

Welcome to New Members

OFA welcomes The Preeners Cleaners, Press Clean,

Member Benefits

Nebs

NEBS are interested in continuing our partnership. Our Association Partnership Program was set up approximately 15 years ago, and is available to our association and all of our members giving them a 15% discount on all NEBS products. When ordering, all our members need to do is quote this **Perfect Partner #98238**, and you are entitled to the discount.

Staples

I have negotiated a major discount for our members when buying products on-line from Staples. Please visit their website at **EWAY.CA** to view the thousands of products that they sell. Staples will be sending you your own personal account number. Please remember that payment is due when required. Once Staples has determined what products are being ordered, they will add additional discounts to the products for our members. To better understand how to manage the website, they are planning a webinar in the near future.

Conference 2015

For those of you who were unable to attend this important conference, I am reporting the gist of the talks. Those who did attend all were impressed with the quality of the speakers and the important content of the speeches.

President's Opening Remarks

I would like to report on the past and current year activities. First of all, we returned to the format of acquiring an audited statement as required by Ontario law and we hired the firm of Henry Finkelstein to audit our books. We then hired a lawyer, Jordan Cohen of MacDonald, Sager, Manis LLP to bring our corporation reporting up to Ontario government requirements. We are very pleased with the results of our professional team, which is important in maintaining the integrity of our association. Incidentally, MacDonald, Sager, Manis, LLP has joined our association as an allied trades member. We would like to officially thank them for supplying knowledgeable speakers to our conference and adding to the value added benefits we provide our membership.

For the first time in a while, our membership is starting to grow and the OFA is being recognized as the go to association for information for the public and from the government as the most professional group in the dry and wet cleaning industry.

Our executive director has been fielding many calls from the government and the public in respect to complaints about dry cleaners, but in each case, there was not one complaint against any of our members. In each case, he has used the opportunity to mediate the dispute and to encourage those dry cleaners to join our association to take advantage of our strong educational policy and attitude to settle problems with the public.

We attended the Clean Show in Atlanta and were able to foster ties with many of the allied trades and visiting Canadian dry and wet cleaners there. We have had some positive responses by some of these trades joining and supporting OFA, we expect to have more positive results and support in the near future. We even met up with a reporter from Sun publications, who promised to write about our association and some of our members in the near future. I would be remiss in not officially thanking the Fabricare Canada Magazine and especially Becca Anderson for her gracious offer of allowing us to share her booth.

We have returned to the format of sending out bi-monthly newsletters and I hope that you have found them informative. As well, our executive director continues to send out emails to our members when important issues arise. He continues to send out information to media and apparel companies to inform them of garment and other issues. He has created "Consumer Awareness Bulletins" which are emailed out on a monthly and sometimes weekly basis. In each case, he ends with the fact that the public can trust their garments to a member of OFA and to visit our website to find their local member.

Thank you again to Becca Anderson for maintaining our website as a professional place to find out information by our members, those considering membership, and for the public and media. Soon the public will be able to hyperlink from the Fabricare website to your own website when the customer clicks your link.

Executive Director's Report

Presentation of year end audited statement

Motion was presented and passed to accept the audited statement and renew our engagement of auditor for the year ending October 31, 2015

I would like to introduce our new Board of Directors: As I call your name, please stand and be recognized

President- Brian Chelsky- Careful Hand Laundry & Dry Cleaners
1st Vice President: Brad Maxwell- Suedemaster Leather Cleaners
2nd Vice President. Brian Hatt

Directors: Jason Wiesner, Carlos Fernandez, Clark McDaniels, "Dino" Kantzavelos, Michelle Kruilicki, Rob McConnell, and I am your Executive Director - Sidney Chelsky

Motion to accept the current slate of members of the Board of Directors for the year ending October 31, 2015

A motion was made and passed to accept the slate of officers for the Board of Directors.

As our president, Brian reported on the past and current year activities. I would also like to officially thank Jordan Cohen of MacDonald, Sager, Manis, LLP for his important advice in helping me maintain the numerous government regulations that our association must adhere to.

As well, I want to thank our board of directors for their dedication and participation on the Executive. They give of their time and travel at their own cost to attend our meetings. They are all dedicated to our association and our industry.

While I attended the Clean Show in Atlanta, I was able to meet with many dry and wet cleaners, as well as allied trade companies. Becca and her staff allowed me to join in discussions with those visiting her booth and introduce the benefits of belonging to OFA.

I especially would like to thank all our members for their kind words. Their emails and phone calls have given me added encouragement to continue in rebuilding our association and the status that is due to it by the public, the garment industry and the dry and wet cleaning industry.

