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## Former KBP Exec Signs 51-Unit Deal With Tide Laundromat

Joe Halpern  
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Tide Laundromat, a franchise extension of Tide Services, a subsidiary of Procter & Gamble, has five locations in the Chicago area.

After what he describes as “a great 13-year run” with one of the largest restaurant franchisees, Barry Dubin is moving on from major quick-service concepts and entering an entirely different space focused on fully automated self-serve laundromats with wash and fold services.

The former chief strategy officer at KBP Brands, ranked No. 4 on the Franchise Times Restaurant 200 with \$1.34 billion in sales in 2023, signed a 51-unit deal with Tide Laundromat to develop units across seven states. Tide Laundromat is the franchise extension of Tide Services, a subsidiary of Procter & Gamble.

Dubin, who helped KBP grow its portfolio of restaurants and become an operator of more than 1,000 Taco Bells, KFCs, Arby's and Sonic Drive-Ins, said his plan is to open Tide Laundromats in Chicago before adding locations elsewhere in the Midwest and the East. Dubin's newly formed franchisee group already operates three Tide Laundromats in the Chicago area and has two locations in development.

"Our intent is to move at a swift pace, but one that we believe is responsible with respect to our ability to learn from the decisions that we've made opening laundromats," said Dubin, who officially gives up his executive role at KBP at the end of the year. He said he will remain involved with the company, which is led by CEO Michael Kulp, in a board capacity.



Barry Dubin, the former chief strategy officer for KBP Brands, signed a 51-unit deal with Tide Laundromat to develop units across seven states.

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"My intent now is to focus on the multi-unit consumer space and work on building exceptional businesses," Dubin said. "What I found with Tide Services and Tide Laundromat is a great opportunity to work with a great brand that everyone knows and trusts. I feel extremely good about this partnership."

Andy Gibson, the CEO of Tide Services, said having someone with Dubin's franchise experience and acumen working with a large multi-unit operator is a major win for Tide Laundromat, P&G's second franchise brand. The brand has five Tide Laundromat franchise open locations in Chicago and Dallas with another three in various stages of development between the two cities. Gibson said Tide Laundromat also has a five-unit commitment in Broward County, Florida, with another operator..

The investment range for a Tide Laundromat is \$1.7 million to \$2.3 million for a typical 4,000- to 5,000-square-foot location with 30 to 40 machines, according to its franchise disclosure document. Its Item 19 reports average weekly net sales of two stores were between \$17,407 and \$25,781 between May 1, 2023 and October 28, 2023.

Tide Services launched Tide Cleaners, a full-service dry-cleaning company, in 2008, and began franchising the brand in 2010. It currently operates about 200 units and ranked No. 297 on Franchise Times Top 400 with \$126 million in sales in 2023.

Dubin said he's open to signing a future development deal with Tide Cleaners, but only after first scaling his Tide Laundromat business.

"We see a lot of opportunity to go in and become a winner in the \$6 billion to \$7 billion laundromat space with Tide Laundromat," said Gibson, "and it's not just 50 or more units with operators like Barry. It's probably hundreds of units."



Andy Gibson is the CEO of Tide Services, which franchises Tide Laundromat and Tide Cleaners.

Michael Schalk

Gibson said his company estimates there are between 15,000 and 20,000 laundromats in the country. But he pointed out that between 50 and 70 percent of them are what he called “zombie mats,” a term he said is used in the industry that refers to outdated laundromats in disrepair with old and even broken washers and driers.

The differentiator for Tide Laundromat, said Gibson, is that the brand offers “new, clean, well-lit and inviting environments” for customers. Laundry products are included with every load and the brand claims it takes under 35 minutes to wash and dry their loads. An app allows customers to schedule and pay up front for their self-serve or full-service washing and drying services.

“Anywhere from 60 percent to 75 percent of our consumers are using the app to interact directly with their machine so they can check and see that machine availability before they get there. They also don't have to bring their own detergent. This is a big differentiator for us. We have auto dosing equipment where you can actually go up to your machine, select your cycle, select the chemistry, select which exactly the performance you want out of that machine,” Gibson said.

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