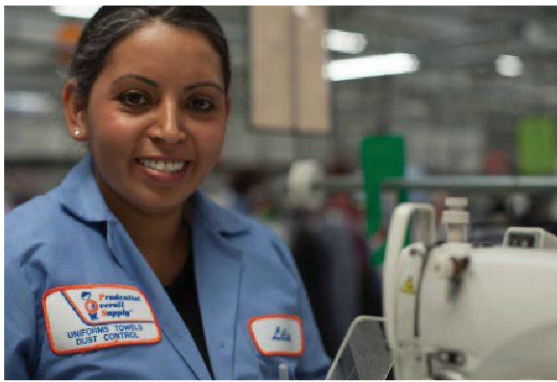




PRUDENTIAL OVERALL SUPPLY

www.prudentialuniforms.com **Headquarters:** Irvine, Calif. **Employees:** 1,650

Specialty: Uniform rental services, facility products and cleanroom services



Prudential Overall Supply started as a one-man operation but today maintains cleaning plants and service centers in several states.

Uniform Success

Prudential Overall Supply grows from a one-man operation to a \$168 million company.

BY BOB RAKOW

Dan Clark

CEO

"Our core business is uniforms on the industrial side. That's how we started."



Prudential Overall Supply was founded in 1932 as a one-man operation in Los Angeles. John Clark had worked briefly for a Standard Oil station and identified the need for individuals in the service industries to have their uniforms cleaned. "He saw the need for cleaning uniforms, and that is our

core business today," says CEO Dan Clark, John Clark's son.

When Clark started the business, the operation was rather basic. He picked up uniforms each day from gas stations, had them laundered at a family laundry, folded and packed them and delivered them the following day. "It was a good service," Dan Clark says.

But the company didn't remain a one-man operation for very long. Eighteen months after launching his business, John Clark took on a partner and opened his first cleaning

plant. He continued to expand the company with new capacity until he expanded into a Commerce, Calif., location in 1952, which remains the company's oldest continually operating location.

STEADY GROWTH

The company experienced steady growth over the years, including the addition of garment rental in 1943. It exceeded \$1 million in revenue a decade later. Initially, Dan Clark did not want to join the business because he did not want to disrupt the good

“I [participate] in 25 delivery routes a year as well as 100 customer visitations. It keeps me in constant contact with our business.”

DAN CLARK, CEO

relationship he enjoyed with his father, he recalls. But he came aboard in 1968 because key positions in the company's management team had unexpectedly become available.

Clark knew the operation because he had worked at the company during summer breaks, but had no plans to succeed his father. However, he took on greater responsibilities over time,

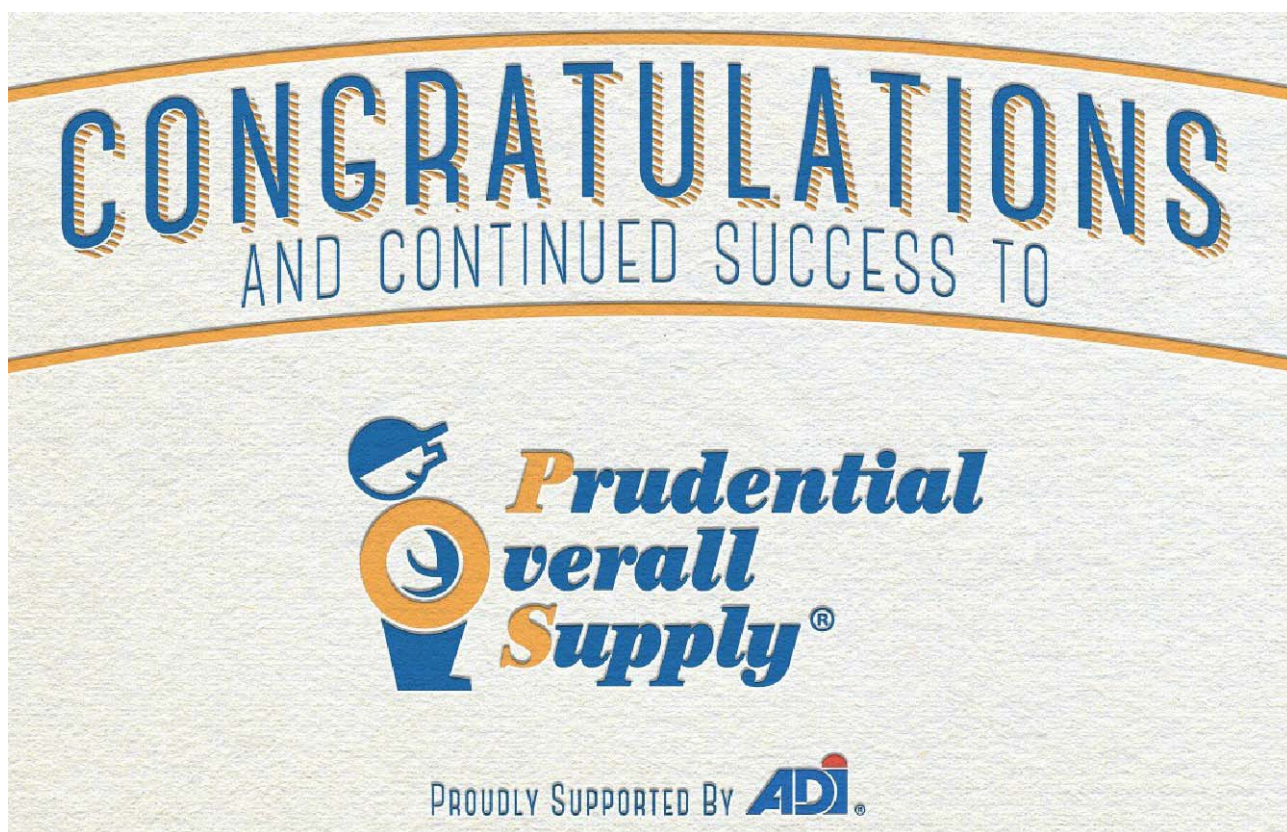
working as a general manager, regional manager and vice president before becoming president in 1984 and CEO five years later.

