



# THE Messenger

## WinterFest Virtual EXPO Coming January 19th - 22nd



BUSINESS IS PICKING UP AND CLEANERS ARE BUSY — AT LAST! THE HIGHLY-ACCLAIMED VIRTUAL EXPO MOVED TO JAN. 19-21 2022, AND IT IS ALREADY DRAWING NEAR.

The change allowed participants to attend the event after the busy

holiday season. MAC is very excited to offer this opportunity to our members, and are confident you will see a tremendous value by participating. Most of the program stayed the same. Unfortunately, due to scheduling conflicts, Sean Abbas had to be removed from the slate of speakers, but all attendees will be invited at a later date to attend a bonus session featuring his “The Best Culture Wins” program at no added cost. This way all attendees will gain additional value in the program.

In is place, a new program has been added, “Analyzing Your Pricing Strategy.” This new session topic has been a hot button for members on the Zoom calls and in requests for information. Members and experts will share some of their pricing strategies, as well as some of the changes that have been made over the past 18 months. This will be an extremely valuable discussion for all drycleaners.

This outstanding opportunity is once again brought to you by the South Eastern Fabricare Association (SEFA), the North East Fabricare Association (NEFA), and the Pennsylvania Delaware Cleaners Association (PDCA). The program is a unique series of virtual presentations designed to focus on a different aspect of your business each day. Register your company now — and don’t worry about which session or sessions you or your staff will be attending. You will get links to all of them and will still have time to decide.

Companies will also have access to recordings of each session for a minimum of three months. All DLI members across the country receive member pricing. There is no better — or more important — time than right now to invest in your staff and company. Education and knowledge are essential to thriving during economic duress. We already have participants registering from across the country.

“The previous two programs were huge successes, and they are looking at an even more diverse platform this time around,” said Peter Blake, MAC Executive Director. “They

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER  
2021

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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE...

# Make This Your Business' New Year's Resolution

IT IS THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN, AND IF YOU MAKE NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS, THEN I URGE YOU TO MAKE THIS ONE A BUSINESS PRIORITY: "INVEST IN YOUR BUSINESS AND IN YOUR TEAM".

Our industry shrunk over the past 18 months, and for the most part, the ones who did not make it were the ones who had investing in their business and keeping their staff up engaged.

Now is the times to take advantage of all the programs out there for small business and put them to use to help re-build or grow your business. I strongly urge everyone to re-evaluate and take a serious look at: Employee Retention Tax Credits (ERTC), EIDL loans, and local grants made possible by Covid-recovery programs. I do not know a single business that can't take advantage of some part of the ERTC, and I also know some businesses that have gotten funding into the 6 figures.

Now is the perfect opportunity to take those programs and re-invest in your businesses. Purchase new equipment, upgrade your facility, expand your menu of services. All of these are now possible uses of the funding made available under EIDL. If you have questions call me and I can help you sort through the myriad of issues and put you in touch with the right people.

## TRAINING IS VITAL TO SURVIVAL

Prepare for the worst and hope for the best. Cross train your employees. Make sure they have the tools to help your business grow. Take advantage of programs like our upcoming WinterFest! Have your key people take in some or all of the discussions. Let them know they are part of your long-term goals. They will feel empowered and valued -- which will lead to higher and more profitable production.

Too often owners and managers are too focussed on the minutia to really expand the vision of the company./ Many times this is caused by staff turnover and difficulty in attracting people that fit within your culture. You need to develop your staff and work to retain them. Again, WinterFest will have a whole session dedicated to how to attract, retain and engage the new workforce dynamic.

I know times have been incredibly difficult, and with all the variants and the continued back-slides in recovery, the future can still be worrisome. But the fact of the matter is, we have to invest in our businesses and we need to adapt to some of the societal changes. That may mean investing in more laundry production and delivery capabilities, It was be in specializing in some new alternative services like sneaker or rug cleaning.

I also know that our industry is extremely resilient. There will always be textiles that need service, and consumers that don't want to waste their time doing it. We need to capture that market and then be prepared to adapt. I am always here if you need some assistance!



