companies' existence.*

WCM: Your filter components are seen quite a lot in the UK.

SG: *We have a great relationship with a couple of the key companies in the UK and they have brought our products to market there on our behalf.*

WCM: How much window cleaning experience did you have before you began selling products?

SG: *I owned and operated a window cleaning company for nearly a decade before selling it a few years ago to focus solely on RHG.*

WCM: Where does your knowledge come from for Pure Water technology?

SG: *I consider myself to be a sponge for information and I have immersed myself in this field for 8 years now. I am a student of pure water technology.*

WCM: The US are big with 'water on demand' units whereas the UK are big on van mounted units. Can you see a swing happening in the US to this now?

SB: *Its coming. I have been watching it for a few years now. In my opinion we are a number of years out yet, but it's beginning to be accepted and we are making a big push with our new Fill N Go truck mount spot free water systems. These systems utilize either a 50-gallon or 100-gallon tank and we expect they will be quite popular.*

WCM: For me, I see a disadvantage for 'water on demand' when the customers water pressure is not high enough. Don't get me wrong the biggest benefit



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Is plug and go with these units and water pressure issues might out weigh that depending on individual experience.

I did see it first hand whilst we were filming All County, NJ as part of the Window Wars USA documentary. Don't get me wrong; there are way more advantages to such a unit, portability, ease etc. But when you get to a site with no water pressure and you find you cannot use it, portability and ease goes right out the window if you pardon the pun lol. What are your thoughts?

SG: *In the evolution of my window cleaning business I went from DI tanks, to building a mobile RO/DI cart, to a van mounted water tank system. I saw the advantage of having the tank on-board and bringing my water with me. Not having to look for a water supply is a great feature of a vehicle based tank system. From there we evolved into wanting a hot water system. It's the evolution of many companies in my opinion.*

WCM: **Have you ever visited the UK and if so where did you go and whom did you see?**

SG: *Yes. I visited the Cleaning Show a few years back. I went and chatted with the folks at Varitech, Gardiner, and others. Overall it was a good trip and helped to solidify a number of things I was working on at the time.*

WCM: **What trade shows do you hold value in and why?**

SG: *All of them. I love attending trade shows both as an exhibitor and as a spectator. There is nothing like seeing, touching, feeling, the products of the trade. Catalogs are great for information, but nothing beats going to an industry trade show and putting your hands on the products.*

WCM: **Where would you say your costs are compared to your competitors on your pure water systems?**

SG: *We are a bit higher than most of our competitors currently, but that is generally speaking due to the capacity of our filters in comparison. On our H2Pro spot free water cart for instance. The Carbon pre filter is 4" in diameter and 30" long. That's massive compared to anyone else in the market today. Our DI filter on this system is the same size. We are able to make custom size filters because we make them in house here as well as our housings.*

WCM: **Do you install for customers and what is the install turn around?**

SG: *No.*

WCM: **Where do you see the industry in 10 years time?**

SG: *Tanked :) I see a large number of companies moving into tank systems over the next decade. RHG is leading that charge with the introduction of our Fill N Go systems. Others will follow there is no doubt.*

WCM: **How have your systems evolved over the years?**

SG: *Ease of use. With the introduction of our EZ Pure systems that we make for Ettore Products Company, we made spot free water systems EZ and much more inexpensive. You simply put tap water in, turn a valve, and get spot free water out. Its so EZ.*

WCM: **What do you recommend in the way on maintenance advise for preserving the life of your filter components?**

SG: *The best thing you could do for your spot free water system is use it. RO Membranes want to stay hydrated. By consistently using your system you keep them happy in a sense. If you aren't going to use it for a while, run water through it.*

WCM: **What are the most common mistakes your customers make in maintenance or installing?**

SG: *We don't see a lot of custom installs in the US as apposed to over in the UK, but in terms of maintenance we see a number of people allowing their RO systems to sit and go unused for long periods of time with no consideration of the affects on the RO membranes.*

