Store Owner Success Series:
Coin Laundry Planning Guide
Investing in The Coin Laundry Industry

According to most industry experts, there are some 34,000 self-service laundries in North America alone. These "stores" generate approximately $8 Billion in retail sales serving some 30 million people.

We think a self-service laundry has tremendous advantages to offer those interested in owning and managing their own business. We're glad you came to Dexter to learn more about "our" industry.

Our business is to provide the basic need of refreshing laundry. According to most industry experts, there are some 34,000 self-service laundries in North America alone. These "stores" generate approximately $8 Billion in retail sales serving some 30 million people.

The Customer
The bottom line is everyone does laundry. Each of us either uses our own washers and dryers, or someone else's. If you're a homeowner you most likely have your own machines, although you may wash larger items in a self service laundry. If you're a student you most likely use the school's machines or a self-service laundry. If you rent your home, sometimes you rent machines or use a self-service laundry. If you are away from home, traveling, or on vacation, you'll wish a self service laundry was near.

Self-service laundries cater to people needing to temporarily "rent" laundry equipment. They pay for the opportunity to use your washers and dryers instead of their own. People will use your laundry because they don't have access to other machines. The "vend price" customers pay compensates you for your rent, utilities, employees, other expenses and profit.

Sometimes, customers will use your laundry because you have available capacity. They may have access to one washer and one dryer, but you have many. By using all your high performance machines they can save a lot of time.

Apartment renters may have access to equipment but share it with many other tenants. Most would rather use your laundry than wait for available machines in the apartment building.

The Opportunity
So, how do you maximize on an investment in a self-service laundry?

1) Pick a good location.
   a. Close proximity to dense population.
   b. Easy ingress and egress.
   c. Safe, ample parking
   d. Affordable rent or acquisition cost.

2) Consult with a qualified equipment distributor.
   a. Use only reputable companies who are willing to share existing customer testimonials.
   b. Look for longevity in business and get to know your distributor.
   c. Listen to your distributor's advice without taking installation shortcuts.
   d. Learn from your distributor's mistakes to avoid your own.

3) Use modern equipment
   a. Save Water.
   b. Save Electricity.
   c. Save Gas.
   d. Reduce cycle times to maximize customer turnover.
   e. Reduce downtime to increase customer satisfaction.
   f. Increase capacity to win new customers.
   g. Use Easy Card™ to make more money.

We believe to compete and excel in the self-service laundry business you need to make doing laundry as easy and fast as possible. Make it easy to find your store, park and gain access to the machines (automatic doors). Have your machines in working order, and simplify change making or use a card system. Place large capacity washers near the front of the store and dryers along outside walls. Always provide laundry carts and spacious folding areas. The key to success is efficiently processing happy customers.
The Advantages
The self-service laundry business provides many operational advantages to the small business owner.

Historically, our industry has weathered weak economic times and grown steadily as the population increases. Washing and drying clothes is a basic function in life and a simple business.

As a cash business, customers pay for their services upfront and there are very few accounts receivable. While self-service laundries do require a capital investment upfront, they do not require much labor to operate. The machines do the job - and never show up late for work.

For More Information
Authorized Dexter Distributors have built thousands of successful self-service laundries. We invite you to locate your nearest distributor and contact them for more information regarding your local self-service laundry market.

The employee owners at Dexter would like to be the first to welcome you to our industry!
Laundromat Investment Frequently Asked Questions

We know that potential investors in the laundromat industry have lots of questions. Below are some of the most commonly asked questions and answers that we encounter from new and potential laundry owners. For more details on any of these topics, or to get answers to additional questions, please ask your Dexter Authorized Distributor. They are a valuable resource, and can assist you with the planning, purchase, installation and long term support of your laundry project and will be able to assist with all of your laundry needs.

Is a Coin Laundry a Good Investment?
A coin-operated laundry is a smart investment, particularly in today’s economy. It’s an all-cash, low labor, and recession-resistant business. Many owners see their initial investment paid back in a short period of time, and this is a business with little inventory, or accounts receivable problems to worry about.

Compared to many businesses, with the help of your Dexter Authorized Distributor, a laundromat is actually a very easy business to start. The requirements for start-up capital are very reasonable, there are no franchise fees, smaller stores have only minimal labor requirements (since customers do most of the work), and there are no spoilage factors. And with manufactured sponsored financing programs (like Dexter Financial Services), once you have your start-up capital, it is very easy to finance the equipment you need. Beyond the obvious revenue from your coin-op washers and dryers; additional services such as wash & fold, dry cleaning service and alterations & repairs and on site vending can also generate additional revenue.

People from all walks of life and ethnic origins are investing in the commercial laundry industry. It is a common sense business, requiring minimal supervision. It can be run on an absentee basis, which helps you avoid giving up your current profession or other source of income.

Why Should I Invest in the Coin Laundry Business?
A laundromat is a smart investment for individuals looking for a business opportunity with good return on investment. You have no inventory and no receivables to worry about. An attendant can add an additional profitable wash, dry and fold service and vending, tailoring and other services can add even more profit potential.

Who Should Invest in a Coin Laundry?
People from all walks of life, inducing retirees, should invest in coin laundries. It is a basic, common-sense, vital service business requiring minimal labor.

Do I Require Any Special Skills To Own and Operate a Self-Service Coin Laundry?
A coin laundry is a relatively simple business to operate. No special skills are required. The most important factors in your success are desire, perseverance and a well-equipped coin laundry with the right mix of equipment in the right location.

How Much Can I Expect to Earn Investing in a Commercial Laundry?
Are There Tax Benefits?
The success rate of any business (coin
laundry or otherwise) depends on how well you manage it. Some important factors in the success of a modern laundromat are its location, the size of the store, the mix of equipment, the hours of operation, advertising and promotion. Your Dexter Authorized Distributor can help you put together a plan for your business that covers not only investment costs, but the return on your investment. Click here to find the Dexter Authorized Distributor nearest you.

The tax benefits of investing in a laundry can depend on your yearly income. For more details contact your tax provider.

