



## Creative Strategies for Attracting & Retaining Employees





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**SCAN ME**





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Visual Media Alliance is non-profit trade association serving Northern California printers and design agency and other small business owners. By providing events, education, discounts, advocacy, industry promotion and insurance programs, we help our member firms become more successful and profitable.

## ON THE COVER

Western Trade Print employees Jon Varella (left), Folder Operator since 2013 and Tony Renteria (right), Bindery Supervisor since 2019.

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Valued Members,

Nearly halfway through the year, 2022 is shaping up to be more challenging than anticipated for many VMA members. Ongoing paper and skilled labor shortages and rising inflation rates are challenges that are not expected to improve until the fourth quarter. Your association can't make paper or tame inflation, but we can help members with their human resource challenges.

The secret sauce for many of our member companies is their employees. The real magic of any business happens with a great staff, where the whole can be greater than the sum of its parts.

How does VMA help with workforce development?

- Job-ready Cal Poly Graphic Communication Department (GrC) interns and graduates.
- The VMA Job Center is available for companies and job seekers to connect for opportunities. Job postings are posted on our website and also cross-posted on Indeed for additional exposure.
- New and improved Mineral website (formerly ThinkHR), with employee handbooks, human resource hotline, mandated sexual harassment prevention training, and more.
- Executive Toolbox, an online resource for employers to adapt to the changing and highly regulated business environment.
- Sales training with Bill Farquharson and his Sales Vault full of webinars, workshops, and one-on-one training.
- For employees new to our industry, we subsidize some training such as a virtual hands-on "Introduction to Graphic Communications" starting this fall.
- We provide over \$20k in scholarships annually to encourage students to pursue this field.

In fact, this issue of *Connected* focuses on how to recruit and retain employees. We hope you'll find useful and actionable ideas!

Please reach out to me anytime at [ian@vma.bz](mailto:ian@vma.bz).



Sincerely,

Ian Flynn  
VMA President

## 8 Examples of Amazingly Creative Recruitment Ideas

1. Share your company culture on social media
2. Put employees in the spotlight
3. Create a recruitment video
4. Organize a virtual event
5. Encourage past employees to return
6. Offer rewards for referrals
7. Use niche candidate networks
8. Recruit students



## OVERVIEW OF VMA PROGRAMS

At VMA, our goal is to help you manage and run your business. Many members state that finding talented employees is one of their top business concern. Below are VMA member benefits that will help you recruit and retain employees.

### Health & Other Expected Benefits

Health insurance is a top benefit that employees want for themselves and their families. VMA Insurance division helps many of our members provide this attractive feature and keep employees healthy.

Members have access to the full panel of health insurance providers such as Kaiser, Blue Shield, and more, and with the various types of health insurance programs, from HMO to PPOs, etc.. Plus, you can mix and match between those and add in vision and dental benefits. We write \$30 million in insurance per year and are set up to know how to help your small business and employees best.



To help you manage all the fantastic benefits you offer employees, remember that members with insurance through VMA Insurance Services receive a free benefits administration portal through Ease. ([vma.bz/ease](https://vma.bz/ease))

We can also get you set up with supplemental employee benefits such as the mandated 401(k) benefit, workers' compensation to protect employees if they get injured on the job, long-term disability insurance, life insurance, and more. Reach David Katz for a free comprehensive review at [david@vma.bz](mailto:david@vma.bz) or 415-495-8242 Ext. 703.

### Surveys and Reports to Make You Competitive

Not being paid enough is employees' number one complaint, according to a survey by Pew Research in July 2021. Through VMA's partnership with leading researchers, wage and benefits information to stay competitive is available at your fingertips. These reports will help you ensure you are offering appropriate compensation.