WCM: **When your not in the office, how do you spend your down time?**

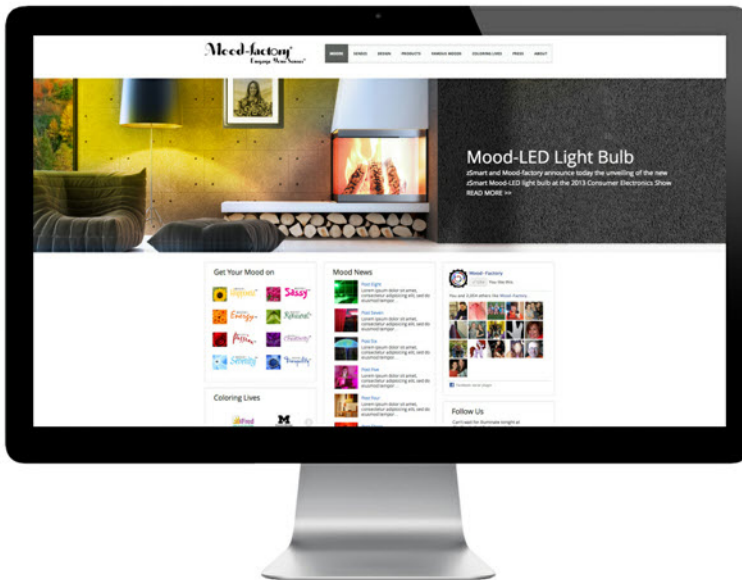
SG: *Colorado is a beautiful place with an abundance of outdoor activities. I spend a fair amount of time outdoors. I enjoy coaching my kids baseball teams, fly fishing, hanging by the pool, etc.*

WCM: **Thank you Shawn**

You Have a Website, Now What?

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By: Mark Palmer - Marketing Manager at HatchSpot.com and WindowCleaning.com



7 Ways Your Website Is Destroying Your Sales

Ok, you went out and got a website domain and you've even placed a website on that domain so now you can go back to cleaning windows right? If only it was that easy. Simply having a website is not enough. In fact, having a website without completing this checklist is like cleaning a window and not wiping the window frames. The job is incomplete. Even worse, your company looks bad and it's destroying your potential sales.

Don't fret; the purpose of this series of articles is not to discourage you. These articles are guaranteed to improve your online sales. I'm going to share conversion principles over the coming months that will help you build a [conversion machine](#).

Before we begin, let's illustrate why simply having a website is not enough.

Whether someone saw your truck drive by, they went to a search engine to find a window cleaning company, or their neighbour highly recommended you, almost all of your potential customers will go to your website first. Even if it's just to find your phone number. When they land on your website they will immediately establish an opinion of your company. What impression will they form? Will they pick up the phone to call?

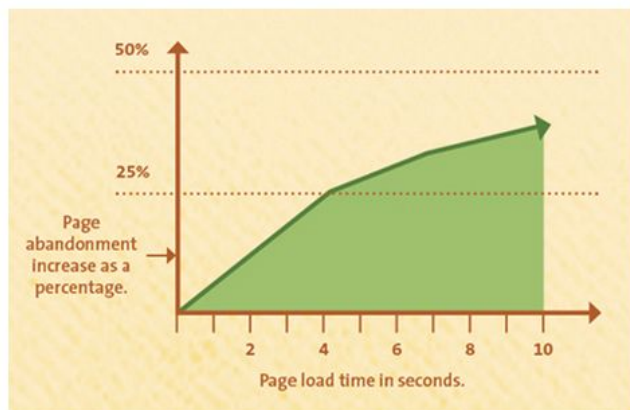
Here are 7 things that will lose you the sale.

Your Website is Too Slow

You've heard that the best thing you could possibly do with your website is to [showcase your work online](#). To upload lots of great quality photos. That's absolutely true. Nothing instills confidence more than fantastic attention-grabbing photos of your company's work. But photos slow down your load times and consumers have short attention spans. In fact, 40% of people abandon a website that takes more than 3 seconds to load. So how do you satisfy your potential customers who want to see evidence of your great work and not lose the sale because your website is too slow? We'll discuss this in an upcoming article very soon.

Your Website Lacks Eye Appeal

Within 7 seconds of visiting your website, your potential customer has established a lasting opinion of your company. Eye appeal is the accumulation of many smaller factors that lead to your potential customers final opinion. The content you place above the fold, the positioning of your page elements, your choice of images, does your website contain customer reviews and do they stand out on your page? Remember, consumers have short attention spans. Were they drawn to those



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reviews? You have 7 seconds to work with and we'll help you make the most of those 7 seconds.

Your Message is Weak

If you passed the 7-second test and your potential customer decides to stay and seriously check you out. What message will they receive? Do you have a clear value proposition? Does it stand out on the page? Is your content clear and concise? Have you organized your content with headings that will help them choose what they feel is most important to read? They won't read everything. If they start with your content that doesn't relate to what they're looking for, guess what? You'll lose the sale.

