



The Messenger

www.macassociation.org

MAC's Spring Management Conference a Great Success

MAY/JUNE
2018



MAC HELD ITS SECOND ANNUAL SPRING MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE IN VIRGINIA BEACH ON MAY 19 AND 20TH, AND THE RESPONSE FROM ATTENDEES WAS TERRIFIC.

“First Class”, observed MAC President, Mike

McKay. “From the venue to the speakers, to the topics, I believe this is one of the best events we have held. Speaking with my colleagues from around the region, they were all equally impressed. It is really unfortunate for all the cleaners who desperately needed to hear the messages, but were unable to attend the conference. They really missed out on an incredible opportunity.”

“Inspirational,” exclaimed Glen Kotval, MAC Member from West Virginia, “and I almost didn’t come. I was on the fence, debating, and called Peter Blake at the MAC Office to thank him for the opportunity -- but told him I was unable to attend. He convinced me to go. We discussed how vital these type of events are both for the presentations, as well as, the networking opportunities. I am very glad I listened. This was a great event, well worth the investment of time and money, and I really got a great deal of value out of it. I will be back next year for sure, and I really hope others who were considering it this year make a special effort to attend the next one. I know I am glad I did, and I won’t miss another one.”

TOP INDUSTRY SPEAKERS

MAC was able to bring out two of the top speakers available in Krista Clive-Smith and James Peuster. While James Peuster is well known in the industry as “The Route Pro”, he was able to deftly shift gears and demonstrate why he is as much sought after for his management training abilities as he is for route development.

While lesser known in the industry, Krista Clive-Smith blended her organizational and brand development expertise with her dry cleaning experience to illustrate ways all dry-cleaners -- large and small-- can develop their own brand and use that expertise to develop a stronger business model.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE...

Identifying Your Greatest Opportunities

AS WE LOOK TO WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR MAC, AND FOR OUR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THE INDUSTRY TRENDS AND FORECAST THE INDUSTRY.

Last issue I asked members to send in their greatest challenges. I wanted to hear from you all what your biggest concerns are, and then we can look at ways to develop programs and services to help you answer those challenges.

The top 5 challenges as submitted by members are:

1. Finding good help. We are understaffed and can't seem to find good people.
2. Depressed prices and dropping piece counts
3. The increasing cost of labor: both pay and benefits.
4. High Insurance costs across the board: health, business, vehicle, etc
5. The proliferation of new businesses like franchises that do not understand the industry.

We were able to answer some of these questions at our last Spring Management Conference. James Peuster did an outstanding job providing tips, tools, and techniques for finding qualified employees, and recruiting them to your business.

MAC is also looking into ways we can provide tools to help you meet the other challenges identified. Did we miss any? Do you have other challenges you want us to explore? Let me know, we are committed to your success.

E-MAIL ME YOUR GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES

The second prong of my approach is to understand what opportunities are out there. What is happening in the industry that you can take advantage of -- and use to your advantage? In many cases, overcoming the challenges listed above can help you take advantage of the opportunities.

I will use the information you provide to me to help develop courses, workshops, and services to help you take advantage of new and exciting opportunities. I will also use the information to develop future articles in MAC Messenger. This will help us better understand how we can play a vital role in the success of your business.

So tell me -- what do you see as your biggest opportunity to grow and succeed in your business?



*Peter Blake,
MAC Executive Director*

Peter Blake

MAC Executive Director
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KEYNOTE SPEAKER: KRISTA CLIVE-SMITH

As promised, Krista Clive-Smith was the highlight of the conference. She explored the needs and benefits of strategic branding. She was able to share her experiences and knowledge to discuss specific strategies that have worked in the past -- as well as ways to relate these ideas to your own marketing strategy.

“She was terrific”, observed Tony Vadala Vice President of Albano Cleaners. “She brought energy and excitement to the program, and really got people to think. Sometimes what is being said isn’t as important as what you think about when you hear it. She really engaged the audience and made us think.”

BREAKING THE “I CAN’T FIND GOOD HELP” MYTH

“Finding good help and competing for employees”, observed Peter Blake, MAC Executive Director, “remains one of the most requested topics. It is getting harder and harder to attract good employees to the industry and you have to start getting creative. This was an essential program for anyone having that difficulty.”

On Saturday afternoon, James Peuster explored the complexities of finding employees. He covered:

- How to recruit people.
- How to identify what a good employee for THIS INDUSTRY is.
- How to use InDeed.
- Where to look for employees.
- How to compete with other industries and how to decipher what employees are looking for.

Peuster not only talked about concepts, but provided real-time tools, tips and tricks to make sure you have access to the best candidates. When exploring the use of indeed, one attendee claimed that discussion more than paid for the whole conference.



