



## 12 Low-cost Ways to Recruit Tax School Students

By Charles E. McCabe

In this economy, given high unemployment, a great source of prospective tax school students is unemployed workers. Many unemployed people would be interested in learning to become tax preparers if they were aware of this opportunity. Other good candidates are stay-at-home parents with school-age children who need to be home in the summer when the kids are in school, but still want to maintain job skills. Early retirees are also good prospects since they may like to travel or spend time with grandchildren during the off-season. College students may view tax preparation as an opportunity to gain experience and enhance their resumes. Below are some tactics you could use to make such prospects aware of your opportunity.

1. **Newspaper Help Wanted Ads.** You can place classified ads in the help wanted section of your local major newspaper. Here are some tips:
  - a. Advertise for Tax Preparers and indicate that training is available.
  - b. Place the ads under the heading of "Accounting" if possible.
  - c. Run the ad on the day when most help wanted ads run (usually Sunday or Saturday).
  - d. Indicate that training is available. Consider "Tuition-Free (fee for books)."
  - e. Keep the ad very short and run it sparingly to minimize the cost..
2. **Internet Help Wanted Ads.** You can usually place the same ad in the internet help wanted listings of your major newspaper, as well as in other internet job boards, including non-profit support groups that help unemployed people find work.
3. **Online Job Postings.** Craig's List is very effective and free in most cities (although nominal fees are now charged in some cities). You could place a detailed ad for tax preparers to start in January and indicate that training is available. You will also need to specify the pay rate. Have applicants reply by e-mail to you with their resumes.

Paid online job postings are also an option. While job sites such as Monster.com, Career Builder and SnagaJob.com are costly, good results can be obtained at a nominal cost from jobsites such as Indeed.com which charges a fee "per click" i.e., you pay a small fee for each prospect who clicks on your ad. Your ad can be as detailed as you'd like since you are paying for viewers, not for the length of your ad. You can suspend the ad at any time.

4. **Social Media.** You could post your opportunity on local groups to which you belong or can join, including local LinkedIn job search and professional groups. While on LinkedIn, you might consider joining the group, Tax Business Owners of America. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube can also be effective to make local people aware of your job opportunities.
5. **Signage.** If you operate your tax office(s) in a storefront, you could capitalize on the visibility by putting a banner in the window advertising your tax school (available from ITS). You could also mount posters on the wall in your client reception area. Window banners and posters are available from ITS; or you can print them locally using graphic art, which is also available from ITS. You might also consider magnet signs for your vehicle to advertise your tax school.

6. **Job Fairs.** You can set up a table at your local job fairs. Some job fairs are free for employers and some require employers to pay a fee. Be sure to have brochures or flyers describing the opportunity. You could bring a set of Tax School Student Texts to display and a poster or window banner (available from the Income Tax School (ITS) at a nominal cost; or, you can print locally using graphic art available free from ITS.
7. **Employment Offices or Services.** You can display flyers or brochures at your local state employment office and any other employment services (e.g. 50+ job counselors). You could provide descriptions of job openings and job descriptions. An example of a Tax Preparer Job Description is available free from ITS.
8. **Networking.** At local networking events, you can make people aware of your job opportunities and available training. Every community has many opportunities for networking such as the Chamber of Commerce, BBB, Retail Merchants Association, and various business and professional organizations. You could attend events that promise to generate the most referrals of prospective students (and clients) by people who you meet.
9. **Seniors & Women Groups.** To reach early retirees and women with school-age children who are prime candidates, you could ask senior & women's groups to make their members aware of your opportunity, possibly in a newsletter. An article on the advantages of a tax professional career is available free from The Income Tax School.
10. **Military Personnel.** If there is a military base nearby, you could make the director of the Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) aware of your opportunity for retiring military personnel and military spouses. ACAP helps retiring military personnel transition from military to civilian careers. Our article on the advantages of a career as a tax pro and our tax preparer job description can be provided to the ACAP manager.
11. **Colleges.** You could advise the campus career placement office of your opportunities for mature students (ideally seniors or graduate students). You could post flyers on approved campus bulletin boards. You could also make the faculty members who teach accounting courses aware of your job training opportunities.
12. **Recruit Your Own Tax Preparation Clients.** We all have some clients who come in with their tax returns already prepared and just want you to prepare them on your tax software and e-file. Who would be a better ambassador for your tax service than a person who chose you over all of their other options? You would lose a tax preparation client, but gain a much more valuable asset! If you send out a client newsletter you could include an article about your tax school.

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