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# How a P&G-Born Startup is Making Laundry Day Easier

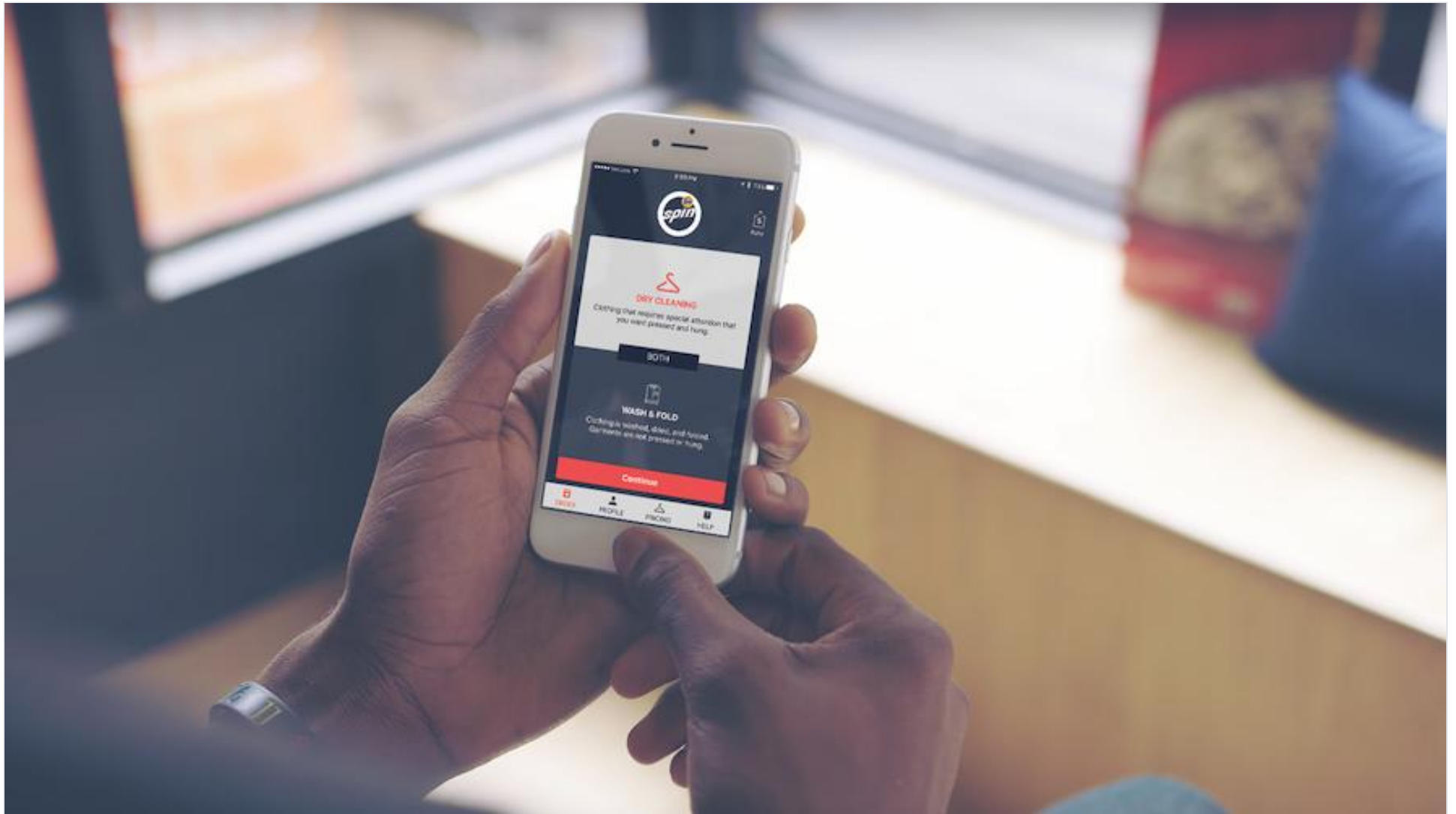
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Photo Credit: Tide Spin

By Courtney Gabrielson

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Ever wish you had a few more hours in your day?

[Tide Spin](#), an on-demand laundry and dry-cleaning delivery service, knows the feeling. “Time is the scarcest resource,” said Tide Spin Brand Manager and Leader David VanHimbergen. “We believe that everyone could use a little bit more time.”

Laundry, he continued, is one of those freedom-sucking chores that could be simplified and streamlined by a technological marriage — especially for those folks who don’t have a washer and dryer.

It works a bit like this: Users create a profile on the Tide Spin app. They set preferences for their services — such as “dry clean my shirt,” etc., etc — and place an order. Tide Spin employees take the laundry to their facilities and clean and press it, VanHimbergen said. “Then, they bring it back to you so that it’s ready for its next adventure.”

Washing and folding has a flat fee of \$1.59 per pound of laundry, although those electing to use Tide Spin's subscription service save a bit more. However, for straight laundry pickup within an eight-hour window, there's no delivery fee; other tasks, or a specified pickup time, have different pricing.

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The company was the brainchild of VanHimbergen, who has worked for more than 17 years at Cincinnati's own Procter & Gamble, and his team. Around two years ago, one of the primary questions Vanhimbergen and P&G were facing was how they could diversify their innovation portfolio, and how they could better "embrace the speed and agility" of other startups while solving problems for consumers with tech.

After developing a prototype that involved Tide (which is manufactured by P&G) and working through those questions, VanHimbergen and his team developed a pitch, "much in the way that a founder of a startup would go to a VC to get seed money," he said.

Upon getting the green light from P&G, Van Himbergen found himself traveling to Chicago on a weekly basis. There, 1871, a hub for tech and entrepreneurship in the city, helped recruit a team to launch Tide Spin. "Within a short period of time, we had a beta test," he said.

Chicago was attractive for a few reasons. It was easy to access from Cincinnati, and it had the right customers and market with the proper profile (millennials working on their careers). Operationally, it was also a win, as Tide had franchised dry cleaners that P&G had started nearly a decade ago.

1871's help didn't hurt, either. "This was a great culture and environment to set ourselves into ... and in that way, it ensured that we'd be operating at that same speed," Van Himbergen said. "When you're sitting side-by-side, you can check yourself and use that peer network to make sure you're thinking about things the same way."

And the rest was history. "[We're] constantly learning, innovating, figuring out the right model that validates our assumptions," he said.

For now, Tide Spin is accessible to users in Chicago, but the group has plans to take it nation- and worldwide. While Tide Spin doesn't disclose specific metrics about its clients, Van Himbergen said they had "thousands of customers." And, the company announced their "Tide Spin lockers," storage that the company installs for free in high rises so residents can have around-the-clock, safe access to their orders.

VanHimbergen added that Tide Spin was a testament to P&G's leadership. "This is kind of a unique case in which we broke away from the headquarters and they gave us space ... to operate with the same focus," he said. "It's a case study of corporate innovation, and how we think about testing and qualify something, how you incubate."

It's also a reflection of a changing innovation landscape, he added. Before, the next cutting-edge thing was coming straight from Silicon Valley. Now?

"I would expect to see a huge wave of corporate innovation drive a lot of new markets and new businesses in the coming years [and] operating with the same speed and agility," he said.

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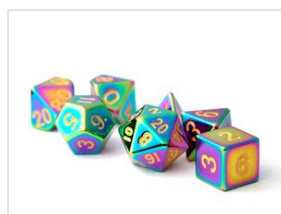
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