

Calling All Corn-Fed Boys! *Why it's Essential to Know Your Sweet Spot*

Hank McGuinty is the HR Manager of a power plant in Beeville, Texas (pop. 13,500). His uncanny ability to attract and hire technicians is the envy of many other employers in the sheet metal industry and it's helping him crush his competition.

With the [ever-diminishing number of skilled workers](#) in every trade - especially in smaller rural communities - this was a mystery that I had to unravel.

"What's your secret formula, Hank?"

"Heck, everyone in town here knows what kinda fellas I hire. So when they run across someone who they think fits my mold, they send 'em my way. I don't even have to advertise on [Craigslist](#) like other power generation companies."

"What kind of 'fellas' do you hire?" I asked.

"I don't hire people based on their college degree," Hank said. "I purposely stay away from them guys 'cause most show up to work with a bunch of bad habits they took away from a previous job. Bad habits can take me a long time to break. I'd rather hire a guy who's never done this before but is mechanically inclined and has a positive attitude about learning the trade. Now, that, I can work with."

"And that's it?" I asked, as if he was holding something back.

"Well, let's just say when I meet a fella who's mechanically inclined and eager to learn, I'm interested. Now if that same guy has grown up on a ranch or a farm, I'll hire him on the spot."

"Grown up on a ranch or farm? That's a strange hiring criterion, isn't it Hank?"

"Not really. It just means he's used to getting up early and working hard 'til the sun goes down. And it also means he's probably as strong as an ox."

There it was, laid out like a treasure map.

Hank McGuinty knows his 'sweet spot' and he's deliberate and intentional in his hiring practices.

"So let me get this straight, Hank," I pried. "You only hire guys who are mechanically inclined, ready and eager to learn a new trade, and raised on a farm or a ranch. Is that right?"

"Yep. And 'round here, we have a name for 'em. We call 'em corn-fed boys. And whenever anyone in these here parts spots a corn-fed boy, they know right where to send 'em. And when somebody sends me a new tech, I return the favor by making sure their electricity is reliable. I guess word of that little trade-off gets around because I never run short of good quality guys who can do this job and really want to work for me."

Granted, if the [ACLU](#) is ever looking for a bone to pick in southern Texas, Hank's got one sticking out that's a mile high with flashing lights on it. But put that aside for a minute as we give the devil his due and study his remarkably effective hiring strategy.

Hank's not fishing in the same pond as his competitors, most of whom are perpetually stealing techs from each other. He knows exactly what kind of individual succeeds in his business.

And moreover, everyone in Beeville, TX, and the surrounding communities knows that Hank is all about hiring corn-fed boys, and they know the three essential criteria that make up that distinction. His customers know. His vendors and suppliers know. The shop teachers and the mechanical instructors in the local schools and community colleges know. And the corn-fed boys who are already on Hank's payroll know.

And Hank takes care of those who send the right kind of fella his way.

Hank McGuinty has not only built a very successful power plant, he's built a pipeline that flows a steady stream of corn-fed boys right to his front door.

ON POINT - What's your sweet spot? Are you able to identify the three essential characteristics for success that each person in each position in your organization must possess? If so, can everyone who does business with you also identify those three characteristics?

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**By request, "Hank" asked that I not use his real name nor identify the actual town where he lives in Texas.*