

# Eight ways to recruit today's best teenage employees

By Ken Whiting

It used to be fairly simple and routine. Need to fill a couple of positions? You simply placed an ad in the local paper, or asked your current employees if any of their friends were looking for work. That's all there was to it! Then, you could get back to running your business.

But now that's changed. Even with current economic conditions, teens have access to plenty of entry-level jobs, but they want to know what you'll do for them before they apply. They are distracted by a cloud of digital noise, making it hard to get their attention. Traditional approaches just don't work. And, you may be left with average, or no, employees while your competition is fully staffed with motivated, hard working, responsible and personable teens.

The times have changes, and so have today's teens. If you haven't adjusted your recruiting approach you'll continue to come up short. To ensure you catch the attention of the best teens, throw out as wide of a net as possible by using these eight surefire tactics.

1. Can You See Me Now? Visually communicate your message. Create your own video that highlights the benefits, fun and friends that will come with working at your company. Utilize music, colors, movement, and other teens to tell your story. Use

this as a TV commercial on local channels, e-mail to prospective new hires and schools, and stream on your Web site. You can even upload the video to YouTube or social networking Web sites.

2. The Need for Speed. Today's teens are impatient. Keep your applications short, with just the information necessary to determine if they are interview-worthy. You can capture additional employment data if and when you meet with them. Respond to all completed applications within 24 hours to discuss the next step. If you wait, they'll be applying somewhere else.

3. Go Digital. Teens have never known a life without computers. You should have a Web site, with an easy-to-remember name. Prospective employees must be able to complete and submit their application online.

4. Advertise Online. The Web is a way of life for teens today. Stay away from the local "wanted ads" in your daily paper. That is the last place a teen will look! Instead, use employment Web sites like Snagajob.com, Teens4hire.org or Craigslist.org. Most communities have localized Internet employment sites. Don't forget social networking sites, such as MySpace and FaceBook. By the way, it's all right if you don't know much about the Web... your current teen staff does. Ask them for their input and include them in the process.



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5. Go Back to School. You have to earn a teen's loyalty and confidence. In addition to job postings that are engaging, utilizing age-appropriate design and humor to communicate your employment message is important. Also, get involved. Volunteer your expertise in the classroom or on campus to build trust. Don't forget to reach out to the local home school community.

6. Send Out the Troops. Create an internal recruitment program that provides incentives, and motivates your current teen staff to recruit as many people as possible. It doesn't have to cost much. Do not penalize them for success - give them a challenge and let them go for it! You can also utilize a

signing bonus paid directly to your new hire. It's a win-win situation when you pay your current employees to be recruiters, instead of other employment advertisers.

7. Shop till they Drop. Loyal customers can make energetic employees. Communicate to your teen customers that you have positions available and tell them about the benefits they would receive by being a part of the team. Sell your jobs while you are selling your products. Be sure it looks like a fun place to work.

8. Work with Strategic Retail Partners. Find other businesses where teens shop and hang out. You can build a partnership with these companies, and let them help you communicate your employment opportunities. By aligning yourself with select music and clothing stores, restaurants and movie theaters, you will put your company name in front of prospective teens. To help connect with retailer, consider purchasing your employment incentives and prizes from them.

Recruiting the best teens is just the beginning of building a strong foundation for your business. When more teens apply, only hire the "best of the best" who are a match for your business requirements. You'll improve your retention, have a more motivated employee base, and keep a young workforce inspired and engaged.

Ken Whiting is an industry expert on providing solutions for entry-level workforce challenges. For a free copy of the "WAVES 101 Best Ways to Recruit, Retain, Educate and Motivate Today's Teens" visit WAVESforsuccess.com. For speaking and consulting, call 831-423-1890 ex.2 or email ken@wavesforsuccess.com.



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