

# RECRUIT & SUCCEED

## ARE YOU RECRUITING AFTER YOUR TECHNICIAN TERMINATES?

BY CHRIS "CHUBBY" FREDERICK | CONTRIBUTOR

**THINK** about it: being without a key player in your business is just painful for you, the other employees, and most of all, for the customers. But rarely when I talk to shop owners do I hear them say, "An employee gave me notice, so I have set up four quality interviews for next week." Typically I hear, "An employee gave me his two week notice. Can you help me write a great ad, and where is the best place to post it?"

Let's face it — we never want to receive notice from an employee, but we all know it happens. So why are we always surprised and unprepared for an event that will never stop occurring, like taxes and death? This month our coach, Mike Haley, is going to give you a little secret that will always prepare you for the worst situation we all face.

Obviously we never want to lose a great employee, and as I write this article I have already started thinking about my next article — how to keep your employees. There are two types of turnovers: good and bad. The good turnover would be an underperforming employee who is receiving performance counseling and not responding as we would like, and the employee is not a fit for our team and culture. The bad turnover would be an employee we value, who is an asset to our company but is leaving for reasons that (we hope) are out of our control. Maybe their spouse received a promotion that is relocating them out of the area.

Owners often tell me employees are forced to leave a job to care for elderly or failing parents who do not live in the area. Whatever the reason, when it is bad turnover we are not anticipating, we are typically not prepared or able to fill the position in a timely manner.



### Recruit like college sports coaches

Look to sports coaches, specifically college-level coaches, as examples for our approach to recruiting and succession planning. Think about what the college coaches are doing every year. They canvass the nation's high schools and sports tournaments to find the best of the best, or the best fit for what their needs are. Some even travel globally to find untapped talent. Think about it when you watch your favorite sport. Mine happens to be football. When the quarterback gets hurt, the coach doesn't tell the tailback he is now the

quarterback and to go out there and throw for 300 yards with no interceptions. They have a backup quarterback who is practicing with the team and knows the plays just as well as the starters. If the starting quarterback has a long-term injury, the general manager is on the phone as soon as he receives the news and is calling a short list of quarterbacks he knows and probably has had conversations with in the last year about "what if?"

In class, I use the example of my son's college lacrosse team. He played Division 1 lacrosse for Mount St. Mary's University in Maryland. Every year

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## “HOW CAN I BE MORE PREPARED FOR EMPLOYEE TERMINATION? KEEP THE SUCCESSION CHART UP TO DATE AT THE END OF THIS ARTICLE AND YOUR LIFE WILL BE MUCH LESS STRESSFUL.”

CHRIS “CHUBBY” FREDERICK [ATI CEO]

they have the same goal: win their conference and make it to the NCAA tournament. It's a spring sport, but let's be real — it's a year-round commitment. In his sophomore year, they felt they had a real chance of winning the conference and going deep into the tournament. They already had a proven all-conference goalie, and the coach had a great recruiting year and signed three other goalies.

Everyone returns or starts school at the end of August. Within the first month, one of the freshmen was able to get in enough trouble with campus police and the administration that he was asked to leave. The second goalie, a sophomore, tore his ACL in a scrimmage. The senior and all-conference goalie was in his room playing Xbox, sitting on the floor with his legs crossed, and when he stood up he tore his MCL. So the team started in August with four goalies and started the season with only one, who was a freshman. If something happened to him, the coach was going to ask if anyone on the team ever played goalie in rec league or at least knew how to put on the equipment.

**“The goal is to have the best players in position and to have not one, but two moves to fill the position if it becomes available.”** — Chris “Chubby” Frederick

How many of you are playing with one goalie? And not if — but when — he or she goes down, do you have a backup?

I have been in that situation and even worse. I once was running a 12-bay shop and lost three technicians in a matter of weeks. Being unprepared, I was forced to take up the slack, working 14-hour days six days



a week. Then of course, being desperate, I panicked and made bad hires. It would take up to 90 days to work them out and start the search over again. It took me months to recover from not being prepared. I still blame that one event for my gray hair and waistline. Afterwards, I promised myself I would never go through that pain again. That's when I created the succession chart I want to share with you today.

### Use a succession chart

What this chart will do is help you evaluate your current staff and identify areas of weakness. The goal is to have the best players in position and to have not one, but two moves to fill the position if it becomes available. Currently I would say that without this succession chart, most owners have an idea or plan for one vacancy in their business. But after that one move, they are out of moves and need to start the recruiting process to prepare for the next move. The problem with that is it's too late. This succession chart will help you prepare for all the positions in your business, so you have not one but two moves per position. This is why we always are recruiting and preparing for the next two moves.

I get a lot of owners who ask me in class how I interview a person when I don't have a position to offer them that day. It's simple — being wanted is a basic human emotion. Everyone needs to feel wanted. If you explain to the candidate you are interviewing for the purpose of future needs and possible expansion, you are being up front and sincere, which they will respect. In all the years I have conducted interviews, I never had a candidate say, “If you're not prepared to hire me immediately, I'm not willing to sit down with you.” You are creating a depth chart for each

position in your business.

The succession chart also recognizes employees already in your business who have potential to fill another position at a future date. The chart will help you create training programs to cross train employees so they are better prepared for the next move, rather than what we do today, which is typically “Congratulations, your new title is (fill in blank) and it starts Monday. Good luck.”

I have to admit filling in this chart completely will take hard work and dedication. As Martin DeBey from DeBey's Service in Greeley, Colo., says, “It doesn't happen overnight, but [when] you have it completely filled out, you get a real sense of accomplishment and know you are prepared.”

I promise if you pull the chart out every month and work the plan, you will have the best players in position and have up to two moves for every position in your business, which is a great situation to be in when the industry is short so many qualified candidates. Once you've completely filled out your succession chart, drop me a note.

If you would like your own copy of our ATI Succession Chart, simply go to [www.ationlinetraining.com/2015-09](http://www.ationlinetraining.com/2015-09) and, for a limited time, you can download a copy.

Good luck and happy recruiting!



Chris “Chubby” Frederick is the CEO and founder of the Automotive Training Institute. ATI's 108 associates train and coach more than 1,250 shop owners every week across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. Our associates love helping shop owners who are having the same struggle as many of them have had, and who are looking for the same answers — and in some cases looking for a lifeline. This month's article was written with the help of ATI Coach Brian Hunnicut.

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