

# Shoe Retailing

T O D A Y

SEPT-OCT 09

THE NATIONAL SHOE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION PROUDLY PRESENTS:

## HUMAN RESOURCES:

Your Best Asset to Achieving Your Mission

NSRA Corporate

## Retailers Share Employee Recruitment Ideas



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5 Mistakes  
to Avoid



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NSRA's  
HR Conference



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Capturing  
Sales from  
Web Shoppers

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**NSRA** has been serving independent shoe retailers since 1912.

**NSRA'S MISSION**

*NSRA's mission is to significantly improve the business performance of our members through exceptional educational programs, vital cost-saving services and informational resources, and powerful networking opportunities.*

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# Retailers Share Employee Recruitment Ideas

MADelyn RYGG



Madelyn Rygg

NSRA hosted a special "Recruitment Workshop" during its July 31 conference in Las Vegas. Participants were invited to get creative and discuss innovative approaches to finding talent. They teamed up in small groups with assigned topics, brainstormed ideas, and then shared each group's ideas with the larger group. Speaker and employment expert Mel Kleiman served as moderator of the session, and offered several of his own suggestions. Following are what each group felt were its best ideas as a brainstorming team.

## TOPIC A—Finding Them

List unique ways, successful techniques, tools and places (including electronic media) to find potential great employees.

- > Customers – current/past, people who have a desire or passion
- > Referrals from employees, customers, family, friends. Do you have a referral program?
- > Social networking clubs/groups, church groups, retired teachers, runners/sports enthusiasts (if you sell athletic shoes).
- > Successful copywriting of the advertising message. For example, if you want to hire older employees, ask for "maturity," "experience."
- > Internet: Craig's List, Monster, etc.
- > Fast food restaurants, other retail places that have less desirable hours. For example, if you are located in a seasonal market, look for people who make up the skeleton crews in the off-season. It may be more comfortable to announce that you're looking for people who

want extra hours/shifts.

- > Pull in from other organizations, e.g., technical schools. Call it an internship.

## TOPIC B—Profiling/Selection

List the 5 most important interviewing questions that help determine who you hire.

- > What are the things that drive and motivate you the most?
- > Are you a top performer? (Hold it against them if they don't meet their metrics!)

such as "I have diabetes," an excellent response is to say simply, "I appreciate your telling me that, but I hope you know that I can't use that information in my hiring decision." It protects you.)

- > If you could create the perfect job, what would it be?
- > What have you done to satisfy yourself?
- > Tell us about your biggest sale.
- > Did you play any sports in high school or college? (This lets you find out if they're competitive.)

**The key to successful personality profiles is: Look for people who get things done even when they are things they don't like to do.**

- Prove to me that you've been a top performer.
- > Tell me about your worst customer and how you handled it.
- > What's been your favorite job and why?
- > Tell me about your best manager, and what was great about him/her? Tell me about your worst.
- > Tell me the things you liked most/least about your last job?
- > Would your last employer hire you back?
- > Other than being sick, are there any reasons that you wouldn't be able to get to work on time? (The response everybody should learn: when someone tells you something you shouldn't know or aren't entitled to ask about,

- > Does the salary we're offering meet your requirements? (This is potentially a better way than asking, "What is your minimum salary requirement?")
- > Are you going to school?
- > What's the worst trouble you've been in? And was that really the worst?
- > **Moderator Mel Kleiman's most important question:** Tell me about the very first job you had that you got paid for, and what were the three most important things you learned at that job? If you ask about someone's last job, you're looking at the movie backwards. Look at the movie forward. Find out the things they learned as a kid, and then assess whether they are still the same person.

## TOPIC C—Being an “A” Player

What are the 5-10 characteristics of a top-notch employee?

- > Good communicator with customers, fellow staff, management
- > Work well with others, great communication skills
- > A “just-do-it” attitude—someone who is confident and self-driven.
- > Friendliness, showing initiative, great sense of humor.
- > Receptive to new ideas.
- > Honest
- > Reliable

*Tips from Kleiman: The biggest mistake most of us make when hiring is not making the shopping list. Where is your shopping list when it comes to hiring your next employee?*

1. Capacity. Can s/he physically do the job? Is he smart enough to do the job?

2. Attitude. Teamwork is an attitude, as is customer service.

3. Personality. Companies, employees, managers, all have personalities. The key to successful personality profiles is: Look for people who get things done even when they are things they don't like to do. Success doesn't come from doing only the things you like to do; it comes when you can also do the things you don't like to do when they have to be done. Look for what people don't like to do.

## TOPIC D—Outside the Interview

What tools are you using to determine if you want to hire someone or not? (i.e., paper & pencil tests, 3-day trial period, credit checks, etc.)

- > Google, MySpace, YouTube, etc. See what comes up on their page, their history.
- > Background checking, drug checking, credit checking.

- If you don't drug test, where do you think the druggies are going to work?

- Even if you do not drug test, have a drug-testing-for-cause policy. Make every employee sign it. If you have a job accident, you have grounds to do a drug test. If they were using, fire them for policy violation.

- > Have potential new employees shadow a successful employee.

- > Use an application form that requires handwritten responses (no spell checker, good handwriting, the words they use, etc. all say something about them)

- > Resumes, changing jobs frequency.

- > Personal appearance.

- > Have they ever shopped at our store?

- > Did they look us up on the internet?

- > How did their shoes look?

- > If they've worked for other stores, ask vendors what they know about them.

- > “Do you have reliable transportation?” (Note: It is illegal to ask whether they own a car.)

- > Body language!

### Tips from Kleiman:

- Everything you do in the hiring process is a test. Make sure you look at everything you do in the hiring process this way.

- Never interview from a resume; it covers what they want to tell you, not necessarily what you want to know. Require them to fill out an application completely, leaving no blanks, and do not say “see resume.” (If they don't fill it out properly, they can't follow directions.)

- Make them invest the time to fill out the application in your store; don't simply let them take it out to fill in later.

## TOPIC E—References

List 5 tips or tactics on how to get the information you need from a reference call.

- > Be aware that no one answers any questions over the phone, except for date ranges worked.

- > “Underhanded” ways work better:

- Pay a personal visit to their current or former employer. Ask for Joe, and look at their reaction.

- > Talk to co-workers at former place(s) of employment.

- > If you can get the HR person, warm them up (toss them a few cream puffs), then sell them on giving you information they wouldn't otherwise give you.

- > Check their MySpace or Facebook page. See if they're the one passing around the bong at the party.

- > Attempt to “circumvent” the HR department. Talk to people who really know the person.

### Tips from Kleiman:

- Ask the reference questions: Did your last employer do an employee evaluation? Did you get a copy of that evaluation? If so, ask them to bring it on their second interview.

- Use a reference verification form. That is, ask the potential employee: If I check your references, how will your former employer rate you? Then you are not asking the former employer for information; you are simply verifying information given to you.

### Closing tip from Mel Kleiman:

- When you attend a conference, write down on two business cards the one thing you are going to do differently because you attended this program. Put one in your own pocket; hand the other to someone else, who will call you later and remind you to do it.

NSRA thanks everyone who participated for sharing their ideas. ■