ANNUAL CONVENTION
March 2 - 4, 2016 - Las Vegas

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www.networkcsc.com
One of the highlights of the CSCNetwork Annual Convention is the keynote speaker. I review many options each year to select the one that makes the most sense for our membership. There are two key aspects I look for with a keynote speaker – insightful content that enables attendees to take home useful information and a charismatic presenter that engages the audience. The recent keynote speakers have met and exceeded these requirements.

I am equally as excited about the 2016 keynote speaker, Scott Deming. The title of his presentation is “Powered by Purpose”. I have had the opportunity to talk to Scott several times. He is passionate about assisting companies of all sizes to transform their business through values and purpose.

Without giving away his entire presentation, I want to share a few highlights of his topic. Scott is a brand-centric person. He believes in the power of the brand, whether it be your company or yourself. In order to have a successful brand, you must first establish and align your values. Your values define your purpose, and there is a method to sustain this vision.

Scott provides insight into determining the source of your values and the importance of knowing where they come from. However, this is just the first step. You establish your values and now you must consider the purpose you are going to use them for. At this point, you are prepared to integrate critical thinking into pursuing and achieving your purpose.

One important point that Scott makes is “surround yourself with people who share your values, believe in your purpose, and aren’t afraid to speak their minds”. As Scott points out in his book, Powered by Purpose, two of the ten reasons your top talent will leave you, according to a 2012 Forbes magazine column, are – more than 50% say they have different values than their employer and more than 70% don’t feel appreciated or valued by their employer. It is important to define your purpose with those around you, as a culture will flourish around shared values.

There are several more steps to moving your purpose forward and creating success, but this is a bit of a teaser for Scott’s presentation at the 2016 CSCNetwork Annual Convention. I invite each of you to come hear the rest of the presentation. It will likely help you personally as well as create a long-lasting and sustainable purpose for your organization.

In addition, we have several new presenters this year covering a variety of topics. I will share with you all that is happening with CSC and the great training events we have planned for the year. The upcoming convention should be the best yet. I encourage you to attend, to learn, to see new products and services, to meet new people, and to network with old friends. Come be a part of the best event in the industry!
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The 2016 Annual Convention will be held at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas on March 2-4, 2016. We are looking forward to another phenomenal convention where CSC members and suppliers come together for this three day event. The Annual Convention is full of great networking events, engaging speakers, enlightening and helpful topics and our supplier exhibition.

Registration began in September for members and suppliers. You can register online at http://tiny.cc/2016vegasac. Each member company will receive the first night free at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas and also receive an $875 rebate towards their Q2 membership dues. The only requirement for members – one person from your company must stay at the Cosmopolitan and attend the General Membership Meeting. All hotel rooms must be booked by February 3rd to receive the group rate. To make your hotel reservations, visit http://tiny.cc/csc16.

For members, this event will kick off Wednesday morning at 8:00AM with breakfast and the General Membership Meeting. Members will find out what’s going on with CSC and details about upcoming events. CSCNetwork will also be presenting the Supplier of the Year award.

For suppliers, this event will begin on Wednesday morning at 10:00AM with supplier registration. Suppliers are invited to attend all seminars and networking events except the General Membership Meeting on Wednesday morning. The Supplier Exhibition will be held Thursday from 3:00PM-7:00PM in the Gracia Ballroom. This is a great opportunity for suppliers to showcase new products and services and for members to meet suppliers. The deadline for supplier booth reservation is December 18th.

Our primary keynote speaker for the 2016 Annual Convention is Scott Deming. Scott speaks for and trains companies across the globe – big and small, in just about every industry. From CEOs to business owners to managers to sales people to customer service reps, his programs have helped individuals and organizations alike, showing them the real process for customer evangelism and lasting customer loyalty.

This is an incredible opportunity for members and suppliers to make new acquaintances, see the latest trends at the exhibition and learn ways to improve your business.

To see pictures of the 2015 Annual Convention and to find more information on this event, visit our website at www.networkcsc.com.

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Route Service Representatives earn incentives for every dispenser placed
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Details coming in January - Contact Lisa Wacker with questions - lisa@networkcsc.com

Important Dates/URLs
REGISTRATION
http://tiny.cc/2016vegasac
HOTEL RESERVATION
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DECEMBER 18TH
Supplier booth reservation deadline
FEBRUARY 3RD
Hotel reservation deadline
With our new distribution center in Chicago, we can get almost anything to anywhere in the Midwest by the next day—offering a better customer service experience for clients who demand the best.
Every Drop Counts: Solutions for Reducing Water Use in Your Laundry Plant

Current Water Trends
Population growth, urbanization and a growing middle class have increased demand for more food, goods and services, placing unprecedented strain on the world’s limited fresh water supply. The World Bank predicts that by 2025, water demand will exceed supply by 50 percent. According to the Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas, severe water scarcity is already a problem across the United States. Forty out of fifty states have at least one region that is expected to face some form of water shortage within the next ten years.¹

The ongoing drought in California has led to a water reduction mandate. On April 1, 2015, California Governor Jerry Brown issued an executive order directing the state’s Water Resources Control Board to reduce statewide water use by 25 percent.

What does this mean for businesses in California?

- Water suppliers will rely on both residential and non-residential (commercial, industrial and institutional) user reductions to meet the mandate
- Water use reporting is required on a monthly basis
- Regulatory and public pressure to reduce water consumption is increasing
- Violations will be costly
- Water prices will increase

What we are seeing in California is just the beginning of regulatory actions to reduce water use throughout the United States. As water scarcity and the demand for water both increase, other states will follow suit in mandating reductions in water use, increasing water prices and calling for greater transparency into water use.

This trend is real, and it’s already hitting home for businesses based in California. Now is the time to evaluate current water usage and determine what solutions and programs can be implemented to assist in reducing water use.

Rising Water Rates
Commercial laundry operators should stay abreast of the water trends because the rates are rising. “Initially, a commercial laundry could see annual increases of 5 to 15 percent in water and sewer rates, but those figures could go even higher,” says John Schultz, senior manager of Water, Energy and Waste Solutions for Ecolab’s Textile Care division. Schultz works on the municipal side of the business in terms of regulations that affect the laundry industry. With the current drought conditions in parts of the U.S., he says laundry operators will begin to see annual water rate increases of 20 percent or more. The elevated annual rate increases will be driven by the fact that water and wastewater utilities are having a difficult time paying for capital improvements. Most municipalities do not have the needed funding.

If you’ve done your due diligence in checking the plant for potential areas where water may be leaking, and you’re still seeing elevated water usage, it may be time to make the investment in water saving washers. Work with your equipment and chemical providers to optimize wash formulas and to see what additional opportunities may exist to further reduce water use.

Recycle Water Opportunities
Another viable option for water savings is to implement a water reuse system. If you can answer ‘yes’ to the questions below, it is a good idea to discuss water reuse with your equipment and chemical providers as well.

- Are washer drains leaking?
- Are fixtures in the restrooms leaking?
- Check each hose connection to ensure there are no leaks.
- Do you use water for equipment cooling, such as hydraulic pumps or air compressors? These clean cooling waters should be diverted to the tempered water tank and not down the sewer.

Because of increasing water rates and regulatory mandates to reduce water usage, it’s advantageous for commercial launderers to discuss water conservation and recycling technologies with their suppliers. Often, water conservation can be as simple as checking your laundry operation. Check to see if there are water leaks occurring not only in production areas, but in all areas of the building.

- Are you using pumps or air compressors that are tempering water?
- Can you divert your cooling water to re-use?
- Can you save water by capturing condensate from your washing machines?
- Can you recycle sewer water for use in a process water system?
- Are there any water-saving technologies your equipment supplier is offering?
- Are you using any recycled wash water systems in your building?

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- Have you considered water reuse?
- Do you have a segregated washer trenches?
- Can you collect the segregated waters for reuse back into the wash wheel?
- Can your wash aisle be segregated so one side processes light soil textiles and the other side processes heavy soil? It may be possible to reuse the light soil drains for wash water on the heavy side of the wash aisle.
There are a number of technologies today to help laundries recycle their drain waters back into reusable wash waters. These technologies use multimedia filters and various types of microfiltration, including ultrafiltration, nanofiltration and reverse osmosis. There are many vendors who can provide guidance as to which technology would be best for your application.

**Water Quality**

One important issue to remember is that some contaminants (total dissolved solids (TDS), total suspended solids (TSS), iron, manganese, magnesium, calcium, hardness and elevated pH) may be elevated in areas where extreme drought conditions are occurring. As water basin and aquafer water levels are decreasing, the contaminant concentrations are increasing. This may affect your textile quality. Some laundries are starting to install potable water pretreatment systems in addition to water softeners to improve the incoming fresh water sources. Other laundries are installing green sand filters to reduce iron and manganese concentrations which cause yellowing or browning of textiles. Reverse osmosis filters are being installed to decrease TDS concentrations. Excessive TDS will cause greying, dinginess and textile degradation. There are municipalities that have increased chlorine residuals due to excessive algal and bacterial growths in surface water supplies. Too high of a chlorine residual may degrade textile quality or chemical activity. It’s important to stay well-informed of how the municipality governing your laundry plant is treating the water you are using so you can effectively alter your processes and programs to maintain the textile quality your customers expect.

**Water Risk Monetizer**

In addition to specific solutions to help reduce current water use, there are tools available to help laundries determine future impacts of water scarcity to their operations. The Water Risk Monetizer (www.waterriskmonetizer.com), developed by Ecolab and Trucost, is industry’s first publicly available financial modeling tool that enables businesses to factor current and future water risks into decision making. Available at no cost to businesses throughout the world, the Water Risk Monetizer helps water-dependent businesses better understand the full value of water to their operations and identify revenue at risk, based on current and projected water scarcity. The tool assesses the potential cost or impact of water risks in ways similar to how other risks are considered in planning and capital allocation to help businesses make informed decisions to enable growth in this new era of water scarcity. For more information and to try the tool, visit www.WaterRiskMonetizer.com.

