THE Reclaimer

New SEFA Scholarship Program Provides Unique Opportunities

AT THE RECENT SDLS IN BIRMINGHAM, SEFA UNVEILED ITS LATEST EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM: SCHOLARSHIPS FOR IN-PLANT EDUCATION. THIS IS A FIRST IN THE INDUSTRY, AND THE PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST MEMBERS IN BRINGING EDUCATORS INTO THEIR PLANT FOR PERSONALIZED TRAINING.

This addition to the SEFA Educational Program provides scholarships for up to $300/day or $600/event to help defray the cost of in-plant training. In order to be eligible for the program, applicants must be a member in good standing in DLI/SEFA and preference will be given to those applicants who have been members for longer than one year.

The scholarships can be used to bring in any of the approved educators listed on the SEFA Website. The initial list or participating trainers includes: Jane Zellers, Jim Groshans, Wash Respess, Don Desrosiers, and James Peuster. SEFA will be looking to add to the list of participating educators in the future.

"This is a great initiative," offered Rhonda Eysel, SEFA Education Chairperson. "and we are really excited about it. We recognize the challenges of sending people out for training, and also understand the benefits of having someone come into your own plant and train on your own equipment. This is really an incredible opportunity for all of us."

SEFA has provided $10,000 in funding to the program for the first year. The Board will re-evaluate the program after the first year to determine its success and member benefit before committing to continuing the scholarship program.

Once an application is approved, SEFA will reimburse the member upon completion of training, and pending a completion of an article submission for The Reclaimer. All applications must be submitted and approved prior to the training event.

"It's exciting to be part of this new program," offered Jane Zellers, "and I am really looking forward to working with SEFA Members. I think this is an outstanding opportunity and I think SEFA has taken another tremendous step in their commitment to their members."

For more information, or to apply, visit www.sefa.org

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

Surviving Summer

IS IT ALMOST OVER? THE BLISTERING HEAT I MEAN. FOR SOME OF US, OWNERS, OPERATORS AND EVERYONE IN BETWEEN THE SUMMER SEASON BRINGS US EXTREMELY WARM OPERATING PLANTS AND CALL OFFICES.

Don Holecek, SEFA President

For me, things changed back in May of this year when I had to assume the duties of drycleaning the clothes on a daily basis. Couple that with a machine that has not played nice all summer and you have the ingredients for a long, hot summer. I do believe that the heat is waning a bit and the cooler weather should be around the corner soon and so should more clothes.

In addition to the summer heat, change has come again to our industry on two fronts that caught most of us by surprise. On one front the large operator, MW Cleaners in Texas, has decided to rebrand itself as Tide Drycleaning. There's more to it than that with the management group that ran MW Cleaners and the parent company of MW, Tailored Brands, agreeing to part ways. Tailored Brands owns the clothing stores Jos. A. Bank and Men's Wearhouse and decided that cleaning didn't fit into their portfolio anymore and the management group of MW was wanting to become sole owners of the cleaning operation. If you know anything about MW Cleaners, they do things top notch and I expect that to continue going forward.

On the second front, more consolidation has occurred and this time it has come from a different angle. Compassmax, one of the largest POS systems for cleaners was acquired recently by Clearent, who earlier this year acquired SPOT Business Systems (SPOT). Clearent is known more as a credit card processing company so it remains to be seen how exactly this is going to impact cleaners. Clearent already announced that over time Compassmax customers will be transitioned to the SPOT platform so Clearent only has to write code for one program.

LOOKING AHEAD

Finally, be prepared for SEFA to ramp up educational seminars in each of the member states. Education is a high priority for SEFA and at the board meeting held at the SDLS show in Birmingham this past June, a slew of ideas and programs were discussed.

What would you like to see? What topics or speakers would you like SEFA to bring to your area? Now is the perfect time to make a request. We always want to hear from the members, and rest assured, if you are looking for a specific topic -- I know a bunch of other members probably are too. Your input and suggestions would help take out some of the guesswork in developing programs. So share your insight with us, and we will do our best to answer your challenges!

