

cents

Scaling Wash & Fold Services for Laundromat Growth



Introduction: A New Era for Laundry Operators

Laundry customers want more than clean clothes. They want their time back. Across the country, laundromat owners are turning to **Wash & Fold (WDF)** as a way to meet that need and grow revenue beyond the limits of coin-operated cycles. What was once a side hustle for a few progressive operators has quickly become a primary source of revenue.

Data from the CLA Annual Survey indicates that over 65% of operators now offer Wash & Fold, and those that lean into it are experiencing anywhere from **10%-30% increase in gross revenue** within the first year. Wash & Fold isn't just a trend—it's a transformation. What once was a "nice-to-have" side service is now becoming the engine of growth for the modern laundromat.

This guide is designed to show you how to implement, expand, and scale Wash & Fold profitability. It goes beyond the why and dives into the how, from pricing and staffing to marketing and automation, so you can take action confidently.

Information sourced from: <https://www.intothefoldproject.com/>



Why Wash & Fold Belongs in Your Growth Strategy

Higher Margins, Recurring Revenue, Simpler Operations

Self-service laundry is steady, but Wash & Fold is scalable. Let's break down the numbers:

- **Self-service laundry** typically generates **\$3-\$6 per machine with tight margins** due to rising utility costs and fixed pricing.
- **Wash & Fold** services, by contrast, bring in anywhere from **\$1.15-\$2.92/lb on average**, with orders ranging from **\$44-\$79 per transaction** depending on drop-off or pickup and delivery.

Because Wash & Fold bundles convenience with personalization (think preferences, folding styles, and packaging), customers are willing to pay more and come back more often. With loyalty programs, memberships, and saved preferences, Wash & Fold naturally drives **repeat business and higher lifetime value**.



Who's Using It?

Your ideal Wash & Fold customers are already out there:

- Busy professionals working long hours
- Parents with multiple kids and zero laundry bandwidth
- Elderly customers who value mobility assistance
- Small business owners with daily linen needs
- Property managers juggling laundry at multiple rental sites

In short, you're serving people *who value their time over the cost of a laundry cycle*.



Stand Out in a Crowded Market

Your competition may have shinier machines, but **you have service that builds loyalty**. Whether you're competing with big-box laundromats or DIY garage setups, Wash & Fold sets you apart. In smaller markets, you're giving a unique offering. In dense markets, it's how you rise above the noise.

- You're offering service, not just space.
- You build a brand around convenience and trust.
- You create recurring revenue with predictable, trackable outcomes.

“We pioneered the wash-dry bag concept in Brooklyn. We just wash, dry, and bag things back into the bag, unfolded. I remember those early conversations with Cents where we said, 'We need this other service that is not wash and fold.' Everyone was surprised at first, wondering why we'd offer that. And now we see it popping up at other stores as well.”

- Corinna Williams, Celsious



How to Operationalize Wash & Fold Without Adding Headaches

You don't need to reinvent your operation. You need a system that works.

Smarter Pricing, Smarter Packaging

It's all about starting simple, then expanding.

- **Flat Rate:** Charge \$1.75/lb with a \$20 minimum. It's easier for customers to understand and for staff to process.
- **Tiered Service Models:** Offer a "next-day" tier at \$2.25/lb or an eco-wash with hypoallergenic detergent at a premium.
- **Membership Subscription Packages:** Weekly pickup at a flat \$99/month covers up to 60 lbs, which is ideal for families or business clients.

Cents Tip: Use your pricing to encourage higher average order value (AOV) and reduce labor friction. The fewer options you need to explain at drop-off, the smoother your workflow.

Staffing & Training: The Right Tasks, The Right Way

You don't need more staff. You need clarity and consistency.

- Assign tasks like folding, bagging, or packaging through a business management dashboard for easier tracking.
- Standardize folding styles like retail fold vs. bundle roll.
- Use checklists for order accuracy and include visual references for training.

