

UniMac: How advanced controls can lower all laundry costs

Bill Brooks, national sales manager for UniMac, distinguishes between two levels of controls on washers and dryers. The first level is the controls the operator sees—the push buttons that start the cycle. But behind the scenes in today's laundry equipment are the interactive controls that are much more sophisticated.

"What the user sees is very simple; but the manager can get reports off those controls that can monitor the laundry operations," Brooks says.

The major cost in laundry operations is labour, which accounts for 45-50 per cent of all costs, while linen replacement, equipment, chemicals and utilities account for 8-12 per cent each, and maintenance for about 3 per cent, Brooks notes. Controls on laundry machines can address all these areas.

send a remote signal—a light or a beep—so that the operator doesn't waste time checking. Managers can also download reports daily, weekly or monthly that show how much time has elapsed between the end of one cycle and the start of a new cycle. This provides a way to manage labour without having to stand over the operator. This is just one of many trackable items.

To save money on utilities, the machine cycles are programmed to product water savings. But behind the scenes, every 8 to 10 cycles, there's a another cycle programmed to test every water and drain valve to make sure there are no leaks. Just as a leaky tap or constantly running toilet costs money, so do leaks in laundry systems. There's an error code if there's a leak, and the process doesn't disrupt labour at all.

"It's like a car," says Brooks. "It pops up as a preventive message."

Both washers and dryers are programmed for maintenance, with reminders flashing up until bearings are greased, or other maintenance takes place. These error codes can save the cost of repairing a washer or dryer. The controls enable self diagnosis of the problem. Then when the operator or manager

the phone.

"A service call can cost several hundred dollars, and the controls help solve that problem," says Brooks.

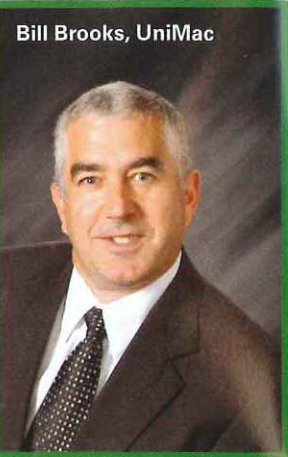
All chemical use is measured.

"You need to measure it so you can make improvements," Brooks notes.

Linen replacement is a huge cost of running a hotel laundry, accounting for 13 to 25 per cent to maintain 3 par (three sets per room) for linens.

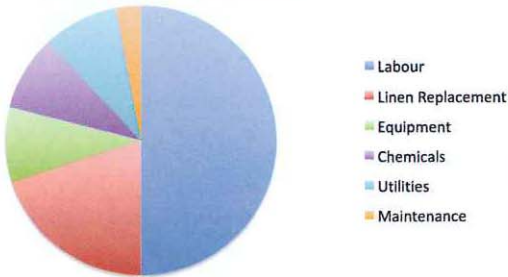
"Through controls and proper laundry procedures, managers can save up to 33 per cent on linen costs," Brooks says. Overdrying sensors stop the dryer when the load is dry. "Almost all the damage to linen happens when you overdry—that's when the wrinkles set in," he adds. "When a user overdries for eight minutes per load, the yearly cost to the hotel is almost \$2,000 in gas costs—not to mention labour costs since the next load could be in."

"In an eight-hour workday, an inefficient laundry operation will do 6-7 loads, while an efficient operation can do 10. And most of the time, the manager doesn't even know how wasteful it is."



Bill Brooks, UniMac

LAUNDRY COSTS



One way of controlling labour costs is found on the simple controls which give a countdown to the end of the wash or dry cycle. It can

calls UniMac's service company, the service technician can bring the right parts. Sometimes there is even a simple fix that can be done over