

By John Kasun

In my ongoing conversations with business owners one subject that keeps coming up is the difficulty of finding good employees. While everyone will tell me they are looking for good employees many complain about a poor employee they already have.

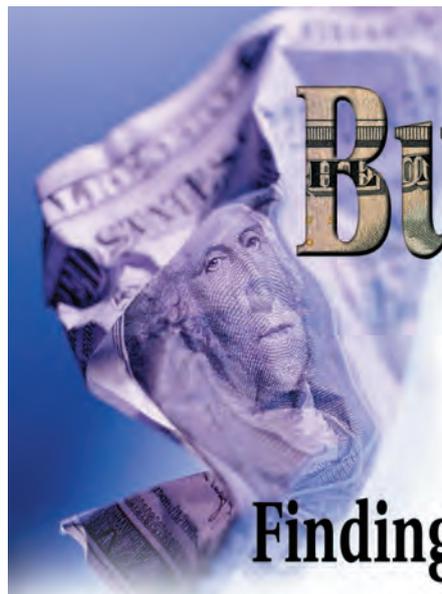
If you have found yourself in this same situation, consider this for a moment. Poor employees don't simply grow in the dark like mushrooms, they don't just show up in a business, someone had to hire them. It is also important to remember that many employees that have great potential turn into poor employees because their employers failed to give them the proper direction or training.

Your employees represent your business; they represent you and your reputation. Their actions can bring customers to your shop or drive them away. With all of that at risk it makes sense to take the time to find the right employee for your particular application and need. While a good employee is an asset to your business and will make you money a poor employee will always cost you money either by not doing the job you need done properly or at worst driving away customers through poor service or a bad attitude.

Finding a good employee does not just happen, it takes a planning and work. There is enough at risk so it is a job that must be done right and should not be taken casually. The first step in this process is developing a written job description of the position you wish to fill. Only when this is complete can you consider a search for suitable candidates, conduct an in-depth interview and utilize a comprehensive training program. Eliminating any one of these steps is normally a recipe for disaster.

### JOB DESCRIPTION

Depending upon the size of the shop the needs for an employee with specific skills can vary greatly. Whatever your needs are it is important to be realistic when determining them. It is going to be very difficult to hire someone who is a skilled bow



## Finding Good Employees

mechanic, a super salesman, knows computers, runs a cash register, empties the trash cans and is great with people. In order to select the right employee you must first know what your needs are and in what areas you most need help. If you don't know what you are looking for how will you know when you find it? And how can your employee possibly know what you expect if you don't tell him?

To help with this task it is beneficial to establish a job description which outlines your needs and what you expect of the potential employee. It can be as formal or as informal as you choose but writing it down will make it much clearer in your mind and that makes the task of selecting the right employee much easier.



A simple job description can be a few sentences or a complete written page. In any event it should be clear, concise and directly to the point. Remember taking the time to write down what you expect from your new employee goes a long way in helping you make the proper choice.

### THE SEARCH

Before you can staff your business with good employees you must first locate those candidates with the most potential. The most common mistake make in the hiring process is waiting until you need help to look for it. A smart employer is always on the lookout for a good employee. Even though a vacancy does not presently exist making a physical note of someone that impressed you in some manner, with either their knowledge, experience or personality makes a good starting point when a need actually presents itself.

Due to the nature of the archery business many employees are simply chosen from the ranks of customers, friends and referrals or someone who simply "hangs-out" at the shop. While these are good areas to begin your search do not make the mistake of allowing it to limit your thinking about other possibilities.

While conducting your personal business be constantly on the alert for people in the service field, who you find helpful, courteous and friendly. People who may impress you probably have what are often referred to as "people skills" and they are the heart of any good business. When you run across someone that catches your eye take a few extra minutes to learn more about them for future reference. You would be surprised what a few friendly questions might reveal. You may just have



**Lance Laratonda, owner of Chimney Rocks Archery located in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania takes a few minutes to look over his job applications file, even though he has no immediate need for extra help. As a business owner it is a good idea to keep a constant eye out for anyone that might be a possible future good employee as you never know when the need for additional help might arise. Keeping a list of such people will help you avoid the mistake of hiring someone without adequate consideration just because you might find yourself in a bind and need someone "right now."**

stumbled across your next best employee, particularly if they're already in sales and you find out they've got a keen interest in hunting or archery.

Being constantly aware of the people around you will provide you with a good list of potential candidates when the need to fill a position arises. It will also keep you from making a bad hiring decision in the event you are faced with a situation in which you need someone "right now" and are forced to choose the next guy through the door.

### THE INTERVIEW

If you have done your homework properly when the need for additional help arises you will have a list from which to select your next employee. However simply having the list of possible applicants is not the end of the selection process. It is important to sort through the potential candidates on your list and select the best one for the position that you need to fill.

This is best done with an in-depth interview process. A properly structured interview process is actu-

ally a two-way street. It give you the opportunity to learn more about the potential employee and equally as important it gives the potential employee the opportunity to learn more about you, your business, the job and your expectations. This is where the job description plays a vital role. The applicant might visualize working in an archery shop as getting to play with archery gear all day and talking hunting with the customers. They may not understand the importance of handling the customers in a time efficient manner, especially during the rush season. They might also not realize that keeping the pegs stocked, the trash picked up and the phone promptly answered all while keeping an eye out for shoplifters is part of the job.

A shop owner recently told me of a man he hired on the spur of the moment to help out in his shop. The man was very knowledgeable about archery equipment and the owner put him to work immediately on the sales floor with no real instruction or direction. Unfortunately in spite of his archery knowledge the man was

terrified of writing up the paper work involved in making a sale and handling the cash. His first day on the job resulted in an immediate logjam of disgruntled customers at the check-out as he waited for others on the sales staff to ring-up his sales. This problem could have been easily avoided if the job expectations were simply made clear to him before he was hired or if he was given some initial training.

### JOB TRAINING

Once a new employee has been selected their success depends greatly upon the initial training provided. The owner or manager must familiarize them with the store policies and the stores sales philosophy. This includes everything from how you expect a customer to be handled to how you like to set up a bow and what equipment you recommend and why. It is also important to stress that their job is to assist the customer in making the right selection for their needs and budget and is not to be based on the employee's personal likes or dislikes.

When it comes to training never assume that just because an employee is willing to do a task that they know how you want it done. Often people feel awkward giving other people direction but remember if you don't tell an employee what you want done and how you want it done it is your fault if his work does not meet your expectations.

### CONCLUSIONS

It makes no difference if you are a small shop with two employees or a large operation with 20, the quality of your employees has a direct impact on the success of your business. Selecting the proper employees is too important to be left to mere chance. Just as it is critical to maintain a balanced inventory to meet your customers' needs it is equally as important to ensure that your employees fit your needs and those of your business. That doesn't happen by accident. Hopefully when the need for an addition to your staff arises the above tips will help you make the best selection. ←