You Haven't Instilled Trust

Ok, do I have to say this? Spelling and grammar is extremely important to instilling trust. If you're sloppy about your spelling and grammar, then you'll be sloppy when it comes to cleaning windows. Whether you like it or not, that's the conclusion every potential customer will make. But it doesn't stop there. Is your photos stock photography? Come on! Who are you kidding? That's not your work and your customer can see that it's not too. Are you afraid to show your work? Or maybe you're just starting out and don't have any happy customers yet. Is that what you want them to think?

Speaking of happy customers. We talked about reviews already but when we discuss how to instill trust in a future article we'll delve once again into reviews. Why would someone trust the reviews you've placed on your own company website? It's your website, you have full control, your customer knows that, so how do you make sure they fully trust your reviews. We'll have some great tips to share.

Your Website is Not Mobile Friendly

What do you mean mobile friendly? Yep, I can see my website when I look at it on a mobile phone or tablet.



Mobile Website

VS



Standard Website

Maybe, but does your visitors have to pinch and scroll to read your content? Are your photos super tiny? How about your phone number? Never mind just being able to see it, is it clickable? Your visitors will not stop to write down your phone number on a separate piece of paper just so they can switch over to their phone's dial pad and type in each number one by one. They just won't. How about all your navigational buttons. Are they big and easy to click on as well? Nearly 40% of Internet time is now spent on mobile devices. You need a mobile friendly website or you'll lose 40% of your potential customers.

You Don't Have a Clear Call To Action

A call to action is the element on your website that will motivate your visitor to take that all important final step, to pick up the phone and call you.

Or maybe you want them to fill out a simple form to request a quote. You'd be amazed how much attention you need to pay to this seemingly very small detail. The wording you choose, where it appears on the page, does it stand out from everything else on your website, does your customer clearly know what you want them to do? You want them to contact you right? But that doesn't mean just making your phone number big and visible.

When was the last time you saw a phone number and instantly felt compelled to call that number? Creating an effective call to action is an art and a science all in



itself. Don't worry we'll look at tons of great tips to get your phone ringing. After all, what good is a website if your potential customer doesn't contact you?

You're Not Using Landing Pages to Close Sales

A landing page is a page on your website that speaks specifically about one subject. Maybe it targets one of your services but it could also target a specific neighbourhood in your service area that has a lot of high-end homes. Imagine a visitor finding a page dedicated to their specific neighbourhood, full of photos of homes they drive by every day? Companies with 30 or more

landing pages generate 7 times more leads than those with fewer than 10. Be specific with your landing pages. Make your potential customers feel like you specialize in exactly what they're looking for.

Combine incredibly targeted landing pages with Pay Per Click Ads and voila. Instant sales!

You Have a Website, Now What?

Yes, you've got a website. That's a good start! But how great is it at turning your visitors into customers? If you haven't seriously worked at these 7 important factors you're losing sales. Maybe you're losing 1 customer a month, maybe you're losing 20, either way you're losing sales. If you want to win more customers make sure you read every upcoming issue of Window Cleaning Magazine. And for more great tips be sure to subscribe to our blog at www.hatchspot.com/blog.

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Industry Spotlight: Xline

We speak to James Daykin

WCM: Who are Xline?

James: We are actually two companies, Xline Systems & Xline Cleaning Services. It is a family run business owned/run by Steve Daykin (my father) and myself.

Xline Cleaning covers the East Midlands area with a fleet of 10 vehicles providing residential, commercial & industrial cleaning services.

Xline Systems provide window cleaning products/systems/poles/services and many other solutions to window cleaners.

WCM: How did Xline Systems come about?

James: It started in 2004 providing custom made van mounted water fed systems, we quickly opened a retail shop providing local window cleaners traditional & water fed products.

What do Xline Systems specialise in?

James: Mainly water fed pole equipment from water fed poles to purification systems. We also manufacture our own range of telescopic water fed poles, filtration systems, Microflex hose & portable trolley systems. We listening to the customer's needs, providing good quality, sound advice and providing custom made solutions & systems to meet those requirements.

We feel that we provide the best products available to window cleaners. We never wanted to just be a distributor of other supplier's products or just to have a local retail shop. Our passions have always been in designing & producing custom made high quality products. We fabricate & install our own lightweight van mounted systems while also servicing and maintaining all types of other window cleaning systems.

WCM: What makes Xline Systems different from the other system manufacturers and suppliers?

James: We design & manufacture our own custom made

products as well as distributing a full range of products to the window cleaning industry. We provide good quality advice gained from years of our experience in the cleaning trade and we can provide hands on training to all our customers.

Our mission is simple, to provide good quality solutions and products at the most reasonable prices while maintaining an excellent customer service, as we feel these are the main 3 factors in keeping our customers happy.