(Clockwise: Peuster discussing developing staff, Russ Kaplan on the links showing conferences aren't all business, Krista discusses Branding, and Peuster involves the audience)

Then on Sunday, James Peuster expanded on his previous program and discussed how to develop and invest in your staff. After you have attracted a good staff -- you have to work to keep them, You have to develop them and give them tools to grow.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Founders inn and Spa proved to be a great host hotel. The rates, the meeting packages, the food, and outstanding customer service all helped make the conference a great success. MAC plans on returning to the venue in 2019. The exact dates are still to be determined.

Have a topic or a speaker you would like to suggest? Please contact Peter Blake at the MAC Office (peter@macassociation.org). We are always looking for unique programs and good speakers. This is your meeting -- and we would love to hear what you would like to learn more about.

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Two for the Price of One



AS SURPRISING AS IT SEEMS TO DLI BOARD AND STAFF, MANY OF OUR MEMBERS DO NOT REALIZE THAT BEING A MEMBER OF MAC AUTOMATICALLY MAKES THEM A DLI MEMBER AND VICE A VERSA. COMBINING MEMBERSHIPS GIVES MEMBERS THE BIGGEST BANG FOR THEIR BUCK.

DLI provides members with national representation, an industry-wide perspective on information, and the resources of a great technical staff. DLI develops numerous programs, services, and business tools that assist members throughout the country. A few of the latest key member benefits include: Effortless Social Media, The DLI Spotting APP, and the Encyclopedia of Drycleaning APP. DLI continues to develop new programs to assist members in running more efficient and profitable businesses.

MAC provides members with local, hometown representation and a localized perspective on what is happening in the industry. MAC also provides you local programming including high-value

educational opportunities and great networking events like our recent Spring Management Conference in Virginia Beach. MAC has a vital role in being the industry watchdog in the region, and keeps members up-to-date with all local information. Together, local and national level memberships create a robust and highly accessible professional network.

As your District Director my job is to represent your interests to not only the national association, DLI, but also to your local association, MAC.

Unfortunately, I do not often hear from members as, like me, most members are always very busy running the business. Please take a moment to send me an email or give me a call and let me know how I can make your membership more valuable.

I promise to share your thoughts and suggestions with DLI's Board of Directors and MAC's management team. We want to hear from you -- our member -- about ways we can help you and your business.

DLI DISTRICT 2 CONTACT INFORMATION

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Why Do Drycleaners Get Such a Bad Rap?

Written by James Peuster, 21st Century Drycleaning & The Route Pro



"I GOT TAKEN TO THE CLEANERS". WHY ARE WE CLASSIFIED AS SUCH EVIL AND NON-TRUSTWORTHY INDIVIDUALS?

On a recent flight, I asked a young lady why she doesn't go to the cleaners much and she responded that they are dirty, shady and she would hold on to as much clothes as she could so that she would only have to go once. I have been on a

mission the past 2 years to "clean" up the industry by building relationships and re-establishing credibility with past and current clients.

With the industry down in sales like it is nation-wide, it is more critical today to step up and make a name for yourself. As most of us know, many dry-cleaning consumers do not know your name; they just know your location. With all the variables in place, let's look at how we can develop your business through branding and what steps can be taken to become a 21st century dry-cleaner.

ROUTES ARE A GREAT BRAND MESSAGE

First of all, having routes give you the absolute best way to provide name recognition through many branding elements. First, of all, your delivery and shuttle vans provide what everyone calls a moving billboard. Think about it, go to Las Vegas and see all the rolling billboards there. The beautiful thing about it is that the more customers you service, the more stops your van will have and the more opportunities for prospects to see your van. I know you hear this all the time, but the van must show your colors, logos and represent quality and cleanliness. Your van must also be kept clean inside and out. I recently saw a van with his name and logo on TOP of the van. I had never thought of this, they do this so that people in high-rises and commercial buildings can see it from above. Makes great sense!

Your route driver should look very presentable and represent dry-cleaning. Blue jeans and a T-shirt with a ball cap just don't cut it. If your driver loses a cup or yesterday's newspaper every time they get out of the vehicle, you might want to have them clean it out a little bit. If your van has so much rust on it that someone can see your bags rolling around inside, you might want to upgrade ASAP. If your driver looks like a rapper from MTV, you might want to clean him up. Ok, I am starting to sound like Jeff Foxworthy; however, the above statements ring so true. If we are try to prove to our clients that we care about their clothes as much as they do, how can we provide any sense of reliability when we don't care about our own image?

Logoed bags are another critical element that often gets over-

looked. Stay with the same color as your logo; replace old ones. When the clothes are delivered, drape the bags over the clothes to show off your name. The only exception is if your poly is logoed as well. I am becoming a big fan of the garment bags that provide even more quality and branding. Don't skimp on the bags when you sign up a new customer. Give your clients 2 bags so that your name is getting known every day. If the worst thing that happens is that they use the bags to carry soccer balls to the neighborhood game, so be it. This is why I give every new client a bag or 2 right away. Get your name in their hands and let them know who you are.

