



The Power of Water:

a clean start for the
textile care industry



Electrolux



The power of water: An introduction

Millions of people from all corners of the globe rely on the services of professional dry cleaners on a regular basis and while busy customers' habits change in line with fast-moving trends, cleaning businesses are also forced to comply with challenging sustainability regulations. The combination of these two scenarios creates a need for greener, quicker, and more reliable services; not to mention a hunger for innovation. Without question, the time has come for advanced alternatives to the traditional methods of professional garment cleaning.

With demand for professional textile care continuing to evolve, the onus is very much on cleaning businesses to find sustainable ways they can deliver the same high quality, highly efficient results.

So where do these businesses turn to in their search for this perfect combination? The answer could well lie in nature's most sustainable resource – water.

We know dry-cleaning as a chemical-based process for delicate fabrics that cannot stand up to the rough and tumble of a conventional washing process. But what if we could avoid the use of hazardous chemicals?

The Power of Water is an industry report which dives into the future of professional textile care, and investigates how advanced innovation can change the face of the industry – and of professional textile care as a whole – for generations to come.





Ask the expert

Leon Wennekes, Area Manager at CINET, the International Committee of Textile Care, believes the development of professional wet-cleaning allows dry-cleaners to provide more options for their customers.

Leon comments: "More and more, the market will demand a total problem solver in textile care, a 'one-stop-shop concept', and in this respect it (wet-cleaning) is a perfect add-on to the product portfolio of a professional textile cleaning company. Wet-cleaning enables the professional textile cleaner to take care of any type of garment/textile in the most efficient and cost effective manner.

"The quality evaluation of practical wet-cleaning systems in the CINET Solvetex IV study (2014), concluded that the overall cleaning performance of wet-cleaning is good. A specific advantage of wet-cleaning systems compared to solvent based systems is the ability to remove water soluble stains.

"Finishing is an important step in professional wet-cleaning to deliver high quality garments. Specialised equipment, reduced mechanical action, specific programs and detergents make professional wet-cleaning suitable for delicate garments consisting of materials like wool and silk. In fact, with the proper experience and knowledge of textiles, fabric construction and soiling, a majority of the garments can be cleaned using a professional wet-cleaning system.

"At CINET we feel the development of professional wet-cleaning fits perfectly with developments within the textile industry as well as consumer habits."

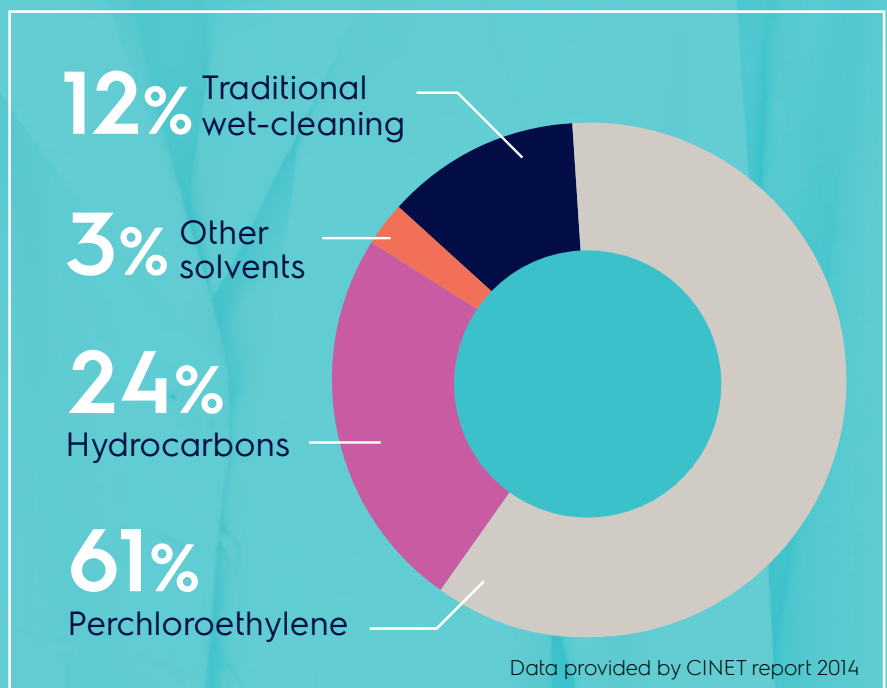
All dried up?

Comparing modern wet-cleaning methods with traditional dry-cleaning

Dry-cleaning has become a staple of 21st century life for those working in professional garment care, but the latest wet-cleaning developments offer comparable results through more sustainable means. For cleaning businesses, that means getting to know the concept or risk being left behind.