*Peter Blake,  
MAC Executive Director*

# Peter Blake

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# Looking Through to '22

By Peter Blake, MAC Executive Director and originally published in National Clothesline



**I KNOW I AM NOT ALONE AND ALMOST EVERYONE READING THIS ARTICLE CAN PROBABLY SAY THE SAME.**

Over the past several weeks I have heard more from business owners that are working hard in the trenches of their business-- more than I have heard at any point in

my 35 years in the industry. The pressures of the pandemic have given birth to a host of new challenges we all need to answer to, and a plethora of opportunities you can capitalize on.

I talk to people up and down the Eastern Seaboard and constantly hear how people are tired, frustrated, and overwhelmed. ***Let me assure you – you are not alone.*** Everyone echo's your feelings and we are all dealing with the same issues. The lack of an available labor pool has stressed out our entire economy. Rapidly rising pay scales are driving inflation on everything. The main cause of the supply chain crisis is the significant lack of a labor force. There are simply not enough workers to unload the container ships, transport stock, or to finally deliver the goods.

Turn back the clock 15 months ago and we were all struggling to find out where we were going to get the volume to help sustain our businesses. All my efforts and columns were on how to get to new business. Where to look for more revenue. The good news is we have done a pretty good job at identifying those areas and members and cleaners through out the country have expanded their menu of services to focus on the needs of today. Wash-Dry-Fold, Pick-up and Delivery, households – all these segments of our industry have seen dramatic growth.

Fast forward to today and the discussion has changed from how to get volume to how to handle the volume we have. Now the challenges are getting the production needed to service the volume you have picked up. I honestly can't remember a time when I have heard so many businesses turning away work or referring it to competitors just because they know it can't get the work done. Plants are working 4-day weeks to maximize the production of the employees they do have. Adjustments are being made constantly in how we do business. I didn't foresee the issue being production.

As we look to turn the page on an eventful '21, we can only wonder what 2022 will have in store for us. As I look ahead, we can all find solace in one basic truism:

## **“LIGHT ALWAYS FOLLOWS DARKNESS”**

The coming year will undoubtedly bring us more challenges we will need to face and overcome, but it will also bring us new op-

portunities. Stop, take a breath, and look at where you are, and make a vision of where you need to be in '22. Look at the things you are learning today, your experiences and build on those in a positive direction.

For those of you battling in the trenches of production, think about how your employees feel knowing you are right there with them working side by side. Understanding their workload can go a long way in mutually understanding the hardships you feel. Getting to know your employees better is a strength that will undoubtedly help you build a stronger team moving forward.

While our business constantly changes as styles, fabrics, and fashion trends dictate – the true fundamentals don't. People will always wear clothing and will always need to have that clothing cared for. Our job is to help them realize the benefits of having us do it for them.

Saving time, protecting the investment in your wardrobe, and making you look good are still the cornerstones of what we offer. We just may have to make a shift in how we make that impression. Years ago, drycleaning was synonymous with fashion. Your good clothes were brought to the drycleaner. Your church clothes, business clothes, the clothes you wore for entertaining. That has shifted now. With the blending of fashion and fabrics, and the casualization of society, “drycleaning” is more often seen as unnecessary. We need to change our message to be more inclusive. We need to re-educate our potential customers to understand we are here to care for the fabric of their lives. We are no longer shirts and skirts, dresses, and suits. We are “if you wear it, we can clean it” is a popular mantra now – we need to even go beyond that to include all the fabrics including linens, sheets, comforters, etc.

## **JOIN THE DISCUSSION**

I will say, I am very proud of the work NEFA, SEFA, MAC and DLI have been doing to support our members and to help them through these challenging times. I can honestly say there has never been a better or more useful time to be a member than now. If you are a member, join in the weekly peer-to-peer calls where we discuss all these issues and more. It is a great way to learn what is happening in the industry and to talk to people from around the country and learn how to take advantage of the opportunities out there.

