

Dr. Die Cast



What's City Planning have to do with Recruiting Employees?

(Is it time to look at how you sell your company to new or prospective employees?)

This month's issue is "Casting Defects". Creating consistently high quality die castings depends on building a stable, highly trained workforce.

Where do your employees come from today and where did they come from when the company was founded? This sounds like a simple, basic question but perhaps one that needs some thought.

As I look close enough at many of the cities in the "Rust Belt" a trend that emerges is that there are single family homes right next to most businesses. Owners of restaurant, bars and stores lived above them. Many of those factories have been converted into "loft apartments". Real estate developers have rediscovered this template and are building apartments in inner cities to house the office staffs.

Think walking or bicycling to work without the need to start up or own a car. Some young people are choosing not to even get a driver's license. Unfortunately most of the die casting companies have long ago moved to "industrial parks" that are distant from housing. It worked as long as everyone was able to commute. The city planners had good intentions. Some of the benefits of being at a distance away from residential zones include quieter neighborhoods when the die casting plant is some distance from housing. But experience is showing that not everyone is going to come from those suburban neighborhoods.

Especially for the entry level jobs, let's face it; all of us were once at entry level. Were you always a commuter? What does commuting mean to you? Does it mean the same for your most recent hires? Might they come from a neighborhood or locale where they always walked or biked to work or took public transportation?

Some companies report that the only thing keeping them from expanding their business is a shortage of employees.

When asked, "Where are your employees coming from?" It might be important to not only look at how far from your facility, but look much farther and look at where is their country of origin? While immigration is a hot political topic it should be noted that in some cities the die casting industry will consist almost completely of one or more ethnic groups. I have seen tool & die shops in Los Angeles that were almost completely Polish or Chinese and many others. The break rooms in some die casting shops sounds like a meeting of the United Nations.

At the recent NADCA Plant Management Conference there were a number of points that are worth repeating in answer to the question, "What are some of the details that make it easier to hire and retain employees?" Following are some of those points with a few additions from my own experience.

- Transportation
- Can your employees afford to live near your company?
 - *Having a bus stop in front of the plant.*
 - *Having your own shuttle service.*
- Having a clear path of career and income development (internships, apprenticeships, journeyman programs, mentorship programs).
- Do you have an orientation program?
- Develop a relationship with agencies that assist refugees resettle.
- Become familiar with state and federal programs that subsidize or outright pay for employee training.
- Direct hires lasted longer than temp services (results varied but worth considering).
- Recruiting military veterans.
- Recruiting prisoners on work release or parolees, returning citizens. Find out which "Department of Correction" facilities have training programs. At least one of the Michigan facilities is working with an electricians union to train electricians. When they are released they already have a state recognized electrician card.
 - *Some states will only parole if the prisoner has as job guaranteed on his release. In other words if you wait for them to apply you will wait a long time.*

Who's Dr. Die Cast?

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- *Halfway houses that arrange for employment but need employers to make themselves known.*
- Bi-lingual or multi-lingual H.R. and key staff.
- Cross training to relieve fatigue and get a break from the heat.
- Rehiring company retirees full and/or part time.
- Referral programs and head hunter bonus, employees referring friends who they respect.
- Being on the lookout 24/7 for people who we see doing excellent work at their current jobs (such as the checkout person or mechanic who is doing their job with enthusiasm and a smile.)
- Do your own wage / salary survey of the local job market. What's your competition? Ask people what the pay is at their current job. What is they like about their current job?
- Do you have a printed brochure of your company's benefits and policies?
- Ron Holland offered the following regarding benefits and incentives:
 - *Consider co-op programs with local universities.*
 - *Develop a relationship with local technology schools (tech schools) and/or community colleges for students with demonstrated skills.*
- *Use the recent business tax reduction to increase benefits offered.*
- *Create a shadow program where employees get a chance to see firsthand what is involved in other work areas.*
- *Promoting from within, giving advance opportunities as often as possible creates its own fulfillment.*
- *Offer employee financial wellness programs are an increasingly popular work perk (such as Dave Ramsey's "Financial Peace". One company routinely sponsors this for all employees with measurable benefits.)*
- Offer maternity/paternity leave.
- Other Benefits:
 - *Employers should consider creative ways to offset cost sharing for insurances. This is huge expense for all employees, especially those with young families.*
 - *Offer working from home where possible.*
 - *Four ten-hour days instead of the traditional five-eight hour days (less commute time/expense, more time at home or for other activities.)*
 - *Flex time where possible for tasks that don't require scheduled completion.*
- *Vacation time (paid and/or un paid), offer additional weeks.*
- *401 K – profit sharing, offer higher match*

A headhunter once told me, "If a person will leave his current city or state to join your company, he can just as easily leave your company to go elsewhere." My point would be to hire locally whenever you can. People who are established in an area have emotional and familial commitment to the area. They stay there because their friends and family live there. Certainly there are those who seem to relocate at a moment's notice but that only lasts until they begin to raise a family and the children begin to get involved in school and neighborhood activities.

Thanks go out to Ron Holland of NADCA Chapter 3 for editorial comments and additions. Some of the above quotations and additional suggestions can be found at the following links:

www.glassdoor.com/employers/blog/5-job-benefits-attract-quality-candidates

www.thebalancesmb.com/top-ways-to-attract-quality-employees-2948197

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