Our Speakers

David Gray of McDonald, Sager, Manis LLP talked about branding your name, expansion through franchising in the dry cleaning industry. Three main points of franchising are uniformity, same pricing, and branding. He explained the Arthur Wishart Act which describes the rules regarding franchising and the legislation in place to protect franchises.

Lauren Sigal of McDonald, Sager, Manis LLP explained the rules of Small Claims Court. She explained how to file a claim and defense and the costs involved. She told us about what your rights are in the court and what you may be entitled to in the form of costs. As expected, there were many questions from the audience and she answered them well.

Jaqueline Stevens of Willms & Shier discussed the regulations and responsibility to report the usage of solvent to Environment Canada and Chemtrac. She illustrated the fines and imprisonment handed out to enforce regulations to protect human health and environment. She described some of the causes of these fines, such as improper storage and improper drain plugs. She reminded us that if we no longer are using perc, it is imperative that you deregister with Environment Canada and Chemtrac. She also discussed the responsibility and liability attached to Directors Insurance.

Ron Kanter of McDonald, Sager, Manis LLP explained municipal regulations and the powers of both municipal and provincial by-laws. He explained local non-conforming use, minor variances, site planning, controls, etc. Ron talked about assessment taxes on business and properties and how to go about appealing these. He alerted us to make sure

we document any conversations with city planners and recommended that we use a professional to protect us in dealing with the municipal or provincial authorities.

Ricardo Gonzalez of the Dry Cleaners & Launderers Institute (DLI) talked about the importance of on line marketing,. He showed us the evidence that customers now use the internet as a starting point to locate businesses and reviews on those businesses. He talked about the millennials and their high usage of the internet. Ricardo explained that emails are being opened more than direct mail advertising through the post office. He focused on the main strategies to reach potential customers. He recommended that we create websites in order to be in contention with other cleaners who have one.

Bob Edwards of A.L.Wilson Chemicals explained the new rules and regulations that are currently in place or will be shortly in the U.S.A. These will be soon coming to Canada and these regulations mimic those in California. He reminded us that the three main things that customers look for are Good Cleaning, Spotting, and Proper Finishing. He offered to make himself available to help individuals to improve their spotting skills and help cleaners to move to acceptable Eco green solvents and products.. He told us that if we have chosen to go Green on solvent, then we should also go Green on the spotting board. He also made available a chart to assist spotters in removing stains successfully.

Beverley Thorpe of Clean Production Action discussed how to move from perc to safer alternative. She highlighted the comparisons between solvents including wetcleaning and the savings derived. She explained the financial assistance provided in the U.S.A. to convert to wet cleaning and discussed the pros of wet cleaning.

John Harrington and Jamie Yuill of Moores Clothing talked about the latest styles and how and often styles change now compared to years ago. He recommended that we get professional consultation to make sure you are dressed properly. He explained that people make up their opinion of you within the first five minutes they meet you. He discussed what to purchase in order to maximize your wardrobe. He provided great information for both men and women on what to wear and not to wear. There were a great many questions and at the end of the questions, we agreed to work as partners in promoting each other and encouraging people to dress properly.

Jason Wiesner of Wiesner Insurance discussed the problems incurred when dealing with a catastrophe that shuts down your business. He discussed the problems with proving losses and what you have to do to prove your loss. He reminded us to keep records of our sales and expenses for a minimum of the last three years and prepare a checklist for preparation for a possible major shutdown. There were a great many questions and it was evident that it was our own responsibility to be prepared for such an eventuality.

Sidney Chelsky, Executive Director of OFA and President of Careful Consulting Service spoke on his experiences in handling hotel business. He warned us about doing proper costing before we go after this business, as there are many pitfalls that we may not be aware of. He said that if we can overcome these obstacles, then this can be very profitable business.

Kang Shin, the Vice-President of the Korean Dry Cleaners Association brought greetings from his association and told us about its membership. Sid Chelsky discussed the future of working together with his association for the betterment of the industry.

CLOSING REMARKS by President

WOW! What a conference. We sure got our value today from being an OFA member and supporting our association.

I would like to thank all our speakers for their presentations. I think you will all agree that our Executive Director has put a great deal of effort into putting on this conference. The wealth of knowledge that has been imparted to our membership has more than given a return on investment to all our members. We need to let all our other members that missed today's conference that they missed a great opportunity to grow their businesses.

A special thank you goes to Carlos Fernandez for co-ordinating the golf tournament and providing the trophies to the winners. As well, thank you to Clark McDaniel of Fabricare Cleaning Services for sponsoring our lunch and to Robert Kuenzien of Green Earth Cleaning Canada for sponsoring our coffee breaks. Since the OFA is a not-for-profit association, it is much appreciated to have this additional financial support so that we can continue to present great conferences now and in the future.

