



## THE ART OF HIRING GOOD TECHNICIANS: IS THERE A RIGHT WAY?

One of the hardest jobs in any office, including our dealerships, is the hiring process to find good employees. To complicate the hiring process, it's even more difficult to find and hire good technicians.

Probably one of the most important things a dealer needs to do is to establish a comprehensive job description for service technician. Their principle responsibilities include:

- ◆ Performs repair and maintenance work on equipment, in accordance with time schedules as assigned by service management.
- ◆ Suggests additional needed work to the service salesman or shop foreman so the customer may be notified.
- ◆ Makes certain that the work assignment is correct, asking for clarification if there are questions.
- ◆ Maintains tools and equipment, follows safety procedures, and notifies shop foreman if tools need replaced or new tools are needed.
- ◆ Maintains cleanliness of the working area.
- ◆ Maintains cleanliness of the customer's equipment.

This is just a short list of some of the things that dealers need to clarify before the hiring process begins.

***Your Employment Application ...*** The next and most important tool is the Employment Application. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the restrictions placed on the hiring process have become even more complicated. Your Employment Application should be as simple as possible, while providing information to the company that is useful in assessing the applicant. One general rule of thumb is to refrain from asking for information that will not or cannot be used in making an employment decision. At a minimum, your Employment Application should include:

- ◆ A statement that the applicant agrees that his/her employment is at will, i.e. it can be terminated at the discretion of the company at any time, and should also invoke the suggestion of an implied contract;
- ◆ An acknowledgment that misstatements on the application are grounds for discharge;
- ◆ An acknowledgment that the applicant, if hired, may be required to submit to a medical exam before commencing work that may include testing for drugs and alcohol; and
- ◆ A reference release designed to provide protection from liability for disclosures of prior employment and other investigations.

***Verifying the Information ...*** What is probably the most important thing you can do? In our opinion, you should verify the applicant's statements on the application by doing everything in your power to:

- ◆ Check out the applicant's Tech school references in detail;
- ◆ Contact the manufacturers' schools that the applicant has attended according to his/her application, and review those in detail; and
- ◆ Conduct a technician skills/knowledge test. What better way could you possibly find than to actually test an individual for his/her abilities in general shop knowledge, engine basics, engine trouble-shooting, drivelines, hydraulics, and electrical principles.



*Service Technician Applicant Test Developed for OPE Dealers ...* Working through your NAEDA OPE Dealer Council in conjunction with The Ohio State University, your Association has developed just such a test. This test is copyrighted by OSU, but under the Association's licensing agreement, it is available for members to use without any kind of fee. Simply, said, it is a tremendous member service to you.

The OPE Dealer Council members served as our sounding board. They wanted a test that covered many areas of service knowledge, would reflect varying degrees of knowledge, require some measurement conversion and math skills, provide some insight to the applicants troubleshooting ability, and would be easy to administer. The dealers wanted a tool to help verify the applicant's work experience on his/her resume. In other words, is the experience credible?

It was determined that eight broad topics should be covered by the test. For simplicity, each section includes ten multiple-choice questions, each with five choices.

Most questions address the basic knowledge a person with some service experience should know. More difficult questions are interspersed to help a dealer identify applicants with higher skill levels. All questions ask for the "best" answer, some include more than one correct answer, and a few are judgment calls, to facilitate dialogue with the dealer.

The eight sections of the test are:

- ◆ General Shop Knowledge, Tools, and Safety
- ◆ Engine Basics
- ◆ Engine Troubleshooting
- ◆ Power Trains/ Drivelines
- ◆ Electrical Principles
- ◆ Electrical Circuits and Schematics
- ◆ Hydraulics
- ◆ Compact Diesel

With most sections printed on a single sheet, the test is very flexible. You can use the test as is, giving job applicants the appropriate section(s). You can also customize for your dealership. In whatever form the test is used, just remember that the copyright line must appear on the test.

As previously stated, the OPE Service Technician Skills/Knowledge Test is being provided as a member service, free of charge. If you want the printed, 10-page version, call, fax, or mail your request to the Association office. Yes, an answer key is provided.

We know that hiring qualified technicians is difficult. We hope this article and the Applicant Test will give you the tools to reinforce your hiring process, which should pay many dividends in the long run.



*Yes, I'd like a copy of the OPE Technician Test to use at my dealership.*

*Company* \_\_\_\_\_

*Contact* \_\_\_\_\_ *Phone* \_\_\_\_\_

*Address* \_\_\_\_\_

*City* \_\_\_\_\_ *State* \_\_\_\_\_ *Zip* \_\_\_\_\_

*Phone* \_\_\_\_\_ *Fax* \_\_\_\_\_

*Email* \_\_\_\_\_

*I hereby acknowledge that this test is licensed to the SouthWestern Association and the North American Equipment Dealers Association (NAEDA) from Ohio State University and may not be disseminated by me to any other person or entity except my employees for purposes of testing applicants and/or employees without the express written permission of either Ohio State University, SouthWestern Association or NAEDA. By using this information, I agree to take such steps as are necessary to prevent my employees from disseminating the test in violation of the preceding sentence.*

*Under the licensing agreement, dealers have the right to use the test without fee. Dealers may use the test in its entirety or separately by section. Further, dealers may select questions from various sections to make a small, less comprehensive customized test for their dealerships but the questions may not be altered. Dealers may also make photocopies of the test, as needed; however, the copyright wording shown on the bottom of each test page must be visible.*

*Signed* \_\_\_\_\_

**SouthWestern Association, PO Box 419264, Kansas City, MO 64141-6264 ♦ 800-762-5616**

**In cooperation with:**

**North American Equipment Dealers Association, 1195 Smizer Mill Rd., Fenton, MO 63026-3480**