Sources:

Nathaniel Giannoni has been involved in the wastewater industry for the past 11 years. He began his career as a field technician working for a local consulting company and lab in Chicago, Illinois. For the past 4 years he has worked with Ecolab’s WEW division providing wastewater service and solutions for industrial laundry customers throughout North America.
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Devising a Policy on Devices – Smart Phones After Hours

“Sent from one of my many devices.” – Employee signing off of an email message.

We live in a digitally connected world of laptops, Wi-Fi, iPads, smart phones and smart watches, all of which is very different from a few short years ago. The Digital Revolution is moving forward at warp speed. Millennials and the younger generations, in particular, don’t know what it’s like to write things down on a piece of paper (the definition of “younger” is “younger than me . . .”). Today, virtually everything is digital. I was in a client meeting with my daughter recently, and as I was furiously taking notes on my paper tablet, she was calmly doing the same thing on her iPad. Said my client friend with a grin, “This is the difference in the generations!” And, thus, we have a new definition for an old word, as has been the case so many times in the Digital Revolution – “device,” which is to say, a mobile electronic communications tool.

The workplace mirrors society, and what goes on in society is ultimately going to make its way into the workplace. Examples include sexual situations at work, violence in the workplace, bullying behavior at work and . . . smartphones and other devices at work. Most of today’s employees come to work with a smartphone, which they may leave on during working hours and check frequently during the day, all of which requires employers to develop a policy on “Smart Phones at Work.” When the workday ends, these employees take their smart phones home with them. So far so good – until the employee begins to use the smartphone at home to make or answer calls, check email or to text message others at work. All of a sudden, we have an employee doing work at home, work that must be recorded as work time and paid for by the employer.

This principle applies to non-exempt employees only; exempt employees may use their smart phones as much as they like, with no wage and hour implications.

**Working Time according to the Department of Labor**

The Department of Labor defines working time as any time an employee is “suffered or permitted to work.” In plain English, this means that you must pay an employee for all of the time an employee is working, even if you didn’t authorize it, and even if you didn’t know about it. If an employee is at the workplace, this is somewhat easier to manage and control; but if an employee is working at home, it becomes much more difficult and uncertain.

Key Principle – If a non-exempt employee is using his or her smart phone on company business, at home or during non work hours, this is compensable work time. The employee must record the time and it must count toward his or her total weekly hours.

Here are some examples and some recommendations:

**Supervisors Calling Employees After Work.** Sometimes supervisors contact employees at home on their smart phones. If so, they should be told that
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this is compensable work time for the employee, and they must make sure employees record this time and are paid for it. Employers may want to instruct supervisors not to call employees at home after working hours, unless it is an emergency or unless they clearly understand that this after work time on the smart phone constitutes compensable work time for the non-exempt employee.

Company Provided Phones vs. Personal Smart Phones. From a practical view, it does not matter whether the employer provides the phone or whether the device is a personal phone owned by the employee; if the employee is using the phone or other device, like an iPad, to conduct company business, it is still compensable work time. However, if the employer tells the employee, “We are providing you with this phone so that we can contact you whenever we need you,” then the stage is set for compensable work time taking place after normal work hours. If the employee later claims that he or she was working at home on the smart phone, it will be very hard to argue that the employer did not know about the compensable work time.

Is On Call Time Regarded as Compensable Work Time? On Call Time is when an employee is “on call” after working hours, subject to being called in, if necessary. According to Wage and Hour regulations, On Call Time is not compensable worktime, so long as an employee is free to move around and is not restricted to staying home, for example. Smart phones have rendered this definition almost useless because it is in the nature of mobile phones to be mobile. Thus, if an employee is on call and is required to carry around a smart phone after work, the act of carrying around the device, standing alone, is not compensable work time, since the employee may go to the movie or the grocery store or wherever, so long as he or she has the device available. However, if the employee actually uses the device to make or receive calls, emails or text messages, then the employee is engaging in compensable work time and this should be recorded and counted toward the employee’s total weekly hours.

A Good Policy for Smart Phones and Other Devices. Employers should develop and communicate their policy on the use of smart phones and other devices during non-work hours to employees, supervisors and managers, and the policy should accommodate employer goals and objectives. For example, if the employer needs to contact employees after work hours, then employees and supervisors should be instructed that this is compensable work time and employees are to record this time and it will count toward their total weekly hours. On the other hand, if employers do not want employees to engage in company business after hours, they should be told to turn off their phones after a certain time, if the employer provides the device, or, if the employee owns the device, told explicitly not to engage in business related calls, emails or text messages after work.

A Walk into the Mists of Uncertainty

By implementing and managing the policies we’ve discussed so far, we’ve covered a good deal of the landscape associated with smart phones and other devices. However, what happens if an employee doesn’t abide by the policy? What happens if an employee, perhaps one who is being dismissed, says to you, “By the way, I’ve been making customer calls at home on my smart phone device for the last couple of years, about an hour a night, so you owe me $10,000 for this time.” In its defense, the employer might say, “We’ve developed and managed the policy the best we can, and we’ve instructed employees to record their time. Other employees have abided by the policy and recorded their time, and there is no evidence that you have used your device at home. Therefore, we have no reason to believe that you actually used your phone to conduct company business, so we don’t owe you anything.” At this point, this is an evolving situation, and it is anyone’s guess where the matter may end, particularly if the employee produces digital records of his emails, phone calls and text messages.

A Good Policy for Employers

Here is an example of a good policy employers may use to help manage the use of smart phones and other devices after hours:

“Employees who have smart phones provided by the company are to use these devices for company business only. Use of the device for calls, emails or text messages after work is prohibited unless this has been authorized in advance or in the case of an emergency. Under those conditions, if you make or receive a call, email or text message that is work related, you must record this time, and it will count toward your regular weekly hours. Supervisors are required to oversee this policy and make sure it is implemented properly. [Or, if the company would prefer, you can use this language. . .] Employees must turn off the smart phone when leaving work at the end of the day and turn it on again when arriving at work the next day.] Employees who have personal smart phones fall under this same policy.”

This policy should be included in your employee handbook. If you have any questions about the work-related use of smart phones or other devices, please call or email us, and we’ll work through the issue with you so that you’ll have the right answer. Remember, as a CSCNetwork member, you may call, email or text message us any time you have employee issues or questions. This is a value added service that is provided to you at no cost, in appreciation for being a CSCNetwork member. Visit our web site at www.seay.us. We appreciate having you as a friend and client of our firm and look forward to talking soon.

Sandy is President of Seay Management Consultants, Inc., a full service Human Resources Management firm CSC has on retainer, enabling our members’ free access to HR help.

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- Increased revenues
- Expanded line up of options to your customers
- Stay ahead of your competitors in the laundry business

Jim Beadles, Textile Rental Partners
lsugameday@att.net | 318.470.9694
Automatic Electronic Defibrillators - Timely, Easy, Profitable, Saves Lives

Wouldn’t it be great if you could offer a rental program for a product with the following criteria: part of a $200 million dollar a year market growing at over 12%; in high demand; very easy to service; extremely profitable; provides an opportunity to remove a competitor from your accounts; and as an added bonus, saves lives?

AED’s, or Automatic Electronic Defibrillators, fit all of those criteria and more. An AED is a device that is used during sudden cardiac arrest or SCA. An SCA is different from a heart attack, and it kills more than 300,000 people each year. Simply put, a heart attack is a “plumbing” problem, and an SCA is an “electrical” problem. One primary difference is that with an SCA, there is no pain or warning. The patient simply passes out.

Interestingly, two of the largest distributors of AED’s are involved in the textile rental channel: Cintas and Zee Medical. As proof of the importance and growth of first aid and AED’s, Cintas recently purchased Zee Medical. What this means for you is an increased effort and chance that they will find their way into your existing and future accounts with these items. There has never been a better time to consider both of these product categories.

The AED is a great rental item for several reasons. It is a life-saving device and obviously comes with all the benefits of that. Once installed, unlike many of your items, there is little or no attrition or “quits”. It requires very little maintenance, depending upon the specific device you choose. In some cases, maintenance is only required once every 5 years. It is easy to service. Some require a simple monthly check by the RSR to make sure everything is satisfactory, and this can be done by looking at the unit. It is a great opportunity to open no-programmer prospects. We think of a no-programmer as a prospect that, for whatever reason, is not a traditional target for your company. An example might be an office building, smaller retail, or other market segment that might offer little or no perceived opportunities or value. The reason the AED works so well as a no-programmer door opener is that the monthly rental rate, on its own, is high enough to justify a stop. Monthly rental rates can be as high as $99, and there are often multiple placement opportunities. Would you stop a truck at a customer for less than one minute for $99? While at the AED customer’s business, the RSR could add incremental stop value that might otherwise not be available to them. Also, manufacturer-provided software management programs make a potentially complex program virtually fool-proof.

It is important to understand that not all AED’s are equal. Selecting the right unit is vital to the success of the program.

Without going too deep into the science, an SCA requires a delivered shock only 50% of the time; however, it requires high quality CPR 100% of the time. The reason is that due to the electrical malfunction, the heart cannot pump blood to the brain. That is why CPR, administered correctly, is an absolute must. So, how do you know if the CPR is “high quality”? How do you
Jim Beadles is a partner with Textile Rental Partners, LLC (TRP). TRP is a manufacture rep focused exclusively on building and delivering programs for the textile rental channel. TRP represents both Zoll AED’s and First Aid Only.

