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# NETWORK NEWS

*The National Alliance of Independent Launderers*



**ANNUAL CONVENTION  
REVIEW**  
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## »MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Superior Linen Service  
Douglas Waldman, CEO/President  
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(800) 749-9040  
www.superlinen.com  
CSC Member Since 1996



### ***What is the history and how was your company founded?***

Our roots go back to 1954 when Irving Waldman moved from the Northeast to Tulsa, Oklahoma and started an industrial linen service business. True to its name, Industrial Uniform and Towel Supply was a full service industrial uniform and shop towel service.

His son, Gilbert Waldman was the second generation family member to run the business. In 1984, Gilbert sold all of Industrial Uniform and Towel Supply, except for the linen supply portion, to Cintas. He took that volume and started a new business, Superior Linen Service. At that time, the business was operated out of a small facility in East Tulsa.

Douglas Waldman joined the business in 1997 and is now the third generation family member to run the corporation.

Since 1984, Superior Linen Service has grown almost twenty times its original size, and now operates out of three operating plants and five branch locations. We have over 3000 active customers, 59 routes and 394 employees.

### ***What products/services are offered?***

We offer services to meet nearly every need of a business whether it's a restaurant, major hospital, specialty clinic, candy store, or a lawyer's office. Our company offers healthcare linen to both large hospitals and specialty clinics, hospitality linen to restaurants and country clubs, and facility service items to businesses who need items like dust mops, entry mats, and paper towels.

### ***What are the advantages for your customers doing business with Superior Linen Service?***

We have been supplying the region for over 60 years in one form or another, so we know the area and our customers well. We have a low turnover on our staff so our customers do not always have to deal with a new face. Lastly, we have multiple facilities that enable us to have built in backup capability, without having to look at our competitors for assistance in a crisis.

### ***How many salespeople are currently on your team?***

Our Sales Department is headed by our Director of Territory Sales and Client Development. We have seven full-time Territory Sales Managers who sell all lines of the business except for large bulk medical accounts. Additionally, we have two Directors of Business Development who are responsible for the larger accounts and the bulk medical accounts. Last year, we also added two new positions to our leadership team, Director of



Specialty Healthcare and Director of Marketing and Communications.

***To what do you contribute the success and growth of your company?***

Our company would be nothing without its staff. As an independently owned and operated company, our team understands the importance and value of our customers and works to ensure their happiness and satisfaction. Hiring great people who treat your customers fairly and honestly is all it takes. If you do that, good things will happen.

***How do you differentiate your company from the competition?***

We don't. Let me explain. We do business the only way we know how – employing the best people, executing the best possible business practices, and delivering the best quality product and service that we can. When you accomplish those three things, you don't worry about the competition because you know you are delivering the best service for your customers and all future customers that will follow.



***How do you effectively communicate your message to your employees, customers and prospects?***

We have a lot of exciting things happening this year that include a new quarterly eNewsletter for our customers and employees, more engagement projects on our social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube), and more frequent contact with our customers and prospects to ensure we are always delivering on their needs.

***What innovations have been implemented in your company/plant recently?***

We always strive to be the first in our area to fully adopt all new industry trends. For example:

All of our facilities are already accredited through TRSA's "Hygienically Clean" program, one of the first companies in the nation to do so.

All of our facilities are certified through TRSA's "Clean



Green" certification program, also in the first year of the program.

Our Healthcare Division was the 7th in the nation to be accredited by the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council "HLAC".

We have already phased out NPE's in our chemistry, long before the regulations required it.

***Have you achieved any milestones recently?***

This year is the 60th anniversary of the family business and we plan to celebrate in a very big way. Our marketing department has several exciting projects that will not only allow us to celebrate with our long-standing customers, but more importantly, allow us to show our wonderful staff how important they are to the business and its success.

***What makes you proud of your business?***

My family has always placed a lot of importance on not only giving great service to our customers, but more importantly, giving back to the communities that we service. We've given over \$2 million dollars to nonprofit organizations throughout our 60 years in business. And





this year we will give nearly \$100,000 more! As part of our new Good Work Initiative, we will be selecting and donating funds and time to organizations that benefit the communities that we service. We believe that in order to continue doing good work for our customers, we must also do good work for their communities.

***What are the advantages of working in a family business, and what does it mean to you?***

Having worked outside the family business for both the federal government and a couple of very large fortune

100 companies, I understand the many advantages of a family business. But the advantage is not only for family members. Non-family employees also enjoy the benefits of working for a company with a more defined structure and access to key decision makers.

***What is the succession plan/training strategy for future generations?***

Although we are still a closely held family business in terms of ownership, the day-to-day operation and management of the company is done by non-family members. We give our leadership team the authority necessary to do their jobs, and the opportunity to grow with the company. So in effect, they are the future generation already. We encourage our staff at all levels, not just our owners, to be involved in the industry as a whole. For example our management staff participates in many

industry events and CSC functions.

Our fourth generation of family members is still young and in school, but has already started working in the business.

***What do you see as the greatest challenge for our industry?***

The influx of “well meaning” but dangerous governmental regulations. The unintended consequences of these are well known.

The consolidation of our customers. As more of our customers consolidate, purchasing decisions are more frequently made by corporate buyers far removed from the actual delivery point. This results in our businesses being treated and priced as commodities, not the customer service functions that they really are as the national textile companies are more skilled at negotiating with larger customers.

***What do you see as the greatest opportunities for growth/change in our industry?***

I sense that there is a better consumer confidence in the country about the economy than we have had for several years. Because of this, I am hoping more independent customers start back up, which would increase our potential market.

***What is the greatest value you get from being a CSC Member?***

I see the primary value of any trade association to be simply the “association” part. I join associations to associate. I like that CSC gives my entire staff an easy way to connect with others in the industry and learn from them. 

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Superior  
Linen Service

