

Messenger

Your Membership Benefits Just Got Stronger



DLI AND ITS LOCAL AFFILIATES HAVE PARTNERED WITH OUR ALLIED TRADES MEMBERS TO DEVELOP A NEW RE-WARDS PROGRAM FOR ALL ASSOCIA-TION MEMBERS.

The new program establishes a list of free products, discounted services, and other business development opportunities that are sent to all members as they renew, and a different package is sent to any new members that join in Membership. There are a significant number of Allied trade partners that have volunteered to be a part of this

new program and the savings are significant. (See page 10 for a list of benefits).

These new reward kits have already begun being sent out. They will arrive via first class mail in large blue envelopes. Some members have already reported receiving them. The package includes description and instructions for redeeming the gifts.

The goals if the program are three-fold. First of all, it is a thank you for our members for supporting the associations and the industry. We know that membership is an investment and are striving to continually increase that return on investment. We know in these uncertain times, every dollar is important. We want you to know your DLI/MAC Investment is critical to your success.

Secondly, it is a great way for our members to explore some of the products and services offered by the Allied trades that support the industry. Sometimes these programs can get overshadowed or lost in the shuffle, and this program is a great way to highlight some of the best opportunities out there to strengthen your business.

Lastly, the program is designed to increase membership participation, and to let prospective members learn what we have to offer. A strong membership base helps the entire industry. The more members we have, the better we can represent your interests and develop additional programs to assist your business development. One thing we have learned over the past few years: there is strength in numbers, and we are not alone. We have a lot to learn from each other.

See Page 10 for more details!

FEBRUARY/MARCH, 2022

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How Have you Adapted?

ONE OF THE THINGS THAT HAS IM-PRESSED ME THE MOST OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS IS JUST HOW RE-SILIENT OUR INDUSTRY IS. WE HAVE SEEN CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES LIKE NEVER BEFORE, BUT WE HAVE RISEN TO MEET THOSE CHALLENGES, LOOKED FORWARD AND FOUND WAYS TO OVERCOME THOSE OBSTACLES AND ARE POISED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT LIE AHEAD.



Peter Blake, MAC Executive Director

To recognize those opportunities and challenges

you first need to understand what business you are in. If you are a DLI Member and you have partaken in the DLI Peer calls lately, this topic has been discussed a few times. Common answers include: cleaning garments, cleaning textiles, keeping customers looking good, providing service, taking care of customer's needs, and more. One of my favorites was "providing a positive experience for those who use our services".

This question Is not a new one. One member recently sent me an excerpt from the DLI Fabricare from 2012:

"Business is not merely about making money or beating the competition or being your own boss, though those are nice benefits. Business means serving customers. Serving customers means making people happy, when you make people happy, they have the tendency to like you. People buy from people they like!"

In my opinion the people who look beyond the technical aspect of our services, the cleaning of fabrics and textiles, and look more at the need to service our customers and make a positive impact in their lives are the ones who have adapted the quickest and have set themselves up for success. I don't think there is any better statement to sum up the consumer attitude that prevails today. You need to be a business that people like to buy from and use. That means great service, great quality, a social conscious, and a business that is a part of the "community" your customers belong to. Never underestimate the power of visibility in your community. Champion the things you do and how you help the people surrounding your business.

By recognizing your main business is providing the services your customers and potential customers need and want is paramount to adapting to the changes we have all faced. It is not just about cleaning shirts/blouses and skirts/suits, it is about helping them understand the benefits of the service you can provide. You are selling a good experience. It is a "people" business and how you make them feel is the pivotal attribute to your success. If they feel good, then your service will be successful regardless of the cost.

We have seen tremendous growth in the wash-dry-fold (or even the new wash-dryhang) programs many cleaners have ventured into. We have seen a growth in pick-up and delivery routes as people have looked to adapt to their customer's need for convenience and contact-less service. While many of these things were brought about by covid – most of these changes were already heading our way and these pressures just accelerated the changes.

Idea of the Month: Use the Power of your Database



FIRST OF ALL, IF YOU ARE NOT USING THE POWER OF E-MAIL MARKETING YOU ARE LEAVING PROF-IT ON THE TABLE.