- **PIPI Survey** - The Printing Industry Performance & Insights (PIPI) quarterly reports show performance and outlook of the print and graphic communications industry. ([vma.bz/pipi-survey](https://vma.bz/pipi-survey))
- **Wage + Benefits Survey** - Wage and benefits information, mostly for the print industry. Other wage surveys for creatives are available by The Creative Group, Aquent, and some other temp job placement companies. ([vma.bz/wage-survey](https://vma.bz/wage-survey))
- **Sales Compensation Survey** - Sales Compensation benefits for your print sales team. ([vma.bz/sales-survey](https://vma.bz/sales-survey))

### VMA & Partner Employee Education & Training

VMA and partner continuing education and training programs ([vma.bz/education](https://vma.bz/education)):

- **Introduction to Graphic Communications Course** - This virtual course will teach those new to the industry or those that need to brush up, about the printing process, workflows, and more. The course runs August 29 to September 26.



VMA members and their employees receive special pricing of \$199. Non-members \$499. ([vma.bz/printing101](https://vma.bz/printing101))

- **Free VMA Learning Events** - Our Collective Conversations events ([vma.bz/cc](https://vma.bz/cc)), often features topics on marketing, sales training, and more.
- **Mail Design Professional Workshop** - A virtual workshop developed by USPS to learn about mail piece design. Get a 2-year MDP Certification after successfully passing the exam. Great for CSRs, sales, designers, and others new to the industry. October 18-20, exclusive to members for \$195. ([vma.bz/mail](https://vma.bz/mail))
- **Sales Vault** - Sales coaching via one-on-one, office hours, workshops, webinars, and more. The Vault which delivers continuous sales growth to its Insiders (members) for a discounted monthly price of \$40/participant. ([vma.bz/sales-vault](https://vma.bz/sales-vault))

Contact Shannon at [shannon@vma.bz](mailto:shannon@vma.bz) or 415-710-0568 for details.

### Developing Fresh Talent

VMA helps develop the next generation of employees by promoting industry awareness and education. We provide educational funds to students in the industry, awarding over \$20k per year through our scholarship fund.



VMA is a strong supporter of the Cal Poly GrC (Graphic Communications) program, one of the most prominent programs from which people join our industry. Throughout the

year, we receive and post resumes on our Career Center website ([jobs.vma.bz](https://jobs.vma.bz)). This is a print and creative agency industry-specific site for you to find potential employees.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

View all of our upcoming events at [main.vma.bz/networking-events](https://main.vma.bz/networking-events). – Register today and make new connections!



### SalesCircle

**Monthly on Thursday • 4-5PM • Online**

Join your colleagues and fellow VMA members for connections and referrals at our virtual industry referral networking group, where we'll discuss sales and referrals tips and ideas.

Register at [vma.bz/salescircle](https://vma.bz/salescircle)



### Labelexpo Americas 2022

**September 13-15 • 3 Days • Chicago**

Save 20% on your conference pass to one of America's largest events for the label and package printing industry.

Register at [vma.bz/labelexpo](https://vma.bz/labelexpo)



### Collective Conversations

**Monthly on Wednesday • 10-11AM • Online**

As part of our virtual round table series, each event focuses on topics relevant to your print or agency business. Our upcoming topics are "Sustainability Matters" in September, "Health Insurance Updates and Q&A" in October, and "Diversity and Inclusion with Sales" in November.

Register at [vma.bz/cc](https://vma.bz/cc)

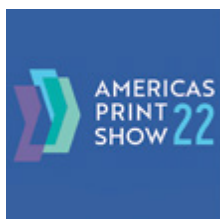


### VMA Golf Tournament

**September 21 • 12-8PM • Oakland**

Held at the Metropolitan Golf Links in the centrally located East Bay. Come for the golf tournament AND BBQ or just join us for the BBQ and enjoy networking and fun.

Register at [vma.bz/golf](https://vma.bz/golf)



### Americas Print Show APS22

**August 17-19 • 3 Days • Columbus, OH**

Build connections and growth in the print and graphics community. APS22 will bring together regional and national associations representing more than 5,000 companies, commercial printers, screen and garment producers, large format and sign printers, binderies and graphic finishers, and industry suppliers.

