

We've all read articles about what the younger generation wants from a job—more responsibility, flexible hours, free food, etc. And while expert analysis does have value, we went straight to the source and invited four students from the University of Nebraska at Kearney's Industrial Distribution (ID) program to share what *they* are looking for in a job and their expectations of their employers. Seniors Zach Jordening and Cale Preble and juniors Noah Sackett and Hunter White participated in a panel discussion with the PTDA Foundation Trustees at the recent Industry Summit. How do their insights change how you recruit and retain?



PT WORK Force<sup>SM</sup>

## We asked them:

### Why did you choose industrial distribution as your major?

Responses ranged from being similar to their hobbies, liking the technical part of ID, seeing all the applications of ID across the world and finding out about the profession from a best friend's uncle (and liking the uncle's lifestyle).

### What will make you loyal to a company so you will stay?

Cale started out right away with what we would expect—and then went beyond that. "Money is a big part, but it's not everything. I want to enjoy my job and not be micromanaged. I want to be able to take on a project and learn from my mistakes rather than be scolded for them." Noah added, "I don't want to work for a manager who is always negative and pointing out what you did wrong."

Collectively, the group agreed they want to be set up for success. They want to grow, get promoted and be rewarded. They do not want to feel stuck, which Hunter defined as, "spending a year learning and then moving to outside sales. Then, in about ten years, moving into a management role through a long-range development plan that's put together by employer and employee early on."

## #WhyIContribute



*"The PTDA Foundation has shown us that we are not alone in the stressful endeavor of day-to-day business, including our employment challenges. Together, our efforts will provide resources for us to attract talent for the next generation."*

**C.C. Vest**

Midpoint Bearing

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As far as the review process, Zach explained, "Respect is important and so is being able to ask my manager for help. I'd like at least weekly feedback about how I'm doing. Formal reviews could be done at the end of a project and definitely more often than yearly. If I'm doing something wrong, the sooner you tell me, the sooner I can fix it."

For them, the goal with any job is to want to show up every day and look forward to what they will be doing.

### How would you decide between job offers?

The students agreed that salary is a big part, but probably places third. Other things they would consider are:

- *Location:* Some wanted to stay close to home, others were open to moving out of Nebraska for the right opportunity
- *Additional benefits* such as cell phone reimbursement
- *Training*, especially if it is offered in different formats
- *Career progression opportunity*

### And they asked us:

#### What do you want in an employee?

While the employers agreed that specific skills they want are different for every position, they shared some general things they look for in all employees. Trustees told the students they want employees who are a good fit for the culture and who will come to work every day with a positive attitude. The Trustees also want employees who have a curiosity that makes them want to fix problems and make the company better.

#### I have been with you for two years and received a better offer. What will you do to keep me?

As employers from different sized companies, the Trustees' responses varied. In general, it would depend on whether or not the employee was a good fit and had high performance that made the employer want to retain the employee. If they did want to retain the employee, the employers said they could possibly offer extra benefits such as more responsibility or working remote. They also stressed that they couldn't always offer additional compensation.

#### What do employers look for in a new employee?

Once a new employee starts at a company, there are many qualities that the Trustees hope they bring to their new position. Trustees want employees to be honest and efficient. They also want to see an employee's passion to succeed. Trustees advised the students to establish performance and professional development goals each year and to share them with their manager. ■

*Interested in learning more about attracting and retaining employees like Zach, Cale, Noah and Hunter? Visit [PTWORKForce.org](http://PTWORKForce.org). PT WORK Force is a PTDA Foundation initiative designed to help you find, hire and retain qualified employees.*