At print time, the schedule was not made available but will soon be and will also be available on our website. Hope to see you there and bring someone with you. That way, everybody benefits!

Don Holecek

Crown Cleaners
(865) 584-7464 / Don@crowncleaners.com

2019 DLI/NCA Five Star Brainstorming Conference Set for St. Maarten

THE 2019 DLI AND NCA ANNUAL FIVE STAR BRAINSTORMING CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD JANUARY 17 - 20, 2019 IN ST. MAARTEN AT THE SONESTA OCEANPOINT RESORT. MEMBERS OF BOTH ORGANIZATIONS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND FOR A LONG WEEKEND OF ADVENTURING, RELAXING, AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

With only 129 rooms on the property, the Sonesta Ocean Point resort is a smaller property than the associations have used in previous years. The resort is a Five-Star adults-only property that includes food, liquor, room service, mini bar, WIFI, taxes, gratuities, and other amenities.

DLI and NCA carefully select speakers to inspire and invigorate your desire to succeed. Check out this year's lineup:

HOW TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES AND CLIENTS

John DiJulius will share his insights and answers to the key questions you have about attracting and retaining millennial employees and clients. This generation is your future, and you need their support in the workplace, at the counter and on line. John has been studying this challenge and is looking forward to sharing his take on what you need to do to with you.

PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION IS THE ONLY SUPERPOWER YOU NEED

Jeff Tippett presents with dual purposes: to uplift and encourage while also providing actionable content that creates change. When talking with others about what he does, Jeff finds they often respond: 'So, you're a motivational speaker.' "Well, not really. But sorta," he said. "I'm really more of a motivational teacher. I think we all appreciate and need motivation. Life can beat us down; so I want to lift people. To accomplish this as I present, I bring lots of energy, humor, and heartfelt connection."

Attendees need more than just motivation because motivation fades, he said. "I mix in actionable content that can create lasting change in lives. I began my career teaching at a university; I guess once a teacher always a teacher." With 500+ presentations under his belt, Jeff knows how to successfully weave these two styles together.

THE SECRET OF CHICK FIL A'S SUCCESS

From Attracting & Training the Best Minimum Wage Employees to Attracting and Optimizing Media, Chick Fil A is the highest ranked fast food restaurant in customer service and the fourth most-inspiring company, according to Forbes. These accolades are the expected norm among higher paying luxury service brands. However, attaining these service and culture heights, when relying primarily on minimum wage employees, makes these Chick Fil A achievements all the more remarkable.

Arthur Greeno, long time Chick Fil A employee turned owner and author of two best selling books, will share the secret of the fastest growing fast food brand's success with you on Sunday morning. His appearances and message have been described by audiences as relevant, adaptable, lighthearted, irreverent, real, hilarious, engaging and remarkable. His goal is to show you how you can make others believe in your business and help make it remarkable too.

Visit www.dlionline.org/DLIonline.org/Five-Star-Conference for more information

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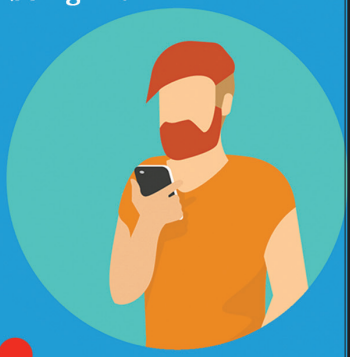

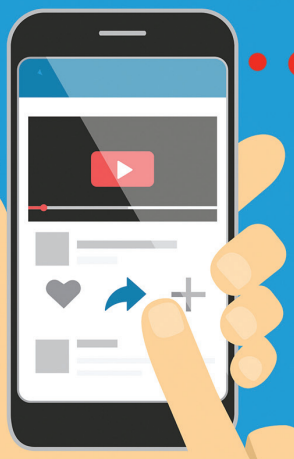

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Achieving Customer Service Excellence

Written by Jim Groshans, FabriCoach, LLC

I GREW UP IN THE DRY-CLEANING INDUSTRY. WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, I STARTED WORKING IN MY PARENTS' BUSINESS, AND MY FATHER GROOMED ME IN ALL ASPECTS OF THE BUSINESS. BY OBSERVING HOW MY MOTHER TREATED THE CUSTOMERS, I LEARNED A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HOW TO DELIVER EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE.