The most common complaint I hear is that volume is down. There are only really two basic

ways to increase volume: get new customers, or have your current customers bring you more volume. Your best customer is your current customer. They already know the value of your service, and if you want to increase volume in your plant -- one of the best ways is to leverage that relationship. E-mail marketing can be the most powerful, and cost effective, tool in your marketing toolbox. You can use e-mail newsletters and postcards to highlight little known services, or to highlight company specials you have running. There is no better way to get your message out there than to be direct, and to be aggressive.

One of the most common hesitations is that cleaners don't want to

coupon. E-mail marketing does not have to be discount driven. In fact -- I believe the more interesting and useful the information, the more apt it is to work. DLI has been creating "Consumer News you Can Use" for use by members for over a year now. These articles are useful, helpful -- and they drive sales. There is a tremendous value to letting your customers know how to properly store away winter garments. They must be cleaned before storage -- that increases volume. Don't let salt damage from icy conditions sit on leather boots and coats for a prolonged period of time. These hints will help drive business.

Company newsletters are great ways of letting your customers know that you are about their garments, you want to help them prolong the life of their fine fashions, and most importantly remind them of the services you can perform. The more opportunities you have to demonstrate your expertise -- the more apt you are to solidify that relationship. Emails are the best word of mouth for your business. It is so easy for your customer to forward your information to their friends and associates. Your customers can help you promote your business. If you need advice or help, call Peter Blake at 617-791-0128.

Do you have an idea you would like to share? E-mail it to peter@macassociation.org

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT...

Inspect What You Except



HAVE YOU TOLD YOUR EMPLOYEES WHAT IS EX-PECTED OF THEM? ARE YOU MAXIMIZING THE PO-TENTIAL OF YOUR STAFF?

Everyone is dealing with the pressures of staff turnover and training, but you can't ignore the need to set standards and communicate those to your staff.

Many owners and managers never tell their employees what level of production is expected of them. Put yourself in your employee's place. How much would you do if you did not know what was expected? Without a standard to meet, many employees will not be fully productive, and instead the likelihood is they will make the hours fit the workload.

"This is one question we are continually asked," commented MAC Executive Director Peter Blake, "and it continues to be an important topic. On average, what production level can you reasonably expect. One of the keys I find is that anything measured seems to grow. If you aren't inspecting the production levels -- or counting and evaluating, the minute you start, production will likely increase. When you stop inspecting and counting, over time you tend to revert back and counts will go down. In order to keep people mindful, and aware -- you have to Inspect what you expect. You have to measure the results you want to achieve. It is just human nature to strive to hit a target, but only when the target is being measured."

DLI has produced some great information on production standards including averages that you can use as a rule of thumb. The information on how to measure production, and how to set standards is covered in Technical Operating Information No. 674. It is available on the DLI's "Encyclopedia of Drycleaning" of you can get a copy by contacting Peter Blake at the MAC Office.

"UNDERSTANDING YOUR CURRENT PRODUCTION, AND YOUR POTENTIAL PRODUCTION CAN BE CRITICAL TO YOUR SUCCESS. KEEPING IN MIND THE ADAGE, 'INSPECT WHAT YOU EXPECT' CAN REALLY HELP YOU GET THE MOST OF YOUR RESOURCES."

Are You Leaving Money on the Table?



FOR MANY DRY-CLEANERS AND SMALL BUSINESSES, THE EMPLOYEE RE-TENTION TAX CRED-IT CAN BE A MUCH NEEDED LIFELINE.

The good news is many businesses have already been claiming the credit and have received tax relief in 2021. A large

number of cleaners have already filed amended returns for 2020 and have started to receive payments on those returns. From just a small sampling of filers, we have seen over \$5,000,000 returned to members of the industry and estimates show it could be more than double that figure.

In a nutshell for 2020, your eligibility as an employer is based on gross receipts of less than 50% compared to the same quarter in 2019. This means if your gross receipts decline more than 50% in 2020, you are eligible to begin taking the credit. You continue to qualify for the credit until your gross receipts recover to over 80%, or until December 31, 2020. The tax credit provides for a 50% credit per employee of the first \$10,000 in wages. This could mean

as much as \$5,000/employee.

In 2021, the parameters changed dramatically. Your eligibility as an employer is based on gross receipts of less than 80% (versus less than 50%) compared to the same quarter in 2019. This means if your gross receipts decline more than 20% in 2021, you are eligible to take the credit. In 2021, you are allowed to take a 70% credit on the first \$10,000 of wages in each qualifying quarter.

