



# MWDLI

MIDWEST DRYCLEANING & LAUNDRY INSTITUTE

## Executive Director Report

By Jon Meijer



Over the last 14 months, we have all become familiar with the terms such as “the new normal”, “the new reality”, “pivoting”, and the list goes on and on. OK we get it now, things are different and the way we do business has changed. Marketing experts will say that, “you should spend more time working on your business rather than in your business”. Well, I’m here to tell you that many of us have been working on their business by actually working in their business. That’s not a bad thing,

Covid and the lack of available labor and customers has forced many business owners to start pressing pants again, removing stains, equipment maintenance, dealing with customers directly, driving delivery trucks, cleaning

the plant and so on. By working in our business, we discovered that we could do with less. We’ve streamlined operations, closed low producing drop/satellite stores, finding out that your star presser was not as talented as you once thought, finally realizing that some of your good customers stopped coming in because of poor service and not Covid related issues or recognizing that your delivery driver was not very active in selling your services.

Many of our members have stated that while their gross sales are down, their net profit is up. Why, because owners and operators have had to do with less, actually working in all facets of the plant. We have had to look at our business from the inside out rather than the outside looking in. For many of our members, it was and continues to be an eye opening experience.

You as owners and operators have learned a lot and going forward you will use this knowledge to help grow your business. Yes, we need to “pivot”, change directions as they say, find new opportunities and not rely so heavily on those customers that continue to bring in less drycleanable clothing. Overall, I would say that we were able to gain a new perspective on our business and we’ve learned quite a bit!

June/July 2021

### In This Issue

- The “Talent Acquisition” Process.....3
- EPA Reviews NESHAP for Perc Drycleaners.....5
- NEW DLI Benefit.....5
- OSHA Temporarily Adopts CDC’s Most Recent Guidance On Fully Vaccinated Employees.....6
- MICHELANGELO ON MANAGEMENT.....8
- Getting Your Employees Vaccinated.....10
- Time Perspective .....12
- DLI Live Training Schedule .....16

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# The “Talent Acquisition” Process

By Peter Blake

Nationwide, small businesses are facing the same obstacle: lack of help and inability to fully staff their operations. This is the single greatest challenge expressed by all business owners, and we are not alone. Restaurants, retail stores, and other service businesses are competing for the same labor pool.

We were facing this same problem before the pandemic, and now it is even worse. There are a great many reasons we can point to: FFMLA, Government assistance, federal unemployment subsidies, lack of childcare services, remote schooling, fear of COVID, and the list goes on. It is a perfect storm of obstacles to re-energizing the workforce.

At the outset, I thought with the number of businesses closing, and non-essential businesses being forced to stop operating at full capacity, pre-pandemic labor shortage would reverse itself. I was confident that people would be hungry to find and get back to work, but just the opposite has happened. It is becoming harder and harder to find people, and even more difficult to hire the right people to fit into your team. Every business owner needs to be in a constant state of “Talent Acquisition”. You can never feel that you are fully staffed, because at the worst possible moment, you will lose a key person and you are back at square one. If you need one person, try and hire two. In the long run being a little overstaffed will always cost less than being caught understaffed.

If you have extra personnel, you can always transition weaker team members to different jobs, or realize they are not a right fit and help them find something better suited for them. You always have room for talent and great additions.

Where to Find Talent

There is no magic bullet. I am sure you are all using message boards, InDeed, ZipRecruiter, Monster.com, Craigslist and other avenues. I hope it is working for you, but if you are like most of the companies out there, the people you want to hire or look at seldom show up for the interview or have already joined another staff. This can get frustrating and can waste a lot of your time.

There are a lot of things you can do to make better use of those tools. If you need help – reach out and I can share some ideas for you. If done right, those

tools can be useful. You have to be quick, attentive, responsive and decisive. Everyone is using these tools and the competition is fierce. Do not just rely on putting an ad on those message services and expect a great return. You must be the aggressor. You must search for candidates that are actively updating their information. You need to go find them. By the time they see your ad, it may be too late. They will probably have been scooped up by someone else.

