

ND Diesel Tech Recruiting Tips and Strategies Report

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Oilfield Competition

Main draw to the oil patch is high compensation.

Oilfield diesel techs: \$22 - \$38 hr. (per Job Service ND/Williston) + substantial overtime potential + benefits. Most wages are hourly rates. Housing allowance and relocation assistance is crucial.

Applicants tend to get stuck on the high hourly wage – they don't think about the cost of living and quality of life issues. Employers in other industries and throughout the state must do their homework, do the cost-of-living math for applicants, and clearly “lay it out for them.” Helping candidates to understand net income and quality of life issues can be huge selling points.

Tip: big oil companies don't call workers – they don't need to. They expect workers to come to them. If a smaller company calls a prospect, they already have an “in” - but they need to have selling points well prepared.

The hiring process in the oil patch can be prolonged because of so many regulations, drug testing, etc. Also, employers are logistically far away – Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, etc. which causes more delays in processing. Being a local employer who is accessible and able to start a worker sooner may be beneficial.

Flexibility is appealing: popular oilpatch offers are 3 weeks on, 1 off; 2 weeks on, 1 off.

Construction Competition

Construction equipment diesel mechanics are earning approx. \$17 - \$30 plus overtime plus benefits. www.jobsnd.com and various postings

Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America (including its chapters) is involved in:

- Curriculum development – high school and post-secondary
- Student Chapters – post-secondary, including North Dakota State University
- Scholarships - \$2,500 per year to max of \$7,500 (undergrad).
- Foundation awards to educators
- Student essay competition
- Charter schools and construction career academies geared toward construction skills
- Career fair participation
- Customizable construction careers brochures for members

AGC North Dakota website includes AGC Virtual University, which provides online continuing education.

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Progressive Benefits

Oil industry and construction sectors both offer progressive benefits, often including:

- Insurance: health, vision, dental, family, short and long-term disability, life
- Financial: savings and investment plan (401K), investment planning
- Housing and relocation allowance
- Company vehicle
- Cell phone
- Continuing education: employer-paid, paid time off for training
- Tools paid or reimbursed
- Gym membership / Wellness program
- Clothing purchase and maintenance allowance
- Vacation / paid time off / paid sick leave
- Flexible hours
- Employee discounts on service/parts/products
- Tuition reimbursement: employer gradually pays down school loans with work commitment

Finding prospects

Job boards, both general and industry-specific, are becoming widely used by both employers and job candidates. Examples include:

- www.constructionjobs.com – (used by AGC) - a job board and resume database for the construction industry. Employers pay a subscription fee for access to post jobs and search resumes.
- www.ndoiljobs.com - subscription job board for oil industry.
- <http://www.jobsnd.com/individuals/oilfield-jobs> - area of Job Service ND website devoted to oilfield jobs
- www.findamechanic.com
- www.jobs.net
- www.monster.com
- See “Top 15 Most Popular Job Websites”
<http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/job-websites>

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Connecting with students

High School Classroom Presentations

- Don't limit presentations to vo-tech classes. Automobiles are a part of everyone's life and budget, so consider business, economics, computer, consumer science, and "living on your own" courses as a way of generating exposure and presenting the dealership career message.
- Make sure brochures, videos, and other materials are current.
- Incorporate humor.
- Talk about income potential and job demand for qualified and highly skilled auto dealership employees.
- Company personnel should be regularly volunteering in schools and in the community – coach teams, sell tickets, sponsor events, help with vo-tech programs, etc. Goal is to become familiar to school administration and students, which fosters trust, which gives company personnel an "in" when it comes to presenting career information. Ask schools, "What can our business do to help?"

Career Fairs

- Dealer principals and managers should be on-site at career fairs wherever possible. Consider having current employees on-hand to tell their employment story and offer first-person insights.
- Prospects should be able to fill out a job application on-site at the career fair.
- Consider securing private space (empty classroom or meeting room, etc.) to conduct on-site informational interviews at the career fair.
- Ask career fair visitors for their questions about the company, their impressions, and their feedback regarding what they look for in a potential employer.
- Have something for students to "do" – a game, challenge, etc. in order to draw them to the career fair display. Give prizes.

Other ideas

Post videos on dealership website showing various employees/departments in action (with employee permission). Basic message: "I love what I do and this is a great place to work – you should consider this too."

Talk to job candidates through a live, streaming video webinar from your dealership. Invite candidates to email questions. Promote through high school and post-secondary counselors. Post the recorded pod-cast to your website.

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Miscellaneous Recruiting Tips

Make use of customizable industry brochures and powerpoint presentations in classrooms, career events, in your customer lounge, sales room, etc. Promote potential workplace and benefits of North Dakota lifestyle. Drop off brochures everywhere you go – grocery store, gym, etc.

Continually be thinking of ways to get students into your dealership: field trips, job-shadowing, summer and after-school jobs, skills contests, etc.

Volunteer to get involved in high school and post-secondary curriculum development.

Pay attention to minority / disability / non-traditional Outreach Programs

Check out returning veteran services. Vets may have received mechanical training in the military but not have a civilian degree – don't overlook this group as a resource.

Consider paying expenses for out-of-town prospects to travel to your dealership for interviews, dealership tours, community tours, etc. Offer relocation assistance and allowance if an out-of-town prospect accepts a position.

Turn employees into recruiters. Offer a referral bonus to current employees who refer a prospect who gets hired and is employed for an established amount of time. Approach top-performers directly for names. Offer training to current employees to help them recruit high-quality prospects and earn the bonus.

CEO and upper level management should be visible to job candidates. Be available for dealership tours and informational interviews. Prospects need assurance that your company is approachable and well-managed.

Dealer website in general should be attractive, well-organized, current, and easy to navigate. This is a first impression of your company in most cases.

Dealer websites should feature a highly visible link on the home page advertising job openings with descriptions and contact information. Employment information should not be hidden - one click from home page! Include online job application.

Allow prospects to connect online or via email with current pre-selected employees in departments of interest (ie. "Ask Me" program at NDSU).

Use website and social media, and devote advertising dollars to promote your dealership as a great place to do business and a great place to work.

Use the references of successful candidates as a source for new, high-quality candidates.

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Misc. Recruiting Tips Continued

Keep in touch with top-performing employees who leave the company - at some point they may be eligible for re-hire (“boomerangs”).

Invite prospects to an after-hours social event at your dealership. Management and current employees act as hosts, tour guides, and information resources.

Whether or not a candidate is hired, he/she should always be treated with respect and have a good interview experience. Candidates will share information and impressions about your company based on their interview experience. This could attract or drive away other good candidates.

Remember to monitor current employees to make sure they’re in the right jobs within the dealership. Poor placement increases employee turnover. It’s easier and more cost-effective to retain high-quality employees than to recruit new ones.

Tailor a candidate's offer to ensure that it directly meets the candidate's job acceptance criteria in order to prevent problems and reduce turnover.

Management should personally follow-up with new hires for several months to improve new hire retention rates.

During orientation, ask new hires what compelled them to accept the job offer.

Contact prospects who turn down your offer after three months to find out the “real” reasons.

Track “source of hire” in order to determine which sources are producing the highest quality recruits.

Ask current employees why they continue to work for you, and use that information as selling points.

Make sure your shop is clean, comfortable, safe, and functional – and describe this in your ads.

Print ad tips

A short, catchy title will determine whether a potential applicant will read further – put some thought into the title and opening line.

A print ad should not be a job description – a common mistake made by employers! A print ad is a marketing piece, and must address what potential applicants are looking for.

Understand your competition. Determine what makes your company unique and state it clearly.