



Finding Good Employees

By Steve Linsky

How do you find **good** employees? Hiring the wrong person can become a nightmare for a company. But many small business owners don't take the time needed to fill openings with the right person. Too often, the person hired is the one that first responds to the classified advertisement and is ready to go to work. You may think, "He or she is here in front of me so I'll give them a shot!" This is a big mistake!

Recruiting is hard work! You need to set a goal with the minimum skill set that you will accept, and then stick to it. Take the extra time to find the RIGHT person. How do you do that? Below is a list of tips to assist you in locating and hiring an employee who you will help you to grow your business.

Recruit in the right places. Before buying expensive space in the classifieds, utilize all of the following:

- **Network through friends and co-workers**— do they know a friend or relative that they would suggest? This is always a good source because the person who is recommending the applicant has a stake in how well they do. They may even become an unofficial Mentor and can help the "Newbie". You might want to consider giving a cash stipend to the person making the recommendation if the employee lasts at least 90 days. People are more encouraged to offer a reference if they will be rewarded for doing so.
- **Talk to placement counselors and shop teachers at Trade Schools.** Build a relationship with them so you can get the first shot at their best students. If they know you personally, these folks can tell you not only who are the best students but also which ones *not* to hire. (No lazy, late, or technically disadvantaged students).
- **Set up your own training program.** This allows you to train from within your current employees. Find great people who may be limited in skills but have a great work ethic and mindset so they will learn and grow with your business.
- **Promote from within.** Train your existing staff members and reward the top of the pack with promotions. Don't let your best people leave to go elsewhere with the training you gave them. Make sure your pay is competitive within your industry. Show appreciation for your "A" employees— if you like their work, tell them.
- **Try recruiting web sites— they work!** If you are targeting the "under 30" folks, you must advertise your job openings on the WEB. The current generation looks there first! Some popular recruiting websites include Craigslist.com, projojobs.com, or even your local newspaper's web site. These sites offer inexpensive ads and have generally good results. Craigslist only charges \$25 for a posting in the Boston market and it's free to post in Rhode Island.
- **Be specific about what and whom you need.** It's better to have a few qualified candidates than many people who have no experience but can learn. If you need someone to do framing or sheet rock, a novice isn't going to help you. State exactly what skills you are looking for and hope you at least get a few that fit the profile.



- Lastly, but most importantly, **Respond to candidate calls quickly**. The good ones don't last long! If you hold them off for a day or two, they will end up working for someone else. Treat every caller as someone who may be able to help you. Screen your candidates over the phone first and only then bring them in for a face-to-face interview. Get names and phone numbers of everyone that calls and jot them down in case your first choices do not work out.

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If you want to discuss the article in more detail, feel free to e-mail Steve and he will be happy to respond to you.

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