Those experiences paid off, and I continued to build my knowledge while working for R. R. Street. For over 25 years, I was fortunate to learn from experts in the industry, and I became proficient in stain removal, wetcleaning, drycleaning chemistry, sales, management and a host of other skills. I am now taking those lessons and sharing them through my own consulting business: FabriCoach, LLC. In this article, I want to share what I have learned about customer service.

DEFINING CUSTOMER SERVICE

What is customer service? Is it a job? Is it a skill? Should it be part of a business philosophy and strategy? I believe the answers to those questions are: "Yes!"

Let's start with why customer service should be part of your business philosophy. A simple definition of business philosophy is "the fundamental principles that underlie business operations and define the nature and purpose of your business." Your philosophy is exhibited in the products and services you deliver. Customer service should be a part of your business philosophy and should identify what level of service you want to deliver. Some sources describe levels of service as basic, good, and world class, while others cite basic, expected, and unbelievable.

Whatever label you use, I believe there are levels where the customer expects certain services, quality, and treatment, and there is a level where you anticipate and fulfill unexpressed needs of a customer. Phrases like "above and beyond," "the extra mile," and "exceed expectations" apply. The idea is that you give the customer what they expect and more!

As a business owner or operator, what level of service does your business deliver? How does that level of service tie to your philosophy? More importantly, what is the level of service expected by your customers? Do you strive to exceed their expectations? And, How does your service compare with your competition? Those are questions you must answer for yourself.

If you decide that your business philosophy or your market only require you to meet customer expectations, you must still strive to do that every single time. However, if you decide you want to exceed those expectations, again, you must strive to do so consistently. From the time customers walk in the door to drop off their order until the time they walk out the door after picking it up, their experience must be consistent.

How do you consistently deliver your target level of customer service? You build a business strategy with tactics to support your business philosophy. Aren't strategy and tactics the same thing? No, strategy is "what" and tactics are "how and who." It's just that simple: what do I need to do in my business in order to achieve the target level of service consistently, how will I do it, and who will do it?

Here are some ideas, but you may need to modify them to fit your business philosophy. Set your service standards related to the quality of the product and the customer experience. One important part of your standards is how your team will handle service recovery. Let's face it, even the best operations miss their targets from time to time. How we handle those "misses" will impact the customer's perception of the company and their willingness to repeat business. You need to hire and train your employees to consistently deliver your target level of customer service, give them the tools and resources they need to do the job, and empower them.

THE VALUE OF TEAMWORK

Another key to achieving your customer service target is teamwork. From the front of the house to the back of the house, your employees must work together and communicate as a team. Most teams need a coach, and that is where FabriCoach can help you. I use a team-based approach to training.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jim Groshans, FabriCoach.com, is an expert in the drycleaning industry. He will be submitting periodic articles in The Reclaimer, and is already working on the follow-up on this article.

The FabriCoach approach is team-based using personal hands-on training to help clients and their teams achieve maximum efficiency and productivity without sacrificing quality.

To learn more about coaching opportunities, visit www.fabricoach.com, or reach out to Jim directly at (954) 850-3618. He can also be reached via email: jim@fabricaoch.com.

Your Success is Our Goal

Written by Peter Blake, SEFA Executive Director

ARE YOU GETTING THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP? HAVE YOU LOOKED AT THE BENEFITS YOU HAVE INCLUDED WITH YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

I want you to use your membership to the fullest. I want SEFA/DLI to be one of your hardest working employees. We are a resource for you to use, and I want you to use us as much as possible. I recently was invited to speak at the Mid West Drycleaners and Launderers Annual Convention, and my topic was using all the tools in your business toolbox.