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know that you are moving the chest 2 inches deep and doing it 100 times per minute?

While all units can analyze a heart rhythm and deliver a shock if needed, some can also detect whether or not the CPR is being administered properly and provide audible feedback until professional help arrives. If the unit you choose does not have this feature, then in essence, that unit is only relevant 50% of the time (if a shock is required). Think about it like this: if your loved one had an SCA, would you want to use a unit that is effective half the time or potentially every time?

It is also important to choose a company that has an advanced, innovative and proven software management program. That becomes the heartbeat, no pun intended, of the entire AED program. It is what allows you to deliver a true service component and value-add to your customers.

I can assure you that your current and future customers are soon going to have the opportunity to see these programs. If it’s not from you, then it will certainly be from your competitor.

Given the growth of the first aid and AED categories, the ease of the programs and the new and more focused competitive landscape, now is the time to at least learn as much as you can about both first aid and AED programs, and consider adding them to your current product offering.
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NLRA Expands Definition of "Joint Employer"

The National Labor Relations Board recently issued a decision expanding the definition of who is a “joint employer” under the National Labor Relations Act. The likely impact of this ruling is significant.

The old standard used by the Board to determine whether a joint employer relationship existed focused on whether the alleged joint employer actually exercised control over workers that was direct and immediate and not “limited and routine”. Entities that had the ability to control or affect the employment terms of another entity’s employees but did not actually do so were under the prior standard and held not to be joint employers.

Under the new standard just established by the Board to determine whether a legally enforceable joint employment relationship exists, the analysis will focus on whether the potential joint employer has sufficient control over employees’ essential terms and conditions of employment to permit meaningful collective bargaining, even if they never actually exercised that control. To make this determination, the Board will consider factors such as the ways in which the purported joint employers could, under the terms and circumstances of their relationship, share control over terms and conditions of employment such as wages, hours, hiring, firing, discipline, supervision, scheduling, size of the workforce, directing work, and determining how work will be performed. Exercise of control over any one or more of these factors exposes both entities to a joint employer finding and potentially, liability for the actions and/or decisions of the "co-employer".

The impact of the decision is significant and potentially far-reaching, exposing employers, temporary service, contract employee providers, and other individual or entities in that chain to a finding of joint employer status. No person or entity is immune. Parents can be joint employers with subsidiaries, franchisors with franchisees, lessors with their lessees, and subcontractors with the entities that hire them. The potential reach of this decision is unknown.

The Board's decision is still subject to appeal to the federal appellate courts. Absent a reversal, it is anyone's guess as to how the Board will interpret its own ruling in the "real world". However, we can be assured that it will be in a manner that expands employee rights and the potential targets of both union organizing and entities that can be liable for unfair labor practices.

Scott focuses his practice in the areas of labor law, employment litigation and drafting and litigating non-competition agreements and employment contracts. He also works with companies on the labor and employment aspects of plant closings and the purchase, sale, or merger of a business.

Contact: skamins@offitkurman.com
The South attacked from the north.
And the North attacked from the south.

What insights from the battle of Gettysburg are there for businesses?

Consider some basic principles:

**Transactions grow up into Transformation**

As business matures and competition increases, most products and services become more transactional. Specialized offerings get more competition, which forces everyone to sharpen their pricing or get some sort of edge. Eventually products become so generic that the market evolves into a “big box store” or morphs into high value offerings. Consider the overrun of Sears by Wal-Mart (transaction) and Nordstrom (transformation). When you want a makeover, you do not go to Wal-Mart. You go to Nordstrom’s for your “transformation”.

Think of ice cream cones.

The grandkids still think soft serve ice cream is great, but not the teenagers. To them, there is something a lot better. They want ice cream, but they also want thousands of choices. The chocolate sprinkles, cherries, Oreo cookie bits and a whole cadre of other choices, all mixed together on a large marble slab that transforms simple ice cream into the Cold Stone Creamery experience.

**Transformations are the building blocks for Experiences**

The single serve ice cream cone may cost you a buck, but the Cold Stone Creamery product doubles, triples, or increases the price paid by a factor of 5 or more. It should; it’s a real experience. The single serve is a transaction. It is a generic product that can be purchased at many locations, but that transformation of marble and ice cream is where you take your date for an experience.

Today, the consumer is pursuing ever more the experience. Consider the following examples:

**Transaction:**
Single Serve Ice Cream Cone
Roller Coaster
Starbucks Coffee

**Association Education Event**

**Transformational (the experience):**
Cold Stone Creamery
Space Mountain in the Magic Kingdom
Sidewalk Café in Paris

**Gettysburg Staff Ride**

Staff Ride? What the heck is a Staff Ride?

Today, a common occurrence is for a group of executives from XYZ Corporation to travel to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. There they find themselves on a bus with an expert in the Civil War. For the next several days, these executives are transported to the various Gettysburg locations where history is narrated by this expert. Woven through the lessons of the good and bad leadership of this battle, the group is taken through their own leadership challenges in their modern day environment. Discussions occur, similarities debated, plans made while leadership and management are improved.

This is a long way from a leadership retreat. It is a major revolution in the traditional day-to-day business, taking the consumer to a place where they have not been before. Henry Ford said, "If I had listened to my customers, I would have built a bigger horse."
When Businesses go Experiential

People want experiences. They pay big bucks for them because they transform lives quickly and are memorable for a lifetime. The wedding ceremony, graduation, birth of a child and so on are examples. They are anticipated for long periods. Consider the Blue Man Group Concert, those season tickets for your sports team, or a trip to New Orleans or Vegas.

They reek of participation. You can watch Guy Fieri on his TV show, Diner, Drive-ins and Dives, or you can make the pilgrimages to the various featured eating locations and relive the magic.

Experiences are so powerful we want to share them with others. The wedding invitation, the double date, taking the kids, now that they are older, back to Disney World.

When your business goes from facilitating the transactions of the sale to creating customer experiences, the businesses of your customers will transform as will your own organization.

Making your efforts more experiential will make sales go up, cost of marketing will decrease, word of mouth buzz will skyrocket, referrals will increase, customer retention improves, and your leadership will grow solid.

How do YOU create a business experience?

There are hundreds of elements that go into creating an experience like using authority figures, calories, illumination, and eclectic pursuits with smell, taste and touch. A few to consider:

Raiment
Great experiences require a change of raiment, or clothing. It is the wedding dress, the graduation gown and the sports jersey for the big game. What special clothing is involved with your selling event? Logo’d shirts? One business association has their version of the PGA Green Jacket for their board members, although theirs are red. Are you having a golf tournament? Might you have a prize for best attire, worst attire, most creative, etc.?

Sound
When one Chamber of Commerce started focusing on outcomes for their members and helping them increase business revenues, they decided to have a theme song. Each of their meetings has the "Taking Care of Business" rock music playing (Bachman Turner Overdrive to the rescue) in the background as attendees arrive.

Liquid
Most experiences have some sort of liquid as part of the experience. It is the champagne at the wedding or the beer at the graduation. You are going to cruise across the liquid, drink it, surf it, skate across it, partake of it as a sacrament, but there will be liquid.

Are Business Experiences a must?
Generals are always best at fighting the last war. They equip for it. They train for it. Fresh horizons require new tactics. Sears fought against Montgomery Ward. Did they even see Wal-Mart on their radar screen before it was too late? Often, we look backward because it is easier than the unknown future.

The future is here, and customers are voting with their dollars. They chase down the experience and inhale it to the fullest, like the Super Bowl, a 3D movie or even a Staff Ride. The experience is the demand of the younger generation and a pleasant surprise for your current business. So are you going to attack from the south or from the north?
What is the history, and how was your company founded?

The Plowman Family have been in the textile rental industry in Australia and New Zealand from humble beginnings in 1910 when George Plowman, great-grandfather of the current owner of Australian Uniform Service (AUS), purchased an address list and a small stock of towels in Auckland, New Zealand. It marked the start of a family business in this industry that spanned 88 years of continued ownership that concluded with a sale to ALSCO in 1998.

Peter Plowman, sole owner and managing director of Australian Uniform Service, is the 4th generation to be in the industry. After completing a Bachelor of Commerce degree, he was not only trained in the local business in New Zealand but had the opportunity to train in the USA in the early 1990’s with many independents such as Budget Uniform in Los Angeles and also major corporates like Aramark, Cintas and ALSCO. That training and experience gave a passion for the industry that continues today.

Peter’s passion for the business lead him to start Australian Uniform Service in Brisbane, Queensland which is Australia’s third largest city, via the acquisition of Taylor’s Apparelimage in 2001. This business grew well by focusing on the uniform rental needs of local businesses.

In 2007, Simon Davis joined the business to assist with growth. As a 2nd generation launder, Simon had worked for the Plowman family before in many roles, in addition to working for Spotless Services in Melbourne and running the largest branch of ALSCO in Auckland, New Zealand. In fact, Simon’s father worked directly for Peter’s father in the Plowman’s business in the 1980’s and 90’s.

In 2008, with Simon as part of the team, AUS expanded down the eastern seaboard of Australia, firstly in Sydney NSW, the largest city in Australia. The purchase of two laundries, Blue Ribbon Uniform Service and ACE Overall Service, created the foundations of the Sydney business as it stands today.

To complete the focus on servicing Australia’s largest population centres, AUS purchased MWS Linen in 2009 in Australia’s second largest city, Melbourne Victoria. This group of companies were aligned and formed into the Australian Uniform Service Group in 2011.

In the following years, two more acquisitions were completed in Sydney being Tiger Workwear in 2012 and Fresh and Clean Uniform Services in 2014. AUS has doubled the size of the company every 5 years through growth by acquisition and...
organic sales. As a ‘teenager’, we are still young and will turn 15 next year.

