

Employee Problems? Are They The Cause Or Could It Be You?



By Jayme Broudy, Contractor's Business School

Dear Jayme:

I can't seem to hire good employees. Some get the job done, some don't. Some are slow, some are fast. Some understand what I want, some don't. Nothing's consistent. Does every contractor have this problem?

—Sam

Dear Sam:

How hard can it be? You needed a Service Tech, you hired him, but now he seems to be on a different planet. He doesn't know a lot of stuff, takes a long time to do things, etc. Now you have figure out what he knows, what he doesn't, and train him up to speed (you have extra time for that, right?).

Almost all employee problems stem from two people assuming different things as a result of vague communication. You thought you were hiring X, the recruit thought he was applying for Y. You assumed he had graduated from a trade school, he actually went to high school. He assumed 40 hours a week, M-F but you assumed 4 ten hour days including Saturday. Now a disaster looms. Who didn't do their job in hiring?

Because your employees have such a profound effect on your business, it's critical that you create a solid hiring process where all of your expectations are crystal clear so that you hire the closest possible match. You can skate on some other things, but getting the right people isn't optional.

So how do you get the right people in the door? We'll start by avoided some mistakes and misunderstandings:

Mistake #1: Job Title and Job Description are the same things. No, No, No. This is really important. They're two COMPLETELY different things. You may *think* you want to hire a "Service Tech", but you don't. What you *really* want is a bundle of skills and experience that can solve a specific set of problems in a particular way.

And a good Job Description specifies that: What results must the Service Tech produce, how are those results measured, who does he report to, what tools or systems must he operate, etc. It will also describe the experience, training, education, licenses, etc. that are necessary and any other qualifications needed to do the job.

When you've got that detailed list of criteria assembled, *then* you're ready to start interviewing candidates. And interviewing, by the way, is a structured, detailed process as well. There no point in creating a detailed set of qualification requirements and then do an off-the-cuff interview down at Subway.

Mistake #2: Great employees guarantee good results. Not. They're not a set-and-forget system. When you get the great guy and hire him on, your job is only beginning. The rookie (even an experienced one) needs proper tools and training to insure that he fully understands the job expectations and duties (as you've already laid out in the description).

Mistake #3: I can hire them now and fix them later. Once in a while, maybe, but you'll have to deal with a lot frogs and it's not worth it. Build your hiring system once, let it filter out everyone but the very best fit, and go from there. A far better investment in the long run.

Human Resources is a fuzzy area that's hard to clearly define. Hidden in there, however, are a set of

useful methods that can make life way more pleasant for both you and your employees.

If you cut corners on a construction project it almost always comes back to bite you and costs more than if it's been done right the first time. Same with hiring. You get quality people by investing in a quality process and touching all the bases every time.

Cheers!

Jayme

I wonder if other dogs think poodles are members of a weird religious cult. –*Rita Rudner*

Jayme Broudy is the founder and principal of Contractor's Business School® - a coaching, training and consulting firm specializing in helping contractors produce more profit in less time. Since 1993, Jayme has worked with hundreds of contractors in many specialty areas to build successful stand-alone businesses. Visit www.contractorsbusinessschool.com or call (800) 527-7545 to get the free CD "10 Key Strategies to Build a Business that Works."

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