I am going to make a confession here, many of the ideas that I am referencing have come from the DLI Peer-to-Peer Zoom calls for members held weekly. There is no better forum to discuss issues, ask for advice, and to learn new ways to approach old problems.

To really be successful, however, you need to step outside the normal everyday tools and constantly be a “Talent Agent”. You must be on the lookout for the type of people you want to build your staff. When you are out at a restaurant and get exceptional service, maybe leave a business card with their tip letting them know if they ever consider a career shift, you are always look for team members. Retail stores, service technicians, home delivery people are all viable candidates for you to be on the lookout for. Any place you encounter the types of people you wish you had working for you – it is ok to put a lead out there and let them know there may be options. You can have something printed on the back of your business cards like: “Looking for a new career direction? Join the XYZ Cleaners Team. We are interested in exceptional people”.

Be prepared to recognize potential everywhere. Over the past year, many great employees have been kept working, but their hours have been cut. Do not be afraid to approach people with potential and offer them supplemental hours. Retail stores and restaurants are great resources. Let the prospective hire know that if they need more hours, you may have some flexible hours you can give them if they want to try something new. It does not always have to be a career change.

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We often talk about networking for sales, but you can also do it for employees. Maybe you know another company that is struggling to give their employees the hours they need. Let them know you may be able to help the employee recover the lost time. You can work out an employee sharing program if neither business needs full time people.

Do you have some strong staff members? Ask them for referrals. Offer to pay referral bonuses if the employee works out. Incentivize them to help you build your staff. Have you thought of your customers? They already know and like your business, or they would not be customers. It is ok to let them know through your email service, texting, or even Facebook & Social Media that you are looking to add assets to your team. You may be surprised what you find. Kids graduating High School looking for options or stay-at-home Moms and Dads whose kids are off to college and they are thinking about re-entering the workforce. The best candidates can often come from unlikely connections.

Also, keep in mind, you will rarely find the right person with drycleaning experience and someone who already knows the industry. If you do – phenomenal, but for the most part you need to be looking for the types of people you want to work for you. You can teach every aspect of this industry, but it may be harder to teach good teamwork, good customer service instincts, and integrity. Look for the core values you desire – and you can train for the rest.

“We look for three things when we hire people. Intelligence, Initiative, and Integrity. If they don't have the latter, the first two will kill you.” - Warren Buffett

The Competition for Candidates is Fierce  
Like I said earlier, everyone is facing the same challenges. The reality of today is that job applicants have many choices. With minimum wage continuing to rise and corporate pay structures in restaurants and fast-food businesses continuing to escalate, you need to set yourself apart. The days of posting an add, getting 30 applicants, and having your choice of employee is GONE. Now you are lucky to get those

that apply to even show up. Things have changed, and for the employer it is not for the better.

Why aren't they showing up for the Interviews? There are probably several answers including: really don't want a job, already took another position, and have already decided against taking your position. I think these three are the most likely.

If they don't really want to work or are only answering job posting to prove to unemployment they are looking, you can't do anything about that. Trust me, you will not want them anyway. Like I said before, you need to be quick and decisive. You cannot hesitate or the qualified applicants will be grabbed up quickly and you will lose the chance. You must be flexible when scheduling phone and or physical interviews.

I hate to break it to you but working at a drycleaner is not on everyone's priority list. As an industry we are not highly sought after. You need to be proactive with your reputation. As soon as an applicant is approached by a company, it is so easy to check them out on Social Media, Yelp, etc. When people have choices, they will gravitate to businesses they trust, believe in, and want to work for. You have a lot of control over what they see. Make sure your Yelp and Google Reviews are good, and you are responsive. When working on your social media pages, highlight your employees. Stress their longevity. Feature ones that have been promoted or moved up in the company. Highlight activities you have done with your staff, or any highlights or recognition. When you demonstrate the value of your team members publicly, you are showcasing your work culture. You are highlighting reasons to work for you. When people are trying to decide to work for a company, these will all play a factor.

Lastly, keep in mind that while pay structure is important, it is also important to highlight the other added benefits you may offer. Flexible hours, paid time off, 401 K, any and all of these benefits could sway the decision in your favor. If you do not have a 401K, now may be the time to initiate one. There are significant tax breaks available that makes it almost pay for itself!