What markets does your company serve?
AUS serves the industrial markets on the Eastern Seaboard of Australia. The customers vary in size from one and two employee businesses to large organizations. Key industry segments include Transport and Automotive to Food Processing and Manufacturing.

What products/services are offered?
Uniform Rental forms the largest part of our revenue, and we offer a large range of garments that are ‘fit for purpose’. This ranges from white food industry shirts and pants to hi-visibility garments with bright orange and navy with reflective tape.

AUS provides a complimentary range of products in floor care mats such as dust control that cover all situations. The mats are sold on programs that manage the Health, Safety and Image of our customers such as Anti-fatigue, Safety Message and Welcome or Corporate Logo mats. Associated products being hand drying services of Cabinet Towels, towelling and kitchen wipe products.

What are the advantages for your customers doing business with AUS?
We are one of the few independents left that are doing business in our three key markets. This provides us the opportunity to be a bit different.

We are not the company with lots of add-on charges. We keep our pricing as transparent as possible. We are also 100% Australian owned and operated, and that gives us an edge over the two major companies.

We empower our management team to be the first and final point of contact with our customers by making timely decisions with customers that are specific to their market and products.

How many customers/routes/employees do you have?
AUS employs 140 staff across our three locations to service about 1,250 customers across 18 routes.

How many salespeople are currently on your team?
Each of our locations has a State Sales Manager who is responsible for achieving not only their sales budget but also the team’s. They are each supported by a Sales Executive which means our total sales resource is six.

To what do you contribute the success and growth of your company?
Our success has been built on having a sales-driven culture that has a passion for growth. The performance of our team has come about by having very focused business plans that have been executed against agreed budgets. These key business drivers focus in unison in the areas of product, industry type, geographical area and price.

In addition, businesses are built by people. We have put a lot of energy into training and developing skills and competencies that will take our company forward.

What is your company’s mission statement/slogan/model?
A National Company with a local focus!

How do you differentiate your company from the competition?
Our big focus has been on providing the customer with a transparent relationship between us as a supplier and them as a customer. This is best illustrated by the following principles: a clear concise one page contract which includes prices without add-ons, annual contract variation via a price review program, and a subject to satisfactory service clause.

Coupled with our local management’s direct engagement with our customer base, this has increased customer satisfaction, reduced decision delays and improved customer resign and retention rates.

This is measured monthly by our independent customer satisfaction survey, where all customers are contacted every 6 months. We are measured on our performance in the key areas of quality, service and response time. The results are compared by plant, company and benchmarked against our peers.

In response to any adverse comments, the customer is contacted within 24 hours of receiving an alert and followed up by an agreed action. This is recorded in to our company CRM as confirmation of actions and outcome.

How do you effectively communicate your message to your employees, customers and prospects?
We have put a lot of time and energy into making sure our communication with staff, customers and prospects is consistent. This has been done by our branding on vehicles, uniforms and social media all being aligned. Our sales team has a consistent set of information to present to prospects and customers.
What innovations (if any) have been implemented in your company/plant recently?
As we service many large food accounts with size pooled non-personalised garments, we implemented a way to load garments in a semi-automated way. Once packed, all customers are railed onto trucks with a minimum of effort and time. This has improved our load times and reduced the amount of health and safety risks.

What are the advantages of working in a family business, and what does it mean to you?
A family business allows you to make decisions in a timely fashion and be more responsive to changing needs of the company and market. While return for the shareholders is important, you can make long term decisions that might impact short term earnings without catering to the stock markets. It also allows you to engage with people directly by knowing them personally and treating them like they are family. People like to be part of something successful, and as an owner, you can engage people to be closer to the business and the decisions being made.

What is the succession plan/training strategy for future generations?
Being a multi-generational industry family, we believe it is important to encourage any family members to work outside before they are accepted into the family business. It gives them a better perspective on how business works. When they are ready to be involved, they bring real skills that can be applied to the business. The Plowman children are still too young at this point, but they will have to get educated prior to getting involved.

What do you see as the greatest challenge for our industry?
The biggest challenge for our industry is attracting and retaining good staff. We see it at all levels and our industry is not ‘attractive’ and doesn’t always pay the biggest wages. However, we are still an industry where anyone can make it to the top by learning and developing within the company and industry.

What do you see as the greatest opportunities for growth/change in our industry?
As an industry, we have been slow to embrace technology and use it to add value to our business. The opportunities lie in using technology to improve our customer service or manage our costs which in turn helps us grow profitably. A good example of this is UHF RFID chips which provide so much data to communicate with our customers and also manage our labor costs through improved productivity.

What is the greatest value you get from being a CSC Member?
The greatest value AUS receives from CSC is the networking with other operators who face the same problems that we do. The Annual Convention also provides us with a lot of value due to the quality of the speakers and presentations. The buying programs have provided us with alternate suppliers who can add value to our business.
Leonard Automatics offers Steam Tunnels, Stack-N-Store Multi-lane Stackers, Pressing and Tensioning Equipment, Cart Washers and Transporter Conveyors. All with the quality and reliability that our customers have come to expect. Contact Leonard Today. Find out what we can do for you!
Europay®, Mastercard®, and Visa® - What You Need to Know

Every merchant’s need to implement EMV will be different. Here’s what you need to know.

EMV® (Europay®, Mastercard® and Visa®) is a global standard for the authentication of chip-based credit cards. Chip cards, also known as “smart cards,” are credit cards that have sensitive cardholder information embedded in a data chip in the card, as opposed to traditional credit cards where the data is stored in the magstripe on the back of the card.

While the two types of cards may look the same, the way that the data is accessed to process a payment transaction is very different. Traditional credit cards are swiped through a magstripe reader or credit card terminal in order to perform a transaction. Chip cards can be swiped too, but have extra security advantages when processed via EMV chip readers instead.

On October 1, 2015, merchants who do not use a chip card reader to process card-present transactions when a chip card is presented, can be held liable for any fraud that occurs as a result.

In other words, after the liability shift takes effect, merchants who swipe chip cards instead of using EMV chip readers do so at their own risk.

You may be thinking, “But my customers don’t use chip cards, so why should I care?” The answer is that the credit card industry has been paving the way for EMV to become the standard in credit card processing for several years. EMV Aite Group® predicts that about 70 percent of cards in the U.S. will have EMV chips by the end of 2015.

Merchants who want to implement EMV will most likely need to update POS software and/or hardware.

It’s important to remember that there is no mandate for merchants around EMV, only a liability shift. There are several considerations you should make before implementing EMV. Here are three questions every merchant should ask when considering EMV acceptance.

**What is my chargeback history, and does moving to EMV make sense in light of my total cost of implementation?**

Does your business have a history of getting frequent fraud chargebacks? Currently, fraud chargebacks are typically covered by the card issuer if the chargeback is found to be truly fraudulent, but after October 2015 that chargeback liability will shift to the merchant if the transaction is run as a magnetic stripe transaction on an EMV capable card. Reviewing your past chargebacks on statements can help you establish a benchmark of what your future risk may be by running EMV cards as magnetic stripe.

A second consideration is asking whether your business can absorb a loss if a fraudulent transaction happens on one of your high ticket items or a series of low ticket fraudulent transactions. If the answer is no, you may want to implement EMV as an insurance policy against your risk.

**How will EMV impact my line speed?**

An EMV transaction will take a few seconds longer than a card swipe largely due to the fact that the transaction must be...
Who said FR work shirts have to be uncool and uncomfortable?
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Mercury Payment Systems has been an approved CSC supplier since 2010. For additional information on how EMV will affect your business, contact Nathan Sanders at nsanders@mercurypay.com or (970)335-5501.

Should I wait and consider EMV in the future?
Being an early adopter is not always the best strategy for some businesses. Since there is no mandate for merchants to implement EMV, some merchants may take a wait and see approach. EMV adoption in the rest of the world has been a gradual process that has taken an extended period of time to become the standard. The liability shift marks the beginning of the transition here in the U.S. and should not be viewed as a deadline. However, there is a chance if you are a late adopter of EMV, you may see more fraud being funneled to your business as other merchants close the door on card-present fraud. If you decide to wait, be sure to regularly monitor chargebacks after the liability shift.

The main takeaway is that moving to EMV is not an emergency. It is an opportunity to reduce payment card fraud that may be beneficial to your business. However, it is also a chargeback liability shift that could significantly negatively impact your business. Don’t be pressured into abandoning the benefits of a fully integrated POS system for a stand-alone EMV terminal that does not interact with your POS system. Many POS developers are currently working on solutions that enhance their systems with EMV capability and for certain merchants the benefits of waiting for the perfect solution may outweigh the benefits of scrambling to implement EMV now.
Transforming Leadership - The Sandler Way - The Big Seven

You can't transform a team or an organization until you've transformed yourself. With that idea in mind, I decided to write about the critical leadership principles that support great leaders, great careers and great teams. Transformational Leadership is leadership that starts in your own life, then radiates outward as an example to others!

This book is divided into seven sections. Each section reflects a quality I have seen exemplified in the character and work habits of the great leaders I've been privileged to work with over the years. Let's look at each of those seven now. A leader needs to be someone who has a demonstrated record of:

**Personal Power**

Now, how do you define success is, of course, an individual matter. But if you expect to be followed, you must have achieved a measure of success in some area in which others want to achieve success. Others must be willing to follow you in the hope that you can lead them to similar success in their own world. So: What is your track record? What abilities and special skills made that track record possible?

