

Laundry service startup targets BnBs and other rentals

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Startup company Washbnb does what many Airbnb hosts, vacation rental property owners and boutique hotel managers don't necessarily have the equipment or time to do — laundry.

Founder and CEO Daniel Cruz figured that out for himself when he began renting out several units through Airbnb, only to discover the laundry and linen turnover was far too much for a residential washer and dryer, or an individual person, to handle.

"I started looking into laundry solutions and trying to find a better way to do it, and I realized that there really wasn't one, so I decided to do it myself," Cruz said.

As suggested by its namesake, Washbnb caters to Airbnb hosts, as well as vacation rentals and boutique hotels, and takes the burden of laundry services off of their hands.

Founded amidst the beginnings of the pandemic, the business is among the semi-finalists in the 2021 Wisconsin Governor's Business Plan Contest.

Due to the pandemic, customers have been veering away from larger hotels, and are more inclined to book with Airbnb or smaller vacation rentals. Cruz explained that the demand side of Airbnb has really surged during the pandemic, while the supply side has faltered. This has created an ideal ecosystem for the startup.

“It’s been gang-busters on the vacation rental and Airbnb side,” Cruz said.

Cruz has a clear vision for the future of the company. He wants to build a community around the business, helping Airbnb hosts to provide a repeatable and high-quality stay for guests. Cruz said there is a lot to learn from the hotel industry and how hotels run laundry systems.

Cruz also believes it essential to preserve the innate “funkiness” of Airbnb. Unique properties are a large part of what drives people to book with Airbnb in the first place. However, he emphasized there are certain aspects of your stay that should never be left open to interpretation.

“When you get out of the shower you don’t want to wonder what you’re drying yourself off with, what it smells like, or who else has used it, you just want it to be super clean and white and luxurious,” he said.

The pandemic has been a deterrent for businesses everywhere. The travel industry, for obvious reasons, has been hit particularly hard. Airbnb cut 2,000 employees in May 2020 alone. However, home-sharing schemes have proven to be a much more pandemic-friendly mode of travel than large hotels or resorts. There is one caveat: How far are hosts willing to go to ensure the cleanliness of their properties during a global pandemic?

Washbnb provides pick-up and delivery of clean, high-quality linens. Unless you are an Airbnb host doing innumerable loads of laundry to keep up with the constant turnover, you may not have even imagined that this was a problem in need of fixing.

Now, more than ever, customers are preoccupied with cleanliness. Washbnb aims to

provide a prompt, professional, and timely service that fills a major gap within the small-scale rental market.

-By Sophia Wells

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