Finding the right fit takes work and it is not easy, but you must do all the things you can to make you and your company someone that people want to work for. As Mark Albrecht of the Route Pros has told me countless times: “Everyone Wants to work for the cool boss and the cool company.” Your job is to make them understand: that is you!

# EPA Reviews NESHAP for Perc Drycleaners

EPA's Air Office is currently reviewing the existing National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAPs) for perc drycleaners. This is a court ordered 8- year technology review of the current perc drycleaning standard, finalized in 2013. The review allows EPA to make recommendations and/or proposed changes to the standard based on the drycleaning technology used today. Last December, EPA, released the final risk evaluation for perchloroethylene (perc) under the Toxic Substances

Control Act. Drycleaners who use Perc could face additional regulations by EPA, which may also include a ban on its use as a drycleaning solvent. The risk evaluation process will require EPA to develop regulations to protect public health from unreasonable risks that were identified. Of primary concern to EPA is the unreasonable risk to employees and the public from exposure to perchlorethylene. DLI is actively working with EPA on these issues and will continue to keep members informed.

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## OSHA Temporarily Adopts CDC's Most Recent Guidance On Fully Vaccinated Employees

By RANDI KLEIN HYATT, Kollman & Saucier, P.A.

On May 13, 2021, the CDC issued its ["Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People"](#) which advised that fully vaccinated people (meaning two weeks have passed since receiving the second dose in a 2-dose series or 2 weeks after the single-dose vaccine), in non-healthcare settings, no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting (indoors included), except where required by applicable laws, rules or regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.

OSHA has taken an aggressive position regarding COVID-19 workplace health and safety enforcement. In its January 29, 2021 [COVID-19 Guidance on Mitigating and Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 in the Workplace](#), OSHA explained that workers who are vaccinated must continue to follow protective measures, such as wearing face coverings and remaining physically distant.

On May 18, [OSHA issued a statement](#) that in light of the new CDC guidance on recommended precautions for fully vaccinated people, which OSHA is in the process of reviewing, and until such time as OSHA issues updated materials on the topic, OSHA is directing the public to refer to the CDC Guidance for information on measures appropriate to protect fully

vaccinated workers. Therefore, until we hear otherwise, OSHA is not stopping businesses from letting its fully vaccinated workforce shed their masks and stand within 6-feet of each other, inside.

Of course, many workplaces may continue to require masking, social distancing, and other safety measures, both for its employees and for customers and others who enter the workspace. Further, state and local jurisdictions may have requirements in place that mandate masking and/or social distancing, so it is important to understand the requirements of the jurisdictions in which your business operates. And still, even if masks are no longer required, many businesses may find themselves with employees (and customers) who will continue to wear masks (and it would make good sense to permit and accommodate mask wearing for the foreseeable future).

Employers need to account for how it will track who is and is not vaccinated within the confines of the law, and enforce mask-wearing for those who are not yet fully vaccinated. The CDC's latest mandate certainly brings optimism, but should not become a reason to disregard thoughtful consideration of keeping the workplace safe and ensuring that proper protective measures and protocols are in place.



