

CSC Network News

1ST QUARTER 2021

Empowering Independent Laundries

THE ROSCOE COMPANY

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

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What is the history and how was your company founded?

George C. Buik and John P. O'Connell were two young entrepreneurs who, in 1921, saw a market niche in rapidly industrializing Chicago. As smokestacks blossomed, the workforce grew, and there was a growing demand for someone – other than the wife at home – to launder work clothes. They pooled their resources to purchase equipment and rent the building of The Very Best Laundry at the corner of Roscoe and Southport streets. From there, the Roscoe Overall Laundry was born.

In 1927, after outgrowing the location at Roscoe and Southport, Roscoe moved to its current home on Harrison and Central Park alongside what would eventually become the Eisenhower Expressway. Roscoe was fortunate to experience growth year after year, with the transition from washing customer-owned garments and rags to rental garments and shop towels, and a contract supplying uniforms at Chicago's Century of Progress World's Fair in 1933-34. The second generation, George's son-in-law John Roche, and sons Don and George Jr., joined the business from 1940 to 1945. By acquiring small independent operators, Roscoe expanded throughout the region. The second-generation acquired the business, and George Sr. retired in 1969.

Don was an early adapter of utilizing computers for invoicing and production requirements in the late 1960s, as well as pioneering the transition from pressed cotton garments to tunneled blended



garments with the Hot Box project coordinated by technical committees of both national trade associations. Roscoe has always been an innovator in the industry,

developing products and processes adopted on a national basis by other operators. Another such innovation was developing the first wastewater pre-treatment system

in the nation as a joint project with the newly formed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and industry trade associations in 1975. Don purchased all outstanding common stock shares in 1974.

Don's youngest son, Jim Buik, joined Roscoe in 1982 and purchased all outstanding common stock shares in 2000. When Jim was promoted to Roscoe's President in 1991, Don wrote in Roscoe's newsletter, "Jim brings particular skills in the areas that are going to be most important to Roscoe from now until our 100th anniversary – computers, implementation of environmental controls and marketing. He has been able to hone these skills not only here on the firing line, but through very active participation in the industry association."

Don was right on the money regarding the areas Jim would focus on most during the next 30 years. Jim programmed the company's first CRM system and continues to drive innovation through technology. Jim incorporated sweeping changes in production methods and measurements with the guidance of consultant Jim Gutheim. Roscoe consolidated operations in 2009, creating a modern and efficient operation with increased capacity and a lower cost to produce, utilizing the expertise and equipment of Ellis Corp for a new wash aisle, conveyors, and water systems. The consolidation and modernization had environmental benefits as well, resulting in Roscoe receiving awards for sustainability improvements.

As for marketing, Jim led Roscoe through the transition of our slogan from "Delivering a better company image since 1921" to "Take Pride." As Jim reflected in a 2008 article about the re-branding, "You can't say 'Take Pride' and put less of a product in shirts, mats, linens, and wipers out on the street. You can't make that bold statement unless everyone on your team lives up to the image in how they perform in the plant and work with customers. And you have to live up to it in how you work with fellow team members. This is all about raising the bar and being dramatic, bold, and creative."

Jim also used the phrase "raising the bar" in Roscoe's video tour. Produced in 2018, the ability to take a virtual tour has been



one of Roscoe's best marketing projects in the last ten years. Jim's daughter Julia, who joined Roscoe full-time in 2016, led the sorting system portion of the virtual tour. Roscoe is proud to have Jim Buik as our leader, especially as we celebrate our 100th anniversary in 2021.

What markets does your company serve?

Roscoe services the Chicagoland area, southeast Wisconsin, and northwest Indiana. We provide rental services primarily to the manufacturing, wholesale and distribution, specialty trade contractor, and auto repair industries.

What products/services are offered?