If you are not a member, then join in some of the other groups out there that have similar programs like Chambers of Commerce, Business Networking Groups, or local business coalitions. Our challenges are not unique to our industry. All small businesses are feeling it.

As you look forward – the best thing you can do it to keep your mind and ears open. There are tremendous opportunities ahead, and together we can all learn how to make them work for all of us.

# Stay Connected



DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY  
INSTITUTE INTERNATIONAL

“ DLI has done an **excellent** and **timely** job educating members. DLI's response to the crisis has been **spot on, fast, and continuous.** ”

**Gary Maloney**

Nu Yale Glacier Cleaners  
Jeffersonville, IN

“ DLI keeps every **member apprised** of changes and offers **training** to owners, operators, and employees. What you put in is **multiplied** in return **many times over.** ”

**Danny Bahlman, CGCP**

Bahlman Cleaners  
San Angelo, TX

“ DLI is helping us **navigate unprecedented times.** The weekly **webinars** and **conference calls** provide much-needed **guidance.** The **networking** and **professional relationships** are also **tremendous assets.** ”

**Rhonda Eysel**

Master Kleen Dry Cleaners  
Columbus, GA

“ My favorite things about DLI used to be the **problem garment bulletins** in the back of the magazine. Now, it's the **live spotting web series.** Do it! **It's well worth the money.** ”

**Angela Rowekamp**

Mascari Cleaners  
Indianapolis, IN

“ DLI assists us with **marketing ideas, news articles, blogs, and webinars** to help us cope with this pandemic. With our **busy work schedules,** we don't realize we're working with **blinders on.** DLI helps us **focus** on the creative insights we often overlook. ”

**Angelo Nguyen**

British Dryclean Club  
Santa Ana, CA

DLI is here to help. 800-638-2627 • [www.DLIonline.org](http://www.DLIonline.org)



# WinterFest Expo

Continued from page 1

have some innovative speakers and thought-provoking programs that will help you shape your future and answer the biggest challenges facing your business.”

The WinterFest EXPO Development Committee has announced a slate of presenters for the week that includes noted names from within the industry, as well as from other sources. Topics will range from effective marketing strategies to team and staff building and retention, and even an economic forecast of coming years. Participants include: economist Chris Keuhl (Armada Corporate Intelligence), Jennifer Whitmarsh (The Route Pros), Kelby Sankey (Morelli's Cleaners), Brian Fish (Pier Cleaners), Toran Brown (SPOT Business Systems) and more.

## ADDED FEATURES OF WINTERFEST

In addition to the educational slate, there are also added opportunities. The associations have added special breakout room where you can “Meet the Vendors”. These breakout rooms will be open on Thursday night and select vendors will have their own virtual breakout room you can choose to enter and talk about their specific products and or services.

“We are trying to replicate the trade show booth experience where you can learn more and get your specific questions answered,” offered Peter Blake, MAC Executive Director. “This will be an opportunity to check out a few different companies and explore your needs and how they can help you and your company grow. I think

this is a tremendous benefit for the sponsors and the attendees.

Fall Fest ‘21 will also allow for an expanded program for companies that wish to add value to the program with additional company specific programs. These programs will be a great opportunity to learn more about how a Computer Systems works or how to data mine customer information, etc. This will also provide opportunities to explore alternative solvent possibilities or new services.

“We are taking all the best parts of the trade show experience,” commented Leslie Schaeffer of PDCA, and brought them into a virtual platform. We are taking great care to provide as much interaction within the forum as possible. We know how valuable that peer-to-peer discussion can have. We are arranging special breakout rooms to capture the popular demonstrations and vendor showcases that live exhibits have featured. This is your opportunity to make meaningful contacts with other drycleaners, consultants, equipment manufacturers, and service providers.”

The early bird per-plant registration fee of only \$199/member and \$249 for nonmembers lasts until Jan. 7 and includes access to the entire schedule of events, and access to all session recordings for three months following the event. This will also include an invitation to the Sean Abbas special event. After Jan. 7, the registration fee goes up to \$249 for members and \$299 for nonmembers.

