

A cartoon illustration of a male contractor wearing a yellow hard hat, blue overalls, and brown boots. He is holding a long wooden plank over his shoulder and a circular saw in his other hand. The text "Robinson's Contractor NEWS" is written in a bold, red, sans-serif font, with "NEWS" being significantly larger than the other words.

# Robinson's Contractor NEWS

"Lumber, Building Material , Millwork & Hardware"

May 1, 2020

*Positive Thoughts to Remember*

## 3 Tips for Choosing a Helper

For most small business owners, the day when you start getting more work than you can handle by yourself is a day for celebration.

You've finally built up your reputation and customer base and no longer need to spend so much time worrying about how to get that next job. That kind of growth also brings new stresses with it though, like bringing on your first new employee, as this decision will likely have huge ramifications for your business. You need someone who represents your goals, makes customers feel confident and comfortable, and who you can trust to be honest, hardworking, and show up on time every day.

Here are some tips for helping you find and choose that first employee.

### **Be realistic in your expectations.**

If you're just to the point of being ready to hire, you may be willing to hire someone with less experience and pay them less in exchange for training them. If you want to hire a teenager or a student on summer **vacation** who's never had a **home improvement** job, be prepared for what a big job it can be to teach someone who isn't an expert. Be sure you feel like the hire is willing to learn and ask questions instead of assuming they know what to do all the time. Don't expect to be able to leave them at one job site and go to finish another job somewhere else. If that's the way you need to work, or if you don't want to train someone, you'll need to hire someone with more experience, but you'll need to be prepared to pay more.

### **Search within your networks, but cautiously.**

When you're ready to hire, start by asking among professionals you know and trust. Do you belong to any local contractor organizations? They may have recommendations of people they've worked with that you could reach out to. There can be value in asking at your church, on your Facebook page, or at your child's soccer games if anyone knows of a potential assistant, but it's very common for people to recommend a relative or friend just because they know that person needs work, even though they might not know how that person will perform professionally. Just be aware of why you think a person is recommending a name to you and don't hire someone just based on this personal recommendation.



## **Don't hire anyone without checking their references.**

This should be a given, but make sure you get at least three references for anyone you consider hiring. No matter how good an impression they make on you in person, you need to talk to people who've known them in a work situation. It doesn't matter if they've ever done any **construction work**. If you're hiring a student for the summer, talk to their teachers and ask if they complete their work on time and are respectful. If you're hiring someone with experience, ask past employers if they take too many risks, if they always show up, and if they take good care of their equipment.

Most people will only give you references of someone they trust to recommend them highly – but talking to at least three other people can give you a very good idea of what kind of person you'll be hiring.

We hope these ideas help you navigate your new role as an employer. We'd love to hear from you. How do you know when you're ready to hire someone new?