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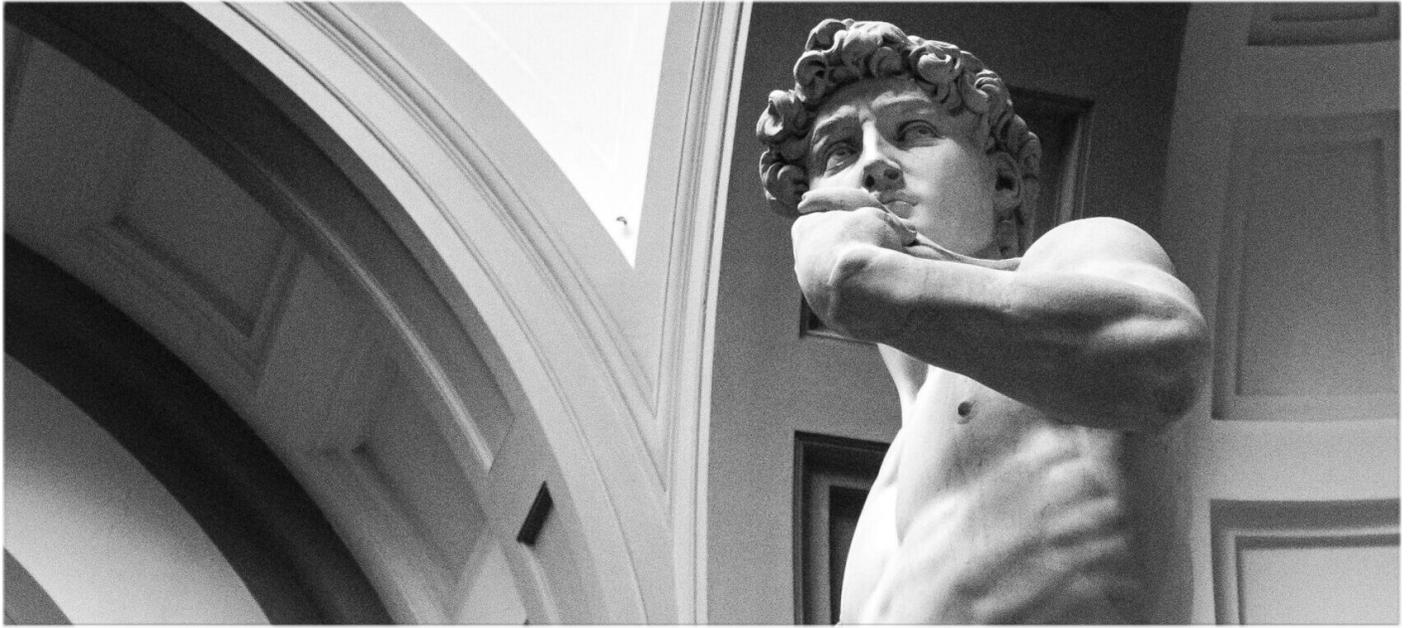


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## MICHELANGELO ON MANAGEMENT

### BY RALEIGH F. "SANDY" SEAY, JR., PH.D.

Linda and I just returned from taking our oldest granddaughter Annie to Europe, as a high school graduation present. We got lots of Good Grandparent points and our Grandparent stock is pretty high right now. One of the highlights of our trip was a visit to the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel, along with about 100,000 of our closest friends – I will admit, gentle reader, the crowds were tough. “In the room, the women come and go Talking of Michelangelo.”

-T. S. Eliot.

Linda and I have visited the Sistine Chapel several times in the past and I have taught the Renaissance at Rollins and Valencia so we have a good familiarity with the history and the art on display. The Sistine Chapel is named for Pope Sixtus IV who restored it between 1477 and 1480. It is always stunning and the story of Michelangelo's work on the ceiling is remarkable. If you have an interest, you may want to read Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling, by Ross King. Michelangelo was only 33 years old when he began the ceiling and 37 when he finished it, working between 1508 and 1512. He initially refused Pope Julius II's command to paint the ceiling and ran away to Florence to avoid it. However, the “Warrior Pope” sent a posse after him and brought him back to Rome where, with great reluctance, he agreed to paint the ceiling, with the stipulation that he would design the work himself and not rely on the ideas of others.

He was a fairly crusty fellow and considered himself to be a sculptor, not a painter, and had never worked in fresco. One of his more difficult initial problems was designing and constructing a scaffold from which to paint the ceiling and, standing alone, the scaffold itself is an engineering marvel. So, for the next four years, he worked from a very uncomfortable and sometimes painful leaning position, some 65 feet above the ground, creating one of the great masterpieces of the Western World.

Michelangelo returned to the Sistine Chapel some 25 years later at age 59 and spent the next seven years painting the magnificent and powerful Last Judgment on the far wall of the chapel. I have a PowerPoint presentation on the Last Judgment so if you would like a presentation for your management team or your group, let me know.

I knew that Michelangelo was a sculptor (see David and the Pieta) and I knew that he was a painter and an architect (see the Dome of St. Peter's Basilica). I also knew that he wrote poetry and was something of a musician. What I did not know was that he wrote some very astute commentaries on life and, in particular, on management. Here is one of my favorites:

“The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it.”