Register at [vma.bz/aps22](https://vma.bz/aps22)

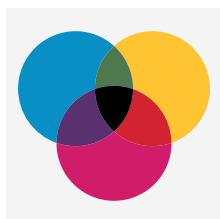


### Sacramento Design Week

**October 18-23, 2022 • Sacramento**

Design Week Sacramento is a weeklong celebration of Sacramento's design community. Enjoy lectures, panels, workshops, networking events, studio tours, and more! All events are hosted by the local design community and are created to educate, empower and connect our community.

Details + Register at [designweeksac.com](https://designweeksac.com)



### Printing 101

**Introduction to Graphic Communications**

**August 29 – September 26 • Online**

This virtual hands-on course, held on Mondays and Wednesdays, provides an overview on print processes including workflow, file creation, digital and conventional printing, substrates, and finishing processes such as bindery, finishing, and distribution. VMA will provide partial subsidies to members and their employees.

Register at [vma.bz/printing101](https://vma.bz/printing101)



### ConnectUp

**October 19 • 5-8 PM • Sacramento**

ConnectUp is our in-person networking event series. We'll meet to network and discuss sales and referrals while building new or forming stronger connections. Join us at Sacramento Design Week at **Uptown Studios** for a session on "Social Justice in Print," where three panelists will discuss recent projects.

Register at [vma.bz/connectup](https://vma.bz/connectup)



# YOU

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# CAN

A full-page photograph of a kayaker in a red jacket and black helmet, paddling through white water rapids. The kayaker is holding a yellow paddle, and water is splashing around them. The word 'CAN' is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters on the right side of the image.



## PM Packaging Buys Dome Printing



In April, PM Packaging, a packaging solutions company, announced the purchase of Dome Printing and Lithograph. Dome is a leading supplier of commercial print, mailing, display and packaging. PM Packaging is a leader in the industry providing paperboard packaging, blister cards, single faced, laminated packaging, digital printing, display, and fulfillment services. Tim Poole, Owner and CEO of Dome Printing said, "Working together, we will improve opportunities for our clients, while maintaining the same core values that PM Packaging and I share."

[bit.ly/3yXS8Y6](https://bit.ly/3yXS8Y6)

## Canon Launches Exciting New Digital Press

To help address the increasing demands of production environments,



Canon brings a new printer to marketing. The imagePRESS V1000 digital press offers a strong emphasis on automation with tasks such as color repeatability and registration alignment simplified. This new tech will be valuable to printers looking to produce a wide range of applications, from direct mail and business cards to booklets, posters, and other creative marketing collateral. [bit.ly/3w8xNgK](https://bit.ly/3w8xNgK)

## Affinity Creative Fun Design for Dough Ball Whiskey

With the recent explosive growth of flavored whiskeys, Patco Brands, a producer of niche brands came up with the fun cookie dough flavored whiskey. Patco engaged Affinity Creative Group to project attitude, whimsy, and memorability for a new concoction in the spirits aisle, Doughball Whiskey.

Affinity came up with a pudgy, lovable, and regal bulldog to serve as an icon and portray the emotive essence of the brand. They combined the bulldog imagery with bold letterforms for the brand name and positioned on a big round field of 'dough.' The total package captures grins, invites trial, and encourages customers to 'unleash' their sweet side. [bit.ly/38mXcdz](https://bit.ly/38mXcdz)



## SWM and Neenah Paper to Combine



In another fantastic industry merger, Schweitzer-Mauduit International, Inc. (SWM) and Neenah, Inc., two leading global manufacturers of specialty materials, recently announced an agreement. They will combine in an all-stock merger of equals with consolidated revenues of approximately \$3 billion to expand scale and capabilities and accelerate growth opportunities.

This transaction unites two organizations with highly complementary technologies, geographies, and product portfolios in specialty materials. The combined company will capitalize on influential megatrends with strong positions in large, growing categories, including filtration, healthcare and wellness, protective and adhesive solutions, industrial solutions, and packaging and specialty paper. [bit.ly/3yv0bev](https://bit.ly/3yv0bev)

## BR Printers Acquires C&D Printing

In exciting news, BR Printers of San Jose bought C&D Printing, out of Denver. With over 30 years of experience, C&D Printing capabilities include offset printing, large format, in-house mailing, and design all under one roof and is one of Colorado's few union printing facilities.



