



The Old BARN POST

Quarterly Newsletter of The Hess Agency

Fall 2021

Help Wanted ...

With the economy picking up steam again after the pandemic shutdowns, almost every business insurance customer has been telling us that they can't find applicants to fill their hiring needs. For many months, I was under the impression that this was a short-term issue that would resolve when unemployment subsidies expired at the end of the summer. Yet here we are a couple of months later still looking for people to fill jobs in almost every sector of the economy.

On a recent drive back to our office from north of York I counted 31 signs saying "Help Wanted", "Now Hiring", "Hiring Bonuses Offered", or something similar. And that was just those visible from the main roads. The most imaginative sign I saw read: "Obviously, we're hiring too, and we pay more than they do" with an arrow pointed to their neighboring business. I'm guessing they don't have a lot of neighborhood picnics.

I don't personally know many people who are refusing to return to work due to the pandemic, but there may be a combination of sentiments involved. The pandemic may have caused some to re-evaluate their life goals and choose early retirement; become a stay-at-home parent, grandparent, or caregiver; change to a nomadic lifestyle and travel; or stay home either due to fear of Covid or masking and vaccination mandates.

There's no question that the employment situation is greatly impacting the economy. Restaurants and other retailers are limiting open hours, trucking companies are scrambling to get goods delivered, and contractors are scheduling projects well in the future since they don't have enough help – or materials. Some businesses are relying on their existing workforce to stem the tide with longer hours and dual roles, but that approach will only work for a short time before they risk burnout of their workers and themselves.

So, what steps might an employer use in filling open positions? The vast majority of our valued customers are

great places to work, but it can be challenging to spread the word about the advantages they offer. Here are three ideas some of you have shared recently:

- Ask your current staff to refer other candidates and provide a financial incentive for referrals. Good people tend to want to surround themselves with other good people, so encourage them to bring others along.
- Treat candidates like customers. A candidate's first impression of your company is critical, so make sure you put forward your best image right out of the gate. You're going to have to sell your business to potential hires and use the same energy as bringing in new customers.
- Use social media effectively. Job postings can be shared with your entire network. Use photos and videos to share insights about your company culture.

Paying a competitive and fair wage is highly important, but not necessarily the sole factor in most people's workplace decision. A good benefit package (of course, we can assist in developing this for you), flexibility in work schedule, a positive work environment, and opportunities for growth all weigh heavily for most people. So, placing a sign saying that you're paying more than the business next door might not be enough to attract someone.

While I'd love to say I see a light at the end of this tunnel, I've been hearing that the current state of short staffing is going to continue for at least several months. I think the best we can do is try our best to stay afloat until we start to see things pick back up again as more people return to the workforce.

Stay safe,

Steven L. Faus, CIC, CLU
President



Increased Subsidies for Individual Medical ...

The 1.9 trillion covid relief bill enacted in March 2021 made subsidies for insurance premiums through the public health marketplace more generous and expanded who can qualify for them. These increased subsidies will remain in force through 2022. Individuals and families who may not have qualified for a subsidy before based on income might qualify now, and those who had a small amount of subsidy before might now receive a higher amount. Please contact us if you'd like to review what you would qualify for.

Fresh from the Fields

Welcome to the Barn!

We are excited to welcome Lamar Messner to our benefits team. Lamar brings nearly a decade of experience in assisting clients with their employee benefit strategies. He grew up in Berks County and currently resides in York with his wife, Ashlee, and their many pets. He enjoys playing video games and board games with friends, as well as disc golf when the weather is nice.

Open Enrollment for 2022

The open enrollment period for Medicare-related coverage begins on Friday, October 15 and ends on Tuesday, December 7, 2021. Take advantage of this time to adjust your senior health insurance needs. Many recent enrollees are choosing Erie's Medicare Supplement or a Medicare Advantage plan to round out their coverage. Make an appointment to discuss details.

We are here to serve you Monday through Saturday
Weekdays 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Thursdays 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:00 a.m. - noon Other hours by appointment

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