**How Much Does It Cost To Build a Professional Coin Laundry?**

There are several factors that can impact your potential cost. Location, demographics of the area, layout of the site, size of the laundry, sizes of the equipment, water heaters, water storage tanks, plumbing, exhaust venting, etc., will all contribute to the total cost of the store. A properly designed and equipped coin laundry can cost between $135,000 to $600,000 or more. More important than the actual cost of a store is what a store will generate in revenues and profits for the owner relative to the cost – that is what determines the owner’s return on investment. For more details on building a successful laundromat in your area, please contact your Dexter Authorized Distributor.

**Where Do I Get Financing to Open a Laundromat?**

Dexter Laundry offers competitive financing and your Dexter Authorized Distributor can assist you with how to apply for financing for your laundromat investment. They can make recommendations on how and where to finance your businesses and will work with you to select the option that best suits your needs and budget. Click here to learn more about financing your laundry equipment through Dexter Financial Services.

**In Addition to Financing, What Will I Need for Start Up Costs?**

The cash down payment for an existing store depends on the cost of the store and the availability of outside financing, or the willingness of the existing owner to hold financing as a provision of your purchase. The up-front capital required to build a new store will depend on your equipment mix, the size of the laundry, and the condition of the location.

As a general guideline, recommend that you have approximately thirty percent of the purchase price available to invest into a new Laundromat, assuming you have a financial statement able to finance the balance. In addition to the down payment, you will have to pay insurance, escrow charges, and deposits on utilities. You also should set aside a cash reserve equal to 2-3 months of operating costs of the business, while your new business is developing a customer base. Your Dexter Authorized Distributor can help walk you through the expected costs and investment
needed to open up your new laundry.

**How Does Location Impact the Success of a Laundromat?**
Location is one of the most important factors in determining the future success of any coin laundry. Your coin laundry should be located in a high-traffic, densely populated, low-to-medium income area, with good access and the availability of convenient parking. Coin laundries can also do well in middle-to-high income areas with single family homes because many two income families find it more convenient, time saving and cost efficient to use the local coin laundry or its wash and fold service.

Whether you are considering purchasing an existing laundry or building a new laundry from scratch, your Dexter Authorized Distributor can assist you in the selection of a good location. Among the many services Dexter Authorized Distributors provide is a free evaluation of your location, store design, and equipment recommendations. Their factory trained laundry industry experts will look at the demographics and traffic patterns of an area to assist you in finding the best possible location for your laundromat.

Dexter Distributors can also provide you with assistance in negotiating a lease, obtaining financing and more.

**Can an Equipment Dealer Help to Find and Evaluate a Location?**
Yes! Among the many services Dexter Authorized Distributors provide are free evaluation of your location, store design, and equipment recommendations. They can also assist you with developing a business plan, proforma and applying for financing.

**Should I Buy an Existing Coin Laundry and Upgrade It, Or Build a New One?**
There are many different factors that can impact whether you should buy an existing laundromat or build one from scratch. Your Dexter Authorized Distributor will be more than happy to meet with you on site to discuss your potential investment, be it an existing business, or a new location.

**What’s the Process of Building a New Laundromat?**
Your Dexter Authorized Distributor will be able to help you find a location, recommend a mix of equipment, and design your laundromat’s layout. After you approve the basic design, an architect will deliver a complete set of plans for submission to the appropriate building department. Construction will then start with the delivery appropriate gas, water, sewer and electrical service to the site followed by installation of the equipment and other tenant improvements.

**What are Impact Fees and How Do They Impact my Laundromat?**
While not all cities impose them, impact fees are charges imposed by cities on new construction projects that require connecting to the city’s water, sewer or
irrigation system. Costs can range from a few dollars per machine up to several thousand depending on the city. If you purchase an existing laundry, it would not be necessary for you to pay these fees. However, there may be other charges required to bring an aging laundromat up to code. For details on what you might expect for impact fees in your area, please consult with your Dexter Authorized Distributor.

**Are There Other Taxes or Permits I Need to Know About?**

There are an assortment of licenses and registrations that do need to be obtained in order to open a laundromat. These can vary for new or existing locations and by municipality. For more details on what you can expect for your area and laundry location, please consult with your Dexter Authorized Distributor.

**How Much Should I Expect to Pay for Utilities?**

If your laundromat washers and dryers are water and energy efficient, and designed for heavy-duty commercial use, the utilities costs can average 15-25% of your monthly gross income depending on which part of the country your laundry is located. Older, less efficient laundry equipment can push utility bills beyond 30% of the monthly gross. Consult with your Dexter Authorized Distributor on how to minimize your utility expenses and to make your laundromat as energy efficient as possible.

**What Type of Washers Should I buy?**

Customers primarily visit laundromats because they do not have, or have inadequate laundry equipment at home. The equipment you install for your customers to use is the most important factor in the success of your business.

Customers must be more satisfied with the wash results they get in your laundry than with the wash they get in a laundry down the street or at home using an appliance washer. As a laundromat owner, you
will want to install high quality, durable machines that out-perform the normal washers and dryers that consumers have at home. Since professional laundry equipment is also a significant investment, you’ll also want to invest in dependable machines that have a long life even in heavy use conditions.

Customers also appreciate being able to choose from a wide range of machine sizes to wash items like bedspreads, rugs, curtains or big family bundles. You’ll want to offer a variety of sizes for your customers from small washers for college students to large multi-load washers for large families or those with large items.

Your Dexter Authorized Distributor can make recommendations about the types and sizes of equipment that is right for your business.

Why Not Install Home Appliance-Type Top-Loading Washers?
Toploaders are not always the best choice for a professional coin-laundry because they use up to 60% more water and energy. Primarily designed for home use, top load washers are not built for the heavy use of a laundromat environment. They use up to 60% more water and energy, and on average last only a few years when compared to professional front load models. The result is that you’ll earn much less money with toploaders and spend much more money on repairs and replacement. Ask your Dexter Authorized Distributor what a difference front-load washers can make in your laundry.

How Much Time Will I Need to Spend Managing My Laundry?
At first, you will spend many hours learning the business and getting familiar with the various pieces of equipment installed. In time you will be able to manage your laundromat with fewer numbers of hours.

