



Time to Declare Your Independence From Bad Hires

By Laura Byrnes

Here we are smack dab in the middle of summer.

Ah ... the heat. The humidity. The cyclical spike in unemployment. It can all start to feel downright oppressive at this time of year.

Fighting oppression, coincidentally, is at the root of the one big-bang-of-a-celebration this month: Independence Day. Our Declaration of Independence, after all, was a clarion call for relief from King George's oppressive rule of the American colonies.

So it seems more than fitting that we commemorate our nation's nascent independence against oppression on July 4, during the most oppressive "dog days" of summer.

While CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion can't do anything about the temperature or humidity, and while the seasonal employment slump happens every single year (don't worry, it will improve by September or October), we can help you declare your independence from what can seem oppressive, at least in terms of cost and time, and that is recruiting, hiring, training and retaining the right staff.

Depending on your industry, of course, July can be a relatively slow month for staffing up. Businesses looking for professional workers before the fall tend to do so now, before key decision makers start rotating out for summer vacation. Job seekers with nontraditional but impressive resumes may take advantage of the lull to make career moves. Manufacturers gearing up for holiday production may be in the market for additional workers.

You get the idea. When it comes to recruiting, there's no "one size fits all." What we can agree on is the damage created by a bad hire.

Without belaboring the point, the true cost of a bad hire may be greater than you think. A recent CareerBuilder survey found that 27 percent of US companies reported each bad hire cost their companies at least \$50,000. Zenefits cited a Center for American Progress report that found bad hires typically cost 20 percent of the employee's salary. The average annual wage in Citrus County is about \$36,000 so that would come to \$7,200 per employee, figuring the cost would be much higher for specialized or senior employees.

Even if we play with averages, does your company have an extra \$7,200 to lose?

Forbes magazine revisited the issue of hiring a bad apple in September and found that while the financial cost is quantifiable, chief financial officers actually rank the impact on morale and productivity ahead of monetary loss.



Why? According to contributor Falon Fatemi, "an apple spoils the bunch, so to speak. Disengagement is contagious ... In many ways, a bad hire's effect on company culture echoes beyond the employee's tenure. Poor performers lower the bar for other employees and bad habits spread like a virus."

So, we're agreed. No one likes bad hires. Yet Glassdoor for Employers found that 95 percent of organizations continue to make them every year due to "broken screening, (inadequate) interview and hiring processes, too-little-too-late candidate vetting, plus an overemphasis on candidate skills sets rather than organizational fit."

In new research cited by Glassdoor, the Brandon Hall Group found that organizations that lack sufficient interview process are five times more likely to make a bad hire while those that invest in a strong candidate experience improve their quality hires by 70 percent. And this goes for hires from entry-level to C-Suite.

Are you ready to declare your independence from bad hires? Are you ready to go forth this Fourth of July – and onward – to celebrate a truly remarkable workforce?

If so, we offer a full menu of fee-free services to help you, and it includes assistance with job descriptions, screening and vetting candidates and help interviewing and hiring. Eligible employers may also qualify for on-the-job training grants, paid adult internships, worker experience trainee programs and custom business training programs all designed to help you find and train you new and existing workers.

Other ways we can help. It's hard to miss the big regional career fairs we hold, typically every spring and fall. So far this calendar year, we held career fairs in Citrus and Marion counties, a job fair for graduating high school seniors in Marion County, targeted hiring events for health services, business and technology for area college graduates, and a youth job fair for 16-to-24-year-olds. Plans are under way to expand the wildly successful youth career expos to Citrus County hopefully this fall. And that doesn't include fall job fairs.

Job fairs can be open to general job seekers or specific to targeted industries, such as healthcare, or a target audience, such as older youth or college graduates. They offer you a fast, effective way to meet a variety of jobseekers in one place on one day. We handle all the logistics, promotion and provide staff support.

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Sometimes you need to hire in a hurry and only want to meet with those with the skills and experience specific to your immediate job openings. That's why we also offer hiring events, exclusively for individual employers. Typically, for your convenience, these take place at our career center in Lecanto, but if you prefer they can be held at your place of business or we'll arrange an alternate site. Again, at no charge to you.

And our latest initiative to help targeted industries raise awareness of opportunities in our own backyard is the Career Awareness-Talent Pipeline video project which is expanding into Citrus County on three significant fronts. First, we're adding more Citrus County companies to the library of informational videos and second, we're including more targeted industries. So if your business is in technology, logistics, healthcare or manufacturing, and you'd like to take advantage of this program, let us know. We underwrite most of the cost of the video and for what amounts to less than a dollar

a day (\$325), you'll get a professionally produced company video, strategic marketing plan, lots of free-to-you promotion via our social media platforms, and distribution to your potential talent pipeline (students the parents and guidance counselors who influence them) through the public school districts.

And speaking of schools, the third way this project is growing and thanks to a generous grant from the Duke Energy Foundation, we are adding videos highlighting career preparation programs available in our public schools.

This is just the beginning of, dare I say, revolutionary programs that can help you Declare Independence from bad hires and give you cause to celebrate this July and all year long.

If you want to learn more, please call us at 342-249-3278 or 800-746-9950 or visit careersourceclm.com.

Use Less Water for an Eco-Friendly Yard

By Megan Hanna

Everyone wants a beautiful looking yard to set the stage for a beautiful home. And while a lush lawn and a variety of ornamental plants can up the value and curbside appeal of your home, it can also have a big impact on the environment and the world's growing demand for water.

According to the EPA, the average American family uses about 320 gallons of water a day and about 30 percent of that is used outside. Altogether, the EPA estimates that the U.S. uses nearly 9 billion gallons of water each day watering lawns, gardens and other landscaping in yards.

Meanwhile, serious droughts continue to affect areas of the U.S. and the world, jeopardizing crops and even leaving people without sufficient water for drinking, cooking and bathing.

But there's good news. With a little effort, we can take steps to cut back on the water we use – without sacrificing a great looking yard.

About half the water we use outside goes toward watering, whether that's by hand or through a sprinkler system. The fix? Water less often.

In an effort to keep the lawn as thick and green as the neighbor's, we're quick to put out the sprinkler. But do we really need to?

There's a simple test: step on your lawn. If the grass springs back after you step off, that means your lawn is sufficiently hydrated. In one step, you've not only saved water, but also saved yourself some work!

If the lawn, or other landscaping really is in need of a drink, consider a few things. First, check the forecast. Why water if rain

is on the way? It can be pretty frustrating to spend your morning watering the garden just to see the clouds roll in by the afternoon.

Secondly, consider how you water. Typical sprinklers can be very inefficient, with much of the water just evaporating into the air or being carried away by the wind. Switch out wasteful systems for a drip irrigation or other more efficient watering system. Or, instead of setting out the sprinkler for a few hours, water by hand to make sure the water is going where you actually want it to go.

Thirdly, think about changing up your landscaping. Lawns have long been the status quo, but there are plenty of alternatives. More and more homeowners are opting to forgo laborious and needy lawns in favor of low-maintenance, eco-friendly options like stone or drought-tolerant groundcover plants.

A growing trend has many people looking toward nature. Instead of fighting the elements, embrace the unique environment around you and fill your yard with native plants. Perfectly suited to the area, once established, native species require little water beyond rainfall, giving your yard endless beauty without extra work.

For those specimen plants or seasonal pots and hanging baskets you love, keep them hydrated with water from a rain barrel. Gone are the days of having to make one from an unsightly blue barrel or trash can – plenty of aesthetically pleasing, finely crafted options are available.

With just a few changes and additions, we can all make a big dent in our water usage, helping the environment and the world.