[CLICK TO view videos](#)

We also test our own products within our Sister company before bringing a product to market.

Working with individual window cleaners right up to national cleaning companies and facility management operators has given us further insight in establishing customer needs and the products that are right for their them.

WCM: We've heard a lot about the Evolution poles over the last year or so, tell us more about them.

James: Our aim was to produce a pole that we could be proud of, one we would be happy to use in our own window cleaning company. Over the years we have used and supplied many types and many makes of water fed poles, but we were never completely satisfied. Now we are.

We are happy and confident that we have produced the best all round range of wfp's on the market today.

We launched the range at last years NEC Window Cleaning Show, with incredibly positive feedback from the window cleaners who got hands on with the pole, we were rushed off our feet for the full 3 days, and selling out of all the poles we took to the show.

The Evolution poles come in 3 different materials, glass fibre, carbon composite and the full-blown 100% carbons (high modulus poles from the 45ft+ range)

They range in sizes from 20ft right up to 70ft.

The carbon poles are incredibly light, super rigid and durable. They have unique hassle free glue-less lateral style clamps, that don't come loose and they have lots of room for adjustment over the years and can be removed/replaced in a matter of seconds.

Hardwearing sections, meaning no annoying section spinning over time and you can easily add or remove sections depending on the working height required.

We also manufacture a range of high quality pole hose, lightweight pole brushes and aluminium and carbon goosenecks that are available with the Evolution poles.

WCM: There has certainly been abuzz over the last year with regards to Xline, what areas have you been concentrating on?

James: Mainly to expand both businesses. We managed to take on 4 new window cleaning vans/rounds last year on the cleaning side of the business. One of the aims of Xline Systems was to expand our customer base starting in the UK and recently into Europe, while growing the awareness of our brand of products.

We had a massive push to improve our online presence, putting a lot of time into building a new website showcasing all our products, creating new product videos and generally getting our name out there. We jumped on the social media bandwagon becoming part of many online



forums and communities and being a regular presence on some of the popular Facebook communities.

We also aimed to improve a lot of our internal processes and customer service levels. The last year has been massive for us, keeping up with the demand of developing and producing our own range of products, while maintaining a full range of stock for next day delivery has been an exciting challenge, but one we have enjoyed. Also, we have seen the business grow dramatically, even more than we anticipated.

One area we are really excited about is what's to come in the future, we sometimes just wish there was more hours in the day!

WCM: What does Xline Systems have planned for this year?

James: We are on track to bring out a range of new innovative products specifically designed for window cleaners. In the years to come we will be expanding our distributor network wider across Europe and move into bigger premises, allowing us to hold more stock with a bigger showroom while expanding the companies office and workshop space in order to help with our expanding workforce.

We plan to exhibit at the Dorset window cleaning tradeshow (17th May) and the Scottish Cleaning Show (Sep-14)



Also, on the cards is to run a series of demo days in a select few locations across Britain, so watch out for the Xline demo van coming to an area near you.

We will defiantly have another local summer BBQ for our local customers, Xline style! Last year **Lee Burbidge** of the **Window Cleaning Magazine** attended and we have no doubt he will be attending our next one too.