“Training staff and getting buy-in was the most challenging aspect. We solved it through hands-on support and showing how it made their jobs easier.”

- Ariana Roviello, Laundré





Optimize Your Floor Plan

Whether you're operating from a 1,000 sq. ft. storefront or a full-scale facility, there are plenty of ways to maximize your existing square footage:

- Set up a dedicated folding area away from high-traffic zones.
- Add mobile carts or laundry bins with labels to prevent mixups.
- Create a "staging shelf" system so completed orders are easy to grab and go.

A streamlined layout doesn't just speed up orders, but gives your space a more professional look and feel.

What to Invest In

If you've already got commercial machines, you may not need to upgrade immediately. Other investment considerations include:

- Adding extra folding tables
- Installing shelving for sorted/completed orders
- Upgrading your packaging materials, like branded bags and labels, to reinforce quality.

You don't have to spend big. You just need to show customers you're taking their clothes seriously.

Converting Self-Service Customers to Full-Service Clients

If you're already getting the foot traffic, let's make it count.

Your self-service customers represent an untapped goldmine for Wash & Fold growth. They're already on site, and they already trust your machines. What they need is a reason to let go of the chore completely. The reason they may be hesitant is that they think it's too expensive, they're unsure about the quality of care, or they just don't know it's available.

These aren't dead ends, but opportunities to educate and prove your service is consistent, professional, but most importantly, worth it. Here's how to break down resistance and build lasting value.



Effective Conversion Tactics

You don't need a giant campaign to start converting. You need small, repeatable moments that reduce friction.

- Start with Promotions: "First bag \$10" or "Get 20% off your first Wash & Fold order" makes the first step low-risk. Include this offer on every receipt, website pop-up, or even machine decal.
- In-Store Visibility: Display "Ask us about Wash & Fold" signage near machines, folding tables, and POS.
- Staff Engagement: Arm attendants with scripts like "Did you know we'll do the folding for you?" or "You can drop it off and we'll text you when it's done."
- Automated Nudges: Send a post-visit SMS with a Wash & Fold offer or use in-app marketing to target recent customers with timed promos.

Build Your Value Message

At its core, your Wash & Fold service offers one big thing: **time back**. Speak to them to encourage them to give it a try. Craft messaging that's built on benefits, not features.

- "Reclaim your weekends."
- "Laundry done exactly the way you like it without lifting a finger."
- "Drop it. Done. Delivered."
- "Laundry that fits into your life, not the other way around."

You can also tailor the value proposition to different customer types:

- **Busy parents:** "One less thing on your to-do list."
- **Professionals:** "Your laundry's done before your next Zoom call."
- **Elderly customers:** "No lifting, no stairs. Just clean, folded clothes."

Make it personal and make it practical. Remind your customers that it isn't a splurge. It's an **affordable convenience** they'll love once they try it.

Customer Education Strategies

Sometimes it's not hesitation, but unfamiliarity. Clear education on what they should expect is key.

- Use simple language to explain the process: "Drop off. We wash, dry, and fold. You relax."
- Add photos showing how orders are folded and packaged or share a short video on your website and social media.
- Create a quick one-sheet or poster answering questions like:
 - What if I have special preferences?
 - How do I know my clothes won't get mixed up?
 - Can I choose my detergent?
- Let customers know that every team member follows clear instructions, mentioning tools like saved preferences, barcode tracking, and bag labeling that ensure quality control.

Bonus: Customers who understand how it works are more likely to trust it and tell their friends.

Marketing That Moves the Needle

It's simple: if you build it but don't promote it, it won't grow.

Operators who offer Wash & Fold often make the same mistake: they build the service, launch it once, and expect word-of-mouth to carry it. That's not enough, though. If you want to Wash & Fold to grow your business consistently, you need a simple, repeatable marketing playbook designed specifically for this service.

Let's break down what works, starting with who you should be going after.