Do Many People Own More Than One Laundromat?
Yes! There are many successful multi-store owners in the coin laundry industry. In fact, it is very common for individuals to choose the coin laundry industry because of the ability to own and operate multiple stores. With managements systems such as Dexter’s Easy Card system, it continues to get easier for store owners to control the operation of multiple locations.

Have more questions? Visit our store owner resource center online at www.dexterlaundry.com or schedule a free consultation with your Dexter Authorized Distributor. To find the Dexter Distributor nearest you, visit us online at www.dexterlaundry.com or call us at 1-800-524-2954.
Location, Location, Location!

Location is the first thing to consider when looking to build or buy a new or used coin laundry. Your Dexter Authorized Distributor can also help with location selection. Consult them for more details.

Things to consider:

- Where is the store located? Is it a busy street? What are the demographics of the neighborhood? What type of customers is this store going to attract?
- 80% of a coin laundry’s customers come because the coin laundry is closest to their home. How close is this store to its ideal customers?
- Is the store well-lit? Is it visible from the street?
- Is adequate signage available, or is it possible to install it?
- Does it have easy access in and out? Is it handicapped accessible?
- Is ample off-street parking available? Is it easy to get into and out of the parking lot?
- What other types of businesses are located in the same area? Are these businesses that could increase or decrease business?
- What is the traffic count for this store?
- Where is the competition located? What services do they offer and how do they impact business of this store?
- Is the store (or can it be) clean, well-lit and safe for customers? Lower income neighborhoods may need higher levels of security. Are women and / or families going to feel safe coming to this location?
- Middle-class and upper income areas may often need additional services such as drop-off laundry or dry-cleaning.
- If the store is existing, does it have the technical capabilities the owner will need for utilities, plumbing, etc.
- If the owners want to lease, can they get a long-term lease with reasonable rent? Do they have availability of options to renew, and low rent increases?
Why Location Matters!

Every retail operation must have a location to do business. Given a choice, all store owners would choose a great location. The only way to make an informed decision is to evaluate the location and its merits. This evaluation process is nothing more than gathering pertinent information regarding the prospective site for the laundry. The more pertinent information gathered, the greater the opportunity to uncover that GREAT laundry store location.

• Should the store be located in the country, suburbs or in an urban center?

• Should the store be in a strip mall, a free-standing building or on a commercial or residential street?

• Will the store have off-street parking for customers?

• How big will the store be? 3,000 square feet? Bigger? Smaller?

• Should the store be attended or unattended?

• Should the store provide other services to customers in addition to the laundry, such as drop-off service, drycleaning, shirt finishing and shoe repair? Take some time to define the type of store desired. Define the location in concrete terms: the type of building and building site; then set out to find that great location.

The Next Step
After finding several potential sites that fit the basic criteria of proximity, availability and space, it’s time for the next step. Begin to gather the information to facilitate decisions about the site. Is this site a great location, a good location or a poor location? Gather information on the demographic and population makeup of the site; its marketing area; the competition provided by other laundries in the marketing area; the traffic patterns in the area of the potential store; the visibility of the store; and what other types of retail stores are in the immediate vicinity.

Population: Potential Customers
When selecting a site for the store, pay close attention to who the potential customers will be. Consider the following:

• What is the total population of all people living in the marketing area?

• What percentage of the total population in the marketing area are:
  — Renters?
  — Condo owners?
  — Homeowners?

• What percentage of people living in the marketing area are:
  — Single?
  — Single-parent families?
  — Dual-income families?
  — Senior citizens?
  — Students?

• What percentage of people living in the marketing area can be classified as
  --- Low income to lower-middle income?
  --- Lower-middle income to middle income?
  --- Middle income to
upper-middle income?
— Upper-middle income to wealthy?

• Is the population in the marketing area stable? Has it declined or increased during the past couple of years?

• If the population is increasing, where will the newcomers live? New rental housing? New condos? New single-family housing?

• Are there many new building permits being issued by the city within the marketing area?

• If the population is decreasing, from what area are the people leaving?

• Why are no new people moving into the vacated housing units (if that is the situation)?

Use this type of information to create a profile of potential customers.

**Competition -- The Key to Success**
Analyze the competition in the market area. It is very important to visit existing stores and multifamily dwelling laundry rooms in the marketing area — to determine the competition. Knowing the type of competitive situation will go a long way toward determining if the chosen store site is going to be great. When visiting the competition, consider the following:

• What type of store does the competition operate?
  — A large store (over 3,000 square feet)?
  — A medium store (2,000 to 3,000 square feet)?
  — A small store (under 2,000 square feet)?

• What services does the competition offer?
  — Drop-off?
  — Budget drycleaning?
  — Professional drycleaning?

• Is the store:
  — Fully attended?
  — Partially attended?
  — Unattended?
— All frontload washers and no topload washers?

- How many of each type?
  - Topload washers
  - Frontload washers
  - 18 lb., 25 lb., 30 lb., 35 lb., 50 lb., 75 lb.

- What is the vend price of each washer?

- How many dryers are in the store?

- What is the vend price of each dryer?

- Is there a sufficient amount of dryers in the store to take care of the peak washing periods?

- Are there bill changers in the store?

- Are there soap vending machines in the store?

- Is it a coinless, card-operated store?

- Are there snack and soda vending machines in the store?

- What other amenities are there (video games, a lounge, a television set)?

- How does the store look?

- Is the store clean or dirty?

- Is the store neat or shabby?

- Does the equipment look fresh and new or old and beat up?

- Are there many out-of-order signs visible on the washers and dryers?

- How is the interior signage in the store?

- Is there a sufficient number of folding tables for customers?

- Are there customer seating areas in the store?

- Is the store excessively hot? Cold?

- Is there a ventilation system? A heating system? Air-conditioning?

- Keep in mind how customers will get to the store. Will they drive? Use public transportation? Walk? In addition, consider the following:

  - Is the store on a main thoroughfare or on a side street? How visible is it?

  - Is the store easily accessible? Is it located on a one-way street? Is the street divided by a permanent barrier? Will customers be able to maneuver easily into the store’s parking area?

  - When customers leave with their clean clothes, will they be able to safely enter the traffic flow?

  - At what speed does the traffic pass by the store?