**Conviction**

Conviction means your ability to communicate in a positive way about what you think and strongly feel. Conviction literally means "unshakeable belief." It's what happens when you believe in something so deeply that it actually becomes a part of you. Are you willing to communicate that which is the deepest part of you? Are you eager to do so before anyone else communicates how they feel about the topic under discussion?

**Charisma**

Charisma means how effectively, quickly and deeply you connect with others. How easy is it for people to get to know you? Think about figures like Kennedy, Eisenhower and Reagan, whose ability to bond with others quickly was usually more relevant to problem-solving than their politics? Are you, like them, easy to like? Or are you "a lot to get past"?

**People Skills**

People skills means the ability to "read" people and have influence with them. It includes the ability to read subtleties in people's body language. It also includes the ability to learn how to connect with somebody without overlooking the context in which you're communicating. At the end of the day, having people skills means being sensitive to all of the cues that people are sending your way in their communication with you.

**Courage**

Courage is not necessarily about how confident you are as an individual. It has more to do with how secure you make others feel. Does your level of courage cause others to feel secure too? Courage that only causes those around you to remain fearful isn't the kind of courage I'm talking about in this section of the book.

**Ethics**

Ethics means that you act in accordance with clear, consistent principles that connect to a sense of right and wrong. You might not know in any given moment exactly what a leader's going to do; but you'll know within what boundaries that leader's going to do it because the leader has clearly communicated the principles and values that guide his or her life.

**Expertise**

Expertise is different from what you do. It's what you know. What wisdom and insights do you possess as the result of your personal experience? Expertise is the practical wisdom that causes others to say, "Wow! I didn't see it that way."

These are the seven essential qualities of a leader. They support each other, and no truly great leader is missing any of the qualities. Each quality operates in an integrated manner with the other six. You can look at the list, mentally remove any one of the points, and instantly understand how deeply any missing element would diminish a leader's strength. Consequently, each section in this book deals with a single item on the list. *Transforming Leaders the Sandler Way* is based on decades of experience as a Sandler trainer and in other roles, based on work with some of the greatest leaders in American business. It is designed to help you "unpack" each key point and strengthen your own leadership in all seven areas. This book comes with a companion card deck. In following the card activities, unless otherwise noted, it is assumed that you will only use the cards that correspond with the chapters you have already read and studied.

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In the commercial laundry industry, there’s often hesitation to invest in FR, or flame resistant, clothing and uniforms, and this is mainly due to the intimidating nature of government safety standards and some common misconceptions and concerns about the costs, limitations, and complexity of entering the FR market.

In reality, while these lifesaving garments are unique in a lot of ways, it may be surprising how straightforward and uncomplicated it is to clean and maintain FR garments.

The biggest difference between outfitting a customer with everyday wear versus FR clothing is the expense. It’s true that FR garments can cost considerably more than what “normal” clothing costs, so purchasing and maintaining an FR uniform lot is a significant investment. In addition to financial considerations, anyone who chooses to care for PPE, Personal Protective Equipment, would be wise to adopt a healthy respect for the responsibility and potential liability that comes with such an investment.

However, the investment in FR is not a limited one—although the standards that regulate FR tend to promote that misconception. For example, because of the ASTM F1506 requirement that FR properties withstand up to 25 washes and the NFPA 2112 standard of 100 washes, most folks infer that the FR characteristics of a garment diminishes after 100 cycles.

The key to maintaining a safe and profitable FR uniform lot is vigilance, common sense, and attention. While there are no secret processes or special equipment, there are a few basic care and maintenance guidelines that, if followed, will maximize the safety and profitability of an FR investment.

As with any laundry processing, it’s a good idea to avoid extreme washing and drying temperatures because shrinkage and fading can shorten the lifespan of a garment; however, there are two main things to remember when it comes to FR clothing. First, bleach can break down the FR chemistry in treated fabrics, and second, buildup of any kind on the surface of the fabric may support combustion.

“The concern with bleach,” according to Bob Harris, Manager of Product Performance, “is that continued use can actually damage the polymer that gives treated fabrics their flame resistant characteristics, and while one exposure probably won’t destroy the garment, it’s not clear how many will, so using any bleaches, chlorine or otherwise, isn’t permitted.”

In addressing “buildup”, Harris states broadly, “You can’t add anything to the fabric surface that could potentially serve as fuel and overwhelm the garment’s ability to self-extinguish.” He then specifies, “That means no starch and no fabric softeners.”

He continues, “Putting anything back on the fabric that would serve as a coating and could build up on the surface and perhaps form a flammable surface is not permissible on FR garments.”

While it’s fairly clear how laundry additives could eventually cause surface buildup, it’s not so obvious how the water itself plays a role. To clarify, Harris shares an example, “We actually tested some garments that failed an FR test in our labs—scared the heck out of us—and what we learned was that the laundry did not use soft water, they did not have a water conditioning system, and over time the minerals in the water built up to a point that they formed a
flammable layer on top of the fabric.”

Harris continues, “That’s actually what was igniting and failing in our laboratory testing. When we removed the mineral deposits from the fabric, the fabric passed with flying colors.”

Even when following these basic rules, according to Denise Statham, Technical Services Director for Bulwark FR, “clean” is a matter of perspective. She says, “Garments can be stained, visually unattractive and perfectly safe, but if they look clean and are contaminated with something combustible, then the person wearing it could get hurt.”

The best way to know for sure is by smell, because as long as the odors of oil, solvents, or other potential accelerants linger, it could promote ignition.

Resolving a potentially dangerous situation is often easier than it seems. Statham continues, “The garment may just need to go through the cycle again; of course it might need to be taken out of service altogether. A smell might mean a lot of things, but it definitely means one thing - don’t reissue that garment if it’s not clean enough.”

Beyond proper cleaning, the efficient, safe and profitable care and maintenance of an FR lot depends on regular and thorough inspection along with appropriate repair and/or replacement.

While another common misconception is that FR garments with tears, holes, or damaged closure systems such as broken zippers or lost buttons are a loss, ASTM F 1449 provides specific guidance on their repair and return to service.

“FR clothing can be repaired,” Statham points out, “but it has to be done properly so that it maintains its flame resistant integrity. In other words, if you’re going to repair a hole or a tear in an FR garment, you have to repair it with flame resistant fabric and using flame resistant thread. You can’t repair an FR garment with non-FR fabric and findings.”

One easy, economical, and time-efficient way to handle repairs is to be prepared for them. Statham continues, “Our recommendation is when they take an FR garment out of service, hold on to it. It can become a source of fabric to repair or use for patches for other garments. Not so sophisticated, but it works.”

In the care and maintenance of FR uniform or garment lots, it’s difficult to understate the need for diligent and consistent inspection. “It worries me to see garments in the field that should have been repaired or even removed from service,” says Statham, “It’s easy to think you can use it one more week because replacement is expensive, but you’re talking about a person’s safety. You’re getting into liability issues as well.”

Outfitting customers with FR apparel should not be an intimidating proposition. By following basic guidelines, being vigilant, and making use of the resources, services, and support that your FR supplier offers, CSC laundries can confidently commit to offering and managing safe and profitable FR programs.

When it comes to maintaining a line of FR, it’s about the lives of workers and the livelihoods of those who support them. In fact, it would be wise for the many commercial laundries that provide uniform rental programs to revisit their customer list, reassess their level of responsibility, and reevaluate whether their customers’ workers are wearing the appropriate clothing for the dangers they face.

To learn more about OSHA regulations, occupational hazard assessment, and FR outfitting standards, contact Bulwark Customer Care at 800-223-3372.

Bulwark, part of VF Corporation’s portfolio of brands, is the North American market leader in flame-resistant protective garments. For additional information on Bulwark FR apparel and OSHA compliance, please contact Bulwark Sales 615-565-5307.
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Critical thinking gets customers out of their box. During my graduate work in training and development, I had the good fortune of taking a psychology class. Toward the middle of the semester, the professor asked me for a favor. He wanted to know if I would be willing to assist him in reviewing more than 20 years of research relating to the way people communicate. At first, I was somewhat reluctant. It sounded like a lot of work, and I really didn't have the time. Then I realized that he had been very helpful to me and very insightful when it came to the material he presented in class, and now he needed my help. So I signed on to help. Most of the material I reviewed talked about open and closed questions.

Do your Questions Differentiate You?

The goal is to differentiate and brand yourself, gather key information, and move your existing relationships forward. Chances are that the customer views what they are selling as somewhat similar to what the competition is providing.

There are probably few products offered in today's market that are remarkably different from the competition and that offer significant difference. As a matter of fact, the customer probably assumes that both you and the people you compete against will provide relatively the same thing. Therefore, you are being viewed as the same as the competition, almost like a commodity. Of course you want to establish a strong business relationship, separate yourself, stand out, and become a significant partner in the customer's practice. To make that occur, you need to engage in relevant dialogue.

During my analysis of 20 years of research on the way people communicate, I came across several interesting articles and studies that made me think a little differently about questions, how they are presented, and the way sales people ask them to build and develop relationships. These studies focused on the fact that too many recital questions were being used. A recital question is a question that is asked of individuals that gets them to recite what they already know. Educator Meredith Gall suggested that recital questions get someone to recall information that requires little to no thinking. When a customer answers a recital question, he/she recites something they already know and probably have already been asked before in previous conversations. Think of all of the questions that were asked prior to reading this. Do your questions fall under the category of recital? If so, is it possible that you might be boring your customers because you are forcing them to go over the same ground they have been going over with everyone else? How many sales people do you think your customer sees in a day? Could your customer see as many as ten sales people per day? For argument's sake, why don't we settle on five sales people a day? That is 25 a week, 100 per month, and more than 1,000 sales calls and conversations per year. The customer hears the same question hundreds of times and gives the same answer.