We offer a comprehensive range of rental uniforms, including traditional, medical, food processing, static dissipative, flame resistant, high and enhanced visibility, along with casual, executive, and cover garments. We have recently enhanced our lines of women's, casual, and executive garments to address the needs of all wearers. We also rent top-quality mats, restroom supplies, bar mops, wipers, fender covers, wet and dry mops, soaps, and hand sanitizer. Finally, our Corporate Apparel Team provides embroidered and screen printed products for direct purchase.



What are the advantages for your customers doing business with Roscoe?

Local and family-owned, with a vested interest in our local customers and community, we take pride in friendly, responsive, and personalized service, offering the best quality products in the industry. Our sales and service teams focus on customers and markets that are a mutually good fit. Our personalized services and programs are tailored for each customer who is assigned a dedicated team that is knowledgeable about their account, able to quickly address any requests and concerns, closing the loop when issues are resolved. Together, these result in our stellar customer satisfaction ratings – among the highest in the industry.

We also carry several certifications: ISO for quality management and continuous improvement, TRSA Hygienically Clean and HACCP compliant for food safety, and SHARPs for team member safety. Regarding sustainability, we are TRSA Clean Green certified and have been twice awarded the Illinois Governor’s Sustainability Award.

How many customers/routes/employees do you have?

We currently serve approximately 1,200 customers on 14 routes, with 70 team members.

How many salespeople are currently on your team?

We have three Sales Representatives and one Sales Team Leader.

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

For over two decades, we have utilized an outside coach, Bruce Hodes from CMI, for annual and long-range strategic planning. The Strategic Planning Team includes all team leaders with an annual rotation of several additional team members for fresh perspectives and individual development. The process begins with three, five, and ten-year planning by the Long-Range Strategic Planning Team, comprised of senior leadership. We then conduct customer research (see next paragraph), which is followed by each department analyzing their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The larger Strategic Planning Team then has a series of meetings to bubble up issues, write white papers, and

ultimately produce objectives and action plans for the upcoming year. For over thirty years, Roscoe has also utilized Market Measurement, an independent market research consulting firm, to conduct an annual customer satisfaction survey. These results help us focus on the areas where continuous improvement is most important to our customers, which feeds into our strategic planning. This culture of continuous improvement further compels us to be innovative, looking at challenges from many different angles, and taking the approach that best serves our customers.

How do you differentiate your company from the competition?

With a knowledgeable, tenured staff, our customers appreciate personalized service tailored to their specific needs and circumstances. We leverage technology to provide products that are clean, in great condition with deliveries that are complete and on time. Our billing is fair and honest. We pride ourselves on our communications with customers and being extremely responsive when they have concerns.

What is your company’s mission statement/slogan/model?

Roscoe’s slogan is Take Pride, which is reflected in our core values and mission statement.

Core Values:

Positive: helpful, can-do attitude

Reliable: gets things done right

Innovates: offers solutions; focuses on improvement

Does the Right Thing

Eager to Learn

Mission Statement:

Proactive account management

Responsive to customer concerns

Impeccable condition & cleanliness of all products

Deliveries in total & on time

Efficient & accurate billing



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

Roscoe communicates through personal interaction, emails, monitors throughout the plant, and our monthly newsletter to keep all team members in the loop. We also regularly blog and post on social media to convey our core values to prospects, customers, and the community. Our team members are part of our extended family, and we enjoy working side by side to create extraordinary results for customers. Our commitment to the community, by Roscoe and individual team members, provides countless personal enrichment opportunities and supports very worthy causes.

What innovations (if any) have been implemented in your company/plant recently?

We’re always looking for ways to improve through innovation and technology. We also strive to continue being an industry leader, always at the forefront of industry advances. Roscoe implemented a ten-year capital plan that re-engineered our entire operation with the most efficient and effective equipment found in the industry. Deploying accurate and efficient ultra-high frequency chips from Positek in garments and mats, our scanning and sorting system is able to process garments from the bulk scanner on the soil dock to final sort in one day, surpassing the industry standard of three days. Our efficient processing allows us additional time to inspect and upgrade merchandise without missing a beat.



