**Retailer Newsletter**

**October 1, 2021**

**Tom’s Business “TIPS”**

***“To Improve Profits”***

**RE: Recruiting Outside the Box**

**Hi,**

**I have always said if you want to succeed in our business, or any business for that matter, you must think ‘outside the box.’ The most successful companies are constantly transforming and reinventing the wheel. By that I mean you need to think about new unconventional ways to solve today’s problems. I do not always agree with completely reinventing the wheel, but at times when all else fails, you may have no other choice. For as long as I can remember recruiting good employees in the c-store business has been a challenge. When I owned and operated my stores (and yes, there were 5 at one time!), and I would be asked, “How’s the staffing at your stores?” There were times I would answer, “Well today it’s fine, tomorrow remains to be seen.**

**I recently stopped in at a fast-food restaurant near my house, and I realized they have several employees with special needs. By that I mean they have learning disabilities. Now before you read any further, I’m trying to stay politically correct, and I am not trying to offend anyone, so please bear with me. I must admit, my wife and I have stopped there many times and I never gave it a thought. The staff always seemed happy to wait on us and wore a smile. What else matters from the customer side of the counter?**

**I just did a Google Search; “Employment for People with Disabilities” and several pages popped up. This may not be the answer to all your staffing needs, but it might be worth checking out.**

**Driving down any business street you will see ‘Help Wanted’ or ‘Now Hiring’ signs in front of 9 out of 10 stores/businesses. I think they or you are wasting time advertising that way; I believe the best success in our business will come from being proactive. What I mean by this is you must reach out to prospective applicants. First and foremost, talk to your staff on a regular basis and ask them if they know anyone looking for part-time or full-time employment. Be honest with yourself; if you have a marginal employee (someone who is consistently late for work, does not have a good work ethic, etc.), you will probably not want to hire ‘their friend or acquaintance’. However, if one of your better CSR has a friend they would recommend, do you think their friend will do a good job? After all, the last thing one of your good CSRs will do is bring a new employee onboard knowing they will not pull their share of the load. I was very successful hiring friends of my staff. At times I offered a bonus if the person they recommended stayed for 90 days, at a minimum.**

**Set a goal for yourself and your manager(s), to make two prospective employees contacts per day. That means you should be talking with customers, vendors or even the server at your favorite restaurant asking them if they know of someone who is looking for employment. If so, hand them the “recruiting card” and ask them to pass it on to that person for you. You need to sound enthusiastic and happy to be recruiting. If you don’t, the people you are talking to will not be excited about recommending someone to you.**

**Now I am going to mention something you may find difficult to hear. Do not immediately hire the first person who walks in the door!! Remember you still need to go through your pre-employment checklist to be sure you have the right person, not just a person to list on your work schedule. All the times I did not feel right about a potential employee, but hired him/her anyway, the end result was I should have listened to my instincts. They just did not fit in!**

**Here are just a few tips (hint: we have covered this in previous newsletters).**

* **Accept applications anytime you are open. Instruct the applicant to return when you (or your manager) will be present for the interview. Treat the new applicant with respect from the very first moment you meet. That first impression can be long lasting.**
* **Check out our website; *‘Forms for Your Business’,* download some of these forms:**
* **Recruiting Card – two sided, front and back**
* **Pass the card out anywhere, anytime, to anyone that impresses you.**
* **Quick Employment Application**
* **Employee Agreement of Understanding**
* **List of Proper Questions to Ask Applicants**
* **Sample Interview Questions**
* **When applicants show up for their interview with you, on-time and appropriately dressed, hand them a $10 gift card to thank them for reporting for the interview on time.**
* **This will show the applicant you are a serious professional business owner, looking for quality candidates.**
* **If you do not hire the applicant at this time, they may be available the next time you are looking for an employee.**
* **Keep previous, ‘Good Applications’ for the next time you have a need. It only takes a few minutes to contact previous applicants.**
* **A local business in Kansas City recently posted a sign: “Help Wanted – *Very* Flexible Hours”.**
* **Maybe that is something many of us have not thought about. It could be as simple as shorter shifts (especially if recruiting retired people) or hours that differ from what you have done in the past.**
* **You may have to change your standards, just a little. I remember my days as an owner and if someone walked in with multicolored hair and with tattoos up and down their arms, I would not have given them a second thought. Today, you may want to consider hiring them if they meet your other criteria.**
* **Review February 1, 2021 ‘Tom’s Tips’ for ideas on Virtual Recruiting.**

**I recently read an article at CSP Daily News; *“25% of employees say they are not satisfied with the format and amount of both orientation and ongoing training they receive”.* That means you cannot just hire some warm body and put them on the register and think your problems are behind you. Actually, if that is the training at your store, your problems are just beginning AND you better start looking for another CSR. FAST!!**

**Is your starting wage competitive? Do you offer any benefits? Does your competition? I suggest you check what your competitors are offering new applicants.**

**The COVID-19 virus is very much still active, and the new strain is more contagious and requires all of us to continue using pandemic-inspired cleaning and sanitizing procedures. Please keep a hand sanitizer dispenser available for your staff and customers to use. Various local governments are re-instituting mask mandates. Be proactive. I’m sure we have all read news stories about the violence that occurs when strangers are confronted for not wearing masks. If your local community requirement is people wear a mask, I think a sign in your window stating the mask requirement is sufficient. Also, I do not recommend putting your staff in the uncomfortable position of being the ‘mask police’. Check your signage too; if it is old and tattered (and unreadable), replace it. Check our website for cleaning tips ‘Clean & Sanitize Your Facility’. I suggest you refresh your staff on this information to be safe.**

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**If you think your store is not providing the profits that you believe necessary, give us a call or email. If you are a supplier or organization with retailers, and they are struggling to maintain profitable stores, please reach out to us. We can help improve store operations and profitability!**

***“Treat Employees Like They Make A Difference, And They Will.”***

**Jim Goodnight CEO SAS**

**Don't be a victim of the 5 Dangerous Words –**

***‘Maybe I’ll Do It Tomorrow’***

**Do it today because tomorrow (~~could be~~) will be too late!**

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***“Our business is making your business better!”***