

F O C U S

This
Month

Service Providers



Making connections

**Greg 'Tex' Leggio, President
The Networker.Biz**
Houston, TX

What is your perspective about the state of the Houston construction industry in 2013?

I think we are in great shape! I recently had dinner with State Senator Randy Webber and he stated that there are approximately 1000 people moving to Texas on a daily basis.

We are starting to get so much work that we are concerned about manpower. Companies are starting to spend more money and contractual agreements are prevalent.

We need to take a hard look at our infrastructure and make sure we are looking at it as a short and long-term problem as it relates to our future demographics more.

Our economy in Houston, even though it's slower than years past, we are still doing better than most. The state of Texas is number two in the nation related to growth. I think we will continue to see our growth increase over the next ten years.

What sparked your interest to start TheNetworker.Biz?

A friend of mine and I were talking

about the networking events we had planned to attend one week.

I wasn't aware of the trade show he was attending and he didn't know of the golf tournament I was attending.

I needed to attend the trade show and he had clients he needed to see that would be at the golf tournament. I also realized that this was not the first time this had occurred. I decided to create a website where sales, business development, marketing and other people in the construction industry could find all the mixers, fund raisers, fishing tournaments, luncheons, barbecue cook offs, clay shoots, trade shows, golf tournaments, etc.

I became frustrated on the events that I was missing out on and needed to be at. I knew I wasn't the only one who was missing out on the opportunity to grow my client base.

We are in the people business, some of us sell products and some sell services but we all have to meet those people who need our services.

Why do you enjoy what you do today?

I enjoy helping people and I feel TheNetworker.biz does just that. I also feel that this calendar helps our industry be more organized and have kinship. It is truly something I do because I want to put back in to our industry and invest in our industry's future.

What advice would you give a young person who wants to do what you do?

I would tell them to get in front of the people you want to do business with. People seem to do business with people they know.

When you have a social event, eat lunch or play golf with them, you strengthen that relationship and as long as you're honest and providing the best service possible you will have more opportunities for repeated success. I truly think our industry is a relationship friendly industry.

You can't fake passion; if you're passionate about what you do people recognize that and want to be a part of your success. I will quote Dave Ramsey, "find something you love to do and you'll never work another day."

In your opinion, what are the keys to success in your industry?

Relationships with our customers, we need to know them and understand their needs. Another is what I like to

call "moldy cheese," avoiding confrontation. If you know you have an issue, you need to fix it so it doesn't grow.

Lastly is integrity, your clients need to trust you and your comments. When these criteria for success are all used, typically a strong relationship will take hold.

What is on the horizon for your industry?

A skilled worker shortage is becoming a bigger issue every day. We need to work with the high schools to help the next generation of kids know their options after graduation.

Some have the opportunity to attend college, but those who don't, can make a good living being an electrician, welder, crane operator, driving a truck, tug boat or whatever, by attending trade schools.

Our industry needs workers building our country. We can't all be engineers, doctors and lawyers. I think in the next 10 years, our industry will keep getting better. We need more housing, hospitals, schools, churches, and refineries.

TheNetworker.Biz provides a calendar of networking events for the entire construction industry. The commercial, industrial, gas/oil companies use the networking calendar to help find, plan and schedule an event for their geographical area in the Texas Gulf Coast area and Louisiana. -ab



Can he? Will he?

**Larry Williams, President
MEMCO, Inc.**
Houston, TX

With the construction economy on the uptick in most Texas markets, contractors are once again in a hiring mode. As you begin to man up, this timely article may help in the pursuit of selecting the right employees.

(Author's note: the masculine gender pronoun "he" is used throughout for clarity and illustration purposes only, and is not intended to represent gender bias.)

Most construction hiring personnel would rather take a beating than go through the interview part of the hiring process. Perhaps if the hiring person had an easy way to find out what he really needs to learn from an interview, it would go down a little easier.

To be consistently successful in evaluating new hires, the interviewer must be able to answer two questions by the conclusion of the interview:

- CAN the applicant do the job?
- WILL the applicant do the job?

Hiring for skills alone is most often a losing proposition. Because the "will he" component tells us about the character of the person and will more often determine the success of the new hire, regardless of his skill set.

A good method to help you answer both questions is the KASH system. Rating an applicant in four areas:

- Knowledge
- Attitude
- Skills
- Habits

Assessing an applicant's knowledge and skills will help answer the "can he" question. Assessing him on his attitude and habits is much more difficult but will help answer the all-important "will he" question.

For starters, the interview process should include an oral or written test to determine how much the applicant knows about the various aspects of the job for which he is being considered. In the case of craft personnel, for instance, does he know how to add or subtract whole numbers and fractions? Can he read a tape measure? In a trade like dry-

wall, you would want to determine if he knows the proper spacing of studs or screws, or the standard sizes of track, stud and drywall and their uses. All of this measures the knowledge possessed by the applicant.

Skills assessment is used to determine competency in performing certain functions. But the hiring person must be convinced that the applicant possesses the skills to use that knowledge.

Whatever position you are trying to fill, have the person demonstrate that he indeed has those skills.

Use whatever means at your disposal, you must be able to determine if the applicant can, in fact, do the job for which you're trying to fill.

If he cannot do the job, you must evaluate whether he has the potential to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to the job, given time and training. In many cases most hiring decisions do not explore this option - in many cases, the applicant is just deemed not to be what we are looking for because he is not ready for the job "as is."

If the answer to the above questions is yes, or yes, with time and training, then you must now answer the second and most critical question. Will he DO the job?

Applicant's attitude:

How does he describe his past jobs,

past employers and past supervisors? Are his comments positive or negative about them? Does he credit others for his success or blame someone else for a lack of it?

How is his overall disposition?? Is he a sour puss or does he make a lot of positive comments and/or smile when he speaks? Is he cocky, arrogant, or humble??

Has he ever left a prior employer involuntarily? Why? What were the circumstances?

Applicant's habits:

Look at his employment history - have him discuss his past 3-5 years of employment.

Did he complete the application paperwork or try to "blow off" parts of it. Does he monopolize the interview and oversell himself?

Can he convince you he is dependable, reliable and can maintain good attendance?? Can he convince you that he takes direction well, likes to stay busy and has a good work ethic?

When making your hiring decision, keep in mind that a person's knowledge and skills can usually be enhanced, but his character is usually cast in stone.

That's why when I'm hiring, the answer to the "will he" question always trumps the "can he." -bd

NEXT MONTH
September 2013

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