



Small Business Builder: Do Your Ads Work?

Making Those Want Ads Work, And Other Tips

By [Mary Campbell](#)

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Is this your ad?

"PEOPLE PERSON" WANTED Local business seeks an energetic, professional, FT assistant with PR skills and supervisory experience. Must be nonsmoker. Competitive salary & benefits. Paid vacation, holidays. Some weekends required. No phone calls. Apply at 752 E. Maple, Suite 35.

This actual help-wanted ad (only the address has been changed) suffers from too much fluff and not enough substance. It screens out introverts, smokers, and people seeking part-time work, but the rest of the world could come knocking.

They won't, however, unless they live at 754 East Maple, because there's nothing worth trekking across town for. The employer sounds overbearing and unfriendly. And why "no phone calls"? Is the company interested only in applicants of a particular age, race, gender, or "body image"?

At a minimum, a help-wanted ad should include the job title (preferably as the heading) and a descriptive sentence or two ("program assistant" won't do it); company name and type of business; education, certification, clearance and experience requirements; scope and duration (part-time, temporary or otherwise); location; application instructions; and the contact's name. The closing date, salary range, and a few words about the working environment are also helpful.

If you can't make the ad inviting, at least don't make it hostile; and leave out the jargon and the gunk about "self-starters" and "team players."

Whose Fault Is It When Teams Don't Work?

I was leery of the new book *Teamwork Is an Individual Skill*, by Christopher M. Avery, but got hooked halfway through the first chapter. If you work with people as a manager, employee, business owner □ even as a family member □ you're likely to find valuable advice for building cooperative relationships and achieving common goals.

This is not a book about getting along with those you work with, or even about being nice to them. It's about helping them help you succeed. According to Avery, if you do your part (by taking responsibility for the team's performance), they'll do theirs. The team will achieve its goals, and everyone will be able to take the credit.

Following are a few of the book's suggestions:

Realize that teams are defined not by the people on them but by what the team must do. To win individually, the members must win first as a team.

Take responsibility for and act on troublesome situations, rather than waiting for those "in charge" to do so.

Don't go along with something you are strongly opposed to. Without blaming, "push back," knowing that your silence would be equivalent to consent.

Begin a team relationship with a contribution: evidence of your talents, special information to which you have access & tools, contacts, whatever you have that supports the team's mission.

Practice "servant leadership," Buckminster Fuller's concept of winning by helping others win.

The book continues with ideas for using conflict constructively, distinguishing criticism from feedback, building consensus, calling others on broken agreements, and much more. Avery has included individual and team exercises, so you can use *Teamwork Is an Individual Skill* as an employee-training manual.

No Waiting at the Post Office

Check out the U.S. Postal Service Small Business Tools online at www.usps.com/smallbiz. Not only are there snail-mail services information and resources for direct-mail campaigns, for example but the Postal Service now offers reasonably priced Web site hosting and e-mail marketing support.

At the Net Post Card Store, you can create customized promotional postcards with your logo or other artwork, if you want which the USPS says it will print and mail the next business day. Complete the site's brief registration form and you'll receive the USPS Shipping Assistant CD free (while supplies last, of course).

An editor since the age of 6, when she returned a love letter with corrections marked in red, Mary Campbell founded Zero Gravity in 1984 to provide writing, editing, marketing and other services to small businesses. Her presentations and workshops address small-business topics from Web sites to business writing. An editor of and contributor to dozens of publications (books, journals and newsletters), she is co-author with her sister, Pipi Campbell Peterson of the second edition of *Ready, Set, Organize! A Workbook for the Organizationally Challenged* (JIST Publishing, 2001). Please e-mail her your comments, questions and suggestions at whywalk@about.com. *Small Business Builder* is published every other Wednesday.

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