



TECHNOLOGIES

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP SERIES

5 Tips for Recruiting Technicians

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The right person in the right position is crucial to your success, yet an aging workforce and waning interest in the industry from young people has created a critical shortage of diesel technicians.

In a [story](#) by Transport Topics, Chad Enyeart, coordinator of the Diesel/Advanced Diesel Program at Wyo Tech said, “When we come out of this economy, you’ll probably see 40% to 50% of technicians retiring within 18 months to two years.”

The incredible demand and lagging supply of viable candidates has created fierce competition for the available talent.

It’s not uncommon, in this competitive hiring climate, for technicians to be offered employment before they even finish trade school and, in general, technicians coming into the workforce have the luxury of being able to pick and choose where they work.

That’s why it’s crucial that your business is on top of its recruiting game if you want to have a chance with the technicians entering the industry today. It’s not enough to put a sign on the door and update the “Careers” section of your website. You’ll have to do more to attract top talent.

Recruiting talent from a variety of generations can be challenging. Recruiting Millennials and Generation Y will be different than recruiting from Generation X or the Baby Boomers. If you haven’t hired since Generation Y was in diapers, it is time to review your recruiting strategy to make sure it serves you well in this hyper-competitive climate.

Try these five recruiting tips to attract the talent you need.

1. Partner with a trade school or vocational program

Trade schools with diesel technician programs are preparing the majority of the new talent entering the workforce, and building a relationship with the programs near you is your chance to get in front of dozens of potential employees.

Building relationships with trade schools may be the only chance you get at hiring their graduates. In a [story](#) on the technician shortage in Truck Parts & Service, Al Clark, a diesel tech instructor at Lane Community College in Eugene, Oregon, says that many of his students have been hired before they ever finish the program. Some had been in the program for as little as two weeks before being recruited to work in the industry.

“The best luck that we have had is going through a trade school and we are currently working to build a relationship with a couple of different schools,” says Dino Taylor, Service Manager of Gateway Industrial Power.

Once you have a relationship built, take that relationship with the school beyond just getting to know them and find out how you can become a true partner. Host students for job shadowing or internships. Or open your doors to the entire class for some hands-on “real world” experience working on vehicles currently in the shop. Both are fantastic

opportunities to start the recruiting process with their students. This is an approach that Chuck Burr, Jr., President of Burr Truck & Trailer Sales has had success with.

“I’ve visited and participated in testing and curriculum planning of vocational programs in our local school districts. It gives me the ability to see what they are learning, advise of changes that should be made to the curriculum, and get an inside track on the kids that are planning to pursue a future in the trucking industry,” he said.

2. Be Online

Young people aren’t looking for jobs in the classified section of the newspaper. They are looking online.

A great place to start is with your own website. Is your “Careers” section prominently featured? Is performing a job search easy to do? How complicated is the application process? The more difficult it is for a candidate to complete this process, the less likely they are to follow through with it.

Social media presence is important as well. If a potential applicant performs an internet search for your company, the first result will be your website. The second will likely be your social media pages. Social media is a great place to advertise job openings and an easy way to show off your company culture and personality.

Don’t neglect your social media pages. If a job seeker sees that no one has updated the company Facebook page in over a year, it reflects poorly on your company. Social media might not be your top priority, but it only takes a few minutes to post an update and keep the page active.

3. Don’t put all your eggs in one basket

Website job listings and an active Facebook page with job links is a good start, but that can’t be all you do.

Twitter is also worth exploring, with its small learning curve and large reach, and LinkedIn, a social network designed for professionals looking to mingle with colleagues and job hunt, is quickly catching on with many people. There are now 433 million registered LinkedIn users – and two new members join LinkedIn every second!

Job boards and career advice websites like CareerBuilder.com, Monster.com, and Indeed.com should also be a part of the mix. These are great places to post jobs, but you should do a little searching of your own. Take a look at some of the resumes that have already been posted to see if they match what you are looking for. Finding just one or two names worth following up on would be well worth your time.

Don’t overlook trade publications. Many run job listings on their websites, whether they are in their own dedicated section or run as a sidebar alongside their articles. Be prepared that these will likely require some monetary investment on your part.

4. Offer appealing or unique perks

Offering a job and a steady hourly wage alone is not going to entice diesel technicians to come bang on your door looking for a job. You have to offer them something they find important or something unique.

Taking the time to explain to each candidate how they fit into the company and showing them where the opportunities for advancement are could go a long way. Communication and openness in general does wonders according to Burr.

“I’ve got a strong relationship with our technicians and an open door policy. And we make a point to follow up on any concerns or requests they have,” he said.

Attracting Millennial and Generation Y candidates means appealing to things they covet, like the chance to learn and grow, the chance to make a real difference in the company, the chance to take on new challenges, and flexibility.

Providing the flexibility many Millennials and Gen Y crave may be the real chance to set yourself apart from the competition. Something as simple as giving them the choice of coming in at 7:00, 7:30, or 8:00 in the morning or having some say in which days off they take during the week could send a technician your way rather than to that rival shop down the street.

5. Be Visible, Be Passionate

Just as you won’t win much business if customers don’t know you’re there, you won’t recruit many talented technicians if they don’t know about you.

Selling your business to diesel technicians isn’t much different from selling products and services to your customers.

“I feel like I can ‘sell’ the benefits of working for our company better than anyone else. I’m young and energetic about our future and the future of the trucking industry,” said Burr.

Make it to as many career fairs as possible. Be online in as many places as you can be. Make your presence known on social networks and in trade publications. Set a goal to have every single diesel technician in your area know exactly who you are and what you offer. And don’t be afraid to show what your business is passionate about – applicants are looking for a connection at a company that shares their values. If your business is committed to eco-friendly materials and business practices, your story will resonate with applicants looking for a planet-friendly employer. Maybe you partner with the local community to support the area homeless, or you have an employee wellness committee to support health in your community. These types of programs illustrate who you are and will win over applicants who share those values.

Going Forward

Competition for talented diesel technicians is going to continue to be fierce. But if you focus on these five tips, you can move your business to the front of the pack in the race for top talent.

About Gail Wilkinson

Finding top talent has been a focus for Gail Wilkinson throughout her twenty-five years in the Human Resources field. Her career began with IBM in Washington DC then migrated west to Wyoming, where she held a variety of HR positions in both the public and private sectors. She returned to her home state of Illinois in 2003 and is currently Karmak's VP of Human Resources. She currently provides leadership to the corporate resources and legacy software teams Gail holds an undergraduate and graduate degree and is SPHR certified through the Society of Human Resource Management. Helping to grow Karmak's team of dedicated professionals has been one of her proudest accomplishments.



About Alyssa Burns

As a Recruiter for Karmak, Alyssa Burns interacts with hundreds of potential applicants every month with a goal of connecting the right person to the right position. Raised in rural Illinois, she understands the Midwest culture that is Karmak, and has a unique ability to help hire the best. Alyssa received a BS degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in human resources, and continues to visit campuses in Illinois and Missouri as she connects with top graduates. Alyssa joined the Karmak HR team in 2013.



About Karmak

Karmak, Inc. is a leading provider of business management solutions for the commercial transportation industry. With 35 years of heavy-duty experience, we offer a unique approach combining innovative technology, strategic advice, and best practices. Our success programs produce measurable results by improving ROI, mitigating risks, and achieving operational excellence.

Serving more than 1,500 locations across North America, Karmak is an employee-owned company with headquarters in Carlinville, Illinois.