

# SouthWestern Flash

July 2011, Vol.9, No. 7



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- Education Corner
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- EDF Assists Dealership Employees
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## Upcoming Events

### Dealers of Tomorrow

Aug. 2-3 - Kansas City, Mo.  
Oct. 18-19 - Austin, Texas

### SouthWestern Association Golf Classic

Monday, Aug. 22  
Prairie Highlands G.C.  
Olathe, Kan.

### SouthWestern Association

P.O. Box 419264  
Kansas City, MO 64141-6264  
Ph: 816-561-5323, 800-762-5616  
Fx: 816-561-1249  
www.swassn.com

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[www.swassn.com/register-email.htm](http://www.swassn.com/register-email.htm)

## Limited Space Available - Register Today! SouthWestern Association Golf Classic

**Monday, Aug. 22**  
**Prairie Highlands Golf Course**  
**Olathe, Kan.**

*Proceeds from the event benefit the SWA Technician Training Program at OSU-Institute of Technology.*

Ask any group of farm and industrial equipment dealers about the biggest challenges they face, and the lack of qualified service technicians is a frequent answer. Each year, as equipment becomes more technologically advanced, the need for skilled technicians grows. SouthWestern Association is addressing this problem with the Industrial and Farm Equipment Technician Program at Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology.

The program trains dealership technicians who are:

- Trained on current industrial and farm equipment
- Trained in the latest diagnostic and servicing procedures
- Trained with a positive attitude about the job

The program is a planned dealership personnel development program.

Proceeds from this tournament will support the ongoing expenses related to this important program. Donations accepted.

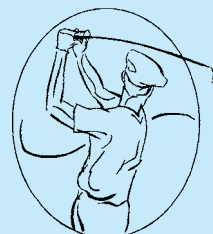
**Registration: 10:30 a.m.**

**Lunch: 11:30 a.m.**

**Shotgun Start: 12:30 p.m.**

**Awards: 5:00 p.m.**

*For more information and registration materials, please contact SouthWestern Association at 816-561-5323 or 800-762-5616.*



## Register Today to Attend Dealers of Tomorrow Workshops in Kansas City and Austin

The 2011 Dealers of Tomorrow workshops are scheduled in Kansas City on August 2-3 and in Austin, Texas, on October 18-19. Topics will range from communications and customer service to leadership skills. The program will feature three speakers on three different topics at each location.

This workshop is for owners, mid-level managers, department managers, and key dealership personnel. Consider bringing several staff members so they can share ideas and return to implement them at your dealership. While the Dealers of Tomorrow programs are planned by younger dealers, the programs are designed for everyone – no matter your age, line of equipment or management position.

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More information about the Dealers of Tomorrow Workshops is available on the SouthWestern Association website: [www.swassn.com](http://www.swassn.com) or by calling the Association offices at: 1-800-762-5616. 

### FIVE REASONS TO ATTEND DEALERS OF TOMORROW

- Dealers of Tomorrow is an established event that offers a rewarding opportunity to meet and visit with other dealers.
- The seminars are planned by dealers for dealers without regard to product or manufacturer affiliations.
- Meals and breaks give you a chance to make connections that you can continue long after the conference ends.
- Time away from your business is a great opportunity to gain a new perspective and re-energize.
- Interact with content leaders and learn new ways to manage better.



