

FINDING WATER TECHNICIANS

5 minute read

Over the past five years or so, the biggest issues facing restoration companies has been finding water technicians.

With the overall labor market improving in the past few years, the demand for blue-collar physical laborers has sky-rocketed, and with it the void for our staff members has gotten bigger and [more challenging](#).



Every company, no matter how large or small, is always in search of quality water technicians. Finding water technicians that can come in and work productively from the start has become akin to finding a needle in a haystack. The normal business model that gets played out is one that help no one in the long run: one restoration company raids the staff of their competitor, offering higher pay and benefits to their techs. This “Yo-Yo” method of hiring only leads to overall instability. Think of this: if the techs are willing to leave their current place of employment for a couple of extra bucks, what will keep them from leaving you for a couple more? Now, you are basically in a hostage situation, having to pay more and more just to remain in business. Bad model, and bad business.

Restoration companies with stable, quality technicians go about it in a different way. Instead of trying to grab another company’s techs, they go about a long-term investment system that works for them. This system focuses on [training, teamwork, and process](#), and establishes a fixed method of improving quality that does not rely on guesswork- remember, stealing someone else’s workers may work out, but you may also be getting someone else’s problems!

STEP 1- HIRE ATTITUDE

The first step in finding water technicians is to hire individuals with little or no restoration experience. Rather than trying to “re-teach” or break bad habits, it makes sense to start with a clean slate and train them to your own specific preferences and needs. When you interview, assess the attitude of the individual. Make sure they are motivated self-starters with a hunger to learn and succeed.



STEP 2- TRAIN, TRAIN, TRAIN

Obviously, if they have no experience you will have to train them before they go out there. “On the job” training is a popular technique- you get some production out of



them while assessing them and giving them [knowledge about the business](#). The risk you run is that your other techs use this time to take advantage of the new guy and bury him before he gets comfortable with this new adventure. If you throw them out there, make sure you have a key technician that understands the difference with a new guy. He can mentor your new hire and turn him into a valuable team member. In any event, spend a LOT of time in the office with your new hire, going over paperwork and documentation

obligations, general rules of the company, basic concepts of drying and demo, and overall expectations. There are a couple of companies out there that provide great videos for new workers to watch that can help educate them quickly.

STEP 3- TEST AND CERTIFY

You are making a time and financial investment into someone that, you hope, will stick around for a long time. You want them to feel welcome, to understand your commitment to them, and to reciprocate your commitment with loyalty. The best way to do that is to get them into an [IICRC](#) class for certification. Having them become a certified water technician gives you two levers: it shows your clients that you invest in your staff and provide the highest quality service; and it shows your team members that you are willing to invest in their futures. This should be done after a short period of time- what I refer to as a “feeling out process,” where both of you figure out that this is the right path for the worker and the company. **Usually, 90 days can tell you everything you both need to know.**



STEP 4- ENTRUST AND ENCOURAGE

Once you are confident that they have “got it,” make sure that you [show them you trust them with your business](#). Remember, in most cases they are the face of your business. Make sure they understand that, and you will find them bending over backwards for you. Responsibility will test them and either bring out the best in them or force out any bad habits. Finding this out early in the process is important for long-term success and confidence.



Finding water technicians, the old way, usually involved ads on websites or asking around. Just know that you are not getting what you want- most times, you are getting what someone else didn't want! Think about a way of getting someone different by doing something a little different.



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