To register or for more detailed information, please visit [www.nefabricare.org](http://www.nefabricare.org).

## ASSOCIATION BENEFITS...

# Join DLI's Marketing Lab



EARLIER THIS YEAR, DLI LAUNCHED A NEW 'MARKETING LAB' PROGRAM TO HELP MEMBERS DEVELOP MAR-

KETING IDEAS, EXCHANGE ADVICE, AND SHARE EXPERTISE.

Under this new program, participants tap into the wealth of experience of their peers in one of DLI's new Marketing Lab peer review groups. In the group, DLI members can develop marketing efforts together, or just help each other tweak current efforts. From plans to final pieces and implementation, members will present marketing ideas to a group of their peers for live, immediate feedback. Ideas shared in the group are available to all members of the group, giving members access to a collective idea machine. In-group collaboration will help make marketing pieces stronger.

“I have been so impressed with the exchange of ideas on the Peer-to-Peer Zoom meetings we have been hosting over the past year,” said Peter Blake, MAC Executive Director, “and those efforts are magnified in these small task oriented groups. The participants are getting real-time feedback on their marketing plans. The discussions have explored target markets, target communication vehicles, branding and more. The members of the groups drive the

topics and discussion, and DLI staff are there to assist and facilitate. This is really grass roots marketing at its finest”.

All DLI members are invited to join a group and there is still room in each group. If there is a need, another group could be constructed. Currently there is a group that meets the third Wednesday and another on the third Thursday of each month. Participation in each lab is limited to 25 participants and all members must be willing to share and handle a critique.

“Constructive, honest, professional criticism can sometimes be blunt but can also be priceless,” Blake said. “We’re excited to open this new avenue for members to work together. To be clear: This will not be American Idol or Shark Tank. Group members will develop extraordinary ideas in a relaxed, professional, and respectful setting.”

While DLI plans to limit the number of members from specific geographic regions, members who join the group will have veto power over new arrivals to reduce the risk of working with direct competitors. DLI will expand this program to add additional groups as interest demands.

Best of all: It's included with DLI membership. To join DLI and participate in these programs, access DLI's on-demand training video library, and enjoy the many benefits of DLI Membership. Call 800-638-2627 or visit [DLIonline.org/Membership](http://DLIonline.org/Membership).

# Cyber Security Affects Us All

By Scott Henderson, Heffernan Insurance Brokers



WEEKLY IN THE NEWS WE READ STORIES OF LARGE BUSINESSES, GOVERNMENTS, AND NON-PROFITS THAT ARE PARALYZED BY CYBER-ATTACKS. FOR YEARS IT WAS EASY TO BELIEVE THAT ONLY THOSE LARGER ENTITIES WOULD BE TARGETED. UNFORTUNATELY, NOW IT IS SMALLER BUSINESSES, SUCH AS DRY CLEANERS, THAT ARE TARGETS OF THESE ATTACKS.

I don't enjoy scaring people, but unfortunately the threat is real. Luckily, this threat can be managed with a simple insurance policy that costs just a few hundred dollars a year. I will discuss that below, but first some facts.

In the past, cyber criminals broke into computer systems to steal data, such as credit cards and social security numbers, and to sell that data to others. But that didn't pay enough.

Today cyber criminals can make much more money by locking your computer up so that you cannot use it unless you pay the hackers a ransom in Bitcoin. This is called Ransomware. This software can infect your computer when you or an employee open an email that appears friendly but is actually malicious, or when you unintentionally download or copy what appears to be useful software.

Reuters reports that Ransomware attacks provide cyber criminals with a 90+% profit margin! US authorities report that in the first six months of 2021 \$590 million of Ransomware payments were made in the US. The insurance company AIG reports that every 11 seconds a business is victim of a cyber-attack. Worse yet, the Ponemon Institute reports that 60% of small businesses that are victimized by a cyber-attack close permanently within 6 months of the attack.