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Item #A4699 '08 JD 4930



Item #A4590 '06 JD 9860 STS



Item #A4697 '98 CIH 2388

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selling**



Item #A5174 '90 JD 8760 4WD



Item #A3781 '95 JD 9600



New Listing '04 JD 1293 12R crn hd

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New Listing JD 9500

Representative photo

Representative photo

**Combines:** '09 & '08 JD 9770 STS, '08 JD 9870 STS, '06 JD 9860 STS, '03 JD 9650W, (2) '98 CIH 2388, '95 JD 9600, JD 9500, '82 & '81 JD 7720 **Application equipment:** '08 JD 4930 self-propelled sprayer, '04 Demco 1100 **Tractors:** '90 JD 8760 4WD, JD 4440, JD 8630, Ford 9N, Ford 4000, Ford 3000, IH 1066, '79 Versatile 855, '73 JD 4230 **Loader:** '08 JD 5425L **Harvesting:** '06 & '04 JD 1293 12R crn hd, '02 CIH 2208 8R crn hd, (2) JD 643 crn hd, CIH 1083 crn hd, '07 Honey Bee SP30R 30' draper hd, '02 MacDon 972 30' draper hd, (2) JD 224 hd, (2) JD 930 hd, '96 JD 893 crn hd, '92 CIH 2055 cotton picker, Shelbourne CX84 24' stripper hdr, JD 915 flex platform **Hay/forage:** '08 JD 568 round baler, '08 CIH RB454 baler, (2) JD 567 round baler, JD 566 round baler, (2) JD 535, JD 346 wire square baler, Hesston 4900 large square baler, JD 704 hay rake, NH 664, '01 Vermeer 605XL, '89 NH 1118 swth, Walt 12 wheel rake, NH rotary rake, '08 NH H8040 windrower **Planting/seeding:** '06 JD 1770NT CCS, JD 9300 drill, '95 JD 455 drill, Crustbuster 4000 25' min-till drill, GP 35' ADC2220 no-till drill **Tillage:** JD 1000 cultivator, Flex-King 5x5 undercutter, Flex-King KM25 undercutter, CIH 4800 field cultivator, JD 1710 mulch, Unverferth ripper **Mowers/rotary cutters:** JD 1508 rotary cutter, JD 1518 rotary cutter, JD 407 rotary cutter, Bush Hog 15' rotary cutter **Trailer:** Aluma 81"x176" tandem axle **Skid steer:** Case 60XT **Attachments:** JD 72" ldr bucket and more assets online.

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## Federal Reserve Delays, Dilutes Swipe Fee Relief

The Federal Reserve Board has decided to delay and reduce the interchange fee caps that retailers had sought to reduce the onerous fees charged by big banks and financial institutions on their customers' debit card transactions.

Recently the Board voted to approve a final rule that would institute a 21-cent cap on interchange, or "swipe," fees, rather than the 12-cent cap initially proposed in December. Moreover, the Board delayed the effective date of the new regulations from July to October 1 in the face of intense lobbying campaigns by big banks. The fees currently average 44-cents per transaction. Small financial institutions with assets under \$10 billion will be exempt from the new caps.

Last year, Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) attached provisions to the financial industry reform legislation to direct the Federal Reserve to issue rules for "reasonable and proportional" fees for debit card transactions. Retailer groups supported the Durbin amendment and filed comments in support of the Board's proposed rule in December. A Senate measure that would have delayed swipe fee relief by more than a year was recently defeated. [SW](#)

## EDF Assists Dealership Employees

Devastating storms swept across Missouri in May, laying waste to miles of landscape – and the homes of at least two people employed by SouthWestern Association members in Missouri – one from Joplin and the other from Sedalia. Fortunately, we were able to step forward and assist these two employees with some of their immediate financial needs with the assistance of the Equipment Dealers Foundation - EDF Disaster Relief Fund.

The EDF Disaster Relief Fund was established in September 2005 after Hurricane Katrina caused severe destruction along the Gulf Coast from Central Florida to Texas destroying equipment dealerships and their employees' homes. Since that time, the EDF fund has provided grants to dealers and their employees affected by hurricanes, storms, flooding and other natural disasters. Grants may be used for food, living expenses, temporary accommodations, home repair, permanent home construction and other approved needs.

