



Southeast ISBDC Client Highlight

August 4, 2014

Client Highlight - Trinity Dry Cleaners

Linda and Barry Mitchell are the owners of Trinity Dry Cleaners ([website](#)) ([Facebook page](#)) located in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. Trinity Dry Cleaners is an eco-friendly dry cleaning business, and they are constantly looking for ways to help customers reduce their carbon footprint. Linda and Barry feel it's their mission to play a part in converting an industry that has been historically toxic to humans and hazardous to the planet to an environmentally responsible and sustainable alternative.

Before becoming entrepreneurs, the owners both held executive level jobs in a multi-national distribution company headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio.

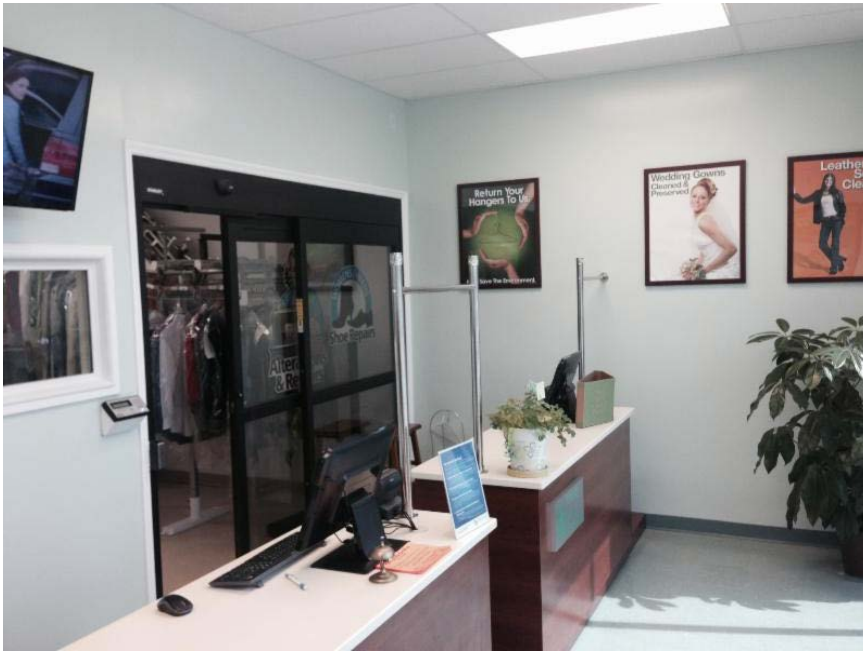
Linda and Barry considered opening their own business for several years prior to launching Trinity Dry Cleaners. They examined a number of different business opportunities but felt they could make the biggest impact in the dry cleaning industry, as most plants still use

Perchloroethylene, which is a toxic and environmentally hazardous solvent. They knew they wanted to take dry cleaning in a new direction, and chose to use GreenEarth solvent, which is non-toxic and non-hazardous. Trinity Dry Cleaners is proud to be the only GreenEarth affiliate in Southeastern Indiana, and also services markets in Northern Kentucky and Southwestern Ohio.



Linda and Barry also feel that there is a huge technology gap between most dry cleaners and their customers. They have embraced technology by implementing

barcode technology on all of their garments, which gives complete traceability to customers. By using Trinity Dry Cleaners website or smartphone app, customers can see not only the status of their orders, but also a full history of each garment. They can also sign up for their free home delivery service and schedule a pickup right from their phone. Linda and Barry said, "We felt by offering these conveniences to our customers, coupled with the outstanding quality of our work, we could differentiate ourselves from our competitors and build a successful business. We wanted to provide a comprehensive range of services to our patrons including dry cleaning, wet cleaning, expert alterations, leather cleaning and repairs, shoe repairs, pillow restoration, and area rug cleaning."



They both agree that the most enjoyable part of their business is the day-to-day interactions with their customers. Whether it's in-person at the counter, through social media, or at community events, they really enjoy getting to know their patrons. When asked what they enjoy least about their business, their response was,

"Trying to overcome the image that dry cleaners are bad for the environment, are dirty sweatshops, and are stuck in the 1970's. We built our store with windows into the plant, to show our customers it's as clean in the back as it is in the front. We also installed excellent ventilation and air-conditioning to keep our employees as comfortable as possible."

Like most business owners, the Mitchells have faced and overcame challenges along the way. Finding business partners that understood the progressive nature of their business plan was the most challenging aspect of starting the business. Having the right accountant, insurance agent, attorney, and design consultant were critical to the formation of their business. Additionally, finding the right financial institution was vitally important, and they interviewed several before choosing the one that they felt truly understood what they were trying to accomplish.

Following approximately 18 months of research and development, it took 9 full months to open their business. They opened Trinity Dry Cleaners on March 17, 2014, and experienced a stronger than anticipated start to their business and hired two additional employees within 30 days of opening. Their business has grown well beyond Dearborn County, and with the start of their free home delivery routes, they intend to expand their customer base into Ohio and Kentucky as well. They have over 1600 customers, and plan to open another location within the next year.

By offering a "green" alternative, they believe their greatest contribution to their community is twofold. They have eliminated a health risk to their customers from Perchloroethylene, a known carcinogen, and they improved the environmental health of their region by removing a threat to air and water quality. They have also partnered with several charities and community organizations to raise funds and awareness for their respective causes, and also plan to organize their first coat drive this autumn.

Linda and Barry, who have been Southeast ISBDC clients since October 2012 say, "The ISBDC consolidates many areas of expertise in one accessible local office. Having access to qualified advisors is an invaluable resource for any entrepreneur looking to start their own business."



Southeast ISBDC Regional Director, Blayr Barnard, says, "I first met Barry and Linda with Trinity Dry Cleaners at our Entrepreneur Day in Lawrenceburg, Indiana. While they are well versed in business, they spent the entire day making sure they soaked up every piece of advice and information available. After having toured their facility, I can say it is the only dry cleaner I have been in that is clean enough to eat off the floor - literally!"