

E. Smith Keeps It's Eyes Peeled for Talent

A booming local economy has meant plentiful work but scarce workers in the Atlanta area. “We’re having a bit of a slow down right now in the residential market, but over the years, finding new people locally in the construction industry has been almost impossible,” said Barry Abernathy, president of E. Smith Heating & Air Conditioning.

This second generation, family-owned company includes nearly 60 employees and focuses primarily on commercial air systems in new buildings throughout the state. “Fortunately as a well-established company we don’t experience a lot of turnover,” Abernathy said. “But on a fairly regular basis, I’m looking for entry-level individuals who have some background in heating and air, either from school or from job experience.”

Tech Experience Only Half the Story

Beyond technical expertise, Abernathy appreciates good personal values in every employee, both those in the field and in the office. “I’m looking for dependable people who know what it means to show up on time every day and put in a good day’s work,” he said.

When hiring experienced individuals, Abernathy prioritizes a track record of loyalty. “I’m looking for people who have worked in a job for a length of time.”

Diversifying the Hiring Hunt

Recruiting quality, committed employees in such a tight labor market requires turning to many hiring outlets, including MEP Jobs, an online job board serving the mechanical, electrical and plumbing niche.

Before taking advantage of MEP Jobs, E. Smith ran ads in the local newspaper. Abernathy cites unqualified candidates as the biggest drawback to this type of search process. Although the company listed the specific job requirements in ads, ill-equipped applicants would apply in the hopes a job was on the other end of their submission. Abernathy’s team would spend hours sifting through inappropriate applications just to find one or two real possibilities.

Abernathy currently uses a combination of notices posted at supply houses and various services provided by MEP Jobs.

Abernathy likes using the MEP Job site as a component of the company’s recruitment strategy because of its specialized candidates.

“People who search the site are almost always already in the industry,” Abernathy said. “We also use the notification system to look over resumes of people who are not actively searching for positions. From the notices, we can see if someone has an interesting background and if they’re already in Georgia or interested in relocating. In years past, MEP Jobs gave us people to talk to when our other methods didn’t get any response at all. The national approach really helped out.”



Customer Case Study

The Search Never Ceases

MEP Jobs brought Abernathy one of his most valued employees, commercial project manager Richard Crenshaw. Crenshaw had prior success finding employment through the job board.

In 1999, Crenshaw identified hiring companies on MEP Jobs and contacted them, which landed him a job that brought him from Texas to the Atlanta area.

In 2001, Crenshaw posted his resume again. “Within 24 hours Barry called me, and within three days we set up an interview,” Crenshaw said. “I had a job offer in four business days.”

Abernathy continues to use MEP Jobs even as his business is not actively hiring. “If we come across particular talent that might be a good fit for our company, it’s nice to know they’re available as we continue to grow,” he said.