

# How to Start Wash & Fold Services

Everything you need to know offering this premium laundry service.

**cents**



Offering a wash and fold service provides laundromat owners new opportunities to increase revenue, tap into new customer markets, and get an edge over competitors with a premium service. Customer trends are shifting toward the laundromat business model that highlights convenience, as we'll discuss in more detail, and expanding your services with wash and fold differentiates and elevates your laundromat above the competition. Wash and fold also opens the door for your laundromat to cater to an entirely new demographic, diversifying your customer base and, subsequently, your revenue streams.

Launching wash and fold services, however, can be complex and cost the owner time, resources, and even customers if mismanaged. In this whitepaper, we'll discuss the growing market for wash and fold, key considerations for getting started, and the essential steps to get your wash and fold laundry services off the ground.

## The Wash & Fold Market

The demand for premium laundry services is increasing, and these services are no longer exclusive to high-income, white-collar areas. Based on the geography, income level, and even relationship status of the potential customers in the area, premium laundry costs and services are becoming more sought after, and the supply is lacking. In fact, **50% of laundromats** in the United States offer only self-serve laundry. Diversifying offerings with wash and fold services creates opportunities for laundromats to differentiate themselves from one another.

There is a significant opportunity for self-serve laundromat owners to grow their businesses by taking advantage of the demand for wash and fold services. In fact, **37% of surveyed laundromat owners** who offer wash and fold expressed that customer levels increased from 2019 to 2020. Wash and fold is currently an underutilized market with revenue potential through which laundromat owners grow their businesses, and without it, achieving further growth can be challenging.





## The Customer Perspective

Many laundromat owners decide where to focus their wash and fold services based on the geography around their location, such as a mileage radius. Potential customers, however, are not concerned about the number of miles from their home to your laundromat. Rather, they are concerned about convenience and how long it will take to drive there. This is a subtle but important distinction since, depending on the location, it can take 15 minutes for a customer to drive one mile or five minutes to drive five miles.

The other common misconception about a premium service such as wash and fold is that it should be treated the same as self-serve laundry by the laundromat owner. The primary factor for self-serve laundry is price. Customers will tend to go further to frequent the laundromat that is even a little bit cheaper. The customer base for premium services, however, is generally not one that is sensitive to cost. These customers are much more concerned about convenience and quality than cost. In the market of premium laundry services, this is the opportunity to compete on your value, not your price.

## The Customer Base

The typical understanding is that only white-collar, high-income neighborhoods will utilize premium laundry services, such as wash and fold. This couldn't be further from the truth. As a result, there is a wide customer base in need of laundromats that offer wash and fold services but are underserved within their communities.

- **Blue-collar:** This group is the antithesis of the typical customer you might think of and may seem counterintuitive. However, among blue-collar communities, many are busy, dual-income households who benefit from a premium laundry service that eliminates the tedious at-home laundry process.
- **Homeowners:** Renters are typically a target market for self-serve laundromats, as it's more likely that a renter will not have a washer and dryer in their unit. As a result, homeowners are a missed opportunity. Even though homeowners are more likely to have a washer and dryer, they are also typically in a higher-income bracket and could have children and pets that result in greater laundry needs.
- **Mid- to high-income singles:** A market that includes mid- to high-income single people is a niche but underserved market for premium laundry services. This group tends to be slightly younger, and therefore are more accustomed to an on-demand world and place higher importance on personal time. These factors create a willingness and an ability to outsource tasks, such as laundry, to a convenient, high-quality provider.
- **Commuters:** Laundromats situated near commuting hubs, with the proximity to engage the same group of customers daily, have a major opportunity to capitalize on wash and fold services. This market is one that can be very interested in the convenience of dropping off their laundry on the way to work and picking it up at the same location on the way home, washed, dried, and folded.





## Essentials & Key Considerations

Diving into the world of wash and fold laundry can be intimidating and surprising if you don't know where to start. There are a number of key considerations to keep in mind as you plan to expand your service offerings and look to the future of your laundromat business.