Perchloroethylene (perc) remains the most common solvent, used by 61% of the global market. According to a 2012 report by Massachusetts Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI), 'improper use, storage and disposal of perc have resulted in widespread contamination of groundwater and soil at dry-cleaning sites. In addition, exposure to perc is associated with a variety of adverse human health effects. Because of these impacts, perc is more strictly regulated today than in the past, and many cleaners are investigating alternatives for use in their operations.'

The use of these alternatives is significantly less common. Just 24% use hydrocarbons, and 3% prefer to use other solvent alternatives such as K4 and Green Earth. What remains is a 12% share of the market which relies on traditional wet-cleaning processes.



Although wet-cleaning systems have existed in some form for over 20 years, it is only the very latest of these which have given professional cleaning businesses real food for thought.

Far from the lengthy processes sometimes associated with more sustainable solutions, the latest, advanced wet-cleaning systems can, in fact, offer best-in-class results in under an hour. This has truly opened up new possibilities for those working in professional textile care – and also their customers.

Making the case for wet-cleaning: A H₂O opportunity

With more and more cleaning professionals looking for efficient yet eco-friendly alternatives to dry-cleaning, the challenge for manufacturers of wet-cleaning technology is to meet this demand in a way that makes sense for real businesses.

Any solution must achieve the perfect blend of sustainability, high productivity, ease of operation and fresh-feeling results that set apart the best wet-cleaning systems.

Here we take a look at Weronika Korga and James Leat – two experienced cleaning professionals who have been able to show exactly how the latest wet-cleaning innovation has enhanced their businesses and impressed customers time and time again.

Bringing greener cleaning to Gdańsk

When Weronika Korga started her family cleaning business in 2010, she knew that choosing the right system would be crucial to its success. Today, with five sites throughout Poland and a flagship laundry in Gdańsk, Eko-Laguna's large loyal customer base suggests her decision was the right one.

The need for great results without the use of hazardous solvents led Weronika to Electrolux Professional's original lagoon® system. Such was the partnership's success, she needed little persuasion when the next generation was developed.

For Weronika, the key draw of the new system is its speed. She comments: "lagoon® Advanced Care allows us to offer customers

express services for delicate garments within an hour. The new solution is more effective thanks to the increased loading factor of the washer and requires significantly less effort for finishing."



Finding the ideal solution

With modern garments and materials proving increasingly hard to clean through traditional, solvent-based cleaning systems, James Leat also turned to lagoon® Advanced Care to propel his century-old family business in Devon, England, into the future of professional textile care.

Despite their vast experience, his team at Ideal Cleaners found that time was being wasted dry-cleaning clothes, only to find stains could not be removed by perc alone. To them, glowing feedback from increasingly environmentally-conscious customers has made the switch towards sustainability well worthwhile.

James commented: "With lagoon® Advanced Care we really can clean everything. Even the kind of greasy stains we would never have imagined could be cleaned with water can be removed safely and quickly, no matter what the garment or material. We can really do anything now, with water."

The future of professional textile care

We know that today's cleaning businesses want it all. They want a rapid return on their investment and a greener solution which doesn't cost the earth. They want maximum speed and productivity with the ability to handle even the most delicate garments. But most importantly, they want to deliver the kind of quality that keeps customers coming back, time after time.

As we've now seen, the rulebook of professional textile care has been rewritten and forward-thinking businesses are beginning to take advantage of more innovative and sustainable solutions to their needs. There are a number of benefits these businesses can make use of in their quest to achieve best-in-class performance.



Sustainable

The latest wet-cleaning technology protects and respects both the environment and staff, who can deliver the high quality their customers expect with no need for perc. How? Quite simply, by using water as its only solvent.

The pre-spotting agents used in the process work in combination with smart biodegradable detergents to make a thorough clean easier and quicker to achieve on both water soluble and non-water soluble stains.



High productivity

A quicker cleaning and drying process allows for a quicker return on investment for business owners, with a shorter turnaround time allowing for more garments to be processed while still achieving results that will keep customers coming back time and again.

Thanks to the unique hydraulic action of Electrolux's ProV'tex function, not only can delicates be cleaned quicker and to a higher standard, but cleaners can also increase the loading factor ratio by 50% compared to traditional wet-cleaning systems. This makes a huge impact on productivity given the average number of garments processed each day.



Gentle cleaning

The phrase 'dry-clean only' no longer applies. Even the most delicate of garments can be professionally deep-cleaned without the use of harsh chemicals. Don't just take our word for it – lagoon® Advanced Care is the latest generation of lagoon®, the first wet-cleaning system to have won the endorsement of The Woolmark Company.



A real game changer

You may have come to associate wet-cleaning with the extra time needed to hang dry and finish garments after cleaning, but this is now a thing of the past. Fabrics and textiles come out of the machine touch-dry and can be returned to the customer in as little as one hour.