There are some stipulations worth noting, you may not claim ERTC for any time period you are using PPP funds, and there are some payroll limitations as to what employees may qualify.

This is a very complex assistance program so we advise you seek advice from your tax professionals. We have printed a 2021 Flow Chart on the next page to check your eligibility

"As you can see the credit can be significant," observed peter Blake, MAC Executive Director, "and it is in your best interest to investigate the program thoroughly. Make sure your accountant is aggressively looking at this program, and how you can apply. It can be a lot of work but in the end it is worth it. There are also companies who specialize in this program and can help you recover funds.

If you need advice or help, contact Peter Blake at 617-791-0128 or peteblke@aol.com.



Employee Retention Tax Credit Flow Chart for 2021 Quarters (Contact NEFA for 2020 Flow Chart)

The following information was produced by Chris Wittich (@ravenousTiger) and was circulated on Twitter. There is a similar flow chart available for 2020, and both PDF versions will be on www.nefabricare.com. This is provided as general information and you should seek professional advice when filing for these Tax Credits.



Adapting your Business

Continued from page 2

HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE THE CHALLENGES?

If you are reading this, you are already ahead of the game. Publications like National Clothesline provide a tremendous service. They bring you free information on the latest happenings, news, and columnists that help you understand the implications of that information. There are others like American Drycleaner and Cleaner and Launderer. They are all free publications, and all bring a little different perspective. You should subscribe to them all.

One of the critical reasons our industry has been able to adapt so well has been the wealth of information that was made readily available. DLI and its local partners like my groups NEFA, SEFA, and MAC have all excelled at proving timely information and valuable insight for its members and the industry. Like the drycleaning industry, I too had to adapt to the new realities and change my focus on what we provided. We had to do more not less. We needed to be out in front of the issues so people like our members. the trade press, and consultants knew where to look for answers.

I have worked hard to keep up to date with all the stimulus packages and financial assistance programs available. I have made sure to we have a great group of experts we can rely on to provide the best assistance for our members in all critical areas. I don't have all the answers, but between DLI and Myself -- we know where to get them for you!

There is no better time to be a member. We are continuing these efforts and even strengthening them as we look beyond covid and to new fashions and trends. Are programs will only grow stronger as we focus on news, marketing, social media, technical information. We will provide you all the latest information on government and HR programs. Trust me, there are still a lot of changes to come, and you will need resources to understand the implications.

USE ALL THE TOOLS IN YOUR TOOLBOX

Don't just rely on the free printed publications like I have mentioned, but use the other tools that are out there. DLI has a terrific Facebook Group designed to answer all your questions and concerns. Cleaner and Launderer has a great group as do The Route Pros and Maverick Drycleaning, and more. Search out these social media groups so you can be kept up to date on latest trends and information. Look to your vendors to keep up to date on critical supply chain issues and timelines. Use their knowledge and expertise. They are valuable resources and provide great insight into the market place.

Now is not the time to pull back and wait out the changes, now is the time to make a step forward and position yourself in a place of strength. Knowledge is the foundation of that strength.

DLI has weekly peer-to-peer calls that are an open forum. Recent calls have featured topics like pricing strategies, marketing, hours of operation, drop boxes, POS companies, credit card fees, and the biggest issue facing all small businesses - staffing.

If you are reading this and would like to sit in on one of these calls

as my guest, let me know and I will personally send you a link and invite you to participate. Just call or email me and I will make sure you have the links to join the conversation. Let your peers help solve your problems.

NOW IS THE TIME

If you are not yet a member of DLI and its partners, now is the perfect time to join. Industry vendors understand the benefits of membership so much that they have joined together to reward people who join and renew their membership. You will see from the add in this issue of Clothesline that a new member will more than pay for the entire membership just by these incentives. Act now - try it for a year and learn how you can strengthen your business.

I am committed to your success. I firmly believe If you succeed, and I can play some role in that success, then I have done my job. I invite all industry members to reach out and let me know where your biggest challenges are coming from, and I will see how we can work together to provide ways to conquer them.

Peter Blake

Peter@macassociation.org (617) 791-0128





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The Employment Brief from Kollman & Saucier

By Frank Kollman, Kollman & Saucier, PA



MAC AND DLI ARE FORTUNATE TO HAVE THE FIRM OF KOLLMAN AND SAUCIER AVAILABLE TO ASSIST OUR MEMBERS WITH LABOR LAW QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS.

