

Tennessee Small Business Development Center at Volunteer State Community College



A public service program of the Division of Continuing Education & Economic Development

April's Newsletter Topic:

Selecting the Right Employee(s) for the Small Business

Perhaps one of the scariest tasks for a small business owner to take on is hiring a new employee. What usually occurs is that you hire someone a month after you actually needed to hire them. This tends to result in either hiring the wrong person or hiring a good person for the wrong situation. Not because they are a bad employee, but because you will not be able to give them the training they deserve or you may have brought in the wrong skill set into your organization. There is not a perfect system to get the best person available each and every time, but you can definitely increase your chances of building the best team around.

Here are the summarized steps for selecting the right employee:

1. **Preliminary Screening Interview** – You should consider doing a phone interview before spending time with someone in an interview. This will narrow down your list of candidates and ensure they fit the skill set you need before spending unnecessary time with them.
2. **Employment Tests** – Have you ever hired someone that said they knew how to use a particular piece of equipment or software program, only to find out that they just meant that they had heard of it? This happens all of the time and it can be expensive for you. Use a standardized test to make sure they can do what they say they can do.
3. **Reference and Background Checks** – This can save you a tremendous amount of grief later. Always call previous employers. Although they are somewhat limited on what they can legally tell you, you would be surprised at what they tell you. Also, background checks can get expensive, but so can a lawsuit. You can hire someone pending they pass the background check, so that will prevent you from running a background check on every possible candidate.
4. **Employment Interviews** – Create a comprehensive list of interview questions that relate to the skill set that you are looking for and always ask each candidate the same questions, so you can get an apples-to-apples comparison. Review this link, <http://www.jobinterviewquestions.org/>, for interview question do's and don'ts. Also take

a look at the **Small Business Tip of the Month** for information on asking behavioral interview questions.

5. **Hiring Decision** – Base your hiring decision on the qualifications, skill set, test scores, personality, and other employee’s feedback. Do not hire someone just because you have a lot in common or because they seem nice. To be successful, you must make sure that they have the right attitude and either the right skill set or the ability to attain the skill set that you will train them on.

April Small Business Workshops

Date	Event Title	Time	Event City	Location	Fee	Contact Person	Contact Phone
4/3/2008	Introduction to QuickBooks for Small Businesses	9:00 - 4:00 p.m.	Gallatin	VSCC, Warf Building, Room 122	\$50	Charles Alexander	615-230-4780 or calexander@tsbdc.org
4/8/2008	How to Start a Small Business	4:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Gallatin	VSCC, Betty Gibson Building, Room 107C	FREE	Charles Alexander	615-230-4780 or calexander@tsbdc.org
Look for this new workshop in May!							
5/1/2008	E-Commerce for Small Businesses	4:00 - 6:00 p.m.	Gallatin	VSCC, Betty Gibson Building, Room 107C	FREE	Charles Alexander	615-230-4780 or calexander@tsbdc.org

Small Business Tip of the Month: **Ask behavioral style interview questions**

To get the most out of your interview, ask behavioral style interview questions. Behavioral style interview questions ask the candidate how they have handled a particular situation in the past. You may ask for a specific example as well. Instead of asking “how do you handle stressful situations”, ask “how did you handle a stressful situation at the last company you worked for and what was the result”. This prevents elaborate, made-up answers that may or may not have any actual substance to them. What you are looking for is someone who has experience with the skill set that you are seeking. To find more examples of behavioral style interview questions review this link <http://career.berkeley.edu/Article/010928a.stm>.

Remember the TSBDC offers the following:

- **Free** and confidential one-on-one counseling for existing and start up small businesses. Whether the counseling is in the area of marketing, operations, management, or any other business service, the TSBDC consultant provides guidance every step of the way. *By appointment, please.*
- Training seminars on a wide array of topics for small business owners.
- Assistance with various funding proposals including SBA loans.
- Referral to professional services and agencies.

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**1480 Nashville Pike
Betty Gibson Hall #114
Gallatin, TN 37066**

**Phone (615) 230-4780
Fax (615) 230-3362**

**www.volstate.edu/tsbdc
www.tsbdc.org**