KEEPING YOUR BRAND CONSISTENT

Finally, brand your name through your best marketing piece, you. I love talking to strangers about the dry clean industry and their image of an owner is someone who stays behind the counter and convinces you that the stain was already there. I love it when an operator goes out face-to-face selling with their crew. Most of the 21st century dry-clean owners and managers network in chamber events and represent their business in front of the counter instead of behind. If you want to brand yourself as a personal and professional cleaner, standing behind the counter with sleeves rolled up and sweat all over you and your shirt doesn't help. Dress and play the part every day.

In conclusion, routes provide you the most ultimate way to build, brand and retain your business. Skimping on any of the above recommendations only decreases your chances of creating a positive image. I am going to give you a homework assignment. I want you to ask 10 people you don't know in a neutral spot what they feel about dry cleaners and their owners. You may be surprised at the result. After they respond, let them know that you are a dry cleaner who cares and would be proud to be your cleaner.

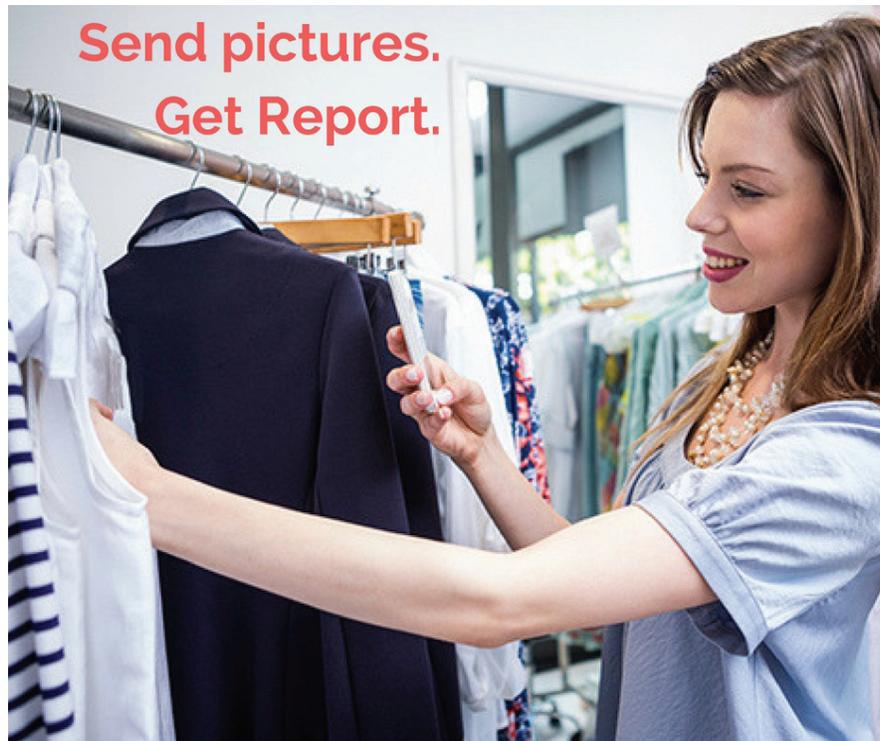
FEATURED SPEAKER AT SPRING CONFERENCE

James Peuster was a featured speaker at MAC's Spring Management Conference recently held in Virginia Beach. He explored the complex world of employee recruitment and finding employees in a tough market.

Employee Recruitment continues to be the number one challenge facing drycleaners, and James Peuster was able to help attendees learn new and innovative ways to reach out to potential employees and attract the best candidates. Need help? Contact Peter Blake at MAC for more information.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

James Peuster is the nation's foremost leading expert in route development. He is a frequent contributor to *The Messenger*, and writes for national publications. If you need assistance with your routes, James can be reached at (816) 739-2066 or by email: james@theroutepro.com.



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Personal Branding 101: Get Noticed. Be Remembered

Written By Krista Clive-Smith, Featured Speaker at MAC's Spring Management Conference



YOUR PERSONAL IMAGE, THE ONE YOU GREET THE WORLD WITH EVERY DAY, SPEAKS VOLUMES ABOUT YOU.

Your clothes, your hairstyle, even the color of your home's walls and the pictures you hang in your office may seem insignificant, but are in fact

quite the opposite. Each contributes to, or contaminates your personal brand. Together they reflect your personality and shape others' perceptions of you.