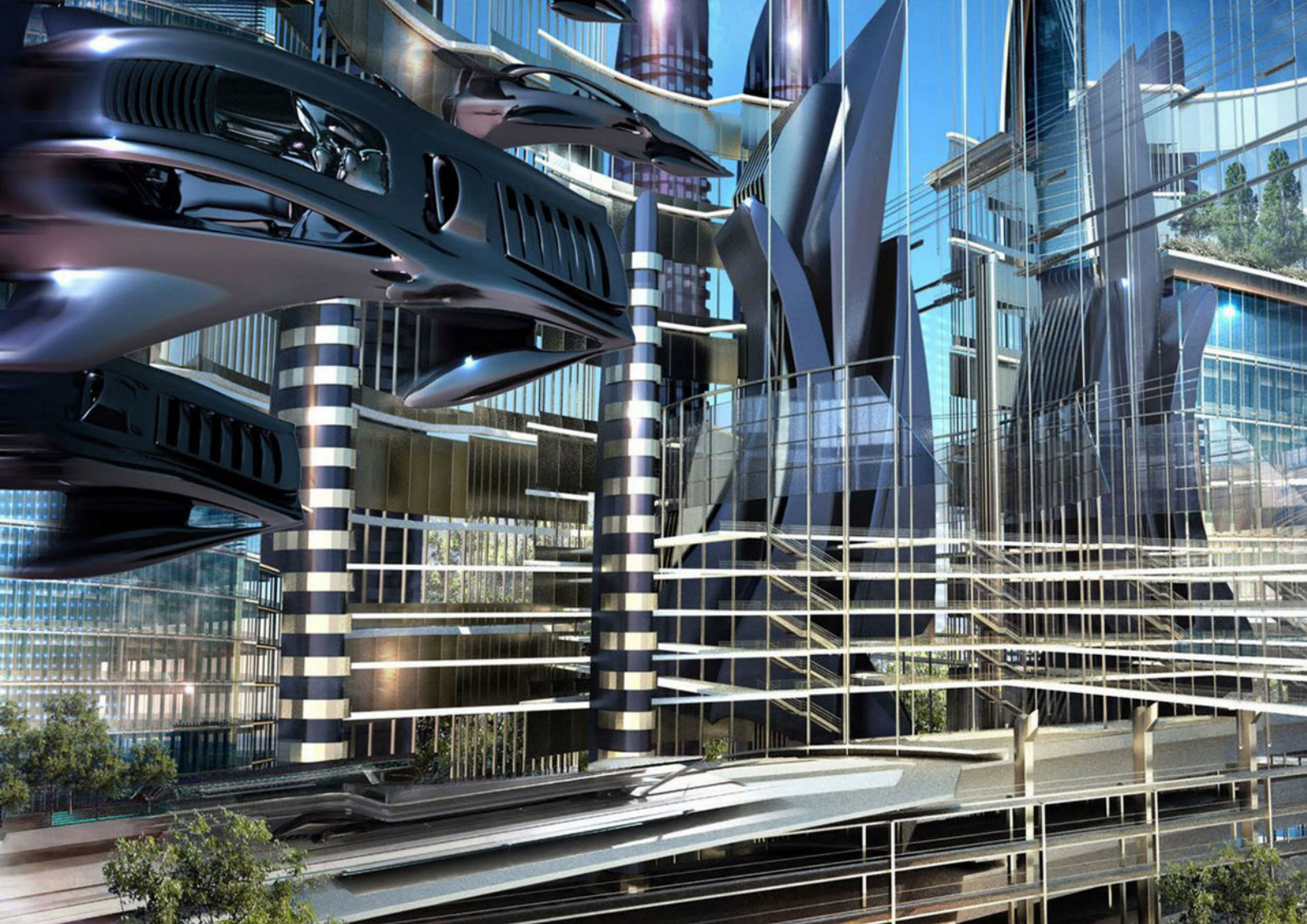
WCM: Can you tell us about any of these new products you are bringing to market?

James: Not quite yet, but watch this space. It is incredibly exciting what we have lined up over the next year. We are also putting in a lot of time and effort and funds into our research and development side of things to improve the durability and usability of our product range in order for window cleaners to be more efficient and have fewer breakdowns.

WCM: Which countries do you currently distribute the Xline range of products to?

James: 10 European distributors sell the Xline range of products in countries like: Spain, Holland and Hungary. In the last 12 months alone we shipped our products into 15 new countries around the world.

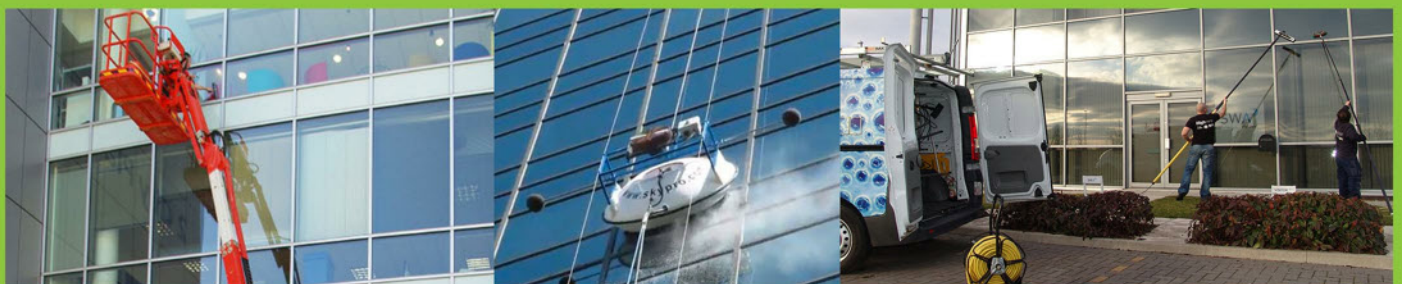
WCM: Thank you James for sharing with WCM. We will have more from Xline in coming issues.



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