Our Spindle system keeps track of productivity in each step of merchandise processing, with monitors by which team members can gauge their productivity in real-time. Recently, we worked with Spindle and Assured Telematics (our GPS provider) to take this system to the next level at our docks, allowing our Route Service Representatives to see their dock time as calculated by geofencing in the GPS system.

Roscoe developed a Predictive Analytics System to identify when garments typically fail so that we can inspect and proactively replace them before they become a problem for our customers.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we implemented comprehensive policies and equipment for the protection of both team members and customers, including air purifiers throughout the plant and offices, HVAC UV air sanitizers, and an electrostatic sprayer which is used to disinfect specific areas.

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

It's like a second family. Everybody works collectively together, and we all have each other's backs. We have a huge amount of trust and collaborate well versus being tucked away in silos, only being concerned

about "my" responsibilities and/or department. We believe our team members are more vested in their work, our customers, and our community. As a result, we have incredible team members that possess a wealth of knowledge and expertise that feeds into providing our customers with the best service available. And all the while, we take great pride in everything we do. This collaborative pride results in friendly, personalized service. We are accessible to our customers and responsive to their needs. When a customer calls Roscoe, they are greeted by a friendly, helpful voice.

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

Roscoe utilizes a structured training process with comprehensive job aids, continuing education, and cross-training for all team members. As is key to our ISO certification, we are always looking for ways to develop further and grow. In addition to internal training, both networking and training through CSCNetwork, the Textile Rental Service Association, and the Entrepreneurial & Family Business Council are crucial to developing Roscoe's entire next generation of leaders. For production team members, Roscoe still utilizes the framework of the Skills Standards and Certification, and Peer Trainer programs developed by the Uniform & Textile Service Association. Roscoe's first participant, Miriam Avila, is Roscoe's Production Team Leader.

The fourth-generation Buik, Jim's daughter Julia, learns new things every day from her fellow team members, as well as our customers, vendors, and industry colleagues. She believes the CSC Next Generation Owners Summits were a key component of her successful transition to working at Roscoe, and now she is a member of a forum that emphasizes learning through shared experiences of others also in family businesses through the Entrepreneurial & Family Business Council. The training strategy for Julia incorporates working closely with various teams and team members as critical projects arise, learning from the valuable experience of Roscoe's team members, and gaining experience in a variety of roles to develop into a well-rounded leader.

Julia was initially involved in discussions with Alliant and Kannegiesser regarding the programming logic for the garment sorting system. Her curiosity and desire to learn resulted in her working closely with the production team to determine the root cause and permanently resolve issues that inevitably arose in the weeks after this major piece of equipment was installed and her being trained by Kannegiesser in advanced troubleshooting for the system. In another key project, Julia worked closely with the service team to determine the best routes based on many factors; however, implementing Roscoe's first major reroute in ten years was only possible due to the dedication, hard work, and coordination of all of Roscoe's team members. As Corporate Apparel Team Leader, Julia has formed relationships with Roscoe's customers and expanded her knowledge of Roscoe's product offerings for both rental and purchase. With this customer-facing role, Julia found the comradery of the SMART group and the

excellent sales training offered by CSC-Network very beneficial.

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

Transferring the ownership of operators and suppliers to the next generation of family members or leadership teams is the greatest challenge, followed by orderly advancement throughout organizations, from the front line to senior leadership positions, as seasoned veterans retire from the industry.

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

Our industry will continue to develop innovative ways to leverage technology and engineering to deliver a widening array of new products and services that are hygienically clean certified. To do this, our suppliers will have to push the envelope in developing more sophisticated technology, equipment, and prod-

ucts, and operators will need to invest in their businesses to include a commitment to training and development like never before.

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

Opportunities for networking within the industry, training and development programs, and purchasing discounts prove valuable advantages to CSC membership.

THE ROSCOE COMPANY

President, Jim Buik
3535 W. Harrison Street
Chicago, IL 60624
(773)722-5000
www.eRoscoe.com

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