All MAC/DLI Members are invited to call upon them with any questions at no cost for the initial outreach. Information

below is provided as part of their service with DLI.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA EXPANDS ITS PAID FAM-ILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE BENEFIT

The District of Columbia will boost its paid family and medical leave program to offer a maximum of 12 weeks of leave annually, as well as reducing the payroll tax rate that employers will pay.

The expansion resulted from a review of the paid leave program finances by D.C.'s Chief Financial Officer, who concluded that the program would have a nearly \$500 million surplus this year at the current 8-week benefit level. The program began paying benefits in July 2020 and currently provides for 8 weeks of parental leave, 6 weeks for other family-related and personal medical leave, and 2 weeks of prenatal leave. The employer tax rate will be cut to 0.26% of wages, from the current rate of 0.62%.

Nine states, other than D.C., have enacted paid family and medical leave funded through payroll taxes, most recently including Oregon and Colorado. During Tuesday's State of the Union address, President Biden renewed his call for a national paid family and medical leave mandate. Currently, there is a Democraticallybacked federal proposal that was reduced to four weeks of annual leave before passing in the House in November 2021. That tax and spending package is stalled before the Senate.

MARYLAND POISED TO INCREASE DAMAGES CAPS FOR DISCRIMINATION CLAIMS

The Maryland Fair Employment Practices Act (FEPA) is the state analog to federal anti-discrimination laws. The law prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, and disability. If an employer is found to have engaged in an unlawful employment practice under FEPA the remedies can include compensatory damages, back pay, injunctive relief, and punitive damages. Compensatory damages are, as the name suggests, intended to compensate employees for future loss, emotional damages, mental anguish, and the like.

The Maryland General Assembly is considering increasing the

limitations on compensatory damages for state law discrimination claims. Senate Bill 449 would increase the amount of compensatory damages available under FEPA as follows:

- Employers with 15-100 employees, increase to \$65,000 (from \$50,000);
- Employers with 101 to 200 employees, increase to \$130,000 (from \$100,000);
- Employers with 201 to 500 employees, increase to \$260,000 (from \$200,000); and
- Employers with more than 500 employees, increase to \$385,000 (from \$300,000).

If enacted, the change will take effect October 1, 2022. The compensatory damages limits would also increase by 5% annually beginning October 1, 2022. The prior caps aligned with those under Title VII (the federal law barring discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, and religion).

In addition, SB 449 would amend FEPA to allow for back pay to be awarded for up to three years preceding the filing of a complaint where the underlying conduct is similar or related to other discriminatory actions that occurred outside the time for filing a complaint.

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.

A Gift to Uou



New for 2022: Start or renew your DLI membership in 2022 and receive discounts from these industry manufacturers and suppliers:

BeCreative360

New members receive a \$200 gift certificate Renewing members receive a \$50 gift certificate

Cleaner's Supply *New members receive a \$100 gift certificate*

EnviroForensics and PolicyFind

New and renewing members receive a free insurance archeology consultation (\$200 value) and \$500 off of any insurance archeology project at or above a \$5,000 cost

EzProducts International, Inc. *New members receive a* \$150 *credit Renewing members receive a* \$100 *credit*

FabriClean Supply New members receive 10% off next order **Fabritec International** New members receive \$150 credit toward Samford, Fabritec, or Sanitone products

GreenEarth Cleaning *New members receive a \$200 credit*

Kleerwite Chemical New members receive a sample case

valued at \$100 Renewing members receive a sample case valued at \$25

Luetzow Industries New members receive a \$100 credit

Memories Gown Preservation New members receive a \$270 credit Renewing members receive a \$35 credit

NIE Insurance

New members receive 6% off insurance Renewing members receive 6% off insurance

The Route Pros

New members receive a free Route Guide (\$159 value)

Sankosha USA

New members receive 40% off an order of covers & pads Renewing members receive 25% off an order of covers & pads

SPOT by Xplor *New members receive a* \$240 *credit*

Unipress Corporation

New members receive a \$200 freight credit for one product Renewing members receive a \$200 freight credit for one product

United Fabricare Supply, Inc. New members in Arizona, California, and Nevada receive a \$100 credit

DLI Membership Pays



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Join now at DLIonline.org/Membership or call 800-638-2627

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Don't see your supplier here? Contact MAC and let us know and we can send them membership information. Make sure your suppliers are supporting YOU!

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