If you would like to help the EDF prepare for the next disaster, tax deductible donations may be made payable to "EDF" and mailed to NAEDA, 1195 Smizer Mill Rd., Fenton, MO 63026-3480. [SW](#)

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# Eight Hiring Mistakes Employers Make: From Application to Interview



By Susan M. Heathfield, About.com Guide

Hiring decisions that result in "bad" hires sap your organization's time, training resources, and psychic energy. These are the top hiring mistakes to avoid during your recruiting and hiring process. Do these eight activities with care; your recruiting, interviewing and hiring practices will result in better hires. Better hires will help you develop a strong, healthy, productive, competitive organization.

Here are eight recruiting and hiring mistakes to avoid.

## Do Not Pre-Screen Candidates

A half-hour phone call can save hours of your organization's time. Pre-screening applicants is a must for recruiting and hiring the best employees. You can discover whether the candidate has the knowledge and experience you need. You can screen for applicants who expect a salary that is out of your league. You can gain a sense about the person's congruity with your culture. Always pre-screen applicants.


## Fail to Prepare the Candidate

If your applicant fails to ask about your company and the specifics of the job for which he or she has applied, help the applicant out. Prepare your applicants better for the interview, so interviewers spend their time on the important issues: determining the candidate's skills and fit within your culture. Prepare the candidate by describing the company, the details of the position, the background and titles of the interviewers, and whatever will eliminate time wasting while the candidate interviews within your company.

## Fail to Prepare the Interviewers

You wouldn't choose a college for your child or launch a project without a plan. Why, then, do organizations put so little planning into interviewing candidates for positions? Interviewers need to meet in advance and create a plan. Who is responsible for which types of questions? What aspect of the candidate's credentials is each person assessing? Who is

*Continued on next page*



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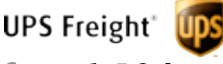
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assessing culture fit? Plan to succeed in employee selection in advance.

## Rely on the Interview to Evaluate a Candidate

The interview is a lot of talk. And most frequently, because applicants are not prepped in advance, a lot of interview time is spent giving the candidate information about your organization. Even more time is invested in different interviewers asking the candidate the same questions over and over.

During an interview, candidates tell you what they think you want to hear because they want to successfully obtain a job offer. Organizations are smart when they develop several methods for evaluating candidates in addition to the interview.

According to the Chally Group, a Human Resources consulting firm, in, *The Most Common Hiring Mistakes*, research at the University of Michigan found that, "The typical interview increases the likelihood of choosing the best candidate by less than two percent. In other words, if you just flipped a coin you would be correct 50 percent of the time. If you added an interview you would only be right 52 percent of the time."

Here are four more mistakes you need to avoid as you work your candidates from application through interview.

## Do Nothing But Talk During an Interview

Every interview needs to have components other than questions, answers and discussion. Walk the candidate through the company. Ask about his or her experience with situations you point out during the walk.

Watch the candidate perform a task such as separating parts or components to get a feel for their "hands-on" ability. Have a documentation or writing candidate write a description of the steps in one of your work processes. See how quickly a person learns a particular task. Ask how the candidate would approach improving the quality of a given accounting process.

As long as you use tests and tasks that are directly related to the position for which the individual is interviewing, you will earn reams of relevant information to use in your selection process.

## Evaluate "Personality" Not Job Skills and Experience

Sure it would be nice for you to like everyone at work. But, this is much less important than recruiting the strongest, smartest, best candidates you can find. People tend to hire people who are similar to themselves. They are the most comfortable with those candidates of course.

This will kill your organization over time. You need diverse people with diverse personalities to deal with diverse employees and customers. Think about the customer that drives you crazy. Isn't it likely that a new employee with a similar person-

ality would have the same problem? Likewise, hiring a candidate because you enjoyed and liked him or her, as the main qualification, ignores your need for particular skills and experience. Don't do it.

## Fail to Differentiate, Via Testing and Discussion, the Critical Job Skills

How do you differentiate one candidate from another? Everyone has a "wish list" for all of the qualities, skills, personality factors, experience and interests you want to see in your selected employee. You must decide on, and perhaps, test, the skills you most desire in your candidate.