Oprah Winfrey. Bono. Ellen DeGeneres. Madonna. Mahatma Gandhi. Taylor Swift. Princess Diana. Mother Teresa. Lady Gaga. For better or worse, these people are distinctly individual and easily recognized. They celebrate their uniqueness and understand both their strengths and their weaknesses. Highly self-aware, they've designed and cultivated a personal image that consciously magnifies their most admirable and idiosyncratic qualities. They don't attempt to hide their weaknesses, and the result is their true selves shining through, without fear of exposure. No wonder we call these people stars: they sparkle and shine with inner radiance and confidence.

"Regardless of age, regardless of position, regardless of the business we happen to be in, all of us need to understand the importance of branding. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me, Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You."

- Tom Peters, in *Fast Company*

WHAT IS BRANDING?

In a traditional sense, branding refers to ranchers searing a unique symbol (specific to their ranch) onto the hides of their cattle. The stamp is an identifier; it establishes ownership and marks the rancher's territory to the outside world.

When the rancher's cattle are shown to prospective buyers or judges, the 'brand' suddenly represents more than just someone's property: it symbolizes all of the quality control standards and ranching philosophies of the owner. Over time, the ranch builds a reputation based on the level of quality and value it consistently delivers.

In more recent times, marketers have co-opted the term to describe the process of "searing" an image into the minds of consumers through the consistent use of a company's logo, slogan or tagline, marketing materials, and advertising copy.

But it's more than just that. Branding is not strictly a function of

the marketing department of a business. Think of your own dry cleaning business. The brand must be infused into every fiber of the organization's being and must be championed by everyone involved, regardless of the level they work at within the company. The person answering the phone is as responsible for the way the brand is perceived in the marketplace as are the glossy ads promoting the product.

Thus, branding is truly achieved through the consistent experience consumers have with a company, or its products or services.

The definition of a brand varies from marketer to marketer, but I define it as:

The entire set of perceptions, whether true or untrue, that a person holds about an individual, company, product or service.

Notice "whether true or untrue." Let's face it: we're human beings. While the old adage about not judging a book by its cover might sound good in theory, in reality it's rarely applied.

When you're browsing through books, how do you decide which one to buy? You may be looking for a book on branding, for example and find several on the subject. You pick them up, one by one, and read the back cover. But you don't pick up every single book in the section, do you? Chances are you only picked up the books that appealed to you when you looked at the front cover.

PERSONAL BRANDING

Personal branding is like designing the jacket for the Book of You. The goal is to design a cover that accurately depicts the content of the text, so that readers know what type of book they're buying. Authentic personal branding works the same way, by externally reflecting your true inner essence.

While a brand is the entire set of perceptions that a person holds, the act of branding is about proactively shaping those perceptions.

Personal branding, then, is not just the sum of the perceptions people hold about you; it's the art of influencing how others perceive you.

By creating a powerful personal and professional identity that authentically highlights your natural talents, skills and outstanding features, you can instantly communicate your values and personality to prospective clients, employers, potential new friends or even a soul mate.

When you find yourself judging someone based on his or her appearance, you need to recognize that others are doing the same thing – forming instant opinions and assumptions about you based on your physical appearance, whether true or untrue.

Ask yourself: is your first impression leaving people with the men

Continued on page 10

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Get Noticed. Be Remembered

Continued from page 8

tal image you want them to have? Are you getting noticed for the things you want to be noticed for? Are you being remembered the way you want to be remembered? Does the image you sear into people's minds reflect your authentic self?

Each of us is born with a talent, a calling – something that makes us unique. It is our purpose in life to fulfill that destiny, to bring to the world that which makes us great.

Finding your talent is often a matter of knowing yourself – and facing your fears. It's much like the following excerpt from the book, "A Return to Love" by Marianne Williamson, as quoted by Nelson Mandela in his inaugural speech in 1994:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It's our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually... who are you NOT to be? You are the child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just some of us; it's everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we're liberated from our fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

You may not know exactly what your destiny is, but don't be afraid. Finding it is an exciting, rewarding journey and along the way you will find that which will "complete" you - the missing pieces to the puzzle of your true identity.

A couple of years ago, when flipping through a fashion magazine, I came across a clothing ad with a tagline containing a tidbit of wisdom that changed my life forever. Very simply, it read:

Be yourself. It's a very tough act to follow.

As you begin your journey down the road to the ultimate realization of what "being yourself" means to you, you must assess where you are right now in this evolutionary process. Every person is at a different stage – maybe you're still trying to fit in with the masses, or perhaps you've reached the point of self-awareness that not only encourages you to be yourself, but literally demands it.

Don't worry – no matter what stage you are in, you're on your way to finding your true self, and the process will happen much more quickly than you might imagine. Take heart in knowing that's the reason this article looked interesting to you.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT MAC CONFERENCE

Krista was a keynote speaker at MAC's recent spring Management Conference. You can learn more about Krista and her experiences at: www.kristaclivesmith.com.



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