  - How is the traffic regulated? How will this impact customers?

  - Is there a parking lot?

  - How is the lot maintained? Is it well-lit? Clean? Clearly striped? Who will maintain it?

- Is there a sufficient number of parking
spaces for customers?

As with any retail business, the store should be visible to as many potential customers as possible. Important questions to consider include:

- Can the store be seen easily from the road?
- How much frontage area does the store have? (15 feet? More than 30 feet? Somewhere in between?)
- How much of the storefront is glass?
- What kind of signage can be used to attract customers?

The store’s neighbors may play an important part in its success. Be aware of other retail stores, bars, offices, banks, etc. in the store’s neighborhood.

- Do the other businesses: Require long-term parking for their customers?
- Look successful and profitable?
- Look run-down and dirty?

These basic questions help evaluate a potential laundry site. These issues must be adequately addressed before moving to the next series of steps in securing that great location. The most important thing to remember while searching for a great location is to do your homework.

Researching each potential site is vital to finding the right fit. Don’t be afraid to ask questions.

Selecting a location is one of the most important aspects of going into business. Many distributors and laundry brokers can assist with this step. However, it is good to know the basics of what to look for in a location, such as:

- **Utilities.** A location should have the capability to provide all the necessary utilities … water, sewer, gas and electricity. Be aware that there may be initial water and sewer hook-up fees, which are also called impact fees. They could cost several thousands of dollars for an entire store and should be carefully evaluated. Some owners have been successful in convincing their landlord to pay this fee. If the landlord refuses, perhaps he or she will agree to amortize the cost of the impact fees into the rent so the renter does not have to produce the capital at start-up when there are many other initial costs.

- **Visibility.** Another consideration when selecting the location is a good, well-lighted building that is not too far from the street … preferably at or above road grade level. Good visibility from the outside through large windows is an important customer safety factor as well.

- **Accessibility.** Avoid a location that is in a highly congested area where it may be difficult to get into and out of the parking lot. Anything that is a vision hindrance, such as shrubbery or another building that blocks the view of the store, should be avoided. Also, neighboring businesses that may not be compatible should be avoided.

- **Free Standing or Cluster.** Decide whether the store should be free standing or in a cluster (such as in a shopping center). There are advantages and disadvantages to both.

Free-standing buildings offer more choice in layout, but strip center laundries have the advantage of late-night activity and ample parking. If acquiring a store in a strip center, negotiate the lease when the strip center is being built. Get in early to renegotiate and prelease, for a better chance to arrange for the landlord to build in many of the precosts. There are a lot of benefits for a potential store owner in a strip center … primarily a long-term lease, which is the security most landlords are seeking.
When choosing a location for a new self-service laundry it is wise to investigate the neighborhood first. Laundry owners want to understand the mix of people in a local marketplace before making a large investment, not after.

Based on U.S. Government Census information we can learn how many, what age, and what race of people live in a certain area. These reports are sometimes referred to as "demos", "pop-facts", or simply "demographics".

Individuals or laundry distributors can purchase this information from a number of sources. The Coin Laundry Association makes them available to members for $10. Most services charge under $100 per cross street address. One popular supplier is Claritas at (800) 234-5973 or www.claritis.com.

A demographic report focuses on a single cross section and gathers information from a specified radius. Urban locations usually view information from a .5, 1, and 2-mile radius. It is common for rural locations to use 1, 5, and 10-mile radius because they draw from larger geography.

A demographic snapshot usually includes 9 pages of information. While it's possible to use each number- it's impractical. Your distributor can help you quickly filter the information and show you the most useful information to a self-service laundry owner.

**Coin Laundry Association**

Demographics are available at a very affordable cost through the CLA for members. Check with them for more details. Your Dexter Authorized Distributor may also be able to provide you with demographics for your area.
Design & Layout Considerations

When you’re planning a new store, or just remodeling an existing one, there are many different factors you want to keep in mind! To help make the best use of your facilities, here are some important considerations to remember in your planning.

Make Use of What You Have
Keep in mind your building’s layout and the structural features that you cannot or do not want to change. These will need to be built around with your new design.

Additional Services Offered
Do you, or are you going to offer dry cleaning, wash / dry / fold service? Alterations? Make sure you allow plenty of space to accommodate any additional services you might be providing including ATM’s, video games, etc.

Number of Machines & Load Capacity
• Make sure you have enough machines for weekends—a laundry’s busiest times!
• Include small, medium and large washer sizes to accommodate many different individuals needs.
• Have plenty of drying capacity for customers to finish their loads.

Efficiency of Customer Flow and Facilitate Processing Speed
Help your customers move around quickly and efficiently with smart planning that includes.
• Large, automatic doors
• Available carts
• Wide aisles
• High speed extraction washers
• Bountiful folding space

Plan Safety in Your Design
A laundry’s design should help customers both keep safe and feel safe by complying with all codes, having ample interior lighting, plenty of open spaces and non-slip flooring. Be sure to have emergency shut-offs and a recordable camera security system.

Other Elements To Consider
• Easy access
• Elbow room to work
• Electrical shut-offs
• Quality water valves
• Lighting
• Future expansion
• Secured office space
• Cleaning supply storage

Elements To Limit Or Avoid
• “Going it alone” and “re-inventing the wheel”
• Too many interior signs
• Negative “Don’t Do” signs
• Too much space for kids play areas
• Too many video games can keep mothers away
• ATM machine

Elements To Add
• Get “creative” with paint – not tile
• Add personality with decorations or plants

General Planning
• Dryer venting and intake air, 12” x 12” after screens, louvers and opening covers.
• Each Dryer should have it’s own disconnect.
• Leave 2 feet behind Dryers min.
• Leave 6 ft 7 inches between washer rows for people and carts.
• Make sure there is enough folding tables or customer will go other places.
• Laundry flow- they fill front to back. Large machines in front fill early. Small machines to back fill later.
• Wash dry and fold will need some storage area.
• Folding tables and areas are important to customers.
• Vending can bring in additional dollars – remember to plan for electrical outlets
• Bulkheads - the cost is less for smaller ones but, leave less space to work on machines. Discuss size with your Dexter Authorized Distributor.
• Match washer pounds with dryer pounds. Ratio of 1:1
• Mention a dedicated power outlet for the computer network and a phone line near by for the network.
Designing for Success

Looking to design a new store or remodel an existing location?

