



SATELLITE BROADCASTING AND COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

Finding Quality Technicians

First Published Transmitter News 2/12/07

■ One of the biggest challenges that the satellite industry has is finding reliable qualified technicians. Satellite installations have become more complex in recent years as multi sat installation and home theater integration have become more common. The potential costs for repeat service call and charge backs make it imperative that the installation is done correctly the first time. *Therefore finding technicians who can meet the technical and customer satisfaction requirements is critical in the long term profitability of your organization.*

If you are looking for qualified help there are a number of things you should consider. This will be true whether you need 1 technician or 100.

First and foremost, you must develop a comprehensive job description for the person you wish to hire. What are the skill sets they will need? What are the hours that they should expect to be working? What type of background check do you need them to pass? Do they need to be bilingual? Will they be full time employees or subcontractors?

Next you should look at what type of training you will provide. If you are not providing training and want to only hire experienced technicians your labor pool will be smaller than if you are willing to train people who are looking to get into the workforce. If you only want to hire experienced technicians then you must be prepared to ensure that they truly know how to do this work. Do not assume that someone is properly trained. Ask them for references and industry certifications. In either case it will be your responsibility to ensure the technician is properly trained.

Once you have this information you need to research what similar industries in your market are paying their technicians. Based on this information develop a compensation program that is competitive. If you are providing tools, materials, vehicles, uniforms, put this information into your total compensation package as these items have value. You might also want to consider offering performance incentives as a way to retain your best performers. Referrals, up selling, longevity and training bonuses are some of the items you should consider offering incentives for.

Now that this is done you need to find the right type of person to do the work. The good news is that there are plenty of avenues for finding qualified help. Many firms will run



adds in the local papers advertising for experienced technicians. While this can be a successful avenue there are a number of other areas that you should investigate.

Many local Technical Colleges are now offering Electronic System Technician (EST) program. These courses can range anywhere from 5-24 weeks and cover all aspects of consumer electronics wiring and installation. These institutions are always eager to place their students with quality employers. Contact the schools career services office and set up a time to speak with them about your business and employment opportunity. Find out if they are having a career night and ask to attend. When you attend be sure to wear your company uniform to present your organization in the best light possible. Once you have established your company as a reliable employer you will find the technical schools will begin referring student directly to you on a continuous basis.

Some company's are targeting retiring armed services personnel. The local recruiting office will frequently try to assist recent people honorably discharged to find employment. Military personnel are considered strong employment candidates as they are comfortable wearing a company uniform, understand the importance of punctuality and will typically have a good work ethic. Besides finding a source of good technicians you will also be building positive good will in the community.

Another avenue to look at is the local employment office. Company restructuring may lead to the closing of a large area employer. Depending on the industry, many of the individuals that were let go may need to look at new employment opportunities. If you can offer steady work with a competitive pay you should be able to get some quality workers. In addition you may also be eligible for retraining funds.

Joining Trade Associations, the Chamber of Commerce and other business organizations will offer additional resources for your business. These groups frequently have networks to assist their members find quality personnel. They may also be able to refer you to other groups who have similar needs and offer you insight into what they have found to be successful.

Lastly, don't forget to ensure that you provide a positive work environment to your existing personnel. These individuals are your number one source of finding quality people. Consider offering your technicians a recruiting bonus to assist you bringing in more people. Be creative and listen to their ideas as they may think of something you have not yet considered. If they are happy with their work they will tell their friends and acquaintances which will provide you with more opportunities to recruit quality technicians.

Good luck and happy selling!