BR is a provider of print and marketing services, value chain and logistics management to marketers and the publishing industry. Adam DeMaestri, President and CEO of BR Printers said of the acquisition, "The addition of C&D strategically strengthens BR's end-to-end marketing solutions. We look forward to expanding our operations in Denver with enhanced printing and mailing capabilities." [bit.ly/3NCsf4b](https://bit.ly/3NCsf4b)

## NEW MEMBERS



### Bedrock Markets

Bedrock Markets focuses on HVAC marketing for contractors big and small across the US. They have a start to finish approach help customers with their business.

Russ Thayne  
530-345-3280  
[russ@thebedrock.com](mailto:russ@thebedrock.com)  
[www.thebedrock.com](http://www.thebedrock.com)



### Printmail Services Contra Costa County

The in-house print and mail shop for the County of Contra Costa County, located at the heart of the Bay-Delta region.

Dale Morseman  
925-665-4500  
[dale.morseman@pw.cccounty.us](mailto:dale.morseman@pw.cccounty.us)

### Vita Grafica Design

#### Vita Grafica

A graphic design studio providing creative and clear visual design for print, business identity, logos, marketing collateral, corporate communications and web design.

Laura Amoroso  
650-995-3480  
[laura@vitagraficadesign.com](mailto:laura@vitagraficadesign.com)

# When You Need to Hire Workers, But Nobody Likes the Work

BY KYLE CUPP — HR certified professional author, editor, and researcher for Mineral. This article has been edited by VMA with permission from Mineral.

Some jobs are just plain unpleasant. You know the type. Monotonous tasks that don't end until it's time to clock out. Dealing all day with customers who are unhappy, unappreciative, or rude. Fielding constant complaints. Hard labor. Work in extreme temperatures. Avoiding undesirable work is a top reason why half of all small businesses are unable to find workers right now.

Although even using monetary methods doesn't seem to be the solution in this market, employers have some control over what the work is, how it's performed, and under what conditions. There often are ways to make unpleasant work more bearable, even if not genuinely exciting.

If you're among the half of small businesses struggling to fill positions, and you haven't had any luck with other measures to entice applicants to apply, consider what changes you could make to the work you need to be done or to the overall work experience at your business.

Here is a set of steps you could follow:

## STEP ONE

### Identify the Unfun Parts

Create a list of all the unpleasant aspects of the job that you're having trouble filling. Include both the work itself and the conditions under which it's performed. Try to be as comprehensive as you can. You won't be addressing everything you write down, but the more things you can include, the more possible things you may be able to adjust. If you're not sure what to include, consider an anonymous poll of your employees or review job descriptions and mentally walk through the day-to-day tasks that are required of your workers.

## STEP TWO

### Determine What You Can Change

For each aspect you've written down, determine whether it's something you can directly change, indirectly do something about, or if it's entirely out of your power. You don't need to come up with changes or solutions at this stage. Just note whether it's something you have some control over, however little that may be. For example, you can't change the weather, but there may be things you can do to make extreme temperatures more bearable.







### STEP THREE

#### Think a Little Harder About What You “Can’t” Change

Now that you’ve categorized the job aspects reevaluate the items you indicated you had no control over. Give each one some thought and challenge your assumptions. Are there no available options as far as these aspects are concerned? Keep an open mind and take some time later to think about them. You also may get ideas when you’re implementing other changes later.

### STEP FOUR

#### Brainstorm Improvements

Now think about what changes you could make. Don’t worry about the logistics or the costs just yet. Here you’re just considering options. For example, if you’re worried that extreme temperatures are keeping job applicants away, you might look at additional or longer breaks. If the work is physically or emotionally taxing, you might consider allowing employees the flexibility to step away and decompress when they need it. Increased freedom and flexibility might be another option; for example, job sharing to minimize monotony.