What are the three-four most critical factors for contribution and success given the job, the skills of the other employees and the needs of your customers? Once you have identified these, you cannot "settle" on a candidate that does not bring these to your workplace. Or you will fail.

## Develop a Small Candidate Pool

Take the time to build a candidate pool with several candidates who meet the needs of your organization. If you don't have to make a choice among several qualified candidates, your pool is too small. Don't "settle" for someone if you don't have the right person with the skills and experience you need. It's better to reopen your search.

These mistakes are often fatal to a candidate's ultimate success within your organization. If you do these activities successfully, you increase the probability of a happy, successful employee contributing what you need from him or her to your organization.

For more information about AgCareers.com contact Beth Hales at 1-800-929-8975 or [beth.hales@agcareers.com](mailto:beth.hales@agcareers.com). SW

## Federated Life Insurance Company Maintains "A" Rating

Federated Life Insurance Company is proud to announce that once again it has earned an "A" ("Excellent") rating for financial strength from Weiss Ratings, the nation's leading independent provider of ratings and analyses of financial services companies, mutual funds and stocks. Less than two percent of the nation's life and health insurers meet Weiss Ratings' criteria for exceptional financial strength.

Melissa Gannon, Vice President of Weiss Ratings, wrote, "This rating recognizes Federated Life Insurance Company as an outstanding insurer, offering excellent financial stability for its customers, vendors, and employees." SW



## Who's Not Buying?

By John Walker, President of After Market Services Consulting Co.

In equipment sales we have the tendency to pay attention to and talk about our conquests. We talk about our successes and how we captured a major account. We nurture and take care of those who buy from us, those customers who provide us with market share to appease the suppliers. This is as it should be; but...

What about all those customers who are not buying from us? Have we ever asked the question of them, face to face, "Why aren't you buying from us?" How much attention are we paying to them? What are we doing to bring them on-board - to add them to our base of customers?

In this instance, we are talking specifically about those customers who purchase our line of equipment, but for one reason or another, forget about our dealership when it comes time to perform service or maintenance on this same equipment.

Pick up any industry's "Cost of Doing Business Study" and look at the dealers' contribution to total sales by their service profit center. As a general rule, no other major profit center contributes less to the dealership's total sales than does the

service department. Now look at the gross margins produced by the dealership's four or five profit centers. Here you will discover there is no other department that produces the high margins of the service department.

What's wrong with this picture? Aren't equipment dealers in business to make a profit for themselves and their families, for their investors and their employees? Dealers make their suppliers happy with market share. If they fail to do this then their agreements with these same suppliers are questioned. Over the years, we have seen few suppliers who are really concerned with their dealer's service business. They care about the dealer making sure the equipment is ready to go to the customer, and that all the mistakes the supplier made in producing the product are fixed (called warranty). They care about the dealer making sure that warranty is performed and that they don't get too many complaints about the dealer's service performance. But, outside of that, the focus continues to be upon market share of equipment.

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You.

It would be crazy to try to find your way out of here without the help of a navigation system. Is your dealership any different? With more than 30 years in the business we've helped guide thousands of businesses to a successful destination. Our Total Management Workshops and 20 Groups will give you the principles and tools for continued success, even when you can't see the forest for the trees.



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How about analyzing your service department's market share? Contribution is a highly interesting number that we have used for years. The guideline for service contribution is generally set at 25 percent to 28 percent, and some dealers take it as high as 32 to 34 percent and they are what we classify as "world class dealers." There are many equipment dealers out there running at the 6 to 8 percent level, and we have told them, "This is not at all that impressive."

## Service Market Share

Sometimes we wonder whether dealers are confused by the word, "Contribution," and refuse to use it as a benchmark. It is simply a measurement by percentage of what a particular department's contribution is to the total sales of the dealership. Therefore, in order to show who is not buying your service, we looked to a dealer whose operations manager decided to figure out his service market share. Surprisingly, it all becomes extremely simple.