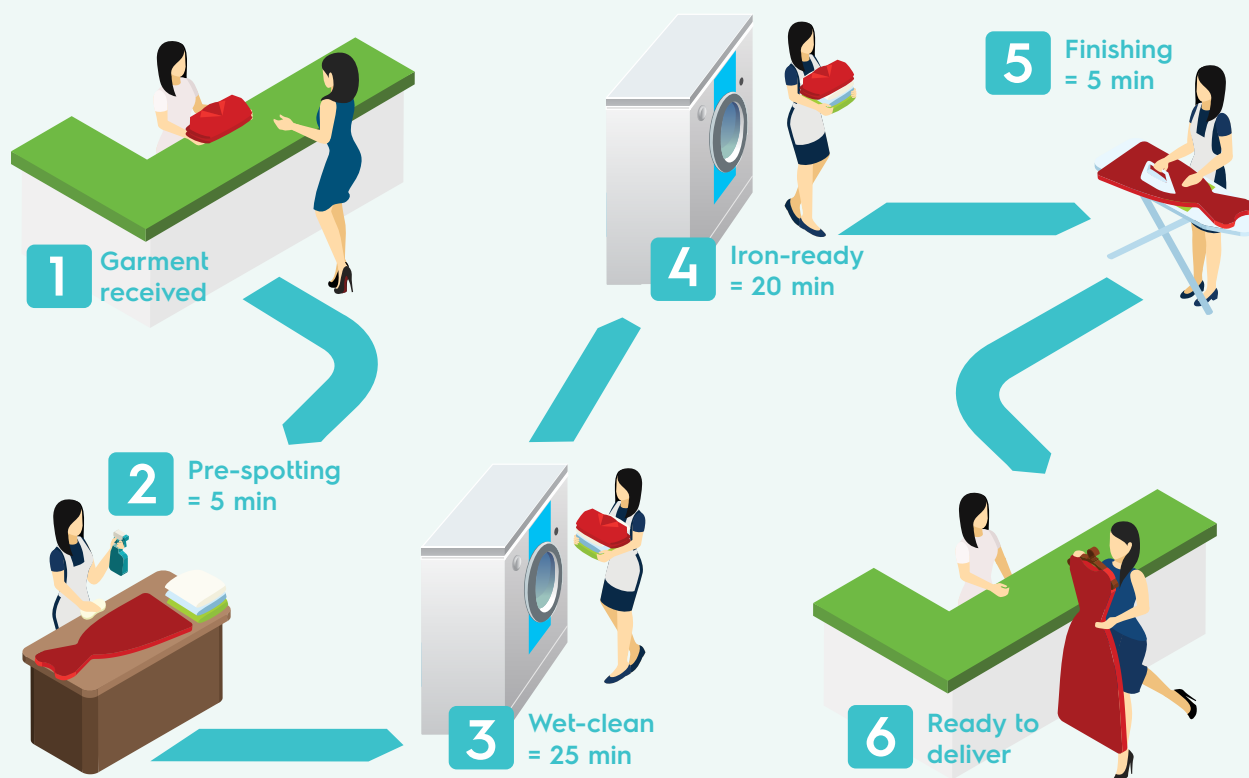


The best performance

Take advantage of all the benefits of water with the speed and simplicity of solvent-cleaning. Garments are clean, dry and soft to the touch, and smell natural.

Although textile wear, dimensional change, and colour loss are often regarded as the most common stereotypes against traditional wet-cleaning options, the Hohenstein Institute in Germany has found lagoon® Advanced Care and perc-based dry-cleaning results to be perfectly comparable. These results confirm no textile wear, dimensional change or colour loss even after as many as 12 cleaning cycles.

How it works



So what next for the professional cleaning industry?

It has been established that traditional wet-cleaning services and perc-based cleaning both have their limitations. In the case of traditional wet-cleaning, drying time and extensive finishing requirements have proved problematic, while perc-based cleaning has unfavourable environmental implications, is not suitable for all fabric and can perform inconsistently on certain stains.

What is needed then is a clean start and a fresh approach for the industry. The latest generation of wet-cleaning technology gives businesses eager to offer their customers greener, quicker, and more reliable services access to the perfect solution.

Through the power of water over 99% of fabrics can be processed, both greasy and water soluble stains can be handled easily, and garments can be delivered clean and dry within an hour due to advanced crease recovery. All of this makes it possible for businesses to ride a new wave of professional textile care.





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Excellence with the environment in mind

- ▶ All our factories are ISO 14001-certified
- ▶ All our solutions are designed for low consumption of water, energy, detergents and harmful emissions
- ▶ In recent years over 70% of our product features have been updated with the environmental needs of our customers in mind
- ▶ Our technology is ROHS and REACH compliant and over 95% recyclable
- ▶ Our products are 100% quality tested by experts

