



Take 2: A Look at Blind, Air Duct Cleaning as Add-On Services

Compiled By Eric Fish

Nu-Look Cleaning Services was founded in 1970 strictly as a carpet cleaning business. But not unlike most businesses that started by solely performing carpet cleaning and floor care services, the Philadelphia-based company diversified over time as market conditions changed. Today, Nu-Look performs the likes of power washing, floor stripping, sealing and waxing, restoration and deck cleaning in addition to carpet cleaning.

But one of their more niche – and more successful – add-on services has been window blind cleaning, both on the commercial and residential fronts.

“If they’re going to trust us with their carpets, then there’s a really good shot that they’re going to trust us with their blinds,” says Robby Zeaman, Nu-Look’s go-to-guy when it

comes to blind cleaning. “They see how good of a job I do for carpet cleaning – that gets me in.”

To maximize productivity, Nu-Look invested in an ultrasonic machine to do the actual cleaning. Not only did this speed the cleaning process, but it also ensured that blinds weren’t broken or damaged during cleaning, as is often the case when they’re cleaned by hand.

“How I describe it to people is it’s millions and millions of little scrubby brushes taking off the dirt and the grime,” Zeaman says.

Nu-Look has been performing the service since it purchased its first ultrasonic in 1999, yet blind cleaning hasn’t always come as naturally for Zeaman. Take, for instance, the first job that Nu-Look received – cleaning 35 floors worth

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of blinds for a Philadelphia corporation, each floor containing about 120 sets of blinds. To do this job, Zeaman took blind cleaning operations on-site, setting up the ultrasonic and drying fans in the loading dock section of the facility. He used rolling carts to transport the blinds from floor to floor. The job took three-and-a-half weeks when it was all said and done.

“That was my first job,” Zeaman says. “I was scared to death. (But) it just became natural. After doing that job, I knew I had mastered this. It was a scary situation, but it was the best tutelage I could possibly have had.”

Sixteen years later, Zeaman is still performing blind cleaning in residential and commercial settings and on disaster restoration jobs. However, on smaller jobs, Zeamon prefers to take the blinds out of the home and back to Nu-Looks facility, where he has floor space set aside for such operations. He says he can clean them and have them re-hung within 2-3 days after factoring in proper cleaning and drying time, although faster cleaning can be done for people who need it. Typically, he charges customers 1/3 of the replacement value.

However, there is more to blind cleaning than simply tossing the blinds in an ultrasonic machine, letting the machine do its work, then removing them to dry. For instance, there’s the matter of taking down the blinds for cleaning and then re-hanging them after the job is done - a task that can be challenging based on the type of blind.

“It’s very easy to put back a silhouette,” Zeaman says. “But it is extremely difficult to take down a silhouette.”

Zeaman says blind cleaning is especially popular among homeowners during the spring cleaning season, when they’re also looking to have their carpets after winter.

“It’s been years and years since this type of blind cleaning has been around, but I still consider it in its infancy stage because there’s still a lot of people who have not heard about it,” he says. “When I’m on a house job, I’ll take one of their blinds with me. When I bring it back and I compare it to their dirty blinds, the job is sold.”