

Recruiting as much about families as candidate

Businesses have found that one of the biggest challenges to staying afloat and achieving growth is attracting and retaining key talent.

And in an area such as the Tri-Cities, where many of our skilled professionals are geographical transplants and the technology-based economic growth we seek often requires highly specific skill sets, effective recruiting is especially critical.

But it isn't just about matching candidates with open positions and signing on the dotted line. In fact, members of the Three Rivers Entrepreneur Network were reminded at a recent presentation that recruiting is very much about attracting the family unit.

The speaker, Wade Bodlovic, does this for a living. His company, Green-



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Foot Technologies, recruits candidates for information technology and engineering openings in the green and sustainable energy industry. Some of GreenFoot's clients are in the Tri-Cities, an area Bodlovic says has many attractive selling points for prospective transplants and their families.

"The Tri-Cities has it all in terms of outdoor recreation, for example," said Bodlovic. "Wine, golf, water, and mountains nearby offer something for everyone. In addition to more practical matters such as schools, commutes, and access to desired services, these are definitely some of the things families are looking at in making relocation decisions."

In fact, it's important to include

tours of some of the highlights in an interview trip. After all, a candidate's family has to picture living and playing in the community in addition to securing a job for one of its members.

"Whenever you can, pay for the candidate to bring their significant other on this trip," he added. "It's as much about getting to know that person and addressing their hot buttons as it is about securing the candidate's professional skills and interest."

GreenFoot's approach is based primarily on one simple question: How would you manage the process if you were recruiting your mother? This caring, genuine approach is unique to recruiting and appears to really work.

"At the end of the day, we're in the people industry," said Bodlovic. "You have to care for the whole family from start to finish. To do that, you have to get to know them and address their unique needs to the

best of your ability."

This includes simple gestures like personal airport pick-up, taking them to your favorite restaurants, and more complicated endeavors such as connecting them with a trusted real estate agent or tagging along on house hunts to ensure a positive experience.

What about two-income households? It's a much more difficult proposition to attract a candidate whose significant other also must find a job to make a move feasible. This conundrum is faced by many employers when recruiting top talent from outside the area. And it seems like a pretty complicated one to address, although Bodlovic has a suggestion worth considering and the capability to build it.

A web-based portal that serves as a central repository for all things related to Tri-Cities recruiting would

be a great way to connect secondary candidates with their own opportunities.

It could include such features as a resume drop box and a comprehensive list of job postings by companies from around the area. To help get us started, GreenFoot has even developed a strawman site at www.HomeTownJobFinder.com.

We don't currently have such a centralized website in the Tri-Cities, but a coordinated effort to establish one might be well worth the effort if it means attracting the talent we need to grow our region's businesses and economy. It just means someone needs to step forward and get the ball rolling. Any takers?

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