Before breaking ground for a new store, signing a lease or gutting an old store “for extensive remodeling,” thoroughly analyze the interior area. Analyze it as to its business potential for the maximum number of pieces of equipment that can fit into the building and still provide the number of turns per day per unit needed to provide the desired return on investment. Any store must be designed for maximum profit per square foot of floor space. Once established, set about providing those customer convenience benefits that complement the layout and equipment configuration. Consider the following:

1. Opening Doors to Your Business.
   Getting your customers into your store is one of the most important design elements you can consider. Try to provide at list one, five foot double door or two, three foot single doors for every 20 washers you have. Automatic sliding doors provide your customers with the most convenience, allowing them to easily enter and exit your store with bundles and baskets of laundry. Many storeowners who have installed automatic doors report that they receive more compliments for this convenience than for anything else.

2. Plan in Breathing Space.
   Dexter Authorized Distributors recommend that inside each entryway, store owners allow at least an eight foot by eight foot (square) of space before your customer encounters the first piece of equipment. This “breathing space” provides customers with the opportunity to become oriented upon entering the store. It gives them a chance to stop, look and decide which direction they are going to take without bumping into someone else who is trying to do the same thing without blocking the door itself.

   Planning adequate aisle space can keep your laundry’s customers happy and help prevent “collisions” between customers during peak times. Be sure to allow at least 5 1/2 feet of aisle space for carts, wheelchairs and customers to have plenty of room to navigate.

4. Go With the Workflow.
When planning your store’s design, it’s important to establish a smooth workflow between the washers, dryers and folding tables. One good way to accomplish this is by using multiple washer islands installed perpendicular to the dryer line. Folding tables should be located closer to the dryers than to the washers. In planning for table space, a good rule-of-thumb would be about 15 square feet of table per three dryers. Newer folding tables take advantage of space utilization techniques by providing shelves, which can increase folding capacity by 30–40 percent. Be sure there is a good flow from washers to dryers to folding tables.

5. Large Capacity Washers.
Be sure to place your large capacity machines as close to the front of the store as possible. Your customers with large loads will appreciate the convenience, and you’ll appreciate the profits you make on these bigger machines.

While most stores have enough washers, customer bottlenecks in stores almost always occur near the dryers. Because drying takes longer than washing, a bottleneck (or backup), is often created by the dryers. If you’re looking at adding washers, especially large capacity washers, consider expanding the dryer capacity of the store as well.

6. Design With the Customer in Mind.
When decorating, don’t be afraid to use bright colors, specific themes or even wild décor. This creativity can provide your laundry with its own personal identity. Once established in the customer’s mind, this store image or identity can be used to advantage in advertising and promotional endeavors.

- Washers located back-to-back need at least +/- two feet for utilities.
- If possible design the laundry allowing unobstructed visibility from the front to the back. This helps the laundry feel more open, and allows visibility for safety’s sake.
- Using mirrors can help your laundry feel larger and more open.
- A ceramic tile floor that will help minimize slips and falls and will look better and last longer.

7. Selecting the Equipment
Work with your Dexter Authorized Distributor to determine the right equipment mix for your location. They can help you plan the right number of machines to provide the maximum number of turns per day to provide your return on investment. They can also help you plan your space and provide you with items you might need such as toploaders, frontloaders, large capacity washers, dryers, extractors, bill and coin changers, soap and bag machines, carts, folding tables, water heaters and storage tanks needed.

Your store’s layout will also depend upon the design of the building ... the walls, window locations, door locations, bathroom plumbing, existing plumbing, gas and electrical, height of ceilings and room shapes and sizes.

Finishing touches can be defined as those little things that provide a store with the personality, uniqueness and atmosphere all its own.

Store lighting is an important component in making your customers feel safe and secure. This is important because too little or too much light in the wrong place can become very discomforting to customers. Subconsciously they will appreciate the fact that they have the proper type and amount of lighting. The lighting will also have a big effect on how clean their clothes appear when they are washed and dried in the store.

If space permits, try to provide an area for vending equipment such as snack and soda machines. These can be a very profitable investment, as well as a convenience for your customers.

Remember to provide the customers with plenty of laundry carts. About half of the carts should have hanging racks on them. The number of carts will depend on customer usage, but a minimum of one per four to five washers would be advisable.

9. Additional Tips to Keep in Mind.
While some storeowners refer to their laundries in terms of square feet or number of washers and dryers, another common size measurement is the number of pounds the store is capable of washing per day or per hour. Of course, large capacity washers allow more volume to be washed in less space. Likewise, stacked dryers provide more revenue in less space. Ask your Dexter Authorized Distributor how to maximize your store’s capacity with your existing space.

Each store will have different layout and design requirements that are based on equipment mix, the services provided and the customer makeup. The actual size and shape of the store should be determined only after all the data has been collected that helps determine the pounds of wash the market demands. A good layout and design can make the all-important difference between a customer choosing and using your store over a competitor’s store.
Remodeling Existing Stores

Store owners are usually the last people to admit that their laundry needs remodeling. However just a few changes and updates can make a vast improvement in your business.

Take a walk through your store looking at it as your customers might view it. What do your customers see when they come into your business? Do they see burned out lights on your store’s signs? Are there more machines out of service than in service? Trip over cracked concrete on your store’s sidewalk? Use a restroom that isn’t adequately stocked or not cleaned?

If you don’t like what you see, then probably need to make a few updates to your existing location.

1. Give them a sign. Store signage can be the one thing that has the biggest impact on your store’s exterior. An outdated or worn-looking sign does one of two things: It causes potential customers to make an immediate negative judgment of the laundry, or it allows them to overlook the store altogether. Does your sign look clean and professional? Can it be read from the street? Does it need to be cleaned or repaired? Consider investing in a current sign, as large as zoning and the landlord will allow and full of color that includes your company logo and phone number.