So what makes a better question? My research suggests changing from a recital question to a dialogue question. Dialogue questions stimulate a complex thinking process involving a longer exchange that solicits opinion and thought, not just a correct answer. When calling on customers, you want to engage them in dialogue. Your goal is to get them talking at least 70 percent of the time. Most importantly, when you ask a dialogue question, you create the possibility of change, and change leads to new thinking. Your goal is to craft a question that gets the customer to stop, reflect, and respond with a new answer.
The ACA is Here to Stay
A Reminder for Industry Employers to Review Their Anti-retaliation Policies

While the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (also known as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare) was signed into law more than 5 years ago, the Supreme Court’s June 25, 2015 decision in King v. Burwell may have removed the last major legal hurdle for the law. Commentators believe that disputes about Obamacare will move from the legal to the political realm and necessarily remain dormant until after the 2016 election. As a result, it appears that the ACA is here to stay.

While this has several practical implications for industry employers beyond the scope of this article, a lesser known provision of the law which protects employees from retaliation by an employer for engaging in any number of broadly-defined ACA protected activities may be unknown to industry employers. This new anti-retaliation provision may unnecessarily trip up unwary employers.

At the same time, wise industry employers are recognizing the prevalence of Title VII, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act and other retaliation claims. Retaliation claims filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission alone have risen more than 30% in the last decade. Currently, approximately 41% of all charges filed annually with the EEOC contain a retaliation claim, in most cases, in addition to an underlying discrimination or harassment claim.

At last count, there were well over 40 federal retaliation claims employees could file against an employer. Some of these apply only to selected industries and sectors; however, when the 20-plus statutes of more general application are considered along with existing state and local law retaliation claims, the need for effective anti-retaliation efforts appears to be clear.

As some industry employers know, while an employer may prevail on an underlying harassment claim, a viable retaliation claim may still exist due to a lethargic or ineffective response to the harassment complaint coupled with an arguable adverse employment action subsequently taken against a charging party.

The ACA anti-retaliation provision, and the prevalence of retaliation claims in general, should serve as a reminder to industry employers that, regardless of the legitimacy of an employee’s original ACA-related dispute, discrimination complaint or other “protected activity,” effective anti-retaliation policies and procedures must be in place to address employees’ underlying concerns in order to prevent potential retaliation claims.

The ACA Anti-Retaliation Provision
The ACA created 29 U.S.C. § 218c, which provides that “[n]o employer shall discharge or in any manner discriminate against any employee with respect to his or her compensation, terms, conditions, or other privileges of employment because the employee (or an individual acting at the request of the employee)” has engaged in activity protected by the ACA. See Figure 1. The ACA anti-retaliation provision (a/k/a whistleblower protection) generally protects employee rights to ACA-guaranteed benefits and the ability to freely exercise those rights in the workplace without fear of adverse action for doing so.

A claim for retaliation under the ACA is established if the employee can show that the protected activity (Figure 1) was a contributing factor in an adverse employment action and the employer cannot demonstrate through clear and convincing evidence that it would have taken the same adverse action in the absence of the protected activity.

Likewise, in the context of a discrimination complaint or a complaint that an employee was subject to retaliation for exercising FMLA rights, an employee simply has to show that he or she: (1) engaged in protected activity; (2) was subject to an adverse employment action such as a demotion, failure to promote, suspension, termination or other adverse action which caused an injury; and (3) establishes a connection between the protected activity and the adverse employment action.
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As in a discrimination context, an employee’s protected activity, such as a belief expressed to management that the employer is not providing “affordable coverage,” need not ultimately be correct; rather, the employee’s reasonable belief that the employer’s coverage does not meet the minimum required coverage standard in violation of the ACA is sufficient.

In addition, if the employee successfully establishes that the protected activity was a contributing factor in the adverse employment action, the employer must provide very persuasive evidence in order to rebut the employee’s claim to establish the required clear and convincing evidence standard and establish a defense to the claim.

To address the risks that may go hand-in-hand with an increase in employer communications to implement ACA-related changes, it is crucial for industry employers to implement policies and procedures that will effectively protect employee rights to raise ACA-related concerns and prevent employee retaliation for having done so. In addition, if knowing or unknown retaliation does occur, an appropriate investigation must be conducted and a response should be mounted to eliminate any potential economic impact upon a complaining employee at the earliest stage.

Steps To Prevent ACA And Other Retaliation Claims
Employers can take several steps to head off retaliation claims under the ACA, steps that also have general application to prevention of other employee retaliation complaints as well.

First, industry employers should review and update their non-discrimination policies and the anti-retaliation provisions in those policies to provide that employees will be protected from discrimination and retaliation as a result of engaging in protected activity, e.g., reporting protected by the ACA, accepting the ACA tax credit, opposing a practice the employee believes to be a violation of the ACA, participating in any ACA-related investigations or enforcement action, or engaging in any other protected activity. Any employee who thinks he or she is being retaliated against or has been subject to retaliation because of such protected activity should be directed to use any existing reporting procedures or the mechanism described below.

Industry employers can expect some confusion will come with ongoing implementation. This confusion may not be the result of any action taken by the employer; rather, an employee’s legitimate misunderstanding of an employer’s obligations may lead to questions or disputes. What is “affordable coverage”? Isn’t the employer obligated to pay for 100% coverage? Can my employer decrease the extent of my coverage to compensate for having to provide coverage to other employees? These and other questions may constitute protected activity. Short-sighted responses to these important questions may land an employer in hot water; however, directing them internally is a far better option.

Second, industry employers would be wise to review and, if necessary, implement internal complaint mechanisms that provide employees a mechanism to file any ACA-protected complaints internally with a human resource representative or other supervisor not responsible for discipline, termination, or employee health insurance issues who is also not in a supervisory capacity over the reporting employee.

After receipt of an employee’s ACA-related complaint, the employer can review, investigate, respond and, if necessary, proactively resolve any implementation disputes before they reach critical mass. This internal procedure not only shows employees that an industry employer is committed to effective implementation of ACA-related changes, but also shows employees that such complaints will be taken seriously, investigated and, if necessary, remedied through the appropriate action.

Beyond these benefits, such an internal complaint procedure directs employee complaints internally to allow an employer, when necessary, to correct any individual or systemic errors that may have occurred by resolving individual disputes and preventing later disputes from occurring. This should occur at the earliest possible stage, before the complaint matures into an ACA retaliation complaint due to later discipline or termination in the normal course of business and personnel management.

Third, by having a policy that protects reporting employees from retaliation, the employer effectively sets the tone by showing its interest in receiving, investigating and when necessary, resolving complaints at the earliest stage. However, for this policy to be truly effective and forceful when push comes to shove, the employer must ensure the policy works by responding to employee complaints, taking action when necessary, and following resolution, setting up, and conducting regular follow up with employees that have lodged complaints to ensure that no subsequent retaliation has occurred. In that way, the employer can add another layer to defend a retaliation claim – an effective remedial mechanism was in place, similar to an anti-harassment policy, designed to prevent retaliation.

In addition, by separating the person to whom the report (and knowledge of the protected activity) is directed from a supervisor who may later make disciplinary or termination decisions, the employer creates an inherent litigation defense. Lack of knowledge of protected activity by a decision-maker is often a very solid defense to an employee’s claim of retaliation. It also stands to reason that a supervisor who does not know of an employee’s discrimination complaint cannot retaliate against that employee because of an unknown discrimination complaint.

Conclusion
As ACA implementation gradually takes hold and charges of retaliation filed with the EEOC and other agencies continue to mount, industry employers would be wise to take proactive steps to directly confront this risk head on to avoid retaliation claims when possible.

Daniel Finerty defends industry employers and other private businesses in labor and employment disputes with current and former employees and counsels them on labor and employment compliance. The foregoing is a general discussion of a legal issue and is not intended to be, nor should it be construed as, legal advice.
Consistency  [kuhn-sis-tuhn-see]  - Conformity in the application of something, typically that which is necessary for the sake of logic, accuracy, or fairness.

This article is the third in a series that examines the six key areas of organizational success or failure in achieving strategic goals. In the first article, we discussed alignment of all goals and initiatives from top to bottom and bottom to top in terms of achieving the vision and living the mission of any organization. Second, we studied how process works to move the organization from the vision of a desired future state to a set of actionable steps to achieve organizational goals. This article will focus on the need for well-defined processes to take root and become a standardized, regularized, and harmonized set of activities.

Lack of alignment is the number one cause of failed plans for organizations, and lack of process is a close second. The conclusion is clear: “sticking with it” is tough. Although foolish consistency has been called the “hobgoblin of little minds,” lack of consistency makes it difficult, if not impossible, to improve an organization’s key work systems. The aligned processes we discussed in the last article will never get a chance to deliver desired outcomes if we fail to establish these processes as repeatable, transferable, scalable, and a regular source of data that inform continuous improvement. Defining and mapping the steps in a process is easy; developing and implementing deliberate practices for using the process consistently is not. I often hear leaders of organizations tout the processes they have built, and yet, upon close examination, I find the processes exist but are not followed consistently, regularly, and in harmony with other processes and the organization’s mission. Such intentions for consistent practice may have been in place early on, but these intentions were not monitored, modeled, and reinforced by management or supervisory staff, or re-examined for on-going fit and appropriateness for the organization. It is important to re-examine the processes on an annual basis and make any adjustments as a result of changing business practices or external factors that have or are impacting the organization. This is part of cycle of continuous improvement that keeps the process or practice relevant.

