

## Tailwind Manager of the Year

Every year around Thanksgiving for a decade now, I have selected the Tailwind Manager of the Year. I truly enjoy bestowing this award and I am particularly careful about who makes the grade. In order to even be considered, one must, of course, be using the Tailwind System, but furthermore that person must believe in the system even more than, perhaps I do.

On top of that, they must be masters at running the system and be consistently attaining among the highest productivity numbers (Pieces per Labor Hour, PPLH) in the country!. This is hardly an easy task. Some would consider the PPLH numbers that past managers regularly attain to be lofty, if not impossible. But those that run the Tailwind System on a daily basis have no doubt why it is the most advanced work-flow management system in the world. With all that said, I had 3 amazing candidates this year and making a choice was quite difficult. So difficult, in fact, that I enlisted the help of the plant owners to help me make a decision. I guess you could call them letters of recommendation. Still, a clear winner was difficult to determine. First up was Virginia Rivera. She is the manager of GNL, Inc., a wholesale shirt laundry in Austin, Texas. Operating a wholesale laundry, she does not have the privilege of having the counter personnel do all the things necessary for the system to work optimally. She has to take extra steps to ensure that once the shirts are received in the plant that everything is correct as in pieces per bundle, buttons undone, proper tying, etc. Even though Virginia has added these extra steps, she is still able to keep production at a peak level without allowing any overtime. Lost claims are way down and production is way up. Most importantly, GNL INC has not had to replace the 5 employees that were cut when Tailwind was implemented therefore keeping payroll at a minimum. Renee Bolt at Drycleaning Station in Denver was a good bet to win, place or show all year long. She is surely one of my favorites and is a true master of the Tailwind System. When she learned the Tailwind System several years ago, she became a bulldog, latching on to the concepts that make-up Tailwind and never letting go. She single-handedly runs the Tailwind System for the shirt laundry, the retail drycleaning, home delivery routes as well and a great deal of fire restoration work affiliated with CRDN (Certified Restoration Drycleaning Network). Photo 2 - Renee Bolt, Drycleaning Station, Highlands Ranch, CO And then there is Jake Whiffen, the Operations Manager at Dermody Cleaners in Taunton, MA, the Tailwind System Manager of the Year for 2010 What made Jake stand out among the candidates is the adversity he faced. It's one thing to stand behind something when you don't need to work at it so much, but it's another thing entirely to stand behind something that you know will work, but your staff is just too "stuck in their ways" to make the transition easy. So goes the saga of Jake Whiffen. Terry Dermody says it all better than I ever could: "Jake is the general manager for Dermody Cleaners located in Taunton Massachusetts. Our operation is comprised of a central plant which serves two drop stores each having a coin laundry under the same roof. From the main plant, Dermody Cleaners also operates two home pick-up and delivery routes. The final component of our operation is our restoration division, CRDN of Boston and Eastern Massachusetts. The need to process all these operations through our central plant in an efficient and organized fashion requires a top flight system administered by top flight management. Tailwind provided the system and Jake provided the management. Photo 3 - Jake Whiffen, General Manager, Dermody Cleaners, Taunton, MA is Tailwind's Manager of the Year The decision to convert to the Tailwind system was an easy one. The implementation was not. Jake fully bought into the need for the system from the very beginning. Our CRDN division was adding additional territory and this could potentially triple the number of restoration pieces the plant will need to handle. Unfortunately, our production staff did not share in the buy in. The main obstacle to a smooth implementation was our dry cleaner, Howie. Howie was a typical "old dog trying to learn new tricks" except for one thing, he didn't try too hard to adapt to the new tricks. Even though Jake explained and demonstrated the system and its benefits over and over, Howie continued to fall back to old habits shortly after being left to his own devices. Jake just wore him down. Jake made it abundantly clear that the system was staying and all personnel had to conform to it, or leave the company. Howie finally, after it was clear that the Tailwind system was not going away, adapted to the system and the increase in productivity was enormous. Similar instances occurred in the tagging and finishing departments. In each, certain individuals did not want or care to follow the new system. Jake made it clear to them that they had the same option that Howie did. That was to get on board or leave. They all opted to adapt to the program. As I mentioned earlier, the results of Tailwind were spectacular. For example, last winter was our busiest period in our company's history due to our expanded restoration business. We were able to process this work load without one hour of overtime in the production department at the same staffing level. In the prior years we just considered production overtime as a "given" necessary evil to get the work out. Jake was the driving force to make sure the system was used and productivity maximized. Jake's strength's in management are his ability to maintain focus and attention to detail in each facet of our multi-faceted operation. Jake brings the same focus to our route sales division as well as in managing our personnel on a daily basis. I believe that Jake's performance on a daily basis is worthy of this prestigious award. Jake receives a certificate of achievement and a custom-made desk clock along with my congratulations and admiration. Please join me congratulating Jake Whiffen as Tailwind's Manager of the Year 2010 and also recognizing Virginia Rivera and Renee Bolt as very worthy runners-up. Congratulations to you all!