It works like this: Assume you have 1,000 customers who have purchased equipment from your dealership over the past five years. Of this 1,000, only 300 are using your service facilities and 700 are either outsourcing their service or doing it themselves. Service market share is based solely upon the customer base identified as buying your equipment and/or operating your equipment. Therefore, in the example shown, your service market share on the equipment you sold is 30 percent. This clearly tells someone it is time to begin marketing your service department.

## Identify Your Buying Customers

The one solid result from figuring service market share is that it becomes necessary to dig deep into your customer lists to determine which customers are or are not buying service from your dealership, despite the fact that they originally purchased the equipment from your dealership. When this list is drawn up you have created your "first great marketing tool" for your service department. You have created a list of customers who, for some reason or another, have decided that they don't need you to service their equipment. Remember how often we have told our readers that their customers all have a choice when it comes to both service and parts. In effect, they don't need you to satisfy their product support needs and requirements – they can easily go someplace else.

You may say at this point, "Well, they may not be buying our service, but they are most certainly buying our parts and that's business we don't want to give up for the sake of getting their service business." We are willing to wager that if you get their service business, the likelihood of your getting all of their parts business is almost a "slam-dunk."

We can tell you with certainty that if your service contribution is low (between 6 percent and 10 percent), your market share as described above will be low. The operations manager,

in this article, who discovered his market share of service was 30 percent, was not a "happy camper." He told me when he discovered this it felt like a horse had kicked him in the stomach and that he was going to shoot for 50 percent in the coming year and not be satisfied until he reached 75 to 80 percent. All of this will come from planning how to do it, but a 75 percent to 80 percent market share in the dealership's service sales would also be extremely profitable for the dealership, all of its managers, and personnel. It would also open up the opportunity to achieve that sought after 100 percent absorption rate.

Take a look at your total parts sales for last year. If the ratio between parts sales and service sales is extremely high and in favor of parts, it should be a pretty clear indication that your customers are repairing their own equipment.

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Next, take a look at your top 25 parts customers. If there are a lot of your competitors on this list, then they are stealing your service business. (We have pointed this out to you before, and have shown you what it costs you not only in parts business but in service business.) Have your service manager begin to log the number of customers who call in asking for advice on how to fix their equipment.

Today, more than ever before, the customer's abuse of the dealer's service facilities is becoming more of a problem. Once again, we are observing more dealers who "loan-out" special tools to customers to perform repairs. This is a slap in the face to any dealer and particularly when the tool is sometimes returned by the independent.

The major benefit of developing your service market share numbers is that the process identifies for the dealership who is and who is not purchasing their service and maintenance from your dealership. Those who are not purchasing your service and maintenance then become your focused opportunity. You develop a dealership campaign blitz, or whatever you care to call it, and go after those customers with all the determination the dealership can muster.

## Determine Why Customers are Not Buying

After performing the task of developing these lists, you are put into the position of determining exactly why these customers are not buying from your dealership. This calls for someone to go out and meet with the customer and to ask

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## After Market Sales - cont.

the hard questions to determine why. In all honesty, it is a question dealers have not wanted to have answered because they thought they knew the answer they would receive, "The dealership's price is too high." Once dealers begin to ask the question, however, they find out they can drop that reason because the customer mentions too many other reasons as being critical to the dealer's getting the customer's service business. Surprisingly, the reason given the most is generally, "Nobody ever asked me for the business."

If someone in the dealership takes the challenge and goes out to discover the reasons customers are going elsewhere for service, you will eliminate a whole lot of assumptions and be on your way to earning a higher service market share. We can assure you we have helped and had many dealers recognize their opportunity by getting into the market place and asking the hard questions. If you have any questions about what you need to do to get this process started in your dealership, call us or email us and we will be more than happy to help you get started. The first step, only you can take, is to determine your own service market share. If it is lower than you want it to be then you are ready to take the next step – ask your customers why. If you believe you can, you will; if you believe you can't than you probably won't.

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