

Universal Linen Service

... a company that's built its business on tradition and technology



Universal Linen Service can trace its roots back more than 100 years in Louisville, Ky., back to the days of Spalding Laundry Company.

Over the course of the last century, Universal Linen Service's business and technology have evolved. But the company's tradition of commitment to its customers has remained constant throughout all of that change, said Tom Austin, president and owner of Universal Linen Service. In fact, Universal Linen's laundry services operates in a building that was built in 1909, which is on the National Historic Registry — only one example of the company's well-seeded roots.

Although Universal Linen's business now focuses primarily on renting and laundering its napkins, linens and towels, the company continues to do a lot of the same things as its predecessors — Spalding Laundry and Universal Uniforms — like laundering uniforms. The reason WHY, Austin explained, is because Universal Linen is committed to working with and for its customers, Austin explained.

As a complete service provider, Universal Linen can handle all of its customers' textile needs, from cleaning their entrance-mats to the laundering and pressing of all apparel for the front and back of the house.

But the company has undergone quite a few changes in recent years — changes that make it stand out from all others in the industry.

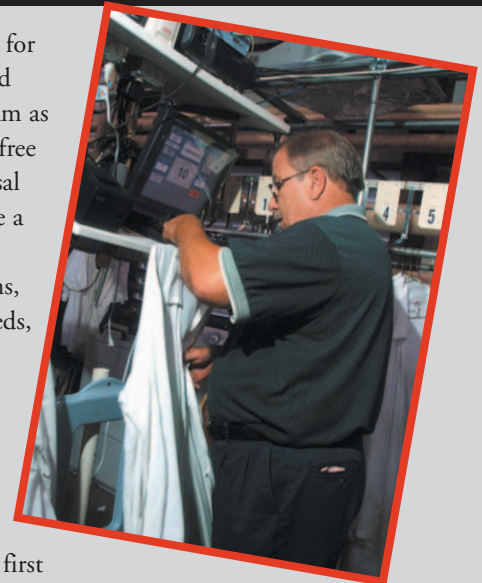
In 2003, Universal Linen Service's largest competitor, National Linen, decided to leave the Kentucky market. Universal Linen bought National Linen's service contracts, fleet of trucks and service inventory, and hired several of National Linen's former employees. With that acquisition, Universal Linen increased its employment to 139, and now runs a fleet of 25 trucks, services customers within a 90-mile

radius of Louisville and cleans more than 300,000 pounds of laundry a week. And Universal Linen is now a leader in linen service and technology.

Take the company's hand-held



computers, which are used for delivery-route accuracy, and touch-free restroom program as examples. With the touch-free restroom program, Universal Linen can not only provide a restaurant with all the bar towels, table cloths, napkins, aprons and uniforms it needs, but it can also install motion-controlled paper towel and soap dispensers, as well as motion-controlled toilet flushers.



Universal Linen also is the first company in the region to adopt a technology that tracks when garments are rented, picked up, laundered and returned. It's all done with radio-frequency chips that are sewn right into the clothing; and the tracking system not only cuts down on the customer's cost for lost garments, but helps Universal Linen keep track of when garments need to be replaced.

That's all part of Universal Linen's commitment to customers, Austin added. And in a matter of weeks, the company will have its new Web site launched, where customers can actually go online to place orders and special service requests.

So why should a Kentucky restaurant manager or owner opt for service from Universal Linen over another laundry or linen service? Austin said that answer is simple.

"People choose us because we're a locally-owned and operated company," he said. "And our products and service are consistent and reliable, week in, week out."