If your store has a beautiful new parking lot or street-side sign, maintain the look of the sign throughout the store. Hang smaller versions of the sign above the doors and/or on the walls inside. Use the same typeface, design and/or colors in any mailing or print advertisements. This reinforces your store’s image and brand, and helps keep your communications to your customers consistent.

Awnings are another type of exterior decoration that can look fantastic when done well. Custom awnings can be done in the store’s color scheme and can be printed with the logo as well as any special services offered, such as drop-off or drycleaning. Some awnings can even be illuminated for visibility at night or in bad weather. They also keep the customers and passersby dry in a rainstorm and shaded during the height of summer.

2. Give Your Store Front a Face Lift. If your building codes and lease allow, consider remodeling your store façade to give your laundromat a whole new life. Even just repainting or power washing the outside walls can make a world of difference. Consider installing more or larger windows, installing a new roof or adding aluminum or cedar siding. Landscaping can transform a drab, barren store into a lush green eye-catcher. Careful planting of trees, shrubs and flower beds provide beauty and also cover up unsightly meters, drains and pipes. If there are mature trees on the property, make sure they do not block your store from traffic, or obstruct view of your signage. Prune any trees or shrubs regularly and remove any obtrusive branches.

Sealing, black-topping and restriping the parking lot can work miracles on the outside. Not only will the exterior of the store look nicer, but traffic flow will also improve when customers can see which direction to go in and where to park.

3. Open your doors for business. Is your entryway inviting and customer friendly? Are the main doors wide enough for customers to come through with large bundles? Do they open easily and close tightly? Automatic doors are extremely helpful to laundry customers, and they keep air conditioning and heat in the store where it belongs. If you don’t have automatic doors, customers will often prop a door open with a chair or cart to bring in several loads, which can waste energy and let in insects. Automatic doors eliminate this, making them cost-effective as well as useful and attractive.

Does the store have a ramp leading from the sidewalk to the parking lot? Not only does a ramp meet ADA standards, but it also makes it easier for customers who use the laundry carts to get cleaned clothes to their cars.

4. Look down. Does the floor gleam like the rest of the store? Is it even, uniform and attractive? How well does it reflect the light from overhead fixtures?

The floor does not have to be the most expensive tile to look nice and to do its job. Nearly every type of flooring can work for a laundry with proper upkeep — some just do it better than others.

Cement floors are cheap and easy to install. However, they also crack and are hard to keep clean. If the store has a cement floor and cannot be upgraded at this time, have it sealed. Sealing makes the floor easier to mop and it looks professional. Some owners have even painted a "tile" pattern onto the cement. This does look nice for a short period, but the floors take such a beating that the paint can wear off in a short time.

Vinyl tile is more expensive, but with proper care it can look great and last for years. The main problem with vinyl tile is that it requires regular buffing in addition
to mopping and sweeping. If the vinyl tile is looking worn, consider replacing it — especially if it is more than five years old. If it cannot be replaced, consider stripping and buffing it. The entire store will have a different look with a clean, shiny floor.

Replace broken, bulging or worn tiles. Not only are these unsightly, but they are also a liability problem. If they cannot be replaced, at least mark them clearly.

Ceramic tile is the king of laundry flooring. It wears well, requires little more than regular mopping and looks fantastic. It is also very expensive and is slippery when wet. If the store has ceramic tile, check it regularly for cracks and either replace or fill the offending tiles.

No matter what type of flooring is in the store, consider laying down clean, attractive carpet runners in high-traffic areas. This protects the floor and can cut down on slips and falls.

Always keep the floors mopped and swept. Adding a few strips of colored tile along the walls or around the washing machines splashes color onto an otherwise drab floor. If there is a children’s area, use colored tile or lay down a washable area rug with a children’s motif.

5. Machine Care and Repair. The first step in sprucing up the machines is to clean them, inside and out. This provides a clear view of what needs to be changed. Once they are clean, check carefully for rust, dents, peeling or chipped paint and other signs of wear. Determine which machines really need to be replaced and which just need a bit of a "face lift."

Stainless steel machines can be polished with special cleaners and rubbing compounds. Dexter does offer their own brand of stainless steel cleaner that is available for machines. Ask your Dexter Authorized Distributor for more details.

If the machines still look bad, consider replacing the front panels. Most distributors also stock the washing instructions stickers for the frontload machines. Replacing these decals can make a big cosmetic difference. Also, do a thorough cleaning of the door glass using vinegar and commercial cleaners to remove calcium, lime and soap scale.
Replace any loose or worn door handles. Painting the machine base a bright color can help perk up an older row of fronts.

Toploaders can also have panels replaced, or they can be sandblasted and repainted for about half of the replacement cost. Don’t put a fresh coat of paint over another since the paint does not adhere well.

Bulkheads can be replaced or refinished as well. Make the best use of the bulkheads by decorating them with plants, professional-looking signage or laundry-related knickknacks.

6. Finishing Touches. Make the most of the space above the dryers. Do not clutter the area up with signage. Hang artwork from local artists. Paint a laundry-related mural. Sell ad space to other local businesses. Run neon bulbs along the wall. If nothing else, paint it and hang a decorative wallpaper border along the top. Anything is better than a boring, white wall.

Replace or refinish the folding tables, and add some extra tables if there is space. Most laundry owners (and customers) agree that there can never be too many folding tables. If the store does not have a television, consider adding one. If there is no adequate wall or counter space, hang one from the ceiling on a bracket, tilted down so customers can see it.

The same goes for clocks. Customers need to keep track of time to get their loads changed and finished quickly. A large, classroom-style clock is inexpensive and attractive.

Check all of the laundry carts for sharp edges. If they cannot be replaced, at least file down the edges or replace the bumpers. Not only are sharp edges dangerous to customers, but they can also scratch the machines.

Cleaning the fixtures and replacing burned out bulbs improve the store’s appearance at virtually no cost, and are also energy efficient. Yellowed louvers can cast an ugly glow on any store. Dirty bulbs diffuse the light, making even the cleanest store look dingy. Cracked louvers look terrible and cause light to pass through them unevenly. Replace them quickly.

There is no such thing as too much light in a laundry. Install quality lighting and lots of it. Skylights also work well and cut down on electricity and heating costs. Keep the windows clean and try not to completely block sunlight with signage.

