Golden Nuggets to Developing Marine Techs

Compiled compliments of Valerie Ziebron, VRZ Consulting

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From the Employer's Perspective

- "We have a local VoTech programs – they offer nursing, welding, automotive, etc., but no marine. I have let them know about our need for marine techs and offered them motors, apprenticeships, and other enticements to get them to consider adding marine training."

- "We let local high school kids 'shadow for a day' any of our employees. Interestingly, they have always chosen to shadow a tech."

- "We are on the homegrown plan more than anything. Look for someone with other skills – like a handyman who loves boating. If they love boating, they are far more likely to excel and to stay."

- "My area is tough, but I've had better luck recruiting from Florida trade schools or some of the bigger Northwest towns. Techs like our cost and quality of living once they experience it. I sometimes even pay moving expenses."

- "We have our co-op students start out with yard work. Once we see how they work, we have them work alongside a tech with basic jobs. They also work with our detailer and help in parts to get an idea of the range of jobs in the marine industry."

- "Don't assume that anyone who's gone to marine school knows how to work on your specific product offerings. They have to learn your brands, your conditions. You have to teach them."

- "Dealerships that provide techs a clear, career path – one that increases their knowledge, responsibilities and pay – tend to retain techs and attract new ones."

- "Our apprenticeship program has clear assignments for the techs to do. We pay our guys based on where they are in the program as well as an efficiency bonus."

- "We pay the mentor a % of the hours the apprentice turns. This gets them up, running and profitable ASAP."

- "We have them spend time with each of our techs. They learn something from each of them and some guys are better at teaching some things than others."

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- "We have our apprentice start as an assistant to the service and parts counters so they understand how the shop works and how important their role is in profitability and CSI."

- "We pay the techs next month student loan payment for each successful month they complete in our shop."

- "All military personnel who are leaving active duty must attend classes to help them re-enter civilian life. Call the base operator and ask to speak to someone who can talk to you about the T.R.S. (sometimes called 'Taps & Tams') courses. Let them know you have jobs available."

- "Don't be afraid to let the bad attitude tech go. He's bringing down the entire shop. Once he was gone I heard horror stories about him – what I knew was the tip of the iceberg. I'll never go through that again! It's so much better now that he's gone!"

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From the Tech's Perspective

- "It would really be nice to hear a genuine 'thank you' from time to time. A little acknowledgement that my job can be difficult. I hear it more from customers than from management." - Master Tech

- "Although money is not the only factor it is important. I want to trade value for value but some shops I've worked at don't share that thinking. Thankfully I found one that agrees if I make them more money, I should make more too!" - A Tech

- "If any of the techs mention something that's hurting the business, we're told to quit whining, but then we are the ones to catch hell when the numbers suffer." - Lead Tech

- "Shop cleanliness, organization, and everything in good working order is what I need to do my job to the best of my ability. Time is money and this is hurting their profitability and my paycheck. It's so frustrating!" - 20+ year career tech

- "Does the manager have processes clearly defined and operational? Does the support staff follow the process? This is a huge reason why you can't get or keep good techs." - Tech who worked at several shops before finding the one he's been at for years