### STEP FIVE

#### Do a Cost-Benefit Analysis

Any change you make is going to have a cost. In this step, do your best to estimate the implementation costs and analyze whether the cost is worth the benefit. That may not be clear right away. If your solution to physically or emotionally taxing labor is additional paid breaks, employees will be spending less time working. Less time working could translate into assignments taking longer to finish or fewer orders being completed. Then again, well-rested employees may be more productive and accomplish more in a shorter time.

### STEP SIX

#### Make the Changes

Depending on your situation, you may decide to try all the changes at once or one at a time. The latter may be more helpful if you want to measure the success of each shift, but the former may have a more significant impact in the short term.

### STEP SEVEN

#### Advertise the New Awesomeness

Shout from the rooftops. Talk up the efforts you take to make the work experience more pleasant. Share photos on social media. Most importantly, tell a compelling story in job ads, your careers page, and everywhere else job seekers can find you.

Stories can be an effective way to share this information. The story should be about them. About the experience, they’ll have. But don’t sugarcoat that experience. If the work is rough, they’ll learn soon enough. But sharing what you’ve done to make the work less taxing tells job seekers that you care about your employees and want them to have a good work experience.

### STEP EIGHT

#### Evaluate the Outcome and Adjust Accordingly

Did the changes you made help? Were you able to fill open positions and keep them filled? How do your employees feel about the steps you took to improve the work experience? If you’re not satisfied with the results and they’re not happy with the changes you made, think about why and discuss solutions with your employees. What could have been done differently? What surprised you?

If the jobs you need done aren’t especially attractive, and measures like pay increases haven’t gotten you more applicants, it makes sense to be strategic about what you can change.



<sup>1</sup> National Federation of Independent Business



# Wrangling the Right Employees at Western Trade Printing

BY REVA HARRIS

Finding good employees has been difficult for quite a while now, and it's something Bob Gardner, owner of Western Trade Printing, knows all too well. In nearly a decade of owning the Fresno, CA print shop, he's seen his fair share of recruiting hurdles.

He's also picked up a few tips and tricks to improve the hiring process. Here's what he learned.



## Be Aggressive

Gone are the days of posting an ad and watching the applications roll in. These days, you have to get aggressive and find candidates who may not be actively submitting applications. Gardner seeks out employees by pouring over resumes on job sites like VMA's Job Center and ZipRecruiter. To find the right people, he looks for candidates who have done manual labor outdoors in the heat. They don't mind hard labor, and they're more likely to appreciate the opportunity to work inside where there is air conditioning and benefits.



## Let the Candidate Take the Lead

Replacing an employee costs time and money, so finding the right fit for both the employer and employee is critical. In such a tight job market, employees have more options than ever before. Even with the many benefits of working in the plant versus many other positions, Gardner is no stranger to having employees quickly leave for other opportunities after realizing that they don't enjoy the manual labor involved in printing. To prevent hiring the wrong person, he's turning the typical interview process on its head. "Rather than asking them to come in for an interview, I'm asking them to come in and interview us."

He schedules about an hour for candidates to ask him questions and spends time seeing what it's like to work at Western Trade Printing. They shadow the current employees on the shop floor so they can get a sense of the environment and the skills required to do the work. This gives candidates a chance to see if something catches their eye that they'd like to explore more. "There's no better employee than an employee who wants to work for you, not just someone who wants a job," Gardner says.



*"Rather than asking them to come in for an interview, I'm asking them to come in and interview us."*

Rennon Fleeting, Shipping and Receiving Clerk who joined WTP full time in 2014.





## Put Culture in the Spotlight

Gardner's approach to the interview process allows candidates to see the culture at Western Trade Printing, which is one of its key selling points. "One of the things I've always taken pride in is knowing that my employees, especially collectively, know a lot more about this business than I do," Gardner says. That creates a culture of autonomy, where each employee is trusted to manage their performance. "When candidates come in, I can tell them you won't have somebody standing over you all day long telling you what to do." Many of Western Trade Printing's employees are good at managing themselves. Gardner makes it a point to give them opportunities to use their experience and perspective to contribute ideas and make decisions.