As president of the OFA I have the pleasure of working with a balanced mix of cleaners, suppliers, and industry professionals. We discuss many topics about how we can improve our industry and offer more value to our OFA family. We are looking at ways to re-invigorate our industry and increase business to our members. One of the topics being proposed is approaching our provincial politicians about having dry cleaning tax deductible just like dining and entertainment is. It will give customers who are required to wear business attire like suits and ties an extra incentive to visit the cleaner more often. We can achieve this through continued support from our membership and by showing those cleaners on the fence that we are a forward thinking association. Dress for success will only help our industry. We are working hard for the benefit of the industry as a whole."

The OFA is continuing to get the word out about our industry. Brian Hatt and our Executive Director have been working with Seneca College to bring about a symposium on solvents with the help of Environment Canada in the near future.

Thank you for attending this year's OFA conference and I look forward to many of you at the President's Dinner Saturday, November 28th.

Cleaners Supply

At the end of the conference, Brenda Chelsky drew a raffle ticket from which was given to all operators at the beginning of the conference. The winner of a \$200.00 Gift Certificate from Cleaners Supply was Rose Strecker from Britannia Cleaners in Stoney Creek, Ontario. Thank you to Cleaners Supply for providing this gift for our conference.

Clark McDaniel (Fabricare Cleaning Center) & Green Earth Cleaning Canada Inc.

Thank you to Clark McDaniel and Robert Kuenzlen for sponsoring our luncheon and coffee breaks. It was greatly appreciated and helps with the cost of the event.

McDonald, Sager, Manis LLP

Special thanks go out to our legal representatives from McDonald, Sager, and Manis LLP for providing us with three very knowledgeable speakers. If you need advice, this is the firm to go to.

Wilms & Shier LLP

Thank you to Jaqueline Stevens who continues to amaze us with her knowledge about environmental laws and directors responsibilities.

Luc Martin – President, Martin Inc.

Many thanks to Luc Martin, president of ALLQ, the Association Des Locateurs De Linge Du Quebec for translating the Fair Claims Guide into French (en francais) for those of our members that require it. It is greatly appreciated. Merci beaucoup.

Added Comments

The accommodations at The Waterside Inn were superb and the food was extraordinary (the only 4 star dining room in Mississauga). Every manager and employee of the hotel made all of our members comfortable and looked after our every wish. Kudos goes out to this fine hotel.

News of our members

I have issued Certificates of Appreciation to Green Earth Cleaning Canada Inc. and Jensen U.S.A. Inc. for their additional contribution to our association. Green Earth sponsored our coffee breaks for the conference and Jensen purchased and donated to OFA a trophy to be known as the OFA-Jensen Trophy for our golf tournament. As well, I have issued Certificates of Appreciation to thank Clark McDaniel of Fabricare Cleaning Center for sponsoring our lunch for the conference and Harco Co. Ltd. for allowing us to use their boardroom at no cost for our executive board meetings. As well, they have supplied lunch to our executive at no cost to the association. Previously, I issued a Certificate to Marcia Todd for her continuous support of OFA.

Symposium

OFA together with Seneca College is planning a symposium on the dry cleaning industry which will hopefully take place in the fall. It will be open to everyone in the industry and we are aiming to podcast it across the country. Meetings are taking place to make sure that is educational and pertinent to today's alternative solvents available and that we are able to reassure the public of the environmental safety concerns that we in OFA espouse.

Money management for the laundry & dry cleaning business

Bookkeeping doesn't exactly rank high on the list of fun things to do as a business owner. However, accurate bookkeeping is a must for any entrepreneur and small business, and it is incredibly important for those who want to grow their ventures in the near future.

The benefits of bookkeeping include:

- Improved organization
- Financial predictions
- Tax compliance
- Accurate spending
- More financial awareness

In the laundry industry, it is vital to know about profits, revenue, expenses and other related elements. You want to be able to plan ahead and ensure your business remains solvent, and bookkeeping is the first step toward accomplishing that goal.

Here are a few tips for how you can improve your business' bookkeeping:

1. Manage your time

Bookkeeping can be a time-consuming process. You want to dedicate the right amount of effort, but you don't want it to interfere with your other duties or become an undesirable chore.

That is why the first step toward better bookkeeping is time management. For starters, set aside a block of time each week to look over your books. You may only need an hour or two, but creating a set schedule will help you remain focused and ensure you don't let this task slip by.

Time management is critical for effective bookkeeping

2. Get the right tools

Bookkeeping can be made a whole lot easier with the right tools in place. Technology today is designed with bookkeeping in mind, like software and mobile applications that allow you to check in remotely.

Gone are the days of bookkeeping with paper and pencil. Tools like QuickBooks or cloud computing can help you out with your accounting needs. Give a few options a trial run when you are getting started, and don't be afraid to try out new technology that may give you an edge.