With all the basic improvements made in the store, it is time to add those final touches that make the store a pleasant place to visit. Plants, whether real or artificial, look great and are inexpensive. Place them along bulkheads, at the attendant counter and on top of machines (always leave room for customers’ bottles and bundles). Mirrors can make a small store look and feel larger and also help reflect the light around the store. Be sure to keep them clean.

If there is room for a children’s area, consider adding a molded plastic playhouse from a toy store. They look cute, are easy to clean and very hard to break.

Ceiling fans are a welcome addition to any store. They are very attractive and keep the air circulating well, even when all the dryers are going at once.

Once the store’s “face lift” is complete, don’t let it go unnoticed. Promote it. Hang a “Grand Reopening” banner out in front. Advertise the changes in the local paper. Best of all, these upgrades can help justify an increase in vend price, if desired. Customers will appreciate it when the store is more inviting. Banners are available from your Dexter Authorized Distributor.
Commercial Installation and Utility Requirements

Common Laundry Elements
- Gas Main Size = 2” to 3”
- Water Main Size = 2 to 2.5”
- Sewer/Drain Size = 4 to 6”
- Foundation = 4 to 10” @ 4000 PSI concrete
- Electrical Service = 200 – 800 AMP service
- Exhaust Venting = As specified
- Fresh Make-Up Air = As specified
- Heating & Air Conditioning = As specified

Size All Utilities For Peak Business!

Installation
All washers must be installed in accordance with all local, state and national building, electrical, and plumbing codes in effect in the area.

Foundation Requirements
The washer must be securely bolted to a substantial concrete floor, or mounted upon a suitable base which is in turn securely bolted to a substantial concrete floor. Care must be stressed with all foundation work to insure a stable unit, eliminating vibration. All installations must be made on sound concrete floors 4” or thicker but see mounting dimensions for each model being installed.

Mounting
A concrete pad or steel base which elevates the machine 4 to 6 inches above the floor level is recommended to provide easy access to the loading door. Allow a minimum of 24” of clearance behind the rear of the machine for service as is shown. Dexter highly recommends the use of a dry expansion grout mix.

Proper Machine Grout Installation
Grout should be installed between base (if used) and concrete floor on all side rails and crossmembers. If using a base you should grout between base top and machine frame and all side rails and crossmembers.

T-300 WCAD18KCS-10 model (1 phase 120 volts) washers are equipped with an electrical cord with a 3 prong grounded plug. A U.L. approved receptacle, which has been properly grounded in accordance with local electrical codes must be used with the machine. Each unit should be connected to an individual branch circuit not shared by lighting or other equipment. Conductors of the proper size and insulation (suggested size below) should be used.

To Make Electrical Connections
Disconnect all power to the washer. Remove screw and lift out the cover located in the upper left corner of the machine (as viewed from the back).
- If power is 208-240-3PH-60Hz, connect L1, L2, L3 and ground. If there is a high leg it must be connected to L3. It is highly recommended to use a TVSS.
- If power is 208-240-1PH-60Hz, connect L1, L2 and Ground. If power is 120 -1PH-60Hz. Use a UL approved receptacle with proper external ground.

NOTE: It is important that the grounding screw next to the power terminal block TB-1 be connected to a good external ground.

Controls Transformer
The controls transformer is located inside the control trough and steps a range of 208 to 240 volts down to 115 volts. There are two terminals on the controls transformer for the primary (incoming) power. Use the terminal marked “208V” for power supplies between 200 and 215 volts. Use the terminal marked “230V” for power supplies between 216 and 240 volts.

NOTE: TRANSFORMER MUST BE SET AT PROPER TAP FOR PROPER OPERATION.

Electrical Connections
Electrical power connections are made to the small terminal block located in the rear of the control trough. The terminal block is accessed by opening the top panel of the machine.

1 Phase or 3 Phase connections
208-240 volts, 60 Hz.
3 wire plus ground

Fusing Requirements:
Dual element time delay fuse or equivalent breaker of amperage specified below.

1 Phase or 3 Phase 15 amp
WCAD-18-12, WCAD-25, WCAD-40

1 Phase or 3 Phase 20 amp
WCAD-55, WCAD-75

1 Phase 20 amp
WCAD-18-10 120 volt

Rotation in extract as viewed through glass door at front of washer models WCAD-25, WCAD-40, WCAD-55, WCAD-75 will be counter-clockwise. Rotation in extract as viewed through glass door at front of washer model WCAD-18 will be clockwise.
Sample Store Layouts

Your Dexter Authorized Distributor can custom design a laundromat around your store’s location and using your equipment preferences and design ideas. Here are just a few sample layouts to get your ideas flowing. Ask your distributor for a free consultation and layout for your location.
Sample Store Layouts
Your Dexter Authorized Distributor and You

Dexter Authorized Distributors have built thousands of profitable, efficient laundries worldwide and you can benefit from their many years of experience. A valuable resource, your Dexter Authorized Distributor and can help you through the planning, purchasing, installation and long-term support of your laundry.

Free Professional Laundry Analysis
Is your laundry as profitable as it can be? Are there ways you could be cutting costs that you aren’t utilizing? Can updating your equipment make a difference in your utility bill? If you don’t know the answers to these questions then you may want to consider a free professional laundry analysis.

Laundry Planning, Design, Sales and Installation
Opening, remodeling or upgrading a laundry involves a lot more than just purchasing the equipment. There are many more aspects to consider! Not only do you need to make sure that you have the right equipment for you and your business, but you also need to make sure that the equipment you purchase works with your store design and technical requirements. Your Dexter Authorized Distributor can help you with every aspect of this process from initial laundry planning and design, to purchasing your equipment, to proper installation per factory guidelines.

Service After the Sale
Your Dexter Authorized Distributor can help you with regular machine maintenance and service, as well as with ordering any parts you might need. Their factory trained service technicians know Dexter equipment inside and out and will be able to keep your new machines running strong for many years to come.

Ask your Dexter Authorized Distributor about upcoming service schools and seminars in your area. Taught by Dexter factory experts, these schools are your chance to learn from the industry experts on how to best maintain and service your Dexter Equipment.

