

By Dan Apple, President of The Apple Group LLC

SALES&MARKETING

HIRING SECRET: Fish Where They're Biting

There is good news and bad news about the ever-rebounding economy.

The good news: there's plenty of demand for garage doors and service from all residential and commercial segments so most dealers' sales are going gangbusters.

The bad news: "I can't find enough qualified people to get the work done" is the #1 challenge I hear from door dealers. The imbalance that exists between customer demand and production prevents dealers from growing sales, gaining market share and ultimately missing out on greater profit.

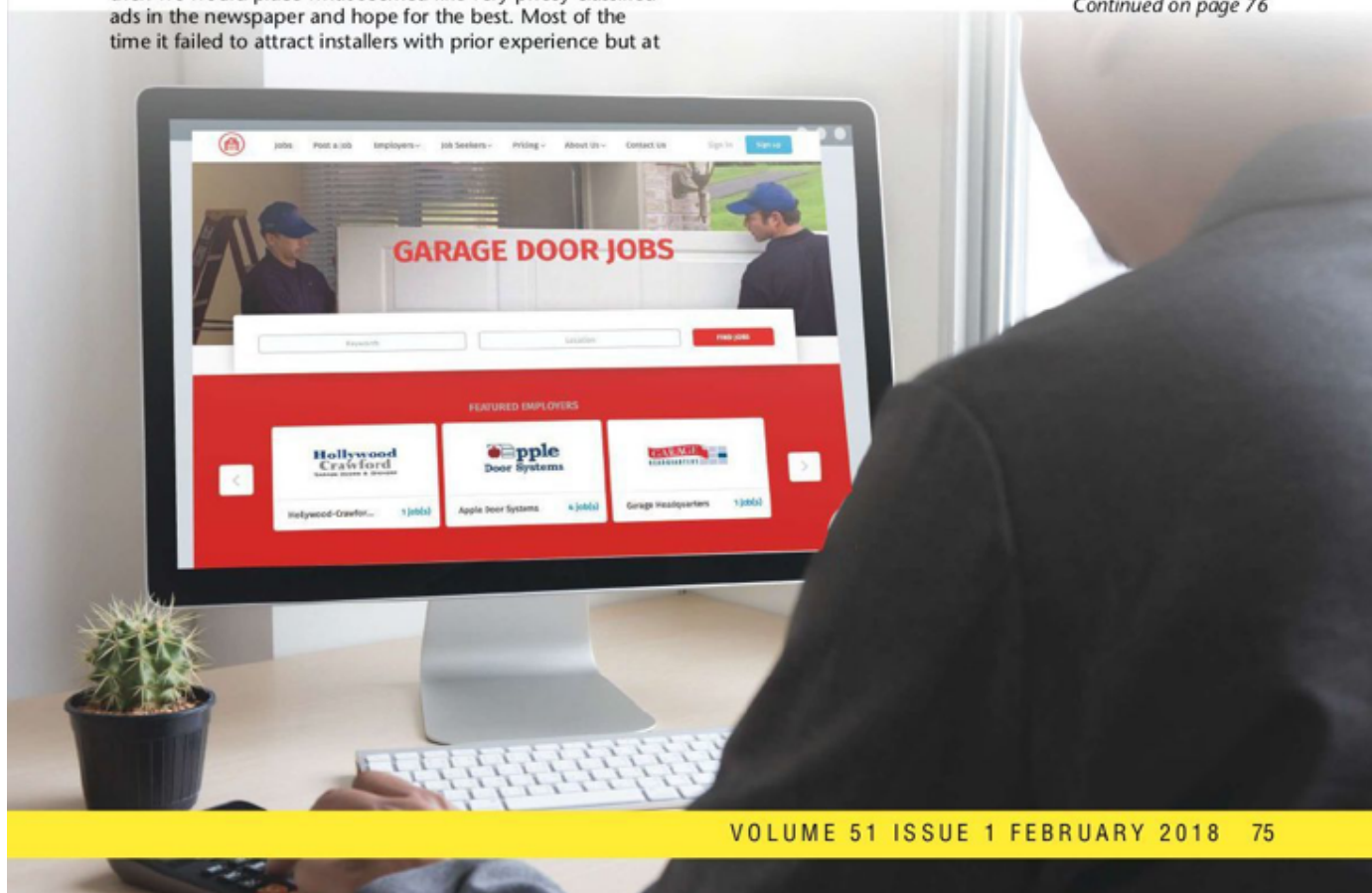
This is not a new problem. During my 33 years (1978-2011) as a dealer finding installers was always tough. It's a unique position and was never easy to advertise for. Back then we would place what seemed like very pricey classified ads in the newspaper and hope for the best. Most of the time it failed to attract installers with prior experience but at