A similar notion has been suggested by other people over the years, which is the idea that it is possible to set our goals too low, thereby growing satisfied and perhaps complacent with less than our best so that we never reach our highest potential. The English poet Robert Browning captured this thought when he wrote that a person's "reach should always exceed his grasp." In a speech to the Orlando Economics Club, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher offered similarly wise advice by commenting, "Set your long term goals early, and do not be deterred by short term difficulty." I like that. In our time, Sam Walton of Wal-Mart fame wrote, "I've always held the bar pretty high for myself: I've always set extremely high personal goals."

World-class athletes know that they perform better against the better players, and may sometimes "play down" to the level of a team that is not as good. Professional racing driver Danica Patrick has said, "Take those chances and you can achieve greatness, whereas if you go conservative, you'll never know." Track and field Olympian Wilma Rudolph remarked that "... the potential for greatness lives within each of us" and All Universe basketball legend Michael Jordan said, "I've failed over and over again in my life and that is why I succeed."

So, if Michelangelo, Robert Browning, Margaret Thatcher, Sam Walton and world-class athletes like Danica Patrick, Wilma Rudolph, and Michael Jordon are right, we will achieve our highest success if we stretch ourselves further than we think we can, perhaps experiencing a bit of discomfort, anxiety, and uncertainty along the way. One of my clients calls these goals, "stretch goals." If we set our sights too low, it is likely that we may have a modicum of success but will not reach our highest and greatest potential. Or to paraphrase Michelangelo, "Better to aim too high and miss than to aim too low and hit."

In my mind's eye, I can imagine that if we were to corral Michelangelo around a dark wooden table in a half-lit Roman tavern, he might have these things to say about aiming high in our management goals and objectives. See what you think!

1. Most of us can do more than we think we can do. Michelangelo did not think he was up to the task of painting the Sistine Chapel ceiling and was depressed and angered that the Pope had asked him. He wanted to sculpt, not paint, and his colleagues Raphael and Bramante hoped that he would fail. When he completed the ceiling, in spite of never having done anything like this before, he had reached artistic

plateaus that he had not even imagined. "You can if you think you can."

2. It's okay to differ from the boss on occasion. Differing with the boss is ok if you do so graciously and if you clearly and specifically articulate your position. Good bosses want employees who take the initiative and who challenge them periodically. Someone once wrote, "Iron sharpens iron."<sup>2</sup> Michelangelo did not want to paint the Sistine Chapel and he told this to Pope Julius II in no uncertain terms. However, when the dust settled and he had his say, he did want the Pope wanted him to do, which was paint the ceiling.

3. Just because you haven't done it before doesn't mean you can't do it now. Michelangelo was a sculptor and had never worked in fresco. But he learned how to do it and the result is the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Fresco is the process of



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working with wet plaster where the colors penetrate and become fixed. And the artist can work only on the amount of plaster he can complete in a day. If there is a problem, you have to chip out the day's work, lay new plaster and begin again. A good manager knows that if things aren't working, sometimes you have to abandon a project and begin again. The last 7 words of a dying company are, "We've always done it that way before."

4. Take ownership of your work. Michelangelo agreed to paint the ceiling on the condition that he would design it himself and not rely on the ideas of others. Pope Julius II wanted him to paint rather static scenes from the Old Testament, one after the other, but Michelangelo's idea was to paint multiple key scenes from the Book of Genesis, from the Creation to the Flood, with supporting characters, using contrapposto and creating energetic, fleshy, muscular, full-bodied images, virtually bursting with tension. "Imagination is more important than knowledge."

5. Get to work with an intense, laser focus and unqualified dedication to excellence. Michelangelo did not keep track of time and did not work 8:00-5:00. He climbed to the top of the scaffold and worked until he

could no longer hold his hands above his head, then went home, collapsed into a troubled sleep, then came back and did it again the next day, not even stopping to take a bath. It is said that once when he collapsed from exhaustion, they had to cut his boots and his clothes off of him, because they were stuck to his skin. "Excellence, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral. Intellectual excellence . . . owes its growth to teaching, while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit"

It could be that most of us will never achieve the artistic or management heights of Michelangelo, but it also could be that if we study the principles that led him to those heights, we might also go as Captain Kirk said, "Where no man has gone before."

