

How to Find & Keep Good Employees for Your Portable Restroom Business

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Making the move from owner to employer is a milestone in your business. It's also a big responsibility to be "the boss." It's not only an investment of time and money, it's an investment in your company image. Your employee(s) will be representing your company. Everything they do will be the same as if you did it yourself.

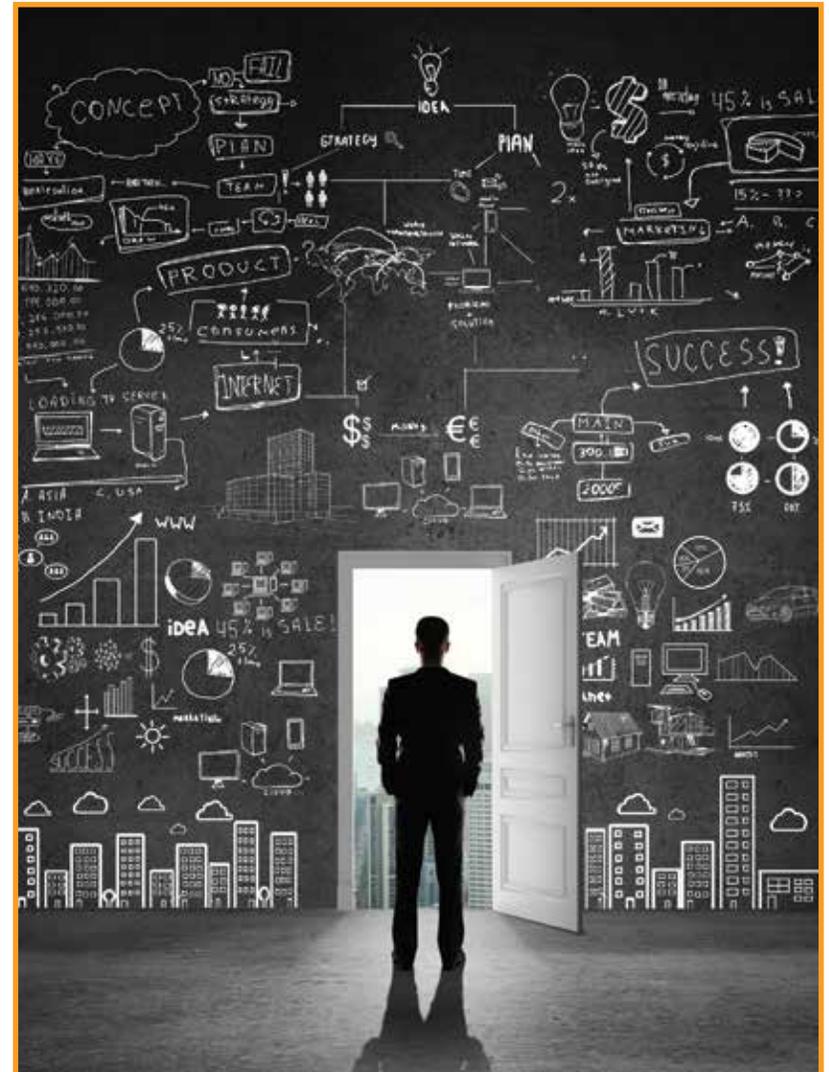
A dependable employee is truly a human "resource." They give you more capabilities to expand your business and more options in the way you run your business. Working with employees will also help you grow as a businessperson. The people skills and managerial experience you gain will be valuable throughout your career.

As you begin what we hope will be a career-long experience in hiring, use the help and expert advice of your business mentor, as well as SCORE, Small Business Development Centers, Women's Business Centers and Office of Veterans Business Development.

FIRST, DO THE MATH

Employees cost money. Before you begin the hiring process, make a realistic estimate of the costs and decide if you can afford an employee. Here are the most significant costs, according to the SBA:

- **Wages**
- **Unemployment tax**
Check with your state department of revenue for your state unemployment tax rate. Federal unemployment tax is 0.8



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percent on the employee's first \$7,000 of earnings.

- **Workers compensation insurance**

Check with your state for the state rate.

- **Medicare and Social Security taxes**

Currently, Social Security tax is 6.2 percent on wages up to \$113,700. Medicare tax is another 1.45 percent.

- **Recruitment and training costs**

Consider the time you spend interviewing candidates, cost of placing ads, etc.

- **Benefits**

If you plan to offer benefits, factor those into your calculations.