Targeting High-Value Customer Segments

Not every customer is your ideal Wash & Fold client, and that's a good thing! Focus your efforts where you'll get the most value.

Who to Target:

- Dual-income families with kids, especially in suburban zip codes.
- High-rise renters, commuters, and remote workers who hate laundry.
- Local salons, spas, gyms, yoga studios, and massage therapists.
- Airbnb and Vrbo hosts who need a consistent, fast turnaround and value cleanliness.

How to Find Them:

- Run targeted Facebook and Instagram ads within a 3-5 mile radius of your store.
- Use local SEO: Add "wash and fold laundry near me" as a keyword to your site and Google Business profile.
- Offer incentives for specific groups: "10% off for new moms", "Business bundles available"

Cents Tip: Use order data and customer profiles to identify who's spending the most and tailor offers accordingly.

Loyalty Program Development

Wash & Fold works best when it's not a one-time purchase. That's where loyalty comes in. Not just as a perk, but as a **revenue multiplier**.

Program Ideas That Stick:

- **Digital Punch Cards:** “Buy 5 Wash & Fold orders, get the 6th free.”
- **Membership Incentives:** Offer a monthly flat rate for recurring orders with a discount baked in.
- **Referral Bonuses:** Give \$10 to both parties when a customer refers a friend.
- **Perks for Preferences:** Customers who set saved preferences, like no dryer sheets, get 5% off their next order.

What Loyalty Actually Does:

- Encourages habitual behavior
- Raises average order value over time
- Builds a predictable revenue stream
- Differentiates you from drop-off-only competitors

Local Business Partnerships

If you're not already partnering with other small businesses in your neighborhood, you're leaving money on the table and missing the easiest channel for steady, bulk Wash & Fold orders.

Who to Approach

- Fitness centers and yoga studios
- Barbershops, nail salons, spas
- Restaurants and coffee shops for staff uniforms and towels
- Property managers and Airbnb hosts

What to Offer

- Set discounted commercial pricing
- Offer pickup and delivery scheduling for staff convenience
- Include professional packaging and weekly invoicing

Co-Marketing Ideas:

- Leave flyers at their front desk
- Offer co-branded promotions
- Create “Preferred Partner” packages with volume discounts

Digital Marketing Approach Built for Wash & Fold

Wash & Fold is a convenience sale, and convenience lives online. Your digital marketing should match the value you're offering: time back, less effort, and trustworthy care.

Must-Haves:

- **Google Business Profile:** Include “Wash and Fold”, “Pickup and Delivery”, and high-quality photos of folded orders and your folding station.
- **Website with book tools:** Use Cents or an integrated widget to let customers schedule online.
- **Automated SMS and Email Campaigns:** Send reminders when laundry drop-off is coming up, offer a discount to schedule, or reward customers with refer-a-friend promotions.

Social Media That Converts:

- Share before/after content of real orders (with customer permission)
- Show your folding process or staff behind the scenes—build trust
- Celebrate big wins: “We just passed 500 Wash & Fold orders this month!”

Cents Tip: Customers who see your process are more likely to trust it. Trust = orders.



Implementation Timeline: Grow at Your Pace

You don't need to flip a switch overnight. Follow this phased rollout for manageable growth:

Months 1-2: Prep and Pilot

- Train staff and standardize folding/packaging workflows
- Set pricing and test a small batch of orders with trusted customers
- Introduce loyalty/repeat options quietly

Months 3-4: Public Launch

- Run promotions
- Add Wash & Fold signage and booking tools to your website
- Begin collecting feedback and testimonials

Months 5-8: Optimize and Expand

- Evaluate order volume, repeat customers, and staff performance
- Launch Pickup & Delivery (if applicable)
- Start targeting commercial accounts

Metrics to Watch:

- Pounds processed per week
- Labor costs per pound
- Repeat customer/order rate
- Revenue per square foot (total vs WDF)



Real Operator Success: Lotta's Laundry

No storefront. No drop-off. No problem.

Lotta's Laundry, founded in 2024 by Bainbridge Island residents Beau and Liz, is a fully digital pickup + delivery-only Wash & Fold operation that illustrates how clarity and intentional design can fuel growth

Highlights:

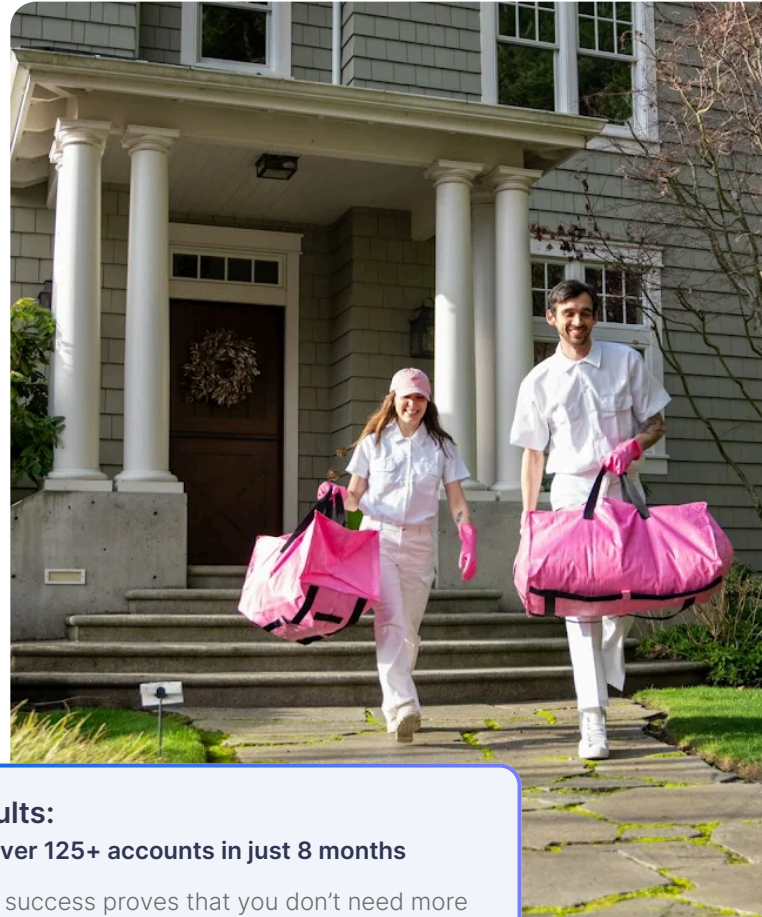
- Pickup & Delivery Focus
- Recurring Service

Exceptional Service & Sustainability:

- Tailored care
- Professional workflows
- Planet-first practices

Community & Commercial Partnerships:

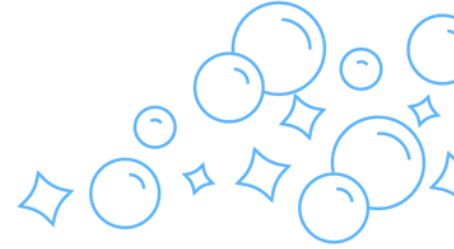
- Local engagement
- Social impact



Results:

- **Over 125+ accounts in just 8 months**

Their success proves that you don't need more complexity to scale. You just need more clarity.



Ready to Scale? Your Folded-and-Finished Plan

Wash & Fold isn't a side hustle anymore. It's your growth engine.

Wash & Fold is more than a value-added service—it's the cornerstone of the modern laundromat business. It delivers higher margins, repeat business, customer loyalty, and professional brand perception. But none of that happens by accident.

Here's how you go from intention to execution.

Information sourced from the Cents Into The Fold Project - <https://www.intothefoldproject.com/> and the CLA Research Surveys

Your Action Plan for Wash & Fold Implementation

You don't need to overhaul your business—you need to take one confident step at a time. Use this checklist to move from idea to income:

Phase 1: Plan & Prep

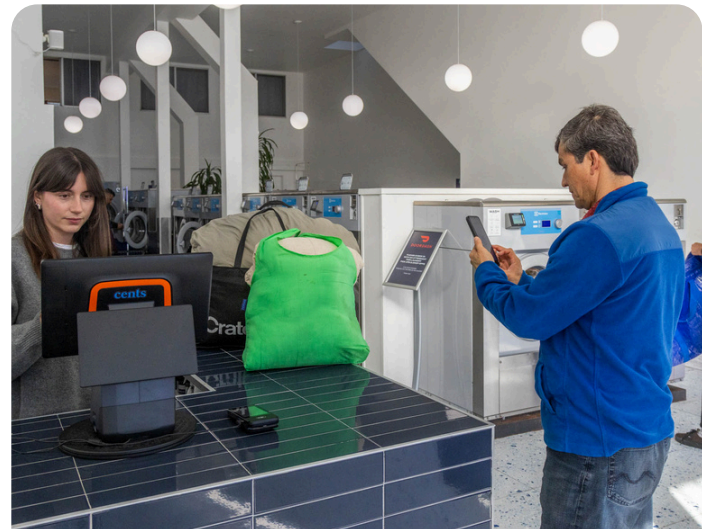
- Define your service model: Drop-off only? Pickup & delivery? Both?
- Establish pricing tiers: Consider flat rates, express turnaround, and eco-friendly upgrades.
- Designate your folding area: Rearrange space for clean folding, packaging, and storage.
- Assess staffing and train accordingly: Use visual SOPs and order tasking tools.
- Source essentials: Folding tables, labeled bags, branded packaging, shelving, carts.

Phase 2: Pilot & Launch

- Test workflows: Run 10–20 orders with friends, family, or existing customers.
- Promote a soft launch offer: “First 15 lbs for \$15” or “Refer a friend, get \$10 off.”
- Add Wash & Fold signage and FAQs in-store and online.
- Create tracking habits: Use tools to monitor order count, staff output, and customer feedback.

Phase 3: Optimize & Scale

- Introduce loyalty or subscription plans for recurring revenue.
- Launch delivery (if applicable) and set service zones based on demand.
- Market intentionally: Target high-value segments, promote online, and pursue local partnerships.
- Refine your KPIs: Focus on pounds processed, reorders, order accuracy, and margins.



Technology & Tools to Consider

To run Wash & Fold without the chaos, you need more than sticky notes and memory—you need systems that think for you.

Cents Business Management Platform

Built specifically for laundromats, Cents gives you:

- **Order Management Dashboard:** Track every order from intake to pickup.
- **Staff Tasking Tools:** Assign folding, sorting, and packing roles—no micromanaging required.
- **Customer Profiles & Preferences:** Save detergent types, fold styles, and special notes.
- **Automated Text/Email Updates:** Keep customers in the loop without extra phone calls.
- **Recurring Order & Loyalty Program Features:** Set it and forget it—for you and your customers.
- **Marketing & Reporting Dashboards:** Understand what's working, when, and why.

Resources for Ongoing Support

You're not alone in this. There's an entire ecosystem of operator-focused support to help you level up.

From Cents:

- Webinars & Events
- Customer Spotlights
- In-App Help & Learning Library
- Dedicated Onboarding Team
- Cents Community

Other Essentials:

- **Branded Packaging:** Reinforces a premium experience
- **Mobile-Ready Scheduling or Customer Portal:** Improves ordering flow and customer satisfaction
- **Integrated POS:** Keep Wash & Fold, retail, and self-service payments in one place

Additional Resources:

- Facebook Groups & Peer Networks
- Local Small Business Associations



Ready to Launch or Level Up?

Schedule a demo or connect with the Cents team to bring your Wash & Fold strategy to life—with clarity, consistency, and the tools that do the hard parts for you.