The other common example of lack of consistency occurs in communications. Six Disciplines’ research shows that internal communications (between leadership and team members) historically scores low in employee satisfaction surveys. The primary reason is a lack of consistency. Many times leaders deliver a message once, but studies show that it takes hearing a message seven times before it is absorbed. As leaders, we need to be willing to repeat ourselves. The most effective way to ensure that our message is being delivered with a regular, consistent cadence is to build a communications matrix.

As part of our own journey with the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, Six Disciplines borrowed an idea and developed our own communications matrix. This matrix is Six Disciplines’ standardized, regularized, and consistent practice for communicating internally and with our clients. Without the matrix, we would be leaving our communications processes to chance thereby limiting our ability to align and execute key processes. These well-defined and developed communications processes have become routine—a part of each team member’s deliberate

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and consistent practice. The matrix is a great tool for developing consistency within an organization.

Consistency is not limited to communications processes only. Any well-defined organizational process will benefit from a consistent approach, including how we lead, how we reward, how we manage team member performance issues, and how we provide constructive coaching. Also, consistent processes impact how we convert data or results into knowledge and ultimately, into strategy. Creating a clear line of sight from individual to organizational goals and executing processes that achieve these goals is only as effective as the cadence and structure we build for deliberate and consistent practice.

*Oxford Dictionary – Oxford University Press

** Ralph Waldo Emerson, Essays. First Series. Self-Reliance.

Eric Kurjan is the President of Six Disciplines NWO. Six Disciplines brings “big company” process improvement to organizations looking to break beyond the status quo.

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Do any of your products offer a significant advantage, and how can CSC members take advantage of that?

Our No Repair and Premium Industrial garments are designed to prevent tears, which is a cost savings for the laundries over the life of the garment and makes for happier customers. We recognize repairs are the #1 complaint from customers. Dickies pants offer reinforced pocket bags, gusset crotch along with wider, stronger beltloops. Our StayDark® technology helps prevent color fading keeping the garments in service longer.
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What value added service does Dickies offer to help CSC members be more productive and efficient?

Most of the Dickies Occupational Wear sales team come from the textile rental business, so they know and understand the challenges laundries have. They provide product training, recommendation and custom marketing support.

What are the most innovative products you see for Dickies and CSC members in the future?

Dickies continues to engineer new Industrial laundry friendly products that focus on innovative performance, comfort and durability.

Over the years, workwear in general has been known to be coarse and constricting. And as a workwear leader, our team is consistently engineering new innovations to offer our customers.

This year, we rolled out the WorkTech collection – an IL-friendly line of shirts developed using body heat mapping and AeroCool™ technology. The AeroCool™ mesh provides superior ventilation technology that optimizes airflow and wicks away the sweat and rapidly dries the material, keeping the wearer both cool and comfortable with a soft ring spun fabric.

We also developed a new Shop Collection for automotive workers. We listened to the auto industry and our new line features stain release fabric, specially designed tool pockets, performance polos, woven shirts, jackets and pants available for men and women, allowing for unparalleled freedom of movement.

What are the biggest market challenges and how would you recommend CSC members respond?

The biggest market challenge is competitive pricing which results in lower margins. Dickies products can command a higher rental price because of both the brand and the durability that extends the life of the garment. Dickies no-repair features benefits both the laundry and the end-user.

What value do you find in your relationship with CSCNetwork?

We value our partnership with CSC. The organization makes it easier to support independent laundries.

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From messenger services to furniture delivery businesses to cable companies, millions of short trips are made every day by businesses with fleets of vehicles—and that means millions of chances for drivers to idle their engines.

Unnecessary fleet idling really adds up—both for its environmental impact and for a business’s bottom line. That’s why Sustainable America recently launched the Idle-Free Fleet program. This customizable program educates organizations with vehicle fleets, including businesses, municipalities and academic institutions, about the environmental, social and economic costs of vehicle idling and provides proven solutions to change driver behaviors.

A pioneering member of the Idle-Free Fleet program is Crown Uniform and Linen, a regional, family-owned, uniform and linen service in the Northeast. With Sustainable America’s help, Crown Uniform and Linen strengthened their existing idling policies and rolled out an idling-reduction pilot program with 20 of its 75 trucks this spring. When they started, they learned that each truck was idling 70 minutes per day on average, and many drivers weren’t even aware that they were idling. Four months into the program, their average idling time per truck dropped to just 7 minutes per day—a 90% improvement!—and in the months following they have further reduced their idling times to as little as 4 minutes per truck per day!

As you can see, by increasing driver awareness, setting aggressive yet attainable idling limits and providing regular feedback, Crown was able to save a substantial amount of money. They will save even more as they roll out the program to more drivers and experience reduced maintenance costs from idling reduction.

Throughout the program, Crown was able to analyze driver behaviors through their on-board telematics system, which tracks daily idling times by truck and driver. Data provided by the system is now aggregated and communicated to drivers on a daily basis, and issues are addressed as they arise with specific individuals. Their collective success at reducing idling hours is being communicated to drivers regularly so that they can share in the accomplishment and take pride in their achievements. George Spilios, Regional Manager of Crown, says he’s excited to see the company expanding its sustainability programs, which already included recycling, waste reduction and lower resource consumption, among others. “Partnering with Sustainable America helped Crown identify a great opportunity. As a result of this program, we captured some significant fuel savings while further supporting Crown’s commitment to sustainable business practices.”
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Safety in Floor Matting

The environment we live in today is loaded with advertisements from all types of attorney’s going after slip, trip and fall victims. If it involves an entrance mat from a rental service, be prepared to be named as a defendant. You should be more concerned if this incident happens to be captured on security cameras and the mat appears to be buckled or defective in one way or another. Do not be too surprised to see your route service representative named as a defendant also. This has become a big business and shows no signs of slowing down. Attorneys are using every type of media there is to get their message out.

Our industry needs to be positioned to provide its prospects and customers with highly knowledgeable and professional, floor safety consultants who know and clearly understand those ANSI standards, OSHA regulations, ADA and ADAAG guidelines which insurance companies and businesses expect and demand from its service providers.

A number of years ago, manufacturers of mats took a bold step, providing their products to the NFSI (National Floor Safety Institute) for certification under the NFSI 101-C test method for measuring dry TCOF (Transitional Coefficient of Friction) of floor mat backing materials. Industrial laundries recently took another step and commissioned additional testing of mats (new vs. in-service) to prove our commitment in providing the safest product, exceeding our customer’s expectations. The results of these tests have proven to be beneficial in establishing our expertise to the legal and insurance industries alike, showing the need for floor mats in all types of environments.

Founded in 1997, the NFSI started with a mission to aid in the prevention of slips, trips, and falls through education, research, and standards development. The “B101.6-2012 Standard Guide for Commercial Entrance Matting in Reducing Slips, Trips and Falls” sets the standards for the proper selection, inspection, backing and sufficiency of commercial entrance matting. This standard has become “the tip of the iceberg” in providing our customers with the highest quality product, backed by service professionals second to none.

By embracing these standards and providing your personnel with the proper training, our industry is poised to gain the trust of not only those governing agencies, but the insurance industry who already notes
the necessity of floor mats in the many White Papers they have published on this subject. Insurance companies know that proper entrance floor matting is essential in reducing and eliminating slips, trips, and falls for their insured. Providing safe floor mats will prove to be the best insurance policy for any companies who choose to do business with our industry. Those who choose not to follow this standard can leave themselves exposed to many unnecessary litigious situations. Providing the highest quality product, placed by trained route professionals, who provide the final inspection and assure your customers that their mats are compliant, and meeting the highest “standard of care” set forth by our industry only increases your worth to your customer/prospect. Delivering value is what your business is all about.

On April 10, 1990, OSHA published Proposed Rules which are about to be approved and implemented. These new rules affect any customer who falls under OSHA oversight. Subpart D of 29CFR part 1910, Walking and Working Surfaces will require that only a “qualified person be permitted to inspect, maintain or repair walking and working surfaces…” Our industry needs to position itself to provide “Professional Floor Safety Consultants” who can assist customers in protecting their employees from these dangers. Slips, trips and falls in the workplace are a leading cause of lost time accidents. Insurance companies have measured these costs at $70 Billion Dollars a year! These slips, trips, and falls can happen every day in your own facility!

In a recent CSCNetwork training session, the Route Growth/Mat Sales Skills Workshop, those who attended received “the tip of the iceberg” on floor safety training. Those who benefited from this session should be looking to enhance those skills and use them to strengthen the many strong relationships they have with their current customers and prospects. There is no other service industry whose commitment to constant improvement matches that of the textile rental companies in CSCNetwork. Let’s continue to build on the strength we have! The training we provide, will be a key factor in whether we succeed or not.

Fred Anderson has 38 years of textile rental industry experience in facility services, healthcare, uniform, and hospitality services. He is an ANSI Accredited Walkway Auditor Certificate Holder and OSHA Outreach Trainer in Occupational Safety and Health Standards for General Industry. He is also an Expert Witness for slip trip, and falls, and has provided assistance to independent textile rental companies.

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Have you noticed lately that hiring top performers in sales is more difficult than ever? Have you noticed your sales team is having to work harder to gain new business and retain and grow existing accounts? Have you also noticed that your team is having a harder time adapting or changing how they sell to support customers’ changing expectations? If you said ‘yes’, then read on.

Based on GDI research in 2015, the number one challenge facing today’s businesses is attracting, selecting and hiring the “right” people that fit your company and stay. Today, most companies are keeping the sales force longer... which is a good thing, right? Well, not necessarily. Today, many companies struggle with a long-term team that struggles to change or adapt how they sell. They want to improve; they just don’t know how. Leadership wants them to improve, but they are unsure how to lead them in the right direction to get increased performance.

