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the performance
plastics association

ATTRACTING, RETAINING & RECRUITING TALENT

SKILLED TRADES

FINDING TALENT IS EVERYONE'S JOB

Tight labor markets mean that it's a good idea for ALL employees to be on the lookout for talent all year round. Even if you have a human resources (HR) department and have traditionally only looked for employees when you have an opening, now is the time to shift your approach. For example, if anyone at your company notices an employee at a retail store, grocery store or restaurant who has a great attitude and gives great customer service, why not talk to them about opportunities with your company?

These tips for finding talent are divided into those that hiring managers can be empowered to do and those that most likely need direction and support from HR. However, HR can help hiring managers recruit by providing support to execute some of these tips; for example, posting on social media or providing success stories.

BEST PRACTICE TIP

Hiring Managers must be engaged in the talent identification and recruitment process. They work hand-in-hand with HR professionals to divide and conquer to find the best fit for the position.

HIRING MANAGERS CAN USE THESE TIPS TO HELP FIND SKILLED TRADES EMPLOYEES:

- Post jobs on Facebook, including local neighborhood Facebook groups.
- Post jobs on community social media apps such as Nextdoor.
- Encourage current employees to post honest reviews about your company on websites such as GlassDoor.
- If you have a referral bonus program, remind your employees that they are eligible for a referral bonus if they recommend a candidate that ultimately gets hired.
- Build relationships with local high schools, technical colleges and universities. Have representatives from your company speak on Career Days and exhibit at job fairs. See if their robotics teams, theater departments or other relevant student groups need materials that you can donate and help provide your expertise with their projects.
- Offer internship and/or apprenticeship programs so local students get to know your company and the industry while they are still in school. Be sure to pay them an appropriate hourly rate!
- Build awareness about your company through community involvement: highway cleanups, sponsoring youth sports teams, support to non-profits, etc.
- Show the benefits of working at your company versus others that might have better name recognition; for example, employees are treated as team members, not numbers, promote your safety record, etc.
- Show potential candidates the interesting applications that your materials are made into; this helps the candidate appreciate that they will be part of something meaningful.
- Share the employee success stories you have in your operations. Did your company president start on the warehouse floor? What was the promotional path for the plant manager?

YOUR HR DEPARTMENT CAN USE THESE TIPS TO HELP FIND SKILLED TRADES EMPLOYEES:

- Engage the services of temporary-to-permanent employment agencies. Emphasize that the position will lead to a permanent role, which is more desirable.
 - Be aware of the hire-to-start date interval for temporary employees; many want to start right away and will not be available after several days of no work. Temporary employees typically start the next day.
 - Be transparent with temporary employees that you wish to hire; begin the process prior to the end of their contract. Treat them like full-time employees from the day they start. If they feel like they're part of the team, they will be more likely to stay.
 - Do not call temporary employees "temps"; "contractor" is preferred.

- Engage in paid social media campaigns on the platforms that your candidates are most likely to use. Many of these campaigns are pay-per-click and provide excellent analytics.

- Work with your local Chambers of Commerce.

- Offer referral bonuses to current employees who recommend new hires.

- Consider whether you are willing to hire people based on attitude and values rather than experience; can you focus on potential, rather than background?
 - Do they fit your culture? Can they be trained for the position?

- Adapt your job postings to appeal to the audience you are trying to attract.

- When taking candidates through your operations, ask them if they can see themselves here. Do they feel like they are a good match? Remember, share with the new employee the only reason you want to backfill the position is if you've promoted the employee. Share the career advancement opportunities and stories in your company.

