

*swept*

# Hiring Guide

**for Your Janitorial Business**

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## About this Guide

The janitorial industry is built on people. Hard working people doing physically demanding work that doesn't pay exceptionally well. Combine this with the fact that a lot of the work is done after business hours, and early in the morning. It's no surprise that retaining staff is a challenge for most cleaning companies.

The goal of this guide is to provide you and your team with a look at some new approaches to hiring in your cleaning company. It's designed to help you think differently about hiring and how with just a few minor changes, your team will see huge improvements.

## Who is this guide for?

This guide is designed for owners and operations managers of janitorial businesses large and small. Some content is strategic, designed to make you think differently about why you do the things you do, while other content is more tactical, designed to help you change what and how you do it.

While we have written this as a guide for owners and managers within cleaning companies, we hope that the ideas in this guide positively affect the most important people within your team, your cleaners.

Thank you for your interest in Swept! We've designed this guide to help your janitorial business succeed by getting the best from your cleaners. We hope you find it useful and look forward to hearing how it works for you.



**Matt Cooper**  
Chief Operating Officer  
Swept

# Win Win by Design

Before Swept became a software company, we operated as a commercial cleaning company for many years. There are a number of experiences we gained in those years that allowed us to appreciate how hard it is to find cleaners that would stay with our company long term.

We realized early on that one of the most important ideas that a number of our competitors overlooked was to match the person for the position instead of simply filling the position we had available. Creating a Win Win approach to filling a position within our company became a key ingredient to our growth because it allowed us to avoid wrongly hiring someone that was likely to leave when their circumstances changed.

For a position to be a good match, it has to be more than just a job to your employee. We found that our best performing cleaners were getting more out of their job with us than just a pay cheque. Sometimes it was how much they liked working with specific clients. Other times it was the time of day the position allowed them to work. Some were

motivated by the fact that the job let them earn extra income for their family, while others were putting themselves through school.

Our best cleaners could have been working any number of places but chose to work with us because the position was a good match for their life. The key was that both our company and the cleaners recognized this.

The key is open communication when the goal is to find a position that specifically fills the needs of the employee in more ways than just a monetary one.

## ACTION PLAN

Make sure the needs of position are clearly outlined in a job description.

Make sure that your screening processes (Application, Phone and In Person Interviews) include asking and recording your applicants ideal job needs.

# Cleaningjobs.co

## **ALL RESUMES LOOK THE SAME**

Traditional hiring methods present a number of challenges in the cleaning industry. For example, when you have a new job you're looking to fill, it's easy to get overwhelmed with the number of resumes that are submitted. Worse yet, it's almost impossible to tell if a cleaner will be a good match based on their resume alone. Time and effort is wasted conducting interviews with applicants who clearly aren't a match.

Others have the opposite problem of not getting enough qualified applicants. For example, if you're trying to staff a new job or dealing with employee turnover, you've got to find new staff quickly