

PWNA Fleet Washing Certification



PWNA Certified Contractors are Landing More Customers, Making More Money

by Allison Hester

Truck fleets are constantly exposed to the elements and every extreme condition imaginable. Keeping a fleet looking clean and professional is hard work, and many fleet owners turn to outside contractors to handle the washing. This is good news for contract cleaners.

However, fleet washing is different from a lot of pressure washing markets. It's volume, not details: get them in and get them out. It's usually performed late at night or on weekends, and you only have a short window of time to do the task. It's carefully regulated environmentally, as the contaminants being removed from the trucks have come from off-property sources. The chemicals used can be very dangerous. It's performed year-round, even in cold weather. And it's hard, physical work.

On the positive side, unlike many other cleaning markets, fleet washing is consistent and repeat. Clients typically need their fleets washed anywhere from weekly to monthly.

Gain a few regular clients, keep them satisfied, and you don't have to keep looking for more work.

It's also a competitive market, with lots of lowballers who win accounts based on low prices. They show up a couple of times, then the next thing you know their quality of work starts to go down. They show up late. Their equipment stops working. And eventually they just quit showing up at all.



The best way to distinguish yourself from the rest of the crowd of fleet washers is to exude professionalism. And one of the best ways to exude professionalism is to become PWNA Fleet Washing Certified.

"Being a certified contractor is a nice feather in your cap. It's one of the things that will help you get more accounts," explained Dan Galvin of East Coast Power Washing, who took the course last Fall. "Managers of trucking companies have enough problems to deal with already.

When they see that you are certified and can be trusted, it takes one problem off their plate.”

The PWNA Fleet Washing Certification Course

Because of the tight regulations involved with fleet washing, as well as the various cleaning methods and equipment options on the market, the PWNA Fleet Washing Certification Course is one of the association’s more intensive certification programs.

“This was a no nonsense course that was laced with many ‘nuggets,’ or takeaways,” said Ty Eubanks of South Shore Building Services, who took the course at last October’s annual PWNA convention. “Even though I’ve since decided not to incorporate fleet washing into my business, I still learned skills that will help me better perform flatwork and the other types of cleaning that we offer.”

The course is currently being taught by Paul Horsley – Publisher of *eClean Magazine* – who owns Scotts Pressure Wash in Alberta, Canada. Horsley has been in the pressure washing industry for over 35 years, and has over 40

staff members and 23 vehicles. Scotts Pressure Wash specializes in fleet washing, commercial cleaning, flat surface cleaning and rail car cleaning.

“It is a great course to take and Paul is a very informative business owner,” said Barry Marno of New Finish Power Washing who took the course with Paul in Calgary, Alberta. “For anyone who is starting a power washing company or adding a new area of business to their company, this is a great source of knowledge.”

“Paul is an excellent instructor,” Eubanks agreed. “I appreciated that he demonstrated an expert knowledge in the course curriculum. He knows his customers and understands how to meet their expectations.”

Galvin, who has been washing fleets for 10 years said he still learned several things that have helped him in his business and in growing his bottom line. “I learned several tips and techniques that have saved me time and money. People need to understand that if you can save a few dollars per truck, that



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could add up to thousands of dollars a year.”

As with all PWNA certification courses, the fleet washing course follows a specific outline, covering each of these topics: background of service; economic opportunity of service; chemicals, detergents and cleaners; equipment; leaning process; water reclamation; safety; pricing; advertising; available add on services.

This is important because becoming a successful fleet washing company requires more than just knowing how to wash a truck. “Over the years, I’ve found that a lot of contractors get into fleet washing without understanding the management side of the business,” said PWNA Board Member Michael Hinderliter, owner of Steamaway, who has been washing fleets for around 30 years. “They don’t know how to price the job. They don’t know how to market. They don’t know what it takes to stay in business.”

PWNA certification not only provides a jumpstart to better understanding the business aspects of fleet washing, but PWNA membership also provides a network of successful fleet washers and business owners to call upon with questions and ideas.

And apparently fleet washing certification works.

Increasing Bottom Lines

“I just landed a new contract with 500 vehicles, trucks and forklifts, and I used my certification to help me land the job,” Galvin explained. “I have made thousands upon thousands

of dollars on the information I received from the PWNA certification courses. Think about it, you add just one new fleet washing client at \$1000 per week, that’s \$52,000 per year. It’s not that hard to do when you have the knowledge to do it and that’s what you will get when you attend the PWNA convention.”

Guy Triger, owner of Puma Power Wash in San Francisco, took the Fleet Washing Certification Course at last year’s PWNA convention. “By implementing the strategies I was taught, I was able to build a steady customer base in a very short time,” he said. “When prospective customers call me for an estimate, I always show them my certifications from PWNA, Their next question is the same: ‘When can you start?’”

“If you’re reading this wondering if you should take the (fleet washing) course, just do it!” agreed Ross Wilhelms of West Coast Fleet Wash. “The value I got out of this program is easily worth 10 times the amount it cost. Five stars.”

Whether it’s fleet washing or one of the many other PWNA certification classes, Eubanks said he strongly encourages contractors to take advantage of the educational opportunities that PWNA will offer at October’s annual convention. “The cost of the PWNA certification courses pales in comparison to the cost of the learning curve in the school of hard knocks,” he explained. “I have started every one of my service lines – window washing, steam cleaning, waterproofing, bird abatement, metal restoration – from scratch with huge learning curves... . Wish I had taken certification courses to learn from the experts and hit the ground running.”

The Fleet Washing Certification Course, along with several other certifications programs, will be offered at the PWNA Annual Convention, October 17-19 in Orlando. To learn more or to register, go to www.PWNA.org.

Welcome New PWNA Members!

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Jean-Paul Guzlemette and Hossein Naghidzadeh
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