I used DLI membership as the basic framework and then added other resources that are available to all drycleaners to explore ways you ensure your success. In making my presentation I was struck by how many attendees were not using the services available to them.

In this day and age, we all need to learn how to do more with less. That is the perfect spot for us! We help you do more. Over the course of the past year, I have written how-to articles on some of the best programs DLI members have available to them including:

- DLI Apps: Stain Removal, Encyclopedia, and Garment Analysis
- Effortless Social Media
- Cleaning Performance Test/Laundry Performance Test
- Mystery Shopper Service
- Certification Programs

If you are a Silver or above member, all of these programs are included as a part of your membership -- but yet many cleaners are not taking advantage of them. All of these articles can be found in the archive section of: www.sefa.org.

If you haven't used these services, make it a priority. These are some of the best programs DLI/SEFA has available to you, and you need to utilize them.

REVIEW YOUR BENEFITS

If I can have you do one thing for me today -- it would be to review your membership benefits booklet you received when you joined or renewed your membership. If you don't have it anymore, call me and I will get another one sent out to you right away. You really need to refresh your memory with all you have available to you. We all get busy, and we all have intentions of doing it all, but I am sure you are a lot like me and it keeps getting pushed to the bottom of the pile.

So make a point to review the programs. Have your key leadership or managers review them. Task them with using those services. I know you will be glad you did. These programs are important and they will help you grow your business and run more efficiently.

When I recently asked members to send me their greatest challenges, many of them revolved around needing more business. These programs can all have a positive effect on your business. From marketing your services -- to ensuring you are delivering the highest quality service possible.

The title of the article is one of my core beliefs: I am here to help you succeed. Anything we can do to make your job easier, to make you more successful, or to help you better serve your customers -- we want to know! We want to help.

When you have questions, or need to discuss ideas -- I really hope I am one of your first calls. I may not know all the answers, but I can certainly find answers and point you in the right direction.

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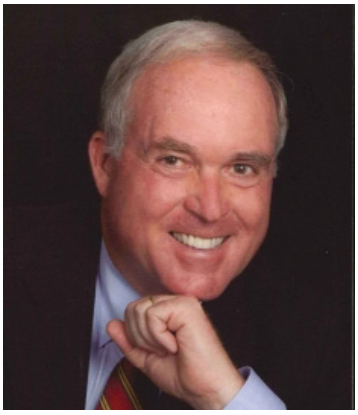
Seeing Yourself as You Are

Written By Raleigh F. "Sandy" Seay, Jr., PHD, Chairman of The Seay Management Consulting Firm



I'VE BEEN THINKING RECENTLY OF SOME OF THE EARLIEST LESSONS I LEARNED AS A YOUNG MAN ENTERING THE BUSINESS WORLD.

These lessons had very little to do with P&L statements and balance sheets, as important as those things are; instead, they had to do with core principles like attitude and perseverance and dependability and vision.

My early instructors didn't have names like Pamplin or Darden or Crummer or Warrington or Wharton. They had different names like Napoleon Hill, Clement Stone, Earl Nightingale, Dale Carnegie and Zig Ziglar. When I applied for admission to the Rollins College Master of Liberal Studies program, back in the 1990's, we were asked to select a book that had a significance influence on our lives and write an essay describing the impact. Later, upon graduation, Dr. Ed Cohen, English professor extraordinaire, commented that I was the only candidate ever to write an essay on Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People.

Napoleon Hill was the first person to write and comment about what we now call "positive thinking." He identified a passage from the Hebrew Scriptures, Proverbs 23:7, which reads, "As a person thinks in his heart, so is he," and argued that the way we see ourselves will, in large measure, determine our destiny. If we see ourselves as successful, we will ultimately be successful. Look out ahead for five to ten years and see yourself as having already achieved the success you desire. In this way, you are much more likely to become successful. The reverse is also true, if you see yourself as unworthy or lacking the skills and advantages others may have, then the ultimate result will be failure or mediocrity.

