

# Garment care or green care? You don't have to settle for one or the other.



Believe it or not, many cleaners in North America proclaim themselves to be “organic cleaners.”

Clearly, these cleaners are attempting to capitalize on the public perception that “organic” equals “safe”. In much the same way that organic foods equal “safe” for consumption.

Anyone with any insight into the dry cleaning industry knows that the quality of product delivered by the vast majority of cleaners is mediocre at best.

For years, industry experts, industry consultants and national industry associations have been banging the drum of product quality. They've exhorted and begged cleaners to refocus on quality of product and the critical ingredients that comprise quality of product — skills, expertise, processes, craftsmanship, equipment and facilities.

All to little or no effect.

## The move away from quality of product

So how did the industry land in this pool of mediocrity?

Because cleaners drifted away from **quality of product** (a truly difficult undertaking) and focused instead on **other differentiating factors** (a much easier undertaking).

First, it was **service** — same day service, next day service, three day service, smiley-face service, have-a-nice-day service, etc.

Next, it was **conveniences** — 3 day pickup and delivery, 24/7 drop off, 24/7 order retrieval, credit and debit cards, house accounts, etc.

Then came **image** — granite countertops, recessed lighting, glossy fashion posters, coffee bars, aromatic candles, cool jazz, etc.

There's just one problem: as more and more cleaners ramped up their service, conveniences and image, many found that these attributes **ceased to be differentiating factors**.

So now ordinary cleaners spend their time trumpeting their “**greenness**”.

We're “green” they say. “Everything about us is green” they say:

- dry cleaning solvents and fluids (synthetic petroleum, formaldehyde dibutyl acetal, siloxane, liquid carbon dioxide, hybrid glycol ether/liquid carbon dioxide and/or wet cleaning)
- waste handling
- gas fired boilers
- plant maintenance program
- insulated steam pipes
- mercury free fluorescent bulbs
- dual flush toilets
- cardboard and plastic recycling program
- biodiesel-fueled and electric delivery vans
- biodegradable poly
- hanger recycling program
- energy efficient printers
- reusable garment bags.

We could go on and on, but you get the drift.

**Fact is, for many cleaners it doesn't even matter whether there's any truth to their green claims.**

**Just saying you're green is all that counts.**

Here's the problem: Apart from reusable garment bags, **you'll never know the truth about their green claims.**

For example, in the metro Phoenix area we've got a "Green Cleaners" that dry cleans in perchloroethylene (aka perc), a "Natural Cleaners" that cleans in synthetic petroleum and an "Organic Cleaners" that dry cleans in synthetic petroleum and formaldehyde dibutyl acetal.

**This is much more than just greenwashing. It's a fraud on the public.**

## The takeaway

The greening of the dry cleaning industry is admirable.

But, as usual, the thing that's all the rage is being oversold and overhyped.

What's more, it deflects attention away from **the only matter that really counts**: true quality cleaning.

Of course, **it doesn't have to be an either or situation**. You can have both.

You can be true quality cleaner and be green. RAVE FabriCARE is a case in point.



**Stu Bloom**

Founder and President of RAVE FabriCARE

RAVE FabriCARE, based in Scottsdale, Arizona, cares for fine garments, household textiles and accessories and serves clients in the USA and Canada and in other selected countries throughout the world. Stu is the author of various Position Papers, White Papers and Ebooks on these subjects, all of which are available from [ravefabricare.com/downloads/free-stuff](http://ravefabricare.com/downloads/free-stuff). He is an evangelist for true quality cleaning and is a contributor to and editor of True Quality Cleaning, RAVE FabriCARE's blog.



## Looking for more great resources?

Check out our Resource Library for over 60 expert Position Papers (short discussions), White Papers (longer in-depth discussions) and Ebooks spanning all aspects of caring for your fine garments, household textiles and accessories.