- **Payroll costs**

It takes time and money to do payroll and calculate taxes and withholding. Consider the cost of investing in payroll software.

- **New equipment**

A second pumper truck, additional units, accessories, fuel and maintenance costs, uniforms.

- **Insurance for company vehicles**

Compare the estimated annual cost of an employee to the extra income you could earn. You will be spending money on hiring and

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employing before your new employee will be increasing your cash flow. Can you afford to live with less profit until your business catches up?

PORTABLE SANITATION AS A JOB OR CAREER

Once you're ready to begin the hiring process, put yourself in the place of someone looking for work. You will see that there are advantages and disadvantages to portable sanitation.

People who are unfamiliar with the workings of portable sanitation may not have a positive image of the business. Job seekers may regard portable sanitation as undesirable because the job involves cleaning human waste. It's also a physical job that requires being outside in all kinds of weather and working weekends and long hours.

Portable sanitation can also be exactly the type of work a job seeker is looking for. Physical, outdoor work may be a positive reason to take the job. Portable sanitation also offers the independence of doing a job with little supervision and the opportunity to meet all sorts of people. Portable sanitation workers have the satisfaction of providing an important service, and they help keep our world cleaner and more sanitary.



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PUTTING THE WORD OUT

Advertise in local newspapers, Craigslist and professional websites such as Indeed.com, Monster.com, Glassdoor.com, Careerbuilder.com and Simplyhired.com.

Here's a sample ad:

XYZ company is growing, and we're searching for a portable sanitation service technician. As a service technician, part of your job will be driving a company vehicle. We pride ourselves on hiring a driver with an outstanding record to ensure equipment is properly cared for. The job also requires physical labor and attention to detail. If you are someone who enjoys working hard outdoors, working mostly independently and "sweating the details," then this is the job for you! Occasional customer interaction is expected, so XYZ will provide the uniform! Commercial driving experience is preferred, but we will train the right candidate. Minimum of a chauffeur license required — CDL B (with tanker endorsement preferred). Candidates must be able to obtain a DOT Medical Card. Apply today!

Do you know friends or acquaintances who might be interested? Network by putting out the word to your business and construction contacts. (Once you have employees, they can also be good sources of new hires. You might consider a referral program that gives employees a reward for bringing in a new hire.)

Put together a job application form that you can email or send to applicants. (There are generic forms available on the internet that you can edit to your needs.)

THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Review the applications for candidates who stand out. You can begin the interview process over the phone.

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You may want to include the following questions in the application and/or phone interview:

- Work history
- Reasons for leaving previous job
- Starting and ending pay
- Years of commercial driving experience
- Types of vehicles driven
- Tickets/accidents/driving record for the last 5 years
- DOB (you are allowed to ask this for a commercial driving job)
- Current/active DOT physical (if not, do they have a problem obtaining it?)
- Drug and alcohol test (if required by your insurance)
- Highest level of education received
- Can you read a map?
- Can you use a GPS?
- How long have you lived in the service area?
- Are you familiar with the service area?
- Can you do repetitive tasks and lift 50 lbs. regularly in all weather conditions?
- Have you ever hauled a trailer before (or pulled a boat, camper, etc.)?
- Criminal record for last 7 years (not required to document anything that has been expunged)
- References



Ask the same question in different ways. Do the answers change?

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ON-SITE INTERVIEW

Invite your top candidates for an on-site interview. Here, you can discover additional indicators about their qualifications.

Answer any questions they may have. Explain the realities of the schedule, such as working weekends in the summer. Explain that emergencies happen and workload is often unpredictable.

Get a feel for their personality and workplace behavior by asking questions in-person, such as:

- How many days did you miss work at your last job? What were the reasons?
- Why will we be able to rely on you every day?
- If needed, can you work longer than originally scheduled?
- At your last job, what did you do if you had a problem getting along with someone?

Give the candidates a tour of your site. (Tip: Make a point to walk fast. Do they keep up?)

Show your candidate how to load, unload and clean a unit, and have them try it. (Let them know ahead of time so they can dress casually.) Explain the steps you take. Can they follow and understand direction?

Have the candidate drive the truck in the yard. Did he or she use caution starting and moving the truck for the first time? Adjust the seat and mirrors? Use the seatbelt? How well does he or she maneuver and back up? Set the parking brake when finished?

HIRING AND ONBOARDING

Don't expect immediate success. Every time you hire, you'll recruit many candidates before you find the right person. But when you do, welcome your new employee and have a plan to help them get up to speed. We call it the onboarding process.

