

Progressive Hiring Strategies

One of the biggest struggles that most dry cleaners face is employee turnover and finding new employees to fill those spots. As an industry, those who have been successful at filling open positions have had to turn to more and more unconventional methods in order to recruit good employees. Unfortunately, the days of people coming to our door looking for work are over.

There are 2 keys to finding good employees, the first is making sure they mesh with your company culture and the second is attracting them to your business.

Core Values

Before you even advertise a position, the key is to figure out the core values of your company. This can seem like a daunting task, so a really simple way to start this process is to think of 3-4 of your superstar employees and write their names on a white board. These are the employees that you wish you could clone over and over and fill your plant with them. Think of all of the great qualities they possess and list them under their names. When the lists are done, look for the common qualities across those employees. Those common qualities are a great start to figuring out the qualities you value for your company and the culture you're trying to create. (If you want to dive deeper into this, I highly recommend the book, "Traction" by Gino Wickman).

Once your core values are defined you know the kind of person you're looking for. Interview for those values by determining questions that assess how well a candidate exemplifies those them.

Finding quality candidates in a competitive market

Now that the easy part is over, how do you reach and find candidates. Most cleaners put a sign in their window, advertise on indeed and craigslist and complain that they aren't getting any good applicants. The workforce is changing and the days of people coming to you for a job are over.

Make sure your employment ads reflect your core values

Make your ads consistent to your values and culture in order to attract the type of person you're looking for. In general, write ads that are different than everyone else's. A friend of ours in the commercial laundry industry recently posted this ad:



I know what you're thinking and yes, this was actually published in the newspaper. I'm sure it doesn't surprise you that one of this company's core values is humor and they're trying to attract a very specific person; one with a sense of humor. A requirement for working at City Laundry is that their employees have fun at work. They don't want to waste time sifting through candidates who can't take a joke because those people won't last long within their culture.

This is a pretty "out there" example but you see my point, they are hiring based on their culture and values.

Make "You're Awesome" cards to hand out.

Always be on the lookout for amazing people. If you're at the grocery store and an employee impresses you hand them a "you're awesome" card. Our cards have our core value logo on the front and on the back say:

*"We are always looking for the BEST PEOPLE to join our team. Call us and let us know that _____
said you are awesome! You could be our next employee!"*

Include an e-mail and phone number on the card and make the entire interaction laid back. Simply say, "Wow, you do a great job and Target is lucky to have you! If you're ever looking for a new position, we're always looking for friendly, engaging people like you." It's as simple as that and the person will be flattered. The best part is, these cards can be made at a very low cost online.

Employee referral program

Some of our best employees have come from recommendations of other employees. It makes sense; your staff will recommend good workers because they don't want to work with someone who's not pulling their weight.

Create an employee referral program to incentivize your staff to recommend others. We offer a \$50 bonus if an employee recommends someone who we hire and an additional \$50 if the recommended employee makes it to 60-days.

Hand out flyers

Know your town. We're close to a college campus, so when we're desperate for staff, we will go to a busy corner of campus and literally hand out flyers and talk to students about our open positions. We've found some great employees this way. This can be done anywhere within your community. Go to Walmart, a mall, a busy street corner. The important part is to start conversations with people. Even if they're not looking for employment, they probably know someone who is.

If you find yourself struggling to fill open positions, try something new! If you're able to continually seek out potential candidates you'll have a leg up when a position opens up at your business.