Hackers are now specifically targeting small businesses because their cyber security is so poor. According to Trustwave, a cybersecurity consultancy, 90% of data breaches (cyber-attacks) are now focused on small businesses. The cost of a data breach for a small-business merchant averages \$36,000 and can easily exceed \$50,000. And AIG reports that the typical outage (where your computers are frozen and inoperable) after a cyber-attack is from 7 to 10 days.

The first defense against cyber-attacks is improve your computer security with proper defensive software, combined with education for everyone in your business on how to be extremely cautious and skeptical when opening emails. Also, you must backup your

data frequently. More on these tactics can be found at the US Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency at [www.cisa.gov/ransomware](http://www.cisa.gov/ransomware).

Today cyber insurance policies are widely available. These policies can pay to repair the damage to your computers if a hacker breaks-in or paralyzes your system. If the hackers ask for ransom the policy can pay that ransom. If you have to get new hardware because of the breach the policy can pay for that. And if your customer data is stolen, the policy can pay damages to your customers and provide them with credit monitoring. These policies are easy to obtain and start at around \$450.

Each year a dry cleaner will pay thousands of dollars to protect the businesses against damage from a fire, and our experience is that only about one-in-a-thousand cleaners will burn down each year. But the statistics show that one in five small businesses will be subject to cyber-attacks. Paying a few hundred dollars to protect against something that has a substantial chance of occurring is an excellent decision.


If you want to learn more about cyber insurance call Scott Henderson at Heffernan Insurance Brokers at (949) 771-3420.


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# WINTER *fest* EXPO

TODAY'S PLANS BUILD  
TOMORROW'S PROFITS  
January 19-21, 2022

*A Virtual Educational Conference Sponsored by Northeast Fabricare Association, Pennsylvania & Delaware Cleaners Association, and South Eastern Fabricare Association in cooperation with DLI*



*A series of live virtual workshops, discussions, and presentations designed to focus on a different aspect of your business each day, and to provide vital training for your entire personnel team*

## Schedule of Events

### Wednesday, January 19

**2:00 - 3:30pm** *Looking at the Economic Landscape of Today and Forecasting Tomorrow*  
featuring Chris Kuehl (Armada Business Intelligence)

**3:45 - 5:00pm** *The industry's Response to "Once in a Generation" Challenges*  
Panel Discussion featuring: Toran Brown (SPOT Business Systems) on how the industry is rebounding, Brian Fish (Pier Cleaners) on KPI's, James Peuster (21DC) on how industry leaders have adapted, Mike Ross (AristoCraft/Minda Supply) on managing supply chain disruptions



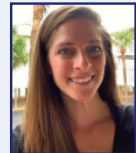
Chris Kuehl

### Thursday, January 20

**2:00 - 3:15pm** *"Attracting & Managing the New Generation of Workforce"*  
(What are they looking for? What do they Value?)  
featuring Jennifer Whitmarsh (The Route Pros)

**3:30 - 5:00pm** *Taking Advantage of High Yield Marketing Approaches*  
featuring Peter Blake & Kelby Sankey (Morellis Cleaners)

**5:00 - 7:00pm** *Vendor breakout Rooms*  
Meet the Vendors - attendees will choose the rooms they want to visit



Jennifer Whitmarsh

### Friday, January 21

**2:00 - 3:15pm** *How to Analyze Your Pricing Strategy*

**3:30 - 4:30pm** *Understanding the Opportunities the Future Holds*

**4:30 - 5:00pm** *Winter Expo Recap and Closing Session - Using Your Winter Expo Resources*

**5:00pm** *Cocktail Reception*

• Topics subject to change. •

**Cost:** **Member:** \$199/per Member (unlimited attendees from member plant) **Non-Member:** \$249 until January 7. After January 7, registration fee is \$249 for Members and \$299 for Non-Members.  
Participation includes video recordings of sessions & added content for a minimum of 3 months.

Registration is open: <https://my.conexsys.com/EventRegistration/Website?regId=1141&eCode=FALLFEST21>

For more information, contact Peter Blake at [Peter@nefabricare.com](mailto:Peter@nefabricare.com), 617-791-0128  
or Leslie Schaeffer at [Leslie@pdclean.org](mailto:Leslie@pdclean.org), 215-830-8495

**Sponsorships Available**

Watch Association webpages: [nefabricare.com](http://nefabricare.com), [pdclean.org](http://pdclean.org), and [SEFA.org](http://SEFA.org) for updates and new additions.