Earl Nightingale followed in Napoleon Hill's footsteps and one of his most profound insights was, "You become what you think about." In other words, the things a person thinks about all day long will at some point become priorities. Thus, a person who thinks positive, successful thoughts all day is more likely to become positive and successful. To the contrary, a mind full of negative thoughts is more likely to produce negative results.

One of my favorite proponents of positive thinking was Zig Ziglar. I recall in a meeting of some kind Zig told the story of his golf game, where one day he stood on the tee with a big lake over on the right hand side. The previous day, he had hit the ball hard but had sliced right over into the middle of the lake. As he came to the tee the next day he thought, "I sure hope I don't slice that ball over into the lake like I did yesterday." So he took his stance, swung at the ball, and sure enough, where do you think the ball went . . . right in the middle of the lake. It would have been better, Zig said, if he had thought, "I'm going to hit this ball straight down the middle of the fairway."

All of which causes me to think, once again, about what my early teachers had to say, which is that we become what we think we are, we become what we think about all day. In 1994, I attended a conference in Honolulu (it was tough work but someone had to do it . . .) where I was one of the presenters but where I also had the privilege of hearing the Vice President of Human Resources for FedEx, Frank McGuire, speak on this very same subject. At the conclusion of his presentation, he read this poem, which he attributed to a friend, someone named "Charlie."

The Eagle and the Chicken
A man once found an eagle's egg
And put it in the nest
Of a barnyard's hen. The eagle hatched
And grew up with the rest,
Of a brood of chicks and thought that
He didn't at all look the same.
He scratched the earth for worms and bugs
And he played the chickens' game.
The eagle clucked and cackled and
He made a chicken sound,
He thrashed his wings but only flew
Some two feet off the ground.
That is high, as chickens fly,
The eagle had been told,
And years passed by and then one day,
When the eagle was quite old,
He saw something beautiful
Flying very high,
Making great majestic circles
Up there in the sky.
He'd never seen the likes of it,
"What's that?," he asked in awe,
As he watched in grace and wonder
At the power that he saw.
"Why, that's an eagle," someone said,
"He belongs up there, it's clear,
Just as we, since we are chickens,
Belong earthward, way down here"
The old eagle just accepted that,
Most everybody does,
And he lived and died a chicken,
Cause that's what he thought he was.

So, if my early teachers are right, and if they have anything to teach us today, it might sound something like this, "See yourself as you really are, as a person of success and achievement, because you are very likely to become what you think you are."

Southside Cleaners and Launderers First Scholarship Recipient

THE FOLLOWING REPORT IS SUBMITTED THE FIRST SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT FOR SEFA'S NEW IN-PLANT TRAINING PROGRAM.

Probably the most important member benefit an association like SEFA can provide is educational opportunity. This typically means going to the DLI school, or attending SEFA's regional workshops. Each has its benefits and drawbacks. SEFA is pioneering a new way to offer members educational benefits by offering in-plant "scholarships", and when we learned of it at the SEFA Show in Birmingham, we couldn't wait to sign-up.

Our company applied for the program, and then contacted renowned consultant Jane Zellers to work with us for three days. Under the new SEFA program, we paid Jane's fees and expenses and are now eligible for up to a $600 reimbursement from SEFA.

Jane not only worked with our employees, in our plant, during our working hours, with our customer's garments, but also helped us determine if our finishing equipment array was proper for the number of pieces and pounds coming out of the dry cleaning room.

You can't get a better educational "bang-for-the-buck" than that, and because we're SEFA/DLI members, the association is helping us with the expense.

We have folks working here who have attended DLI's resident school and numerous SEFA seminars, and each were outstanding educational investments. The resident school is expensive (not because of tuition, but because of room and board for several weeks), and doing without a key employee for that period of time is often a strain. Seminars are great, but typically, occur in the evening or on week-ends. The new program really fit our needs and our schedule.

Obviously all three educational offerings are important, and SEFA has just added another that every member should consider.

Just one more reason to value SEFA/DLI membership. Spread the word!