### Staff & Labor

A traditional, self-serve laundromat can run efficiently and effectively with few or even no attendants, but implementing wash and fold services will require more staffing. As you bring on more staff, you'll want to keep in mind that a larger team is only a small portion of the requirements of staffing and labor. Ensure that there are proper training protocols for the different roles, a reliable clocking and payroll system, and successful methods for employee retention. In addition, any team members up until this point were likely focused on floor tasks, such as cleaning up and monitoring for malfunctioning machines. As you move into wash and fold, however, customer service skills will be a higher priority for staffing, so that your team is prepared to provide the most streamlined and efficient experience for new and returning customers.

### Space, Facilities & Equipment

Another consideration for implementing wash and fold services into your laundromat is space. This new service will require more space than a traditional self-serve laundromat, as you'll need room to store in-house washing and drying materials, as well as separate areas for customers' dirty and clean laundry. Additional machines and other equipment may also be necessary to ensure that you can offer premium, efficient turnaround times for your customers. Keep in mind that overinvestment in more machines only yields a high ROI if you keep those machines turning.

## Technology

Laundromat owners scaling from a self-serve laundry operation to offering premium wash and fold will benefit from a more robust laundromat management system, **complete with POS**, payroll, analytics, and marketing, designed specifically for the laundromat industry. The existing system you have in place may have worked fine for a service that required limited customer interactions and very few employees, but as you grow, so should your laundromat management system. It is much easier and more cost-effective to start with the most streamlined, comprehensive laundromat management system in the first place than to start with a limited one and need to switch down the line. Even if you're unsure where your business is going, or you're positive you will never go further than wash and fold, circumstances and markets change, and you'll need a solution that can grow and scale with you.

## Intent to Grow

Expanding into wash and fold services can open the doors for even greater growth and scalability for your laundromat. Before even launching wash and fold, envision the scalability of the business, and plan for the intent to grow it. As mentioned earlier, it's possible you may have no vision beyond wash and fold, or you feel confident you will not try to grow at all beyond wash and fold. But why limit yourself? You may find very quickly that many of the processes and technology required to master wash and fold can easily be applied to other premium services that can boost your bottom line with minimal adjustment.

## Commercial Laundry

Commercial laundry is a common growth step for laundromat owners after mastering wash and fold. Since only **31% of laundromats** offer commercial laundry, there is immense opportunity for growth into this much-needed service. For laundromats that are located in close proximity to other businesses, commercial laundry can be very profitable and is minimally different from basic wash and fold services. When planning to integrate wash and fold into your service offerings, consider the cost and ROI comparisons of investing in commercial machines vs. large traditional machines to be able to offer premium commercial wash and fold.





## Pickup & Delivery

Another important **growth tactic for laundromat businesses** to consider is offering pickup and delivery alongside wash and fold services. Wash and fold provides an essential baseline for entry into pickup and delivery because, without wash and fold, there is nothing to deliver. A meager **18% of laundromats** offer pickup and delivery, meaning there is extensive opportunity for laundromats to take up space in this important service area. Growing into pickup and delivery services enables laundromats to draw from a larger customer pool by extending the radius of influence. To make scaling the business easy and cost-effective, it's essential that laundromat owners invest in the most comprehensive and laundry-specific management systems from the get-go.



## Wash & Fold Employees

As mentioned above, wash and fold services require more and specially trained staff than a self-serve laundromat. This includes potentially more floor attendants, customer processing, and, of course, wash, dry, and fold staff. As the laundromat owner, the best way to ensure your staff is adequately trained is to first become an expert in processes and technology yourself, then train your employees to be experts in their own rights. Bringing on and training a responsible team also benefits your laundromat beyond wash and fold; additional attendants and customer-facing employees can ensure cleanliness, optimize machine functionality, and assist self-serve customers to streamline efficiency throughout the entire laundromat operation.