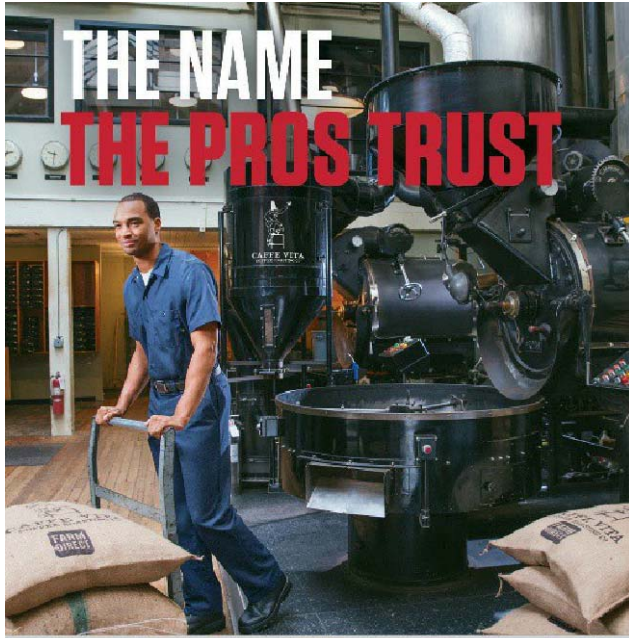
Clark has witnessed the company's significant growth from \$7.5 million in 1968 to \$168 million in 2015. “Every day we take steps and keep working,” says Clark, whose son, John, is a regional manager. “It's organic growth.”

Today, Prudential Overall Supply services include uniforms for rental, lease and purchase for industrial uniform programs and related services. The company provides work clothes to a variety of industries including hospitality, manufacturing and healthcare.

Additionally, it offers protective apparel and outerwear. Prudential Overall Supply partners with leading work apparel manufacturers including RedKap, Wrangler, American Dawn, Miliken and Dickies, Clark says.

The majority of the company's plants and service centers are located in California. But it also maintains locations in Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia and Puerto Rico.





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The service centers or plants in those states deliver to an additional 12 states where Prudential Overall Supply does not have operations.

“Our core business is uniforms on the industrial side,” Clark says. “That’s how we started.” In fact, providing and cleaning uniforms, mats, towels and wet and dry mops represent about 60 percent of the company’s business. Prudential Overall Supply also services restaurants and the hospitality industry with napkins, paper towels, soap and air fresheners, Clark says.

The remainder of the business involves cleanroom apparel services, a market segment added in 1960.

The company is a source for bio-science, pharmaceutical, medical device, semiconductor, aerospace and other industries that must manufacture and operate in controlled environments, Clark says.

The company specializes in cleanroom garment-processing services for aseptic and particulate-controlled



Prudential Overall Supply cleans uniforms and serves its customers in the hospitality industry with napkins, towels, soap and air fresheners.

environments. All of its cleanroom garment-processing facilities are validated for sterile garment processing and have a quality management system that is ISO 9001:2008 certified. "Six of our plants offer the service," Clark says.

STAYING IN TOUCH

Clark says a key to the company's success is his belief in staying closely involved with all phases of the operation. In fact, he spends only 50 percent of his time in his office, preferring to tour the company's plants and service centers. "I [participate] in 25 delivery routes a year as well 100 customer visitations," Clark says. "It keeps me in constant contact with our business. I enjoy it."

But Clark does more than observe when on delivery routes. Instead, he takes on some of the drivers' work to get a true sense of the daily challenges they face, he says.



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PRUDENTIAL OVERALL SUPPLY

“Growth, profit, care for employees and care for the customer. If we do those four things, we will be OK.”


DAN CLARK, CEO

He also encourages drivers to be honest about the good and bad aspects of their job. “Sometimes we become pretty good friends,” he says. In addition to their delivering duties, drivers are expected to generate new business by promoting other services.

Additionally, Clark meets with the general manager at each plant and service center at least once a year and tours the facilities with them.




Prudential Overall Supply CEO Dan Clark goes on at least 25 routes a year to better understand the challenges his workforces faces every day.



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“I need to know what’s wrong,” Clark says. “All of us have to look and see and be aware. I don’t even know what I’m looking for sometimes.”

The tours keep him connected with the day-to-day operation, which has changed since he worked at one of the facilities in the early part of his career. Clark’s father also believed in staying closely connected to the business and clients. “I’m sure he taught me that,” he says.

Clark also participates in the monthly regional managers’ meeting group, which examines the major issues facing the company as well as its future. “That group really runs this company,” he says. Clark’s own philosophy for the company is simple. “Growth, profit, care for employees and care for the customer,” he says. “If we do those four things, we’ll be OK.”

Clark says he enjoys the business primarily because of the regular interaction with clients. “We have a weekly connection with our customers,” he says. The regular connection gives customer sales representatives a routine opportunity to find out whether clients are satisfied or in need of other services. Thanks to such dedication to customer service, he says, “I think we’ve been a success.” ☺