

HLS LINEN SERVICES

www.hslinenservices.com



A large industrial facility, likely a laundry or textile mill, with a high ceiling and complex machinery. In the foreground, several black metal wire mesh carts are lined up. One cart in the middle is filled with large, light blue and white fabric bundles. Above the carts, a dark blue sign with a white wave icon and the word 'SORTING' in white capital letters is suspended. The background shows more machinery, including a blue conveyor system and a large blue structure. The floor is a smooth, light-colored concrete.

 **SORTING**

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HLS LINEN

Leading in qua



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SERVICES

Quality and service





GEOGRAPHICALLY, THE COMPANY now offers its services in several Ontario regions, as well as a couple of western Quebec cities. As for products and services, HLS Linen Services has entered sectors such as acute care hospitals, long term care, hotels, hospitality industry (including restaurants, weddings and campus residences), rehabilitation centers and mental health facilities.

Combined, over 300 HLS employees process and ship over 42 million pounds of clean linen per year. Compare that number to 15 million pounds, which was a reality only seven years ago. The company has grown almost 2.5 times in less than a decade—all in a one-shift operation and in a natural and managed way.

Exceeding industry standards

HLS Linen Services' success is something com-

pany CEO Rocco Romeo is extremely proud of. Arriving in 1995 as an interim CFO, Romeo decided to stay and eventually became Chief Executive Officer in 2000. Since that time, Romeo has seen the company evolve with the times, and in some cases, evolve before the times.

“We are the only company in Ontario (and the second of two in Canada) that is accredited by the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council, which sets standards for laundries,” boasts Romeo. “We were accredited last July. We’re proud of that because it not only shows we rise to meet industry standards and regulations, but we do things voluntarily instead of waiting for people to tell us what to do.”

Another program HLS is involved with is a benchmarking study that measures efficiency. A recent study stated that HLS Linen Services has

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the highest plant efficiencies measured in approximately 700 studies in fourteen countries. The study pointed out that HLS Linen Services is one of the most cost efficient healthcare laundries in the world and the best in North America. “We continue to strive for better and every benchmark is stronger,” says Romeo. “Efficiency is a top priority for HLS, as healthcare facilities cannot run properly without clean linens, just like hotels cannot go without clean towels. We have to respond quickly.”

As for quality service, the company’s improvement systems ensure it achieves high standards. Proud to be ISO 9001 registered, HLS Linen Services tests linens and monitors new textiles to ensure cleanliness control, white-

ness, color retention and tensile strengths. Measurable linen quality parameters have been established to ensure product quality and services are consistently adhered to. These parameters are reviewed by the linen users committee. Any issues that are raised are dealt with immediately, so all partners continue to operate in an environment in which both are satisfied. HLS also bar codes its speciality linens and all carts, and provides clients with information about their laundry costs and utilization history.

All of these measures show concern for excellent care and patient comfort. The ongoing quality improvement systems at HLS ensure it meets the requirements of customers with consistently high standards of quality linen.

Responding to trends

It's an interesting time to be in the linen industry, when the environmental movement is full steam ahead and showing no signs of slow-down. In healthcare, disposable linens in the operating room are becoming a subject of concern, as they represent a lot of waste. "It is definitely an opportunity for us," says Romeo. But providing an alternative to waste doesn't mean HLS is off the environmental hook. "We moved into a new facility years ago and have achieved significant energy savings from this location in gas, water and electricity."

Savings in energy mean savings in cost—yet another trend the company is responding to. "The key challenges in the healthcare environment are all about cutting costs and doing things more efficiently," he adds. Fortunately, a lot of healthcare facilities are outsourcing their laundry needs, which is another bonus for HLS.

It's not just healthcare; all industries are looking for savings, which is another reason HLS is committed to efficiency. "It can be a challenge," admits Romeo, "but we are committed to providing exceptional service to multiple sectors. It's juggling act, because you're only as strong

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5. Customer Preference

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6. Customized Tailored Programs

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7. Versatility of Selection

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as your weakest link. All of our areas have to be strong for our company to succeed. Weakness in any area is dealt with immediately. Of course, without customers, we are nothing; therefore customers are our first priority.”

It is clear that HLS Linen Services’ efforts are paying off. As a leading laundry service in the Canada, the company has managed to grow in all the right areas. As for future growth, Romeo says there are always opportunities. “We assess on a case-by-case basis. I think we are positioned to expand if required, so we will consider opportunities as they are presented. You never know what could happen. If you had told me years ago they

we would be this successful, I don’t think I would have believed it. We’re excited to see what the future brings.” **CBJ**

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**AS SEEN IN THE MAY 2010 ISSUE
OF THE CANADIAN BUSINESS JOURNAL**