## SEAY MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS DLI HR HOTLINE

As valued members of Drycleaning & Laundry Institute (DLI), you have access to a complimentary HR & Employment resource through our partnership with Seay Management Consultants.

This service is available to you to provide answers to your human resources, personnel management, and employment related questions.

Hundreds of employee questions arise in day to day business and almost every one of them can be different – questions about COBRA, FMLA, EEOC, ADA, and so many others.

Sometimes a simple question can turn into a complicated and/or costly concern if it's not handled properly.

When you have a question and need an accurate and concise answer, simply contact Seay Management Consultants and identify yourself as a DLI member and we will happily assist.

Email: [admin@seay.us](mailto:admin@seay.us)

Toll Free: 888-245-6272

It is our goal to:

1. Help ensure that your business is in compliance with all of the state and federal employment regulations and guidelines which affect your company and your employees;
2. Help eliminate your financial exposure in these areas; and
3. Develop the policies and systems which will help you employ and maintain a satisfied, happy and productive work force.

Seay Management provides Human Resources Management and Labor Relations consulting services. Seay Management does not provide legal advice and does not engage in the practice of law. If you need an attorney, we'll be glad to recommend one to you.

### Examples of FAQs

- I am about to dismiss an employee, what documentation should I be mindful to have?
- One of my employees accused another employee of sexual harassment, what are some ways to resolve this situation?
- An employee wants to see his/her personnel file. Am I required to provide access?
- If a salaried employee doesn't come to work, may I deduct this from his or her salary?
- When an employee gives me a two weeks' notice, do I have to accept it? If I don't accept it, do I have to pay the employee for two weeks?
- If an employee leaves the company owing money, may I deduct this amount from the employee's final paycheck?
- If an employee is dismissed, am I required to pay accrued vacation pay?

\*Special Projects will be offered at a reduced hourly rate for DLI members.



Please contact us with any of your HR needs ▶ ▶ ▶

Website: [www.seay.us](http://www.seay.us)



# Mandatory Vaccination: With Clarity of the Law, Employers are Permitted to Require Vaccination

By Jordan Dunham, Kollman & Saucier, PA



AS KOLLMAN AND SAUCIER'S VINCENT JACKSON PREVIOUSLY BLOGGED, IN JUNE 2021, A TEXAS FEDERAL COURT UPHOLD A HOSPITAL'S POLICY REQUIRING ITS WORKERS TO BE VACCINATED AGAINST COVID-19.

Since that decision was rendered, an Indiana federal court issued its decision upholding Indiana University's mandatory vaccination policy that applied equally to students, faculty and staff. The Seventh Circuit recently denied a motion for injunction regarding that decision while an appeal is pending. An emergency application for writ of injunction has now been filed with the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the Seventh Circuit's decision.

Elsewhere, in Massachusetts, a currently enrolled student sued his private law school over its mandatory vaccination policy in *Artem v. New England Law Boston, et al*, Case No. 1:21-cv-10981 (D. Mass. Jul 19, 2021). The lawsuit was dismissed. Last year, a California state trial court upheld the University of California's flu vaccination mandate by denying a preliminary injunction which raised implications of a COVID-19 vaccination requirement. Recently, The Department of Defense announced U.S. military branches will add the COVID-19 vaccine to its list of mandatory inoculations. Further, on July 30, 2021, President Biden announced that every federal government employee and onsite contractor must be vaccinated against COVID-19.

