

CSC Network News

Empowering Independent Laundries

4TH QUARTER 2022



Uniform Masters
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT
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Uniform Masters



**UNIFORM
MASTERS**

A gallon of gas was 15 cents in 1946 when Morris (Moe) Caen moved his new family from New Jersey to Memphis, Tennessee with a Ford station wagon and plans to start his own company. Years later, that company would become Uniform Masters, but in its infancy, Mechanics Laundry opened its doors with no existing customers and did not operate off contracted rental/lease services as we do today.

That changed with the passing of Moe in the late 60s. At that time my father, Richard Caen returned from law school to begin his career in the family business. Richard has managed Uniform Masters for more than 50 years now and has grown and adjusted the company several times. Like Richard, I joined the company after returning from school in Boston. The days of operating on an aging IBM system as well as operating sales and marketing via endless door knocking and wasted window time had passed. For the past 15 years, much of our focus has been to modernize our business for the next generation while maintaining our service quality focus that has driven our growth and success for generations.

Some Uniform Companies Seem to Have Confused "Customer Service" with "Answering Service."

These words come from a campaign that we ran a few years ago which embodies our personal approach to



customer service. We are successful because of our hard work and a personal touch that includes listening, learning, responsiveness, integrity, and a healthy dose of humor with our incredible service. Doing the small things right and speaking plainly is a huge part of our unique way of building personalized service relationships.

Our competitors often look and sound the same. A "boring insider voice" relaying corporate jargon and confusing

contract terms. We work hard to make things easy by offering clear and honest terms with a focus on long-term and high-quality personal service. We are unique in our ways of relating to and supporting our customers. Some of the ways we describe our unique brand image are- credible but not 'corporate,' blue-collar chic, and fashionably retro. This honest and dependable personality is a core part of our unique historic and future operations.



details right. Sometimes it's the simple things we do that our competitors don't, such as having the basic courtesy to call people back. We want to take away the headaches and time of managing uniforms, mats, and facility supplies so our customers can focus on more important things.

Family-Owned and Independent

As a family-owned business our biggest advantage is that our competitors can never compete with our personal dedication to service. Our commitment to customer integrity continues for generations, while our competitors are dependent on the whims of the stock market or other "stakeholders."

The advantage of independence in decision-making means we can set long-term goals based on our company motto and family's dedication to helping our customers: "look good, feel good, and be safe."

Delivering on Family Values

Through living our values as a family company, we believe it is important to communicate not only good news but to have direct and honest conversations when mistakes happen. We make it right. Then we help build a long-term and personalized service plan that prevents the mistake from happening again. We all make mistakes and at Uniform Masters we choose to focus on solutions.

Rising the Challenge

We continue to maintain our commitment to relationships and long-term goals with both our customers and team members. Uniform Masters is a small business, and we know our customers and employees are experiencing many of the same challenges as us. We understand that our customers need solutions, and our teams need compensation. Consistently showing up to engage honestly and communicate openly, even in difficult times, is how we met this challenge both internally and externally.

Routes, Products & Salespeople

Uniform Master's services a 100-mile radius from the Mid-South/Memphis Metro area, which includes North Mississippi, East Arkansas, and West Tennessee. Our products include premium personalized uniforms, Microfiber Mops, Towels, Mats, soaps, and other facility needs.

We believe everyone in the company shares the responsibility of growing the business. That said, we do have two dedicated salespeople as liaisons to manage accounts and guarantee the personal quality service we are known for.

The Uniform Master's Advantage

"You are there when we need you, and you don't waste our time." This is by far the most common thing we hear from new customers as well as our partners who have been with us for over 30 years. We don't censor phone calls to upper management. We are responsive to their needs in a time frame that best suits their needs.

Rather than using complicated jargon or complex contracts to provide short-term incentives, we provide service on terms that best suit our customers. We have the flexibility to adjust to their priorities and the expertise to get the



Labor has been the greatest challenge for the uniform focus of our company. Due to Memphis being a hub for air freight and warehousing, many businesses have transitioned to temporary employment agencies for cheaper labor that can't match our uniquely personal service.

A Legacy of Family

Growing up in a family business means that I have lived the values of this company since my infancy. I have pride and respect in what we do that no corporate entity can ever duplicate. The dedication to service and personal relationships extends back over 75 years, and I feel humbled to continue that legacy of integrity.

We plan succession the same way we have provided quality personal service for over 75 years. We have the difficult conversations with empathy, and we truly listen and seek to understand both each other's and our customer's

needs. It's not always the smoothest transition when one generation starts to take over as family dynamics can be complex. We found a business coach was extremely helpful in navigating these changes. Aptly referred to as our "business psychologist" he helped us build a new business operation structure that included Richard reducing his role as operator to only managing employee benefits and payroll. This reduction in responsibility then expanded his ability to impart wisdom towards level-headed action for the next generation.

What Membership Means

Being a member of CSCNetwork provides not just fantastic lifelong relationships, but a looking glass into a world that goes widely unacknowledged. For Uniform Masters it provides an opportunity to not just see people facing your same problems, but an ability to see how organizations are

tackling those obstacles in very different ways. Bringing our top industry vendors to one place for us to combine our buying power is an invaluable asset for remaining competitive.



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