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SafeSourcing e-Newsletter

Have comments, questions, or suggestions about the SafeSourcing e-Newsletter? Let us know what you think by emailing us at the following address. We look forward to hearing from you!

events@safesourcing.com

Trivia!

What is a Pick and Axe Company?

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Industry News

Automation!

Robots Help Control Costs at Walmart

Walmart has expanded their use of robots to help monitor inventory, unload trucks, and clean floors in an effort to control costs as the company spends more to raise wages and offer services such as grocery delivery. The company announced at least 300 Walmart stores will add machines to scan shelves for out-of-stock inventory. Approximately 1,500 stores will deploy floor scrubbers to help speed up cleaning. Conveyor belts that automatically sort and scan products as they are off-loaded from trucks will more than double to 1,200. "The company said the addition of a single machine can cut a few hours a day of work previously done by a human, or allow Walmart to allocate fewer people to complete a task, a large savings when spread across around 4,600 U.S. stores." It is anticipated that this will allow workers to focus on other tasks and grow in other areas such as e-commerce.

Walmart is spending more to battle with Amazon.com to serve more customers online. Walmart has employed 40,000 store workers to pull products from shelves to fulfill online grocery orders. In addition, Walmart is raising wages, increasing worker training, and investing in e-commerce startups. The use of automation will take away some of the tasks employees don't enjoy doing, thus freeing up janitorial teams to perform higher-value tasks. ■

Sarah Nassauer and Chip Cutter, WSJ, 4/9/2019

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COMING NEXT ISSUE

Jun.	Answer to our Trivia!
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Recent Savings

Olive Oil

Savings were over 18% of total spend. ■

Mayonnaise

Savings were over 30% of total spend. ■

*Please [contact SafeSourcing](#) to schedule your RISK FREE event today.

Are Amazon Workers Listening to You?

Smart speakers are used by tens of millions of people, however, millions of people are reluctant to bring this technology into their homes out of concern that they are being listened to. "Amazon.com Inc. employs thousands of people around the world to help improve the Alexa digital assistant powering its line of Echo speakers. The team listens to voice recordings captured in Echo owners' homes and offices. The recordings are transcribed, annotated and then fed back into the software as part of an effort to eliminate gaps in Alexa's understanding of human speech and help it better respond to commands."

Although Alexa lives in the cloud, it is always getting smarter. Humans are doing some of the teaching. The team is comprised of contractors and full-time Amazon employees that work from Boston to Costa Rica, India and Romania. They work nine hours a day with each worker parsing as many as 1,000 audio clips per shift. Sometimes the workers pick up sounds from crying babies and off-tune shower singers. Echo launched in 2014 and quickly gained popularity in voice software. Alphabet Inc., Google Home, and Apple Inc.'s HomePod soon followed with their own technology. Consumers purchased 78 million smart speakers last year. ■

Matt Day, Giles Turner, and Natalia Drozdiak, Technology, 4/10/2019

Self-Driving Tesla Taxi Fleet

Chief Executive, Elon Musk, promises by the end of 2020, an on-demand robot taxi fleet will be deployed. He envisions a smartphone app on Tesla vehicles to put vehicles into commercial service to pick up riders on the company's network. The Tesla ride-hailing network would receive 25-30% of rider's revenue, similar to what Uber Technologies and Lyft, Inc. do today. The vehicles with the self-driving software will be worth about \$200,000.

"Mr. Musk's plan drew quick skepticism from some analysts. 'I think regulators will be very cautious on this,' said David Whiston., an analyst at Morningstar Research Services." During the recent presentation, investors in attendance were able to go on a test drive. It was reported that the vehicles worked well and navigated around bikers on the city street. There still remains a lot of doubt the technology will being ready so soon. ■

Tim Higgins, WSJ, 4/23/2020

Trivia! From April 2019 Issue

What is a Non-Quote?

During a bidding event, a non-quote indicates if a host is willing to allow participating vendors not to quote and still have access to the event. If the host is not allowing non-quotes, then any participant who does not quote within the non-quotes threshold time set by the host will be disabled from the event and will not have access back into the event.

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Q: I have run events in the past, is there any chance I could be saving more?

A: Yes. No matter when your past event ran, the team at SafeSourcing can find ways for your company to save.

Q: I want to know more about what SafeSourcing does. Who can I talk to about this?

A: You can contact a customer services representative by calling us at 1-888-261-9070 or by going to our [website](#) and trying our "Risk Free Trial" offer.

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