The Changing Customer’s Impact on the Sales Force
Ask any sales professional today if customers have changed how they buy and you will hear a resounding ‘Yes!’ As customers have changed how they buy, businesses like yours realize in order to stay competitive, you need the sales force to develop more new business rather than just manage existing customers. So, what is getting in the way of the sales team changing how they sell?

The key to helping a sales team change, shift, or “transform” their efforts to sell requires having a clear understanding of what defines Top Performance. Then, sales leadership must arm the team with the tools, training, and support to develop new customers and new business. At GDI, we call this Sales Force Transformation, the process of evolving the sales team to change how they do their job, where they focus their time, and what they must do to succeed in the future.

Although, to get our sales team to “transform” how they sell, we must first gain their insight or “voice” about what they do now, the challenges they face, where they focus their time, what they do best, where they struggle, as well as gain input on what they need from leadership to be the best. At GDI, we call this Sales Intelligence – engaging the sales team in a process to understand what they do today, so we can help them change or evolve how they must sell to accomplish success for the future.

Today’s Remote Sales Force
Research states that over 60% of all sales roles today are remote (i.e. working from a home office) where there is minimal direction, sales leadership is at a distance, and it is harder to stay connected. Because of the sales professional’s limited engagement with peers or their managers, the greatest challenge is that instead of developing new customers and new business, they focus too much time on already established customers with whom they have a relationship. They also get minimal opportunities to share ideas, collaborate or have a “team” engagement which can be isolating. This type of work environment makes it easy to breed bad habits, and it creates challenges when we ask the team to evolve or change what they are doing.

Sales Force Intelligence
Today, to understand how to train, develop, educate, or improve the sales team, leadership must first define their needs, expectations, and how they are spending their time. One solution is to offer your sales organization a “voice” to communicate and assess training, support, compensation and much more while providing an opportunity to offer suggestions and recommendations to improve the company. By surveying the sales force with role-specific and company-aligned questions, the leadership team can gain valuable insights, trends, ideas, and recommendations, “sales intelligence,” to optimize and transform the sales team. These are examples of targeted topic areas and questions:
• What motivates your performance in the field?

• How much time do you spend developing new business accounts per week?

• In your view, what is the ideal target sale for your company? And who is the decision maker?

• How are your customers changing how they buy?

• How can your manager best support your success?

• Do you have ideas for marketing or lead generation campaigns that would support your territory?

Sales Force Intelligence… Ideas for Success

1. Well-developed surveys must align with company and sales force goals and have targeted topics and questions that allow the sales team to assess, measure, and offer ideas and suggestions.

2. Pre-survey communication should occur to the sales team about the goal and value of the survey to elicit support, engagement, and response.

3. Share survey results at a collaborative sales team meeting to engage the team.

Providing an effective environment for the sales team to communicate their needs and expectations, while also allowing them to measure company support and offer insight into training or leadership needs will improve employee relations and drive increased sales performance. Most importantly, gaining sales force intelligence can help your leadership team develop strategies for improved sales performance and growth in the marketplace.

Sales Team Engagement & Transformation

Communicating, presenting and sharing the results of a sales force intelligence survey with the sales organization at a team meeting is a highly effective method to engage the team in the process of change. This will also establish role awareness, sales improvement, and a focus on transforming the sales force. When is the last time you had a truly engaging sales team meeting that was focused on the needs of the sales team, as opposed to you telling them what they “should” be doing?

Providing the opportunity for the team to engage in a collaborative discussion regarding industry trends, changes in the role, and changes occurring in the field can drive awareness and solutions for developing new business.

The Result… An engaging, powerful, sales-focused discussion that looks at the role of sales and how to adapt, perform, change and transform their efforts for sales success.

Today’s Leadership Focus – Change!

Today, leading, developing, and retaining a top performing sales organization requires more than just competitive pay and incentives… it requires having a clear understanding of what Top Performance in the sales role is, and having a sales leadership team that effectively hires, coaches, develops, and leads a team to optimize their performance and sales success.

When we survey teams today, the issue is seldom that a team member is the wrong person. It is they are spending too much time in the wrong places and wasting valuable time in areas where they are comfortable. As a team seeks to change how they sell, the leadership team must consider how they must change HOW they lead. Leadership should consistently monitor, measure, coach, develop, and hold accountability for performance improvement.

Transforming a sales organization is not a one-time event, but rather, an ongoing evolution that requires consistent leadership focus, as well as performance accountability, to reinforce change and maintain momentum. By defining Top Performance in sales and gathering sales force intelligence, you will be on your way to a successful Sales Force Transformation!
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Message over Medium: Modern Communication in the Family Business

As the platform for modern communication has radically changed over the past decade, there have been countless articles and opinions offered on “how” to best reach your audience; in particular a younger audience. A whole new set of communication verbs and nouns have emerged in our vocabulary: “blogging,” “social networking,” and “tweeting” are a testimony to the changing landscape of information delivery. Yet, while we clearly need to understand HOW to use these new vehicles of information delivery, there seems to be less thought or discussion around WHAT we are actually saying to one another. What seems to have been lost in the discussion about ‘medium’ is some renewed thought on the message.

Message is particularly important in a family business. “Who we are, and what we stand for” is often the key differentiator and competitive advantage of a family enterprise. As you think about the message you are crafting for your customers, ensure that no matter what platform you use to communicate – the essence of “who” you are is not lost in translation. This is not to suggest that your business identity needs to stay stuck in the age of the dinosaur – family business brands and identities (like those of any company) do well to evolve and stay current with the times. However, if your clients perceive value in the “personal touch” of your company, you want to be sure that any new communication platform you embrace will not “take that away” from your customer’s experience. The point is not to get so distracted by the rush to jump onto the latest platform, or message system, that the communication you put out there is inauthentic to your business.

In addition to communicating with customers, families that are in business together need to communicate with one another on a regular basis – and many are making use of more contemporary methods. Increasingly we see families setting up Facebook pages, or Yahoo groups to share information and encourage the involvement of the younger generation. Some families have set up blogs to journal a family member’s or the company’s activities. While one could imagine how more channels of communication might facilitate the flow of information, it is also true that these additional channels can provide more opportunities...
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for miscommunication – especially if they are used to deliver the wrong message.

Given the emotional load of both business and family issues, communication is a struggle for many family enterprises. Even just on family matters, different communication “norms” (for example, notions of confidentiality that might be found between the generations is a source of problems. In fact, poor communication is the undoing of many otherwise strong family businesses – and has often also spelled the demise of family unity. Yet, the worst kind of communication is no communication – so this represents a challenge: we want to maximize the flow of information and communication, but we must be mindful of communicating in a productive and healthy manner. What to do?

1. Assume good intentions. Language is limited, no matter the platform. When you are reading or listening to communication from a family member, assume they mean well and not harm. Not everyone is a skilled communicator, and it is easy to be misunderstood, so it is important to actively seek the most positive spin you can put on a communication.

2. Be straightforward. No one likes to feel someone is trying to keep important information away from them – and the younger generation is particularly sensitive to this. If there is information you cannot share, or that should not be communicated through a particular medium, simply state this and explain why. It is reasonable to indicate that financial results should not be shared via email (who knows where that information can end up) – but you must then clarify how or when this information will be made available.

3. Understand the protocol. Different platforms of communication have different “norms.” For example, if you use CAPITAL letters in an email, the ‘norm’ says you are yelling. Be sure that when you use a given communication tool you have good knowledge of how your message can be ‘heard’ or interpreted on this platform.

4. Be authentic. This comes back to the “flavor” of the message. When communicating with clients, ensure the personality of your business is shining through, no matter what platform you use.

5. Have tone fit the message. When communicating with family, the “tone” or flavor of the message should vary depending on the content you are communicating. There are some messages that should be delivered with a sense of professionalism – information about the company, minutes from a Board meeting, etc. Yet, when communicating about the annual family BBQ, that message should not be formal or it will be experienced as cold.

6. Clarify norms and expectations. It is important that everyone who will receive a communication understand what they are expected to do or not do with this information. If a reply or response is required, the family should establish norms around how fast responses are expected – some people feel a 3 day delay is fine, whereas others perceive anything longer than 24 hours to be rude. Likewise, when information is sensitive, or should not be shared with others, it is important to explicitly clarify (especially to the younger generation) what this means.

7. Don’t sacrifice the human touch. While modern technologies can allow us to “feel” more connected, and certainly facilitate the frequency of communication, electronic platforms should NEVER replace face-to-face interactions. If you work down the hall from your sister, walk over there to chat rather than send an email every time. Do not get so seduced by the facility of information exchange and light communication via technology that you forget regular family meetings, shared vacations, or other opportunities to more deeply reconnect with your family.

This challenge of modern communication is an example of a paradox we often encounter in family business: the tension of the old versus the new. We want to be able to stay current and embrace new technologies in ways that will be to our advantage, but we need to be mindful of valued traditions or the “old way” of doing things that may continue to have some currency, and should not be discarded lightly. Certainly the human touch and close connections of family are a vital ingredient in family business success. While you should embrace all the communication technologies that will help you in the business, don’t let these technologies damage the positive “family feel” for your clients or your family!

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JANUARY

21-22  SOAPP Group
       Cleburne, TX

28-29  SMART Group
       San Antonio, TX

FEBRUARY

12     Board of Directors
       Palm Springs, CA

18-19  SECURE Group
       San Antonio, TX

MARCH

2-4    Annual Convention
       Las Vegas, NV

APRIL

7-8    Next Generation Owner's Summit
       Nashville, TN

14-15  Retention/Renewal Training
       Chicago, IL

28-29  Sales Training
       Chicago, IL

MAY

5-6    SOAPP Group
       Baltimore, MD

10-11  Owner's Summit
       Kansas City, MO

19-20  SMART Group
       Pittsburgh, PA

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