Visit us online to find the Dexter Authorized Distributor Nearest You or call us today at 1-800-524-2954.
Invensys controls
We’re partners with the world’s largest appliance control manufacturer.
Dexter’s A-Series washers have a new inverter rated motor that is more efficient than those in older two-speed models. This motor brings greater efficiency by handling the voltage spikes that can occur with traditional two-speed motors and utilizing better wiring, an improved winding design and decreased mechanical losses. This also reduces the internal heat that builds up during use and helps the A-Series motors meet maximum efficiency standards.

Energy Conservation
For a washer to consume less power, you need a motor that operates in a more efficient manner and that has greater controls over power usage. In a Dexter A-Series washer, the variable frequency drive controls the rate at which the motor accelerates to a required speed. It also has parameter settings that can limit the current draw during this acceleration time period. This controlled peak demand can lower electricity rates, helping laundry owners save money.

Water Conservation
Dexter’s new “sump-free” design adds even more water savings than ever before.

Palm Software
Each Dexter comes with an infra-red port capable of communicating with a handheld computer running optional Dexter software. Simply point your handheld at the machine, download the cycle information, and make your changes. It’s no longer necessary to open your machines, change jumper wires, or remember programming steps!

100% Employee Owned
The employee ownership culture of Dexter fosters a sense of teamwork, pride and quality not found anywhere else in the industry. From engineering to manufacturing to sales, our staff has a vested interest in making Dexter products the best available.

1000 Hour Tests
Our engineers use, abuse and try to destroy a mechanical design before ever calling it a Dexter. We assume the very worst operating conditions and engineer accordingly. For example all Dexter washers have to pass a 1000 hour out of balance durability test. For this test, we take half the rated capacity for a machine, place it one section of the cylinder, and run the washer at its highest spin speed for 42 days non-stop. No component can fail.

“Over-Built” Designs
Lasting quality means you’re investing versus spending on equipment. All Dexter laundry equipment is built using heavy-duty, over-sized, commercial rated components. Our machines are designed to run efficiently, continuously, 24 hours per day. Cycle after cycle, year after year. Dexter machines show up for work ready to face the tough elements of a self service laundry.

Proven History and Reputation
With over 100 years of innovative products and thousands of successful laundries built worldwide, Dexter has the established credibility you need when selling customers product.

Installation Friendly
To save you installation time and money we engineered washers that operate on single or three phase power that requires smaller electrical circuits and draws fewer AMPS. These features alone can save you thousands on upgrades from your local electric company.

Balanced Heat, Air & Tumble
Dexter dryers perfectly balance airflow, heat and tumbling action. With fully perforated, large diameter
cylinders, high DFM and energy efficient heat reclaimers these dryers guarantee fast drying results which means your customers will be in and out fast.

Sturdy construction protects your investment with a heavy-duty welded steel frame and stainless steel doors that resist wear and tear. Optional stainless steel front panels and stainless steel cylinders keep Dexter dryers looking attractive for a lifetime. Single gas, electrician and venting connections simplify installation and extra large lint screens are easy to maintain.

**Heat Reclamation Design**
Dexter dryers are designed to ensure superior drying performance and feature maximum efficiency. Fully perforated drums combined with just the right amount of B.T.U. content have earned Dexter the reputation of having the industry’s hottest dryers.

**Heavy Duty Design and Easy Installation**
Sturdy construction protects your investment with a heavy-duty welded steel frame and stainless steel doors that resist wear and tear. Optional stainless steel front panels and stainless steel cylinders keep Dexter dryers looking attractive for a lifetime. Single gas, electrical and venting connections simplify installation and extra large lint screens are easy to maintain.

**Dexter Express Washers**
Dexter Express Washers extract with a G-Force of 200. This is means that Dexter Express Washers remove water with 200 times the force of gravity, and twice the G-force of our regular washers! This added extract force saves a store owners money by removing more water from the clothes load in the washer and decreasing drying time and dryer energy usage. Depending on the type of fabric being washed the additional extract can remove as much as 20 - 25% more water from the clothes load!

To help store owners communicate the improved performance offered by Express washers, Dexter has developed special decals that can be added to a store’s Express washers. One of the key benefits of using a vended laundry is the ability to do a lot of laundry in a short time. The improve spin-out performance of Express washers helps customers “Get Done Faster”! Customers appreciate the how fast they can get in and get out, and store owners appreciate having the machines available for the next customers. A true WIN – WIN!

Dexter has long been a leader in improving equipment efficiency. Both the water efficiency and overall energy efficiency of the T-350 Express and the T-450 Express meet Consortium for Energy Efficiency tier 1 specifications and DOE Energy Star MEF (modified energy factor) performance qualification criteria. Because of details in CEE and DOE eligibility criteria that preclude the listing of rigid-mount washers, these models are not listed on the various websites, however the performance does meet these criteria and may be eligible for rebates for products meeting these levels of efficiency. Express washers are available in 18lb, 25lb, and 45lb capacities. When store owners consider purchasing Express washers, they realize that Express means performance, but something they may not know is that in order to handle the tremendous stresses that come with 200 G-force, that each Express model is built on the framework of Dexter’s next largest size. A T-350 Express is built on the framework of a regular T-400, and T-400 Express is built on the framework of a regular T-600, and the T-650 Express is built on the framework of a regular T-900. And true to the Dexter brand, each 200 G-Force design has passed the famous Dexter 1000 test, and is ready to deliver many years of reliable service.

Ask your Dexter Authorized Distributor today what a difference Dexter can make in your laundry. To find the Dexter Distributor nearest you, visit us online at www.dexterlaundry.com or call us at 1-800-524-2954.
Through the continued support and expertise of our Dexter Authorized Distributors, there are now thousands of Dexter Laundries worldwide. These successful store owners have shared some of their experience & success with us, so that we can give other laundromat owners some resources to use in your own laundries.

This guide is just one of several resources we’ve gathered to assist current and potential laundry owners in their pursuit of the commercial laundry industry.

For more information on running a successful laundromat, contact your Dexter Authorized Distributor. They are a valuable resource, assisting with the planning, purchase, installation and long term support of your laundry project and will be able to assist with all of your laundry needs.