Creating an efficient, reliable employee experience is essential to employee retention, and developing a thorough training program is only one element. Implementing a streamlined laundromat management system that displays employee output can empower your staff to do their best work. In addition, it can help laundromat owners identify gaps and breakdowns in employee operations that can be used to make improvements in communication, processes, and the overall employee experience.



# Marketing

## Understand Your Customer Base

Based on where you are located, there can be a wide range of customer personas that may be attracted to your laundromat and your wash and fold services. Become very familiar with your key target demographic so that you can tailor your marketing directly to them. For example, if your target market within your area is made up of predominantly busy, blue-collar workers in dual-income households, you may want to focus your messaging to highlight the speedy convenience of wash and fold that will give time back to their families. However, if your target demographic is comprised mainly of high-income single individuals, it may be more effective to tailor your messaging around the value of personal time and on-demand lifestyles.

## Understand Your Value

One of the most important elements of marketing wash and fold is understanding that this is a premium service, different from self-serve laundry. As mentioned earlier, the ideal customer for wash and fold is not a price-sensitive one, unlike the self-serve customer. With this in mind, the best way to compete and market your wash and fold services is to highlight quality, value, and convenience, not cost. Remember, your wash and fold laundry service does not only offer to do something for customers that they could do for themselves but rather, your service does laundry better than your customers can.

By starting with value and understanding your customer base, you can take your approach to marketing in phases. At launch, tailor your messaging to your ideal customer in your area and market that your laundromat is providing a new, high-quality, convenient wash and fold laundry service. After allowing your newly trained staff to settle in and for your service to gain some traction, utilize data and analytics to identify what is working, as well as opportunities to fill in gaps. A laundromat management system that integrates with your marketing efforts and CRM can help you collect and analyze important data to better understand customer behavior and market more effectively.





## Technology

Having the right technology in place from the start is essential to create the most effective and integrated wash and fold service model. A generic POS that is not specific to the laundry industry may not accommodate the unique needs of your laundromat services. A laundromat management system designed specifically for the laundry industry is uniquely suited to the complex needs of a laundromat business.