HIRING PROCESS

BEFORE YOU HIRE A CANDIDATE, CONSIDER:

- Are you putting your best foot forward with regard to your facility? Is it a nice place to work? What does the break room look like? Is the warehouse climate-controlled? How do you stack up against the other employers in the area?
- Is your company culture visible to potential employees? Do they see a well-run, functional, safe work environment, or is their first impression negative?
- Ensure that you have current data on wage rates for your roles in your geography.
- Are you aware of the compensation, perks, schedules, etc. that other employers in your area are offering candidates? How do yours stack up?
- Offer sign-on bonuses.
- If possible, adapt your shift hours to accommodate local day care centers and schools, as many single parents are trying to juggle their jobs and childcare.
- Review your hiring process. Is it overly complicated? Can it be streamlined?
- Keep in mind that you might not be able to get multiple candidates for a job opening. With the labor shortage, if you find a qualified candidate, hire them as soon as possible.
- Monitor the comments being made about your company on websites such as GlassDoor. Be responsive to criticism.

EXPERT TIP: MOVE WITH SPEED!

In today's tight labor market, companies must re-think their timelines and hiring process and, when necessary, condense the time from initial inquiry to interview to offer. Good candidates will be hired by someone else if you wait too long. It's possible that the interview and the offer could happen in the same day.

Review your processes and ask: What is slowing you down? Where can you expedite? For example:

- Background checks — is there another company with a faster turnaround? Consider having the start date before the results come in, but position is contingent on a clean background check.
- Internal approval process — are there numerous layers of approval? Is it all necessary?

RETENTION TIPS

Some employees are hired right out of school and spend their working life with the same company. Others will move from company to company, staying a certain amount of time before leaving. While there is no way to guarantee that you can keep these employees for their entire career, there are things you can do to help keep them longer than they may have stayed otherwise: Monitor the comments being made about your company on websites such as GlassDoor. Be responsive to criticism.

- Re-evaluate the annual raises, cost of living increases and merit raise processes in your organization to ensure that you are at or above the current market (for hiring and retention). Make sure the new employees are not earning more than the existing employee base; make sure your existing employees don't feel left behind.
- If you offer a sign-on bonus, evaluate the speed at which you pay it out.
- Consider offering a profit-sharing program for non-commission employees.
- Consider offering benefits from the first day on the job, rather than after 90 days.
- Determine what flexibility in terms of schedule and location that you are able to provide for each role or team member.
- Check in with your employees after they start their jobs. Find out if things are working out for them. Especially if they are new to manufacturing or distribution, they may like to know that someone is there and cares.
- Create a training pathway so employees receive training for increasingly complex work and are compensated accordingly. Give them incremental goals and rewards.
- Employees leave their managers, not their roles. Consider training the managers in your company so that they have the skills needed to create a culture that makes their direct reports want to stay.
- The younger generations need more frequent feedback/rewards/incentives than previous generations. Consider breaking down what used to be an annual reward into quarterly, monthly and weekly increments.

- Reward employees in targeted, meaningful ways.
 - Be creative! Bring in lunch, a food truck or an ice cream truck for team rewards.
 - Consider offering the reward twice: during the day and in the evening. This will help your second shift feel appreciated, plus it gives your day shift the option to bring their families to the facility so they can take a tour. They might want to proudly show off what they do.
 - For individual recognition, consider the person to be recognized. Do they want a lot of attention and fanfare, or are they more private? A shy person would most likely prefer being recognized in a quiet, personal way, rather than publicly.
 - Show your employees that you appreciate them all year round.

- When you lose employees, don't assume that you know the reasons they left. Have candid conversations with them to find out why they are leaving. Although there will be reasons that you can't fix, you might uncover a problem that you can address, such as a toxic boss or issues with equipment. Fixing those problems may prevent further loss of talent.
 - Consider using an exit survey either instead of or in addition to an exit interview. In some cases, the (former) employee may feel like he/she can give more candid/honest feedback than if they are speaking with someone face-to-face.
 - Surveys can be sent to former employees at their personal email addresses.

REMEMBER: HERE ARE THE REASONS THAT EMPLOYEES STAY AT THEIR JOBS:

- 83% enjoy the work they do
- 79% for the job security
- 70% for a family-oriented culture
- 68% because it fits well with the other demands in their lives