# [***TV's OxiClean pitchman loves his work***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:4J90-PDP0-TX77-B2XB-00000-00&context=1516831)

Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)

January 3, 2003 Friday

Final Edition

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**Section:** CAREER OPPORTUNITIES; Pg. 29

**Length:** 426 words

**Byline:** Associated Press

**Dateline:** PALM HARBOR, Fla.

**Body**

PALM HARBOR, Fla. (AP) -- There's no escaping Billy Mays on American TV.

There he is, urging you to add a scoop of OxiClean to each laundry load. Change the channel and he's peddling a car dent fixer or a hands-free ***cellphone*** device. On another, he's spritzing Orange Clean on a kitchen counter.

The burly, bearded pitchman loves his work so much that he gave bottles of OxiClean to the 300 guests at his wedding, and did his spiel ("powered by the air we breathe!") right there on the dance floor.

Mays, 44, has helped make Orange Glo International, maker of OxiClean, Kaboom and Orange Clean, one of America's fastest-growing companies. And he's landed himself in a big house with a pool in the back and a Bentley in the garage.

His ubiquitous in-your-face pitches have won Mays plenty of fans. People line up at his personal appearances for autographed glossy advertising flyers.

He has also earned detractors: whole Web sites are dedicated to trashing him.

"The mute button on my remote is getting worn out from all the times I have to deal with him invading my television," one posting says, summing up the sentiments of many at a site called "Billy Mays Mayhem."

Soft-spoken in conversation, Mays claims he just recently learned of this Internet presence and hasn't looked at the sites.

"I'm a sensitive guy," he said. "I don't want to be brought down, so I just leave it at that. As long as there's good and bad, it evens itself out."

Mays has never been anything but a salesman, and developed his style demonstrating knives, mops and other "as seen on TV" goods on Atlantic City's boardwalk. For years he worked on the state-fair and home-show circuits.

After meeting Orange Glo International founder Max Appel at a home show in the mid-1990s, Mays was recruited to demonstrate the environmentally friendly line of cleaning products on the Home Shopping Network (where he met his wife Deborah).

Sales took off from the very first day he was on.

Commercials and informercials followed, anchored by the high-energy Mays showing how it's done while tossing out memorable phrases like, "Long live your laundry!"

Now he's the public face of a company projected to earn $330 million in 2002, up from $245 million in 2001.

It's hard for cleaning products to stand out in a crowded market, and Mays moved Orange Glo out of the pack, says Karen Benezra, editor of advertising trade magazine Brandweek.

"What Billy has done with his products was give them the no-nonsense, 'Hey-I'm-a-regular-Joe' kind of face," Benezra says.

"He just gives you the sense you can believe him."

**Graphic**

Photo: Associated Press; Billy Mays poses at his Palm Harbor, Fla., home with some of his cleaning products that are making him a household name, and product maker Orange Glo international, one of the fastest growing U.S. businesses. ;

**Load-Date:** February 17, 2006

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