3. Organize your records

You won't be able to perform accurate accounting for your laundry business without the right records. One key money-management tip is organization.

You can begin by tracking down all related financial documents. Then, store these in one easy-to-access location. Naturally, online is better, since you can view these files from various devices and at any time. Keep items in neatly labeled folders and make sure you hang on to all business receipts, invoices and other expense documents for later review.

4. Ensure tax compliance

Tax season can be one of the most frustrating times of year for a small-business owner. To make matters more confusing, there are many additional deadlines for business taxes in addition to the April deadline for personal taxes.

"Let bookkeeping make other aspects of your business easier."

Therefore, take note of all related tax deadlines for your business. You may also want to create a separate fund just to deposit future taxes into. A little bit throughout the year can ensure you have enough to pay taxes and won't have to find other ways to come up with that money. Non-compliance with the IRS and the Department of Labor can be a major headache for a business owner.

5. Plan ahead

Planning ahead should be a key part of your bookkeeping efforts. Your expenses are one item that should be on your mind - track upcoming purchases, payroll costs and other factors that will impact your business.

Knowing what's coming around the corner will naturally help you prepare, plus it will also give you time to research loans and other financing options, if needed. It is also beneficial to create a detailed calendar of your business expenses, even looking as far as a few years into the future. The last thing you want is to have a major cost creep up on you.

All in all, good bookkeeping is the foundation of strong money management for a small business.

Resolve Customer Bills Disputes Promptly

Every business has its share of slow-paying customers and plain old bad apples who won't settle up without making a fuss.

But some companies always seem to be embroiled in lengthy and counterproductive billing disputes with their customers. Be careful that your business doesn't fall into that rut. If you find that more than five per cent to 10 per cent of your accounts receivable are late because they are lying in the dispute category, take corrective action to shift them into the paid category.

Review your accounts receivable for signs of collection problems, which generally fall into these basic categories of customers:

- **Unable to pay**, including companies that are insolvent, bankrupt, or dealing with the death of an owner. Don't waste a lot of time on these cases. There's generally nothing you can do except get in line at the courthouse and hope to recover something.
- **Financially strapped** but able to pay. This includes companies that could go to a bank and borrow the money. When these people say they *can't* pay, what they're really saying is they decided to pay someone else instead. Effective staff members in your accounts receivable department should be able to convince these customers to pay your company first.
- **Refusing to pay**, although they could, because of a billing dispute. This includes companies that disagree with the bill. Somebody in your firm should be responsible for resolving these accounts within 48 hours. If it takes longer, the problem generally magnifies and your customer might become alienated in the process.

Once you have that overall picture, try taking these three steps to get better results from that last category of intransigent customers:

1. Set strict deadlines for resolving billing disputes.
2. Post credits and corrections immediately once a dispute is resolved.
3. Notify customers that the disputes and errors have been corrected.

Resolving billing disputes promptly gives you a better chance of collecting past due accounts -- and keeping customers.

Empower Employees and Set Parameters

You've heard the employee empowerment and involvement encourages staff members to solve workplace problems. And perhaps you've even tried participatory management only to have problem-solving sessions deteriorate into gripe sessions that left you and the workers feeling frustrated.

Employee involvement techniques depend on effective communication skills. Ask yourself how you can involve employees in solving workplace problems. But before you look for answers, ask yourself how you can establish good communication skills between employees and managers?

On the path to participatory management, workers and managers use communication skills to meet each other halfway. As a manager you need to:

- **Publicly commit yourself to open communication.** Workers aren't mind readers. You must tell them frequently and consistently that you value their ideas and consider them important members of a problem-solving team.
- **Interact with staff members ... at their level.** Walk among your employees at job sites. Let them know that you are concerned and interested in their jobs and welfare.
- **Listen.** When workers offer suggestions or express concerns, don't interrupt workers and preach to them about the most effective ways to increase production or cut waste.
- **Encourage employee participation in meetings.** When you schedule departmental or plant meetings, ask workers to put discussion topics on the agenda. Put the topics in order of priority. This encourages employees to focus the discussion on their most important concerns.

Emphasize to your staff members that participatory management is not about griping, it's about solving problems.

A young couple move into a new neighbourhood. The next morning while they are eating breakfast, the young woman sees her neighbour hanging the wash outside... "That laundry is not very clean; she doesn't know how to wash correctly. Perhaps she needs better laundry soap," Her husband looks on, remaining silent. Every time her neighbor hangs her was to dry, the young woman makes the same comments. A month later, the woman is surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and says to her husband: "Look, she finally learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this." The husband replies, "I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows," And so it is with life...What we see when watching others depends on the clarity