least we usually attracted people that enough mechanical skills and could be trained from scratch. But today, things are even more difficult.

Traditional ways of employment advertising no longer seem to work. The days of placing a classified ad and hoping for the best has gotten even more expensive and even less effective.

I wish I could give you the perfect solution to this problem but that's not possible. Recruiting new talent requires more time, effort and creativity on the dealer's part. Getting in front of the type of people you want to hire is the trick. Basically, you must fish where the fish are biting and that's not in the newspaper anymore. So, where are they?

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Go fishing... The new talent you so badly need for your garage door dealership are welded to the Internet. Look at these stats from Pew Research Center...

Internet Users	Daily Use Internet	Users of Social Media
Adults, age 18-29	99%	88%
Adults, age 30-49	98%	79%
All adults, annual income of \$30 - \$49,000	90%	80%
All adults, annual income of \$50 - \$75,000	95%	73%

Go fishing

The new talent you so badly need for your garage door dealership are welded to the Internet it seems. Look at these stats from Pew Research Center.

Looks like the “fish” we need are swimming in the Internet pond, most of which are using social media. So grab your tackle box and head on over to Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and other websites where your fish are swimming daily.

Where to advertise?

Recently we were asked by one of our door dealer clients to do some recruiting to fill two desperately needed installer positions. Like most, this medium size dealer in the southeastern U.S. was so busy with running the day-to-day operation there was no time to allocate time for a full court press on hiring. So we agreed to help and began promoting this well paid position online. We advertised on all of the popular sites including indeed, linkedin, craigslist, glassdoor, snagajob and others. The ad was quite explicit about having prior experience. During those three weeks we placed over \$1,000 in advertising on these sites and received over 100 applicants of which 2 had prior experience. The overwhelming majority did not even have the skills needed to learn garage door installation! I felt like the client’s money and my efforts were wasted. To make matters worse, the two that listed prior experience would not respond after trying to follow up with them via phone, text and email. Frustrating, to say the least.

While these popular online job posting boards may be effective for advertising for other positions, they were not doing much for finding garage door installers. I remember our client saying, “Wouldn’t it be great if there were a low cost online job board exclusively dedicated to garage door people?” They say necessity is the mother of invention. The need was certainly there but how could invention follow?

A single portal

I thought, why not create a job search website just for our industry? We could create a singular portal for employers and job seekers to log into and see only jobs specifically related to the garage door industry. A place where door dealers could place ads without breaking the bank and job seekers could see jobs only related to their profession. So, I searched for such a site but when I Googled “find garage door installer jobs” all I got was more of the same places we had already tried (indeed, glassdoor, etc). I spoke to various dealers,

manufacturers and our trade organizations and all agreed that hiring is an issue but offered no real new solutions. It was time to try a new approach.

GarageDoorJobs.com is born

Grandma always told me, “you can’t know if something will work until you try”. It was her inspiration that has guided me all my career and this time would be no exception. So I registered the domain, created the website and launched GarageDoorJobs.com in October. We have partnered with an expert in the field of online employment sites, Smart Job Board, who helped us create a job posting board that is easy to find, easy to use and provides value to employers and job seekers alike. The process is simple for employers.

- Register your account
- Choose the type of ad
- Fill in the blanks with basic job information
- Check out.

