

# Tips from the Toolbox



Skilled workers are moving from job to job as employers offer more pay, more benefits, and more opportunities for growth. Drivers have been in particularly short supply. Experienced drivers even more so. As offers become more competitive, building material dealers will need to get creative to find new talent and retain the good drivers they have.

PLM has compiled the following guide to assist you with some tips on attracting the right candidates while retaining your current quality drivers through other approaches to meet employees' growing desires for flexible schedules and benefits.

## STRATEGIES FOR HIRING DRIVERS

When recruiting new drivers, the usual techniques are still valuable such as higher pay and referral bonuses. Major recruiting sites, advertising and social media are powerful tools and are important to capture the initial interest of potential recruits. Once that interest is secured, employers need to clearly communicate their pay, perks and opportunities for growth to seal the deal.

Some other approaches include:

- **Promote current employees into driving positions.** For example, owners can consider existing employees who have worked in their warehouse for a minimum time period. By investing in these employees by paying for them to attend a CDL driving school to get their CDL license, they can develop quality drivers who tend to remain with the company.
- **Recruit past drivers.** Good employees often leave for perceived greener pastures and soon recognize they made a mistake. These individuals may be too stubborn to admit they made a mistake in leaving and therefore will not ask for their job back. However, many may be apt to come back if the organization seeks them out.
- **Don't limit job requirements to more experienced drivers.** Evaluate the applicant for his/her potential, not just past history. Consider candidates that you can build to be good drivers. Provide a training program. Purchase safety technology (e.g., cameras, radar sensors, fleet telematics) to coach the driver. Allow them time to develop by pairing them with your good, experienced drivers. Although the cost will be higher up-front, in the long term your costs will decrease.

## REVAMP YOUR RECRUITING METHODS

If you have not changed things in years, it may be time to take a fresh new look at selling your company and your driving positions. When communicating your open positions, pretend that you are a driver looking for a job. Some things you should consider:

- Use major recruiting sites to post positions
- Verify that you have competitive pay and benefits
- Share success stories on your website
- Include key information drivers would want to know such as how drivers are paid, frequency of pay, and their benefits
- Discuss schedules and routes
- Discuss the "perks" of the job
- Talk about the equipment (age and type)
- Highlight unique characteristics of the position that a driver may find beneficial such as split shifts (AM/PM)
- Boast how important drivers are to the organization
- Include testimonials from current drivers about what they like about the organization





## HOW TO ATTRACT & RETAIN GOOD DRIVERS

The best way to keep trucks on the road is to retain the good drivers you have. If your drivers are happy and feel valued for their work, they are more likely to stay and continue to grow with your business. It's up to employers to provide a safe and pleasant work environment that not only recognizes or rewards quality work, but also provides opportunities for career growth.

### STRATEGIES TO RETAIN GOOD DRIVERS

Drivers know that they are in demand, and if the pay isn't competitive, businesses will have a difficult time retaining their drivers regardless of other steps they take. Referral bonuses, safe driving rewards, and other benefits can go a long way to making drivers feel appreciated and recognized.

### MONITOR EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION

Happy, well compensated employees do not often leave so it is important to stay on top of employee satisfaction. With drivers, they are looking for things like competitive pay, well-maintained vehicles, accommodating routes/schedules, and caring, appreciative managers.

Business owners should do the following at least once a year:

- **Examine benefits to ensure they are competitive.** Check things like salary, retirement plans, PTO, insurance, etc.
- **Conduct a driver satisfaction survey.** Yearly satisfaction surveys will help monitor how your company is performing as well as identify your drivers' pain points such as:
  - *Difficult managers*
  - *Poorly operating equipment*
  - *Unrealistic expectations*
  - *Lack of recognition*

### IDENTIFYING ISSUES

Taking steps to identify any issues will help you remedy things before employees take actions to leave. It will also help you discover any major items that may require larger changes in your organization.

Here are some ways to identify issues in your business:

- **Conduct anonymous driver surveys.** Anonymous surveys can often uncover minor issues, but ones that your drivers really care about. These problems can commonly be fixed at little cost.
- **Have exit interviews.** "Better pay" is rarely the primary reason for a driver leaving. Having a formal exit interview allows you to dig into the causal factors for a driver leaving.
- **Monitor employment websites.** Sites such as Indeed and Glassdoor allow employees to rate and comment on their past employers. Employers can also monitor other company social media sites for driver comments. You can use this valuable information to implement controls to prevent another driver from leaving for the same reasons.

### EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Recognizing your quality employees and showing appreciation for their hard work can go a long way in their overall job satisfaction. Consider having a driver appreciation day where drivers are recognized for their role in the organization. You can also implement programs to incentivize and reward drivers for their safe driving history.

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