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Personal Branding 101: Get Noticed. Be Remembered

Written By Krista Clive-Smith, Featured Speaker at SEFA's recent SDLS

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

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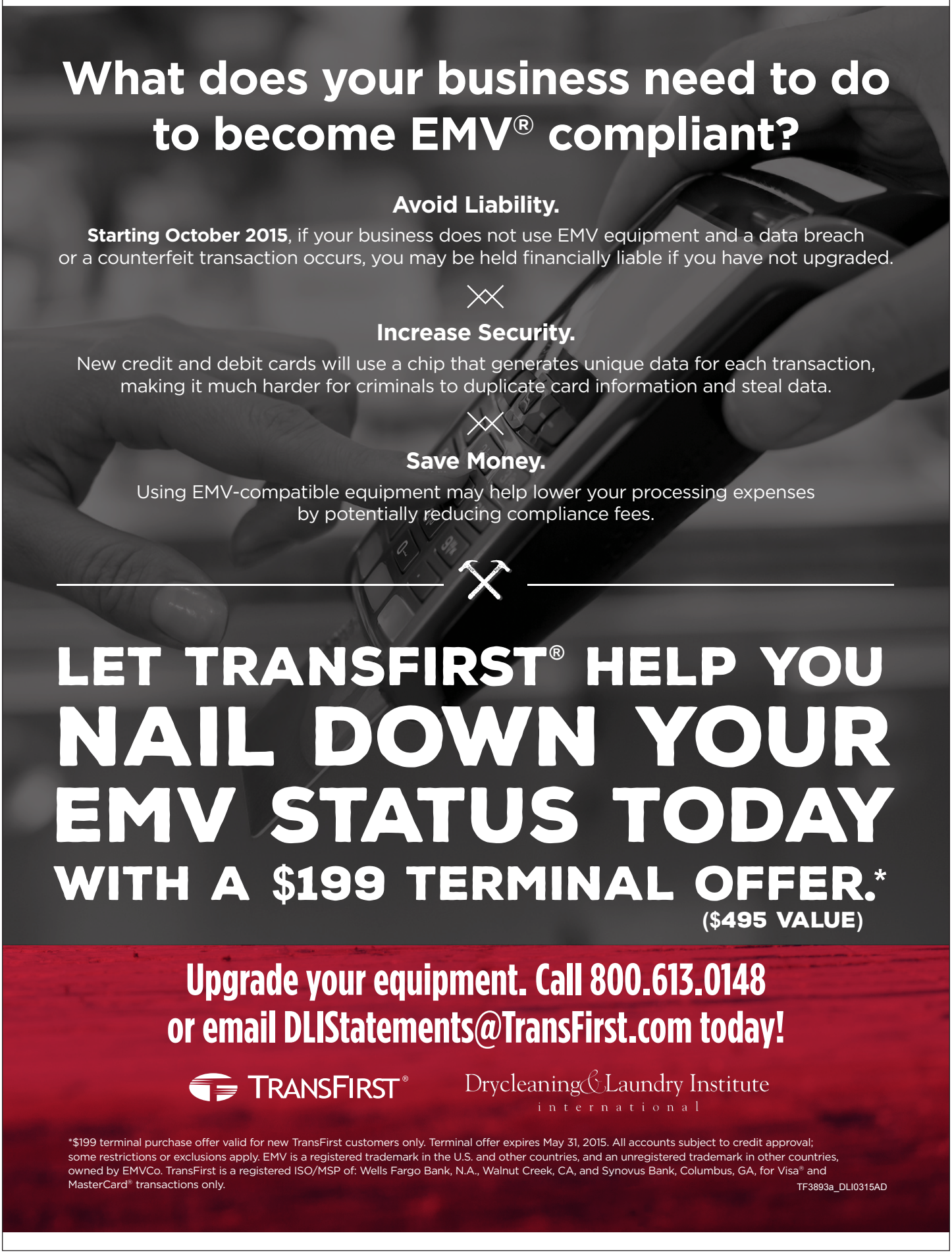

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Get Noticed. Be Remembered

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mental 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.

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