Our two main goals for the site were to make it easy to use and low cost. Employers and jobseekers can register for free. Employers can choose one time job posts for \$20 - \$45 depending on how long they want them to run. Larger employers can purchase job slots where up to 4 jobs can be posted each month with a cost of \$75-\$95 per month. Once registered, and ads are placed, you can monitor your ad’s performance through the Employer Dashboard. Job seekers can search jobs based on job type, location or by our featured employers and then easily apply for jobs without leaving the site! They can also post their resume for free for 30 days or pay a nominal fee for a longer duration. For more information visit GarageDoorJobs.com.

Go to the Mattresses

In my favorite movie, The Godfather, when it looked like the five “families” were about to go to war over Don Corleone’s refusal to sell narcotics, which led to an assassination attempt on his life, one of his most trusted lieutenants said “time to go to the mattresses”. That meant it was time to hunker down, get tough and be aggressive.

Hiring for garage door personnel requires this type of mental toughness. Okay, so the old, traditional and easier ways of recruiting new talent no longer work. Rather than griping about it, why not try something different. Here are some suggestions in addition to using online job boards.

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Call it guerilla marketing or getting back to basics, but there are unconventional ways to advertise for new techs.

- **Your Website** – This may be a blinding glimpse of the obvious but I see door dealer websites that have beautiful homepages, artfully promoting their products and services but not once mentioning that they're looking to hire. Consider it as hanging your "help wanted" sign on your cyber-storefront door. Make it easy to see and link it to a simple to use online application form or maybe allow them to upload their resume. You are already paying for the advertising on the web to sell products, why not allocate some space for selling jobs?
- **Billboard Ads** – Rather than selling doors, sell jobs on the roadside billboard you already pay to advertise on.
- **Truck Signs** – It may sound hokey but it works. In addition to using your trucks to market your company brand, consider using it for recruiting your next installer. Your techs and their techs hang out at the same fast food joints. A well placed, eye-grabbing bumper stickers or magnetic sign can get noticed quickly and at least start a dialog. Once you've hired the people you need simply remove it!
- **Store Signs** – Something as simple as a sign on your storefront may make all the difference. If you really want to get crazy use one of those lighted, rent-a-signs and position it so traffic passing your store can easily see it.
- **Employee Incentives** – We are reluctant to hang bounties on the jobs we need to fill but let's face it, your employees collectively know more people than you do. Why not leverage their connections? Consider rewarding current

employees with a significant bonus, say \$1,000 or more, paid out over time if new hire meets expectations. Require that the referring employee also act as a job mentor to help the new hire adjust. Let them be part of the interview team and decision process also.

- **Hire Veterans** – Consider contacting local armed forces recruiters. Yes, they may be more interested in finding new recruits but take it from this old sailor, re-entry into civilian life can be tough and the local recruiting office is there to help vets. Letting them know you are willing to hire and train veterans can help both of you. On GarageDoorJobs.com we are advertising our jobs to veteran related job search websites and make a special effort to welcome these heroes to our industry. <https://garagedoorjobs.com/welcome-vets/>

I am sure you have other successful ways to recruit. If you'd like to share, feel free to share your idea with us and we'll be happy to post it to our blog for others to see. Drop us a line at <https://garagedoorjobs.com/contact/>

Summary

Finding and hiring new people takes time. Consider using the tools mentioned in this article if your methods are not working. The main thing is to understand that recruiting people is almost exactly like recruiting new customers... both require a bit of selling. Successful hiring starts with advertising online where potential employees visit. Basically, fish where the fish are biting! 



Billboard Ads, Truck & Store Signs, Veteran Administrations... unconventional ways to advertise for new techs are also effective.

Dan Apple is president of The Apple Group LLC, a consulting firm located in Bonita Springs, Florida. His focus is assisting garage door dealers with profitability and marketing. Dan served as president of Apple Door Systems in Richmond, Virginia for 33 years which grew to a statewide dealership with eight locations. He was the first president of the Institute of Door Dealer Education and Accreditation where he was responsible for creating the industry's first national accreditation program in 1998. Dan also served as a director of the Door & Operator Dealers Association and the International Door Association from 1994-1998. Contact him at 804.640.4253 or email: danielapple@me.com or visit the website at www.AppleLLC.net.