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Start your new employee on Monday. For the first week (or however long you decide), accompany your new hire. Have them do the work while you supervise.

Emphasize to your employee that the job is more than cleaning toilets. It's cleaning well, driving safely, being knowledgeable, communicating well, following instructions, being polite and friendly and looking for new opportunities. Show them the professionalism you expect by conducting yourself professionally.

When you hire more employees, you can have your more experienced employees train the beginners. We do recommend you personally overseeing some of the training to ensure all your standards are upheld.

DO THE PAPERWORK

Hiring an employee means you must also meet certain federal and state regulations. Check your insurance policy as well - adding a new driver may require some changes to your policy. They may also have some requirements that need to be met.

Read the SBA article "Hire Your First Employee" at www.sba.gov/starting-business/hire-retain-employees/hire-your-first-employee. Here is a review of your major requirements when you hire:

Step 1. Obtain an Employer Identification Number (EIN)

You need to get an employment identification number (EIN) from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. The EIN is also called an Employer Tax ID or as Form SS-4. The EIN is necessary for reporting taxes and other documents to the IRS and to report information about your employees to state agencies. Apply for EIN online or contact the IRS at 1-800-829-4933.



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Step 2. Set up records for withholding taxes

You must keep records of employment taxes for at least four years. The three types of withholding taxes are:

- Federal Income Tax Withholding
 - Every employee must provide an employer with a signed withholding exemption certificate (Form W-4). The employer must then submit Form W-4 to the IRS.
- Federal Wage and Tax Statement
 - Every year, employers must report to the federal government wages paid and taxes withheld for each employee. This report is filed using Form W-2.
- State Taxes
 - You may be required to withhold state income taxes. Visit your state and local tax page for more information.

Step 3. Employee eligibility verification

Federal law requires employers to verify an employee's eligibility to work in the United States. Within three days of hire, employers must complete Form I-9, which requires employers to examine documents to confirm the employee's citizenship or eligibility to work in the U.S. Many companies have opted to enroll in "E-Verify" which is an online program to complete this requirement.

Step 4. Register with your state's new hire reporting program

All employers are required to report newly hired employees to a state directory within 20 days of their hire date. Visit your state's New Hires Reporting Requirements page to learn more.

Step 5. Obtain workers' compensation insurance

All businesses with employees are required to carry workers' compensation insurance through a commercial carrier, on a self-insured basis or through their state's Workers' Compensation Insurance program.

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Step 6. Post required notices

Employers are required to display certain posters in the workplace that inform employees of their rights and employer responsibilities under labor laws. Visit the Workplace Posters page for specific federal and state posters you'll need for your business.

Step 7. File your taxes

Generally, employers who pay wages subject to income tax withholding, Social Security and Medicare taxes must file IRS Form 941, Employer's Quarterly Federal Tax Return. Visit the state and local tax page for specific tax filing requirements for employers.

Step 8. Set up additional recordkeeping

Certain federal employment laws also require you to keep records about your employees. The following sites provide more information about federal reporting requirements:

Labor Recordkeeping Requirements: www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/recordkeeping

Occupational Safety and Health Act Compliance: www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance_assistance/quickstarts/index.html

Employment Law Guide: www.dol.gov/compliance/guide/erisa.htm

POST-HIRE REVIEW

At the end of a set period of time (30 or 60 days for example), meet with your employee for a performance review. Give a realistic update on how he or she has been performing. Tell your employee the specific reasons why he or she is doing well, and offer suggestions for improvement in areas where the performance isn't up to your standards. Give them the opportunity to bring up any concerns, questions or issues they may have. Give them goals or performance targets for the next review.

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You may have hired your employee as a seasonal worker. You may choose to make them full-time at that point. Or, if the employee's work is unsatisfactory or the employee is dissatisfied with the job, this is an appropriate time to end the relationship.

With the hiring of your first employee, you should begin to put together an employee manual that states rules of behavior and what is expected of employees. For an introduction, read the SBA article "Employee Handbooks" at www.sba.gov/starting-business/hire-retain-employees/employee-handbooks.

If you are having a difficult time hiring or keeping good employees, ask them why they decided to quit. Is it the schedule, conditions, equipment or wages/compensation? Look for causes you can change. Discuss with your business mentor or the professionals at SCORE, Small Business Development Centers and Women's Business Centers.