Please contact your Seay Management Consultant if you have any questions about Human Resources Management or employment issues or need management advice and guidance on other key employee issues. We appreciate having you as a valued client of our firm and look forward to talking soon. And aim high!

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## Time Perspective

By Dave Coyle, Maverick Drycleaners

Type to enter textYour calendar is the quickest way to determine your level of success in running your business (or if it is running you). On the low end of the spectrum, if you don't have a calendar where you make appointments and create blocks of time to solve challenges and seize opportunities, you are probably in survival mode. Get the work out for today. Be a fire fighter. Return and do it again tomorrow. You have a very short time perspective.

When I was drinking almost every day, my time perspective was very short. All I really cared about was getting to five o'clock, where I would promptly check out after a hard day's work. A drug addict might have an even shorter time perspective, trying to get to the next hit, which never comes quick enough. Fortunately, my drinking days ended nine years ago when I could not control it.

As you get others on your team to help take care of today's work (short term time perspective), you can focus on getting results tomorrow, next week, next month, and so on (long term time perspective). You become much less reactive and are intentional about the results you are working so hard to create.

This relates to marketing as well. If you are stuck in firefighting mode, just trying to get the work done, I

guarantee you that you don't have an organized marketing strategy. Instead, you chase the work with uncoordinated marketing, and then you take a break from the marketing to get the work done. And this creates a very lumpy, reactive sales cycle. And it becomes very challenging to manage.

It all starts with getting your top line sales to a point where you can afford to hire and nurture key team members that take you out of the daily operations. Once out of the daily operations, you must increase your time perspective so you can stay ahead of your team. Your team is more efficient now that you are no longer the hub of the wheel, trying to control everything.

Marketing solves a lot of challenges. But only if you change along with it.

Dave Coyle is a DLI member who owns and operates In the Bag Cleaners in Wichita, Kansas. He launched the Maverick Drycleaners marketing firm specifically to help drycleaning business owners grow. He can be reached at [dave@maverickdrycleaners.com](mailto:dave@maverickdrycleaners.com) or (316) 650-9242. Learn more about Maverick Drycleaners at [www.maverickdrycleaners.com](http://www.maverickdrycleaners.com).



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Allow on-demand and regular customers to request a pick-up based on scheduled days and their location



### *messaging*

Allow customers to send email and text messages directly to the store within the app

Connect  
with

Your  
customers



### *updatable*

Through the Customer Gateway customers can update their account preferences and credit card on file information



### *navigation*

Turn-by-turn navigation with real time traffic, optimization based on past traffic patterns



### *changes*

Send automatic text messages the night before pickup, servicing as both a friendly reminder and the ability to skip customer's scheduled stop

### *contact us*

[fabricaremanager.com](http://fabricaremanager.com)  
770.966.9323



# Fabricare



**MWDLI is always looking for ideas and suggestions for things that matter to you.**

What are your training needs? What types of education opportunities would you like to see? MWDLI's advisors are working hard to develop the best training opportunities for members.

**Contact the MWDLI office at 765-969-5745 Or email us at [Midwestdli@gmail.com](mailto:Midwestdli@gmail.com)**

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# LIVE TRAINING

## JUNE 2021

All programs go live at 1 p.m. eastern

- **Wednesday, June 9**  
Drycleaning Machine Maintenance with Lou D'Autorio of Skylou Mechanical
- **Wednesday, June 16**  
How Much Environmental Cleanup Will Your Insurance Actually Pay For? with Enviroforensics Co-hosted by DLI and Cleaner & Launderer
- **Wednesday, June 23**  
Tips and Tricks for Using Indeed to Hire with Brian Fish of Pier Cleaners & Amy Wischmann of Benzinger Clothing Care
- **Wednesday, June 30**  
Customer Service with Jennifer Marquardt of the Route Pros

## Sharing Ideas That Work

Join your peers on Zoom every Tuesday at 11:30 am (EST). Exchange new strategies to help drive business.



Join today at [www.DLIonline.org](http://www.DLIonline.org)  
or call 800-638-2627