

# Top Tips for Attracting and Retaining Technicians

Finding and keeping qualified technicians are among the top challenges auto repair shops face. In many areas, demand for techs exceeds supply. At the same time, today's technicians want more than just a paycheck. They're looking for stability, respect, and opportunities to advance. What separates successful shops and techs from the rest starts with how operators recruit, develop, and retain their team. These expert tips will help improve your hiring and training process.

**1**

## **Always be interviewing.**

The best technicians are rarely unemployed for long, and many are constantly on the lookout for better opportunities. Keep job listings active and meet with techs even when you don't have an opening. Even better, build partnerships with tech schools to engage with students and offer internships to better prepare future technicians. Keeping job listings active, staying involved with local tech schools and community colleges, and meeting with techs, even when you don't have a current opening, ensures you have a full pipeline when growth or turnover occurs.

**2**

## **Write targeted, clear job descriptions.**

Generic job listings might seem like the best way to appeal to a broad audience, but they actually make it harder to find the right candidate. Even worse, they can lead to misalignment once a position is filled. Instead, shops should be specific about the role, responsibilities, expectations, pay range, benefits, training opportunities, and what makes the shop unique. A detailed job description makes it easier to attract qualified candidates and saves everyone time.

**3****Consider personality traits and interpersonal skills.**

Technical skills matter, but critical thinking, a good attitude, a willingness to learn, and a strong work ethic are often equally important. Before hiring, clarify the personality traits that would make someone successful in the role and the shop. Then communicate expectations for performance, the shop's overall culture, and what it takes to be successful. Technicians who fit in with a shop's values tend to stay longer and perform better.

**4****Look beyond the resume.**

The hiring process often starts with a resume, but a piece of paper doesn't always tell the full story. Written or hands-on tests can help shops determine how qualified technicians are, if they need additional training, what job to hire them for, and if they have the skills needed to be successful. Gaining additional insight can reduce hiring mistakes and give candidates a chance to demonstrate their knowledge and where they can excel.

**5****Keep the shop clean and well-equipped.**

A clean, organized, modern shop sends a powerful message to current and prospective employees that it is a safe and pleasant working environment with the resources to help technicians succeed. The latest diagnostic tools, proper lighting, and well-maintained equipment translate into higher productivity, fewer mistakes and injuries, and greater earning potential for technicians and the shop.

**6****Offer competitive pay and benefits.**

Wages remain one of the top factors techs consider when looking for job opportunities, but benefits are also important. Health coverage, paid time off, and performance bonuses play a major role in attracting and retaining talent. Tool support — such as a tool purchase plan, a tool allowance, or the opportunity to spread tool costs across several paychecks — can be a significant perk for techs.

**7****Use your website as a hiring tool.**

Having a strong digital presence with a modern website and an up-to-date social media presence can help market a shop as a place technicians want to work. Key information to share online includes pay, benefits, the schedule, and career advancement opportunities. Photos of a clean, well-maintained work environment and workspaces give applicants confidence that it is a nice place to work. Technicians also value a simple application process and a speedy reply to the application.



**8****Invest in training and growth opportunities.**

Vehicles are changing faster than ever, and shops that invest in training can provide better service, retain top talent, and ensure quality. Unfortunately, finding time for training isn't always easy. The more proactive shops are about training, the more likely it is going to happen. Creating a training calendar and being intentional with development plans can help new and experienced technicians grow their skill sets. One of the most overlooked resources is training offered by industry vendors. AutoZone, for example, offers on-demand courses, customized micro-trainings, and live and virtual training taught by ASE Master Certified and factory-trained instructors.

**9****Create clear career paths.**

No one wants to feel stuck in a dead-end job, and a perceived lack of growth opportunities is one of the top reasons employees leave a position. Outlining clear career ladders, whether from entry-level to master technician or a management position, can make technicians more likely to stick with an employer. Communicating information about opportunities to advance through certifications, skill benchmarks, or performance helps technicians see what it takes to move up and how to do so.

**10****Cultivate talent from within.**

While experience is always a plus, technicians with five or 10 years under their belt are harder to find. Being willing to invest time in a new hire and provide on-the-job training and guidance can expand the pool of available talent. Apprenticeships and mentorships that pair experienced technicians with newer hires can introduce those new hires to the work the shop performs and help them learn important skills. They also give top techs the opportunity to foster leadership and communication skills.

**11****Treat hiring as a calculated, strategic decision.**

Scrambling to fill a position and rushing the process rarely leads to long-term success. Smart shops continuously plan for growth, retirement, promotions, and unexpected changes. Building bench strength through ongoing training can help with succession planning, while maintaining recruiting momentum helps prevent downtime and lost revenue.

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