



CAPRICORN

...it's just easier!™

Resources:

- There are no additional resources

Positions Vacant: Come and work in my grotty garage?

When today's workshop owners left school, it was considered a privilege to be signed up as an apprentice.

It was a different time – the working conditions and pay weren't great, but apprentices understood the importance of securing a job and a career. The greasy floors, the neglected toilet and the smoko room that looked like a bomb site didn't even register.

Fast forward 20 years – how things have changed.

The current technician shortage has shifted the dynamic, with workshops chasing staff rather than staff chasing workshops. Suddenly, working conditions are important. The state of your workshop will determine your ability to attract quality staff who will make you money.

We have preached about the importance of workshop presentation on workshop moral and customer perception for many years. You can now add recruitment to that list.

An inner city workshop we know of recently had its lease terminated when a development application was approved. Being inner city there were no suitable locations within a reasonable radius to relocate, so the workshop owner had no option but to shut down operations and focus his efforts on his second workshop located much closer to his home.

Word spread fast to other workshops and before long, most of the staff of the closing workshop were getting phone calls with offers of employment. One technician in particular, who was very highly trained, was in demand. Needing to secure his future he organised interviews at several local workshops.

A week later his current boss asked how the interviews were progressing. 'Not good,' he confessed.

'When I saw what one workshop looked like, I just abandoned the interview. A couple of the others seemed OK from the outside but once I got inside, they were unorganised, messy and had no real desire to grasp new technologies. The pay they offered was good, but I soon realised I was going to go backwards and at 35 that's not what I'm after.'

That technician's experience with workshops that may be looking to recruit or even retain quality technicians should trigger a big 'a-hah' moment for their owners or management.

Your average technician or mechanic with the attitude that a job is just a job, may very well take anything, but not your quality technician who is focused on a mutually beneficial career. Quality technicians are demanding more, and so they should.

Another workshop we know well, in the South East Queensland area, reports that the current technician shortage is hitting his area hard – worse than when the mining boom attracted everyone with a spanner.

But he has bucked the trend. When he loses a staff member, the vacancy is filled very quickly.

If you saw his workshop, the reason is obvious. It is clean and organised – the sort of workshop anyone would want to work in.

The more you think about these stories, the more you realise the importance of presentation.

You might have learnt to live with the paint peeling off the walls of the office, and the piles of junk in every corner, but your potential recruits will notice these things immediately. The good ones will keep walking until they find a well-run and clean workshop – and there's a good number of those out there.

The best bosses deserve the best staff and the best staff deserve the best workplaces.

So ask yourself: when was the last time you had a uniform change, workshop make-over or reception area clean up? When was the last time you asked your staff what you could do to make the workplace a better place to work? When was the last time you asked your staff what equipment you needed to invest in? And, most importantly, ask yourself if your working conditions are better than the competition down the road?

The place to start is www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn

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Just go for it!