While lawsuits continue to arise, and clarity on the federal executive orders is forthcoming, we have gained a fairly consistent picture on how courts will consider employers' authority to implement vaccination requirements: they are permissible but must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

If your business chooses to require that employees become vaccinated against COVID-19, the practice is permissible and defensible. In May, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) updated its guidance on COVID-19 and the workplace and unequivocally stated that employers may require employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Generally, an employer may require its employees to be vaccinated, subject to Title VII's and the ADA's requirements for reasonable accommodations due to disability and/or sincerely held religious beliefs. Under the ADA, an individual who provides notice to the employer that a disability prevents him or her from receiving

a vaccination cannot be required to be vaccinated or suffer adverse action, unless that individual would pose a "direct threat," meaning a "significant risk of substantial harm" that cannot be eliminated or reduced by reasonable accommodation. 29 C.F.R. 1630.2(r). An employee who simply refuses to be vaccinated, without a documented reason claiming sincerely held religious belief or disability, is not engaging in protected activity and thus can suffer adverse action, including termination.

As I have blogged about in the past, I would remain wary of disclosing any specific employee's vaccination status or even retaining vaccination records. The EEOC has confirmed that an employee's vaccination record is considered confidential information under the ADA. Inadvertent or unintentional disclosures of individual employee's vaccination status can run afoul with the ADA. Further, under the ADA, any medical information held by the employer must be housed separate from an employee file, and access limited to only certain individuals, such as a supervisor, safety personnel or government investigators. 29 CFR § 1630.14(c).

## MAC FOOTNOTE

While the idea of mandating vaccinations can be controversial, we feel it is our role to disseminate the information as it becomes available. We are not advocating you to install a mandated policy in your business, but only supplying you with the information to make an informed decision.

## ABOUT KOLLMAN & SAUCIER, PA

Kollman & Saucier is a mid-Atlantic law firm advising management on a wide range of labor and employment issues. With offices in Baltimore and Charlottesville, Virginia, the Firm's attorneys have more than 30 years experience representing clients before courts, administrative agencies, and arbitrators throughout the United States.

A large part of our practice involves working with clients to minimize risk and avoid litigation. Whether a Fortune 100 company or a small business, our clients deal directly with experienced attorneys who have represented only businesses for decades. We provide our clients with practical advice designed to achieve a desired result at a reasonable price.

Kollman & Saucier represents employers of all sizes, industries, and geographic location. Our AV-rated lawyers are well-regarded for representation of employers in the public sector; higher education; healthcare; retail; and construction-related industries. We have an established record of experience and service to our clients.

Labor and employment law is our niche, but our practice extends to a variety of general matters for business clients including commercial litigation, real estate transactions, corporate acquisitions, bankruptcy proceedings, and general business transactions.

## Idea of the Month: Get Out of the Back of the Plant



IT HAS BECOME A VERY CLICHE PHRASE OF LATE: "YOU HAVE TO WORK ON YOUR BUSINESS AND NOT IN YOUR BUSINESS", BUT THE REALITY IS MORE TRUE NOW THAN EVER.

- Food Quality
- Location
- Website
- Reviews (first visit)
- Cost Expectation
- Pictures (first impression)

How did you answer? How would you rank your criteria? Now take those same criteria and look at your business from the outside like your customers would. Have you kept up your call of-fices? Recently renovated? I know many businesses are always refreshing their looks. Making them brighter, more inviting, a place you feel comfortable coming into and you are welcomed.

How is your website? Easy to use? Champion your best qualities? Do you have pictures of your facility? Videos? Do you : "show off your menu" of services with before/after pictures?

Your customers and potential customers are doing the same thing every time they make a decision of where to go. Do yourself a favor -- and take a look with clear eyes and an open mind. You may be surprised. Is your business one you would choose?

*Do you have an idea you would like to share? E-mail it to [peter@macassociation.org](mailto:peter@macassociation.org)*

Competition is fierce right now. Competition for employees, customers, volume, and you have to realize the landscape you are working in. You need to understand what your competitors are doing, what your peers are doing, and most important of all how you are exceeding your customers expectations. It is hard to do that in the back of your plant.

Try a little exercise, what is the last time you went out to dinner? Why did you choose that restaurant? How did you make your decision? Think about the steps and what attracted you to that place. List them out. I recently did the same:

- Past experiences
- Friendliness of the staff



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