While autonomy is a key selling point, Gardner cautions against passing over quality young employees who need more guidance. It's important to remember that young employees still need to be managed: "Young guys need to be brought along, which I don't think is any different now than it was 20 years ago." If you can find the right young talent and train from within, you can gain an employee that will stick around for decade



Bob Gardner (left), President of Western Trade Printing, joined WTP in 2005 with the recent 8 years as President with Stan Girado (right), Business Development Manager of 3 years with the WTP family



## Be Ready to Train From Within

Gardner started at Western Trade Printing in 2005 as a prepress manager and says proudly, "I'm proof that there's opportunity from the bottom to the top." As the owner, he's successfully trained several young employees from within. "Two of my three full-time press operators started out loading paper. Now they're making top wages as press operators." Another young employee started as a bindery helper. After he hurt his foot, Gardner decided to put his computer skills to work so he wouldn't just sit at home. "He hasn't been back out on the floor since because he really just got it — the order writing, estimating, the scheduling — he's become my right-hand man in the office area, and he started off in the shop as a minimum wage employee."



## Create a Flexible Environment

This attitude, along with a flexible culture that allows for work/life balance, helps to set Western Trade Printing apart. Whether dealing with the loss of a close family member or pet, employees are given the time they need to focus on what really matters. Once he's found the right fit, he finds that retention isn't as much of an issue. Many employees have been with the company for over a decade, citing culture and flexibility as key reasons why they stay.

That's why Gardner advises his fellow print shop owners to be patient as they navigate this challenging labor market. "It seems that we need employees more than employees need us. And we have to wade through a lot to get to the ones that want to be with us. But don't settle. Wait for that right person." The right employee is worth it.



Tom Mintern, Lead Estimator who joined the WTP family in 2014



Jackie Helms (left), Accounting Manager/HR/Shop Mom since 2014 with Tracy Nims (right), Accounting Clerk/Customer Service, adopted into the family in 2017

# 7



# Creative Ways to Recruit Employees

BY SONALI SHAH

One of the most significant challenges facing small business owners today is finding and retaining employees. During the pandemic, over 47 million Americans<sup>1</sup> voluntarily quit their jobs — an unprecedented mass exit from the workforce that is now widely called the Great Resignation. This has resulted in a significant decrease in available talent. Add that for the printing industry, a lack of talent was already a considerable challenge.

As employees are the lifeblood of a business's operations, here are seven creative ways to find and recruit employees:



## 1

### Address Reasons Why Employees Don't Want to Work

According to a Pew Research study, low pay or feeling pay was too low, lack of opportunities for advancement, feeling disrespected at work, lack of childcare, and not enough flexibility were the top 5 reasons people left the workforce. Knowing this, you can determine which aspects you can change.

- Check out surveys, such as the Printing Industry Performance & Insights (PIPI) survey ([vma.bz/pipi](https://vma.bz/pipi)), Wage + Benefits Survey ([vma.bz/wagesurvey](https://vma.bz/wagesurvey)), and Sales Compensation Survey ([vma.bz/sales](https://vma.bz/sales)), to make sure you are offering a competitive salary.
- Augmented with benefits. VMA can help get you set up with health insurance and other benefits. Contact [shannon@vma.bz](mailto:shannon@vma.bz).
- Set up an employee performance review system that can pave a path for employee growth. You can offer cross-training or other relevant education to help their career growth and job flexibility. And use these as attractors in your job posting.

## 2

### Utilize Employee Referral Networks

Your employees might be the best place to find people with the talent you need. Their network of colleagues, friends, and family often have similar backgrounds. Offering a bonus if you hire a referral can be a good motivator. Additionally, companies made up of friends and family members create a wonderful company culture.



## 3

### Use a Talent Agency

If you want a qualified employee and someone else to do the digging, a talent agency may offer the perfect solution. Recruiters often specialize in specific industries and have access to a large pool of prospects. They are also motivated to find the perfect employee for you. The downside is you'll need to pay them, and the cost varies. Costs can be 15-25% of an employee's first-year salary.