## Cents' Employee Experience

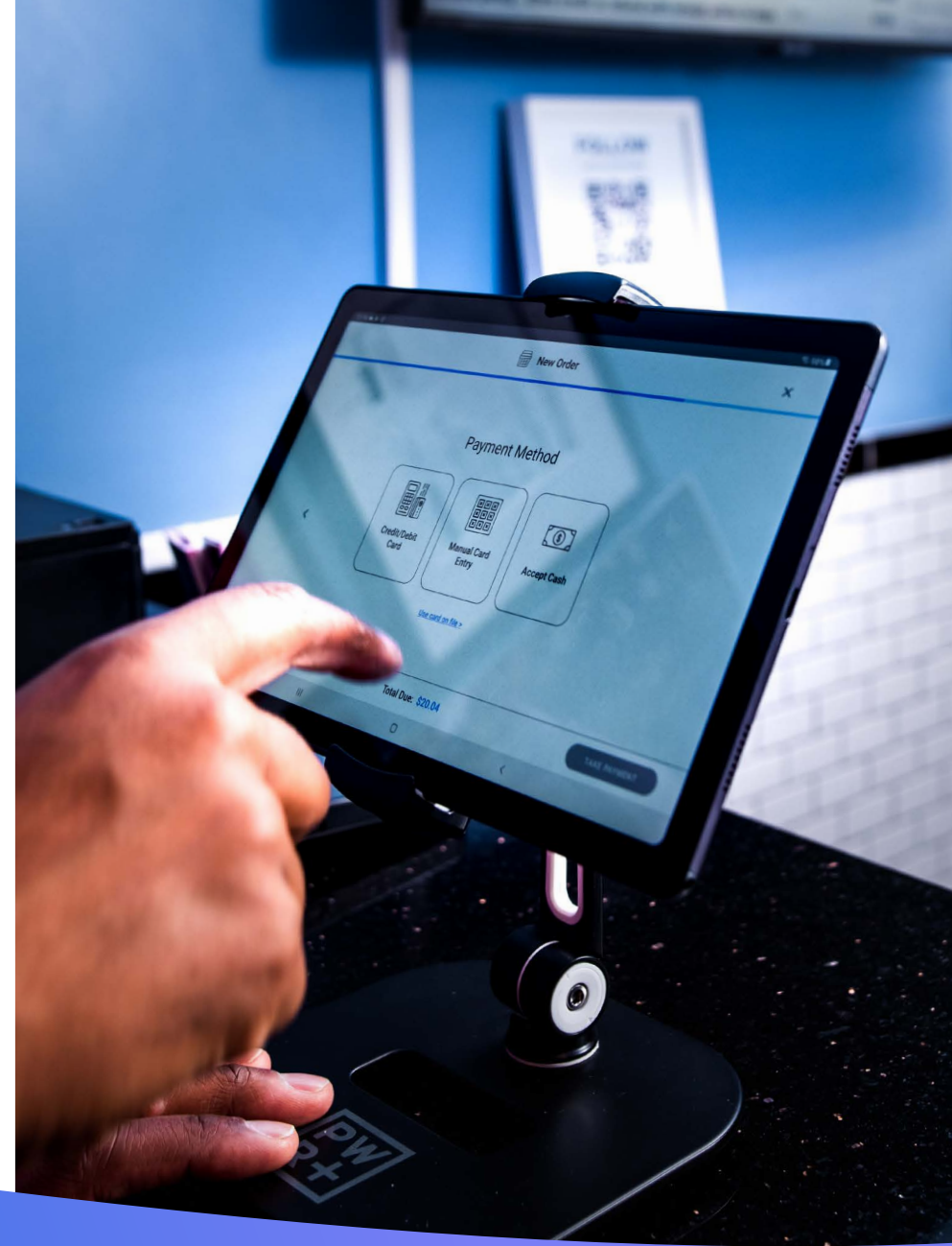
The Cents laundromat management system offers an easy-to-train, easy-to-learn interface for the most streamlined employee experience and improves employee retention. Tracking individual employee metrics inspires staff to do their best work while providing laundromat owners with the ability to identify gaps in staffing and opportunities for improvement. The system also provides insights into business and labor trends, empowering owners to make better decisions for their team and their laundromat. Manage payroll, productivity, and efficiency all in one centralized location.

## Cents' Insights

Data and analytics are essential to managing the successes and failures of your wash and fold laundry service. The Cents laundromat management system provides insights into financials and revenue, efficiency and productivity, customer behavior, and marketing, all in one place. From something as simple as increasing an order of detergent to something as complex as in-depth customer behavior analysis, Cents offers insights from every angle of your laundromat, empowering you to make real-time, informed decisions for the progression of your business.

## Cents' Customer Experience

A streamlined, user-friendly software is only powerful if it equally benefits the customer experience. Cents' laundromat management system and POS provides greater customer visibility, empowering the customer to take control of their wash and fold laundry needs without doing the work. A seamless user experience enables transparency and efficiency, creating high levels of satisfaction and turning one-time customers into loyal regulars.



# Take Control of **Wash & Fold** with Cents

Laundromat wash and fold services provide a great opportunity to grow your business and increase your bottom line. Figuring out where to start and how to move forward can be daunting, even for the most seasoned business professional. With the right laundromat management system in place, you can transform your growth into wash and fold with a streamlined customer experience, reliable employee processes, and informed data and insights. The Cents laundromat management solution uses a powerful POS and intuitive analytics to empower laundromat owners to develop their wash and fold plans into a high-functioning, revenue-driving system. Whether you have well-laid plans for wash and fold already in the works, or offering wash and fold only seems like a distant pipe dream, Cents' software enables laundromat owners to build what they have into a successful wash and fold laundry operation.

To learn more about how Cents can help you get started or optimize your wash and fold laundry services, [request a demo](#) today.

