

## **Attracting Applicants and Promoting Job Retention**

In September, Wisconsin's unemployment rate fell to an unprecedented low of 2.6%. Because of this, employers are experiencing an even more constricted available labor pool when trying to attract new applicants and promote job retention. As the unemployment rate stays low, job searchers have more job options whether they are currently employed, underemployed, or unemployed. This is pushing employers to expand their offerings to applicants and their existing employees by way of benefits, compensation, and overall atmosphere. Several local employers have made changes to attract and keep qualified employees.

### **Wisconsin Veneer and Plywood - Wages**

The biggest factor that most people think of when it comes to attracting and retaining employees is wage. Many companies have increased their starting wages to attract candidates. According to Nick Endres, Recruiter at Wisconsin Veneer and Plywood:

“There was a stigma surrounding our company that wages were low. I used a combination of wage comparisons, exit interviews and various metrics to propose raising our starting hourly rate and was able to implement the starting hourly compensation increase. This has resulted in higher employee retention among new hires, more candidates accepting job offers and less turnover. “

### **Volm Companies – Child Care**

Other employers understand that child care costs are at an all-time high which presents a serious issue for working parents. According to Childcaring.org, in Langlade County, average cost for childcare at a daycare center for an infant 1 year or younger averages \$775.00/month. In Marathon County, costs average around \$962.00/month (Childcaring.org, January 2018). This costs more than monthly rent for many people!

Volm Companies in Antigo recognized this issue and recently introduced a childcare reimbursement benefit. They will reimburse employees \$200/month for 1 child and up to \$300/month for 2 or more children to put towards childcare costs. It doesn't cover the total cost of childcare, but it certainly helps ease the burden!

### **Home Depot – Health Care**

One of the big perks of working a full-time job vs. a part-time job, besides a larger paycheck, is the health insurance benefits that you receive. The problem is that it can take up to 3 months before you are eligible to participate in the plan. If a person receives Badger Care assistance, there is often a period where Badger Care ends and they are uninsured until their new insurance plan becomes active.

The Home Depot identifies this as an issue for many people, so they offer health, vision, and dental insurance benefits immediately upon hire for full-time workers. Even part-time employees receive dental and vision benefits immediately upon starting their employment.

### **Volm Companies – Sign-on Bonus**

More and more employers are advertising sign-on bonuses for new employees to promote job retention. For example, Volm Companies provides a \$2000 sign-on bonus which is paid out in chunks over the course of 2 years while employed with the company. Employers have found that this helps attract the attention of potential applicants.

Overall, employers recognize that it is a competitive labor market and are looking for new and creative approaches to attracting job seekers as well as promoting job retention. These are just a few examples! More and more people job seekers are noting that wages are only one piece of what is important to them in their career and employers are beginning to appreciate that.

References:

<http://www.childcaring.org/documents/FCCAaverageRates.pdf>  
<http://www.childcaring.org/documents/GCCAaverageRates.pdf>