Companies like 24 Seven ([24seventalent.com](https://24seventalent.com)), Creative Circle ([creativecircle.com](https://creativecircle.com)), Aquent ([aquent.com](https://aquent.com)), and 80Twenty ([80twenty.com](https://80twenty.com)) are creative industry recruiters. PrintLink ([printlink.com](https://printlink.com)), Marie Leising & Associates ([printrecruiter.com](https://printrecruiter.com)), and Newhouse Associates ([printjobs.com](https://printjobs.com)) specialize in print, packaging, and label industry recruitment.



## 4

### Hire Interns

What could be better than a constant flow of eager, bright, and fresh talent that you can mold into your perfect future employee? Internships are the ideal way to test out candidates to see if they can learn/do the job and see if they fit into your company's culture.

Since most of these are students, they are usually low on work experience, so it might take a little bit more handholding. On the other hand, interns are full of enthusiasm. They want to gain real-world work experience in a career they aspire to pursue and build a resume. According to Mashable.com, companies converted nearly 60% of interns into full-time hires.

## 5

### Previous Employees and Applicants

A pool that you already have in your database is previous contacts – your previous employees and past applicants. With past employees, you know what you are getting, and they've probably added some additional skills. In a tight labor market, some people who may not have been your first choice may be possible with some training.

## 6

### Tell a Compelling Story in Your Job Ad

Your employment ad is critical real estate. It's often the first place people hear about your company. In today's market, employees are inundated with opportunities, so your ad needs to stand out. Of course, you'll want to include the standard aspects and details of the job, but you can benefit from adding something to make your ad stand out from other job listings.

One simple way to do this is to tell your story. Other companies may have similar job descriptions, but no one else has the same story. This is every company's most underutilized secret weapon. Talk about what makes your company different, the people, the culture, service differentiation, etc. Thinking about how working at your company will benefit the potential hire as part of the story.

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### Promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, equity, and inclusion, commonly referred to as DEI, is a crucial component of hiring as more employees seek out organizations that prioritize diversity. Employees of all ages care about DEI, but as millennials and younger folks become your target hires, you need to be aware that a commitment to DEI is essential to job seekers. According to Monster research, 86% of candidates say diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace are important to them.

DEI is an important topic that should be incorporated into every part of your recruiting process. There is a lot that can be shared, but briefly, some tips for incorporating DEI include:

- Use inclusivity language in your job postings
- Share names and pronouns (like she/her or they/their) when you meet in job interviews and email exchanges
- Make sure your benefits are inclusive
- Consider hiring from diverse pools like veterans

Similarly, a commitment to sustainability is also important to employees. Our Spring 2022 issue of *Connected* was all about this topic. Take a look at: [vma.bz/publications/connected](https://vma.bz/publications/connected).

Getting creative and knowing what employees want, can help your business stand out and attract great employees in this competitive market.



<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## JOY IN THE WORKPLACE: WHY IT'S GOOD FOR BUSINESS

KARINA MARGIT ERDELYI

Conventional wisdom says that if we just pay employees enough, they'll be more productive. Even so, it turns out there's something more at play.

Research is showing that its happy employees make for a more successful company. Studies connecting productivity and employee happiness are revolutionizing how companies structure their culture and compensation.

While the opposite could cost your company a lot, economists at the University of Warwick found that unhappy workers were 10% less productive overall. In contrast, those that were happy had a 12% spike in productivity, which led the research team to conclude that "human happiness has large and positive causal effects on productivity.

Yes, all jobs have aspects that are challenging and tedious. The goal is not to magically get rid of those aspects of work but rather to focus on making work as happy as it can be.

Financial incentives alone are not enough to kick productivity into high gear. Igniting joy can help you attract and retain talent but requires a proactive approach that creates feelings of appreciation, wellbeing, and worth within a team.

Here's how to spark more joy in the workplace:

- Ensure people understand what they are working toward and their role in achieving that aim to give a deeper sense of purpose and fulfillment.

