



How to Hire and Train the Right Employee for Meters and Metering Technology



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*For North Carolina Electric Meter School
Management Session
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Summary



SORRY
We have them all.
QUESTIONS?

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This presentation can also be found under Meter
Conferences and Schools on the TESCO web site:

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Lack of Workforce

As the U.S. economy has improved in the years after the Great Recession, businesses in all sectors have struggled to hire and retain labor. The national unemployment rate has hovered below 5 percent over the past two years, with local rates at or below 4 percent in half the states, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Meanwhile, the U.S. labor-force participation rate—the share of workers who are employed or searching for work—has steadily declined since 2001. That’s left employers in dozens of states struggling to hire and keep employees, whether they’re in minimum-wage jobs or positions requiring advanced degrees.

The metering work force continues to age with the average age of the field meter technician pushing 50 years old and the meter shop average age exceeding that number.



Competition

- Competition for talented, good employees
- Business costs and impact of employee turnover can be grouped into four major categories;
 - Hiring costs
 - Training costs
 - Costs resulting from a person leaving
 - Lost Productivity Costs
- Estimated cost to replace an employee is at least 150% of the person's base salary



Strong Employer Brand

- Employer branding is how your company is perceived by prospective and current employees. Positive employer branding can help you attract and retain the best employees. It can also help reduce hiring costs by attracting more candidates per job opening.
- Strong regional/local company with deep local roots
- Strong employee base. Employees can help attract prospective employees
- Describe your culture – whatever that may be;
 - All about the customer
 - Most technically progressive
 - Best value for the customer in the area
 - Most family oriented
- Whatever your culture – promote this
- Develop a Co-op program with local universities and technical schools
- Speak at secondary school career fairs
- Sponsor primary and secondary school technology fairs



Strong Industry Brand

- Utility work is a unique career
 - Stable work
 - Constantly evolving technology with tremendous opportunities to grow
 - Great upward mobility for the incoming generation of workers
- Utility work is a non-competitive environment that relies on high technical skills and individual work ethic
- There are electric utilities in every region of the country that you may want to live in or relocate to.
- This is an industry with a rapidly aging work force that went too many years without recruiting. Tremendous opportunities for advancement given the gap between new entries into the industry and the retiring employees.
- Do not underestimate the comradery of the industry and the wealth regional meter schools to meet and work with other engineers, technicians, and managers in the industry



Growth Opportunities for the Metering Sector

- People like to be part of something growing and dynamic
 - Do not underestimate the appeal of metering in 2018
 - Metering is growing
 - Metering technology is evolving rapidly
 - Metering is where all the information is
 - Metering is sexy
- New skill sets are necessary and must be coupled with the old skill sets
 - New employees have the potential to be a new breed of engineer or technician
 - Metering expertise
 - Communications expertise
 - Big data and analytics expertise
 - Again – this new set of skills provides the ability for rapid advancement and success



Good Benefits Package

According to a [2017 study by Harvard Business Review and Fractl](#), the top 4 benefits workers seek are health benefits, flexible hours, vacation time, and work-from-home options. Newer benefits may include helping employees with their transportation costs.

Utilities have always had one of the strongest benefits packages of any industry sector. Capitalize on this;

- Great health care
- Great vacation and paid time off package
- Increasingly greater work from home opportunities
 - Field workers often travel to the field directly from home or return there or both
- Field work allows for more flexible work hours and conditions and typically involves a company vehicle that can be used for all company travel including to and from work



Culture

- Culture is important to most employees when deciding whether to stay or leave
- Be the employer people want to work for
- Monthly Game Nights
- Family-like connections with employees
- Increase employee involvement and enthusiasm
- Inspire employees to do excellent work



Top 10 Most Sought After Skills



Top 10 Most Sought After Soft Skills

- 1 Good communicator
- 2 Well organized
- 3 Team player
- 4 Always punctual
- 5 Critical thinker
- 6 Social
- 7 Creative thinker
- 8 Interpersonal communicator
- 9 Easily adapts
- 10 Friendly personality



Onboarding Process

- Once hired, getting new employees onboard is the first step in making sure they're successful and more likely to stay.
- Make onboarding a priority

Cover the basics

- Signed [offer letter](#)
- Tax forms, e.g. W-2s or W-4s
- Identification forms, e.g. I-9
- Payment forms, e.g. direct deposit
- Signed [employment agreement](#)
- Signed [non-disclosure / confidentiality agreement](#)
- Signed [non-compete agreement](#)
- Policies and procedures [employee handbook](#)



Welcoming Them

The basics are good. Go above and beyond. Make sure that they feel they are a priority. They need to feel that you have taken the time to get ready for them and are expecting and wanting them to join the team;

- Business cards are ready for them
- Their name is on their cubicle or office or locker
- Their tools are ready for them
- Lap top or desk top is assigned to them, e-mail is set up, security and access to the network is taken care of



And go beyond that

- Make time out of your schedule to spend time with them. They may spend more time on their first day with you than they will for the next six months or a year depending how many levels above them you are, but if they know the people above them know they are starting and have taken time to spend with them they will feel a part of the team right from the first day



Training

- New employees
- Building a positive culture through training and investment in people is good business sense
- While training can improve performance and service, It can also improve retention.
- **Make Sure They're Well Trained**
- Employees value relevant, high-quality training. It increases their chances for success and shows that you care about their professional growth.
- The key steps for successful training include:
- Don't just train on hard skills. Help new employees acclimate to your small business' culture and norms. This is especially important in areas such as [customer service roles](#).
- Leverage mentors and cohorts. New employees learn best when they have others in the organization they can turn to for tips and help.
- Training needs to be a continuous process, not just something you offer in the first few month. Design it as a career-long process.
- Have a regular check-in mechanism. Make sure you or your HR folks follow up with new employees on a periodic basis to make sure they are doing well and are happy.
- Safety aspect for metering??
- Metering schools like NC???



Other

- Give employees good feedback
 - Everyone likes to know where they stand. There is value in providing personalized feedback to employees on their strengths and areas in need of improvement
 - A strong management process or annual performance review will help employees feel more secure and happier in the long run, leading them to stay longer
- Let employees know they're appreciated
 - Employee recognition programs
 - One thing that can demotivate employees is not being appreciated for their hard work
- Make sure employees are engaged and motivated
 - More engaged employee is a happier employee
 - Learning opportunities for growth
 - Culture building team events



Summary

- Be the employer people want to work for
- Describe the successful person, not job applicant
- Get the word out in the right way
- Filter candidates to find the best
- Set up an efficient onboarding process
- Hire slow, fire without surprises
- Develop employee retention strategies



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