

CLOTH 'ROLL-A-TOWEL' COMPARISON

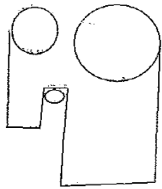
Introduction

This document attempts to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of Cloth Towels rented by companies.

The system you see pictured is known by several names. These include Cloth Towel, Cabinet Towel, Continuous Roll Towel, Rental Towel, Linen Towel, Roll-a-Towel etc. Whatever a customer calls the system all have several commonalities. The towel inside it is linen, the towel is dispensed and the used towel is collected in the same unit.



How Does the Unit Work?



The unit is a complicated box in which a laundered roll is positioned, the tail is 'Loaded' through the feeder mechanism and then positioned in the collection area. There is a method for controlling the quantity of towel that can be pulled at any one time (average length is approx 30cm) and some advanced models now feature an automatic rewind system to take up slack towel.

What Do People 'Like' About The System?

Purchasers and users of the system buy it for some or all of the following reasons:

- It's better than hot air dryers
- There is no paper to dispose of
- It's better than nothing
- People like linen – they use towels at home
- It's seen as being cost effective
- The product is delivered
- One stop shopping – they buy / rent other products from the same company such as mats, linen, overalls etc
- The dispensers are vandal resistant

What Do People 'Not Like' About The System?

Purchasers and users of the system find the following things issues for them:

- The locking feature on the system that slows down how much they use frustrates users
- Users don't know where the towel has been used before them
- Users feel that they may be drying their hands on other people's 'Wet Spots'
- It runs out quickly
- It is expensive to use once analysed
- It can't be topped up
- You pay rental whether you use the towel or not
- The dispensers are very difficult to load
- The drivers for the linen company just drop the stock on the dock and go
- Being cylindrical they are hard to store and carry
- They are bulky
- The rolls go missing and you get charged for it

Calculating Costs of Linen Towel Systems

Most customers who use these systems do not know how many users can dry their hands before a roll is exhausted or how people behave when using the system.

A linen towel is normally 30m in length and the pull setting is usually approximately 30cm in length. People take more than one pull – on average people take an initial pull to clear any towel that may have been touched by a previous user, then they dry their hands on the next pull. If the settings are on average 30cm in length then some users may take 2 pulls to dry their hands.

You can therefore use the following calculation to demonstrate how many people can use the system and the cost per person in doing so:

Assuming 3 pulls per person at 30cm per pull = 90cm and a roll of 30m and a price of \$6.50 per roll

- To calculate the number of people who can use the system before it runs out divide 30m by the 90cm = 33.33 users (round down to 33 users)
- To calculate the cost per user divide the cost per roll by the number of people who can use the roll i.e. \$6.50 divided by 33 = 19.7 cents each

You can now show how much a paper towel costs in use.

Questions To Explore When Comparing Cloth Towel

- Do you know exactly how much you pay for your linen towelling?
- Do you know what your linen towel system costs per person, per hand dry?
- What sorts of 'Mystery Charges' are there on your linen bills that confuse you regarding costs?
- Do your linen towels always get replaced before you run out of fresh towelling?
- What sort of complaints have you received about your linen towel system?
- Have you ever seen people pull 5 or 6 times on the towelling to 'get a Fresh Towel'? How do you feel about that?
- How do you find their absorbency? Are they always as absorbent as you would like? Are you satisfied with the thickness of the towelling?
- How do you feel about using a towel that is dispensed from the same cabinet that a dirty towel is stored in?
- What are your feelings about where the towel you are using has come from?
- What levels of frustration does your staff feel with the loading of the cloth towel dispensers? How do you feel about that?
- Where do you store the cloth towel whilst it is waiting to go into the cabinets? What sort of hygiene issues does this present to you? How does that make you feel?
- What are your thoughts about the size of the dispenser for the cloth towel you currently use?