- Acknowledge good work. Feeling underappreciated is the number one reason Americans leave their jobs.
- Craft a company culture centered on building relationships and community. Team events where employees play, laugh, and solve problems together goes a long way to cultivating a culture of happiness and community.
- Be the joy. Managers who exhibit more joy had teams who completed their work more quickly and cohesively. It turns out that joy feeds productivity and is contagious, too!<sup>1</sup>

### The Bottom Line

Want sustainable high performance for your company? Want to retain your best employees and attract top talent? Make joy a strategic imperative. Crafting a company culture that taps into the productive powers of joy and a strong sense of shared purpose and belonging is just smart business.

1 Lee, Ingrid F. *Joyful: The Surprising Power of Ordinary Things to Create Extraordinary Happiness*. New York City, NY: Hachette Book Group, 2018.

VMA has edited this article with permission. Originally written by Karina Margit Erdelyi of Creative Circle, a recruiting and consulting services company specializing in digital, marketing, and creative staffing. [creativecircle.com](https://www.creativecircle.com).



## HOW CONDUCTING EXIT INTERVIEWS CAN HELP YOU INCREASE RETENTION

KYLE CUPP

Keeping good employees is as critical as recruiting new staff. Interestingly, the exit interview can provide helpful information for recruiting and retaining talent.

The exit interview is a conversation with a departing employee about their time at the company and the reason for their departure.

### The Format

Exit interviews typically use one of two formats: an in-person interview or a form the employee completes on their own. It's optional, but can help you learn about workplace issues that may be costing them good employees.

### Tips To Get You Started

- Explain that the interview is for informational purposes only.
- Say that you will take notes and keep them as confidential as possible. Note that certain allegations must be discussed with management.
- Assure them that concerns or information shared in good faith will not be communicated to future employers or negatively affect a reference check.

### The Questions

Begin with questions about why the employee is leaving. Ask why they sought employment elsewhere and whether the company

or manager could have done anything differently to keep them there. You may also ask whether they explored any options that would have enabled them to stay and what their new workplace does better.

If the employee had a challenging working experience at your company, try to find out why. Ask the employee to talk about any problems, unresolved issues, or other matters not handled to their satisfaction. Working relationships are foundational to employee morale and success, so ask about them.

The exit interview is also an excellent opportunity to get the employee's perspective on the training they received, the benefits the company offered, the growth potential the employee felt they had, the performance review process, and their assessment of employee morale. At the end of the questioning, ask the employee if there's anything they'd like to add.

### Next Steps

Once you've completed the exit interview, put the information you receive to good use. Remember, exit interviews are only useful if you are willing to act on the information you receive.

Kyle Cupp, PHR, is an author at Mineral, a HR portal with helpful tools for managing small business human resources. The article has been rewritten with permission. VMA members receive free access to Mineral. For questions, you may contact us via email at [jessica@vma.bz](mailto:jessica@vma.bz).



# Tailored Workflow Solutions for Print Providers



## LOGISTICS

- Order Fulfilment
- Bills of Lading
- Material Safety Data Sheets
- Scheduling



## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Service Requests
- Asset Tracking
- Procurement Requests



## FINANCE

- Expense Reports
- Accounts Payable
- Accounts Receivable
- Check Requests
- Purchase Orders
- Credit Approvals
- Budgeting
- Vendor Maintenance



## ADMINISTRATION

- Asset Management
- Customer Service Requests
- Facility Requests
- Resource Scheduling
- Safety / Incident Tracking
- Leasehold Management
- Space Planning



## SALES & MARKETING

- Order Process
- SOW Approval Process
- Non Standard Approval Process
- Proof of Delivery
- Event Management
- Product Launch
- Product Catalogue Publishing



## LEGAL

- Conflict Resolutions
- Retention Policy
- Records Management
- Contracts
- New Matter / Case
- Regulation Inquiries
- Physical File Management



## HUMAN RESOURCES

- New Hire On Boarding
- Performance Reviews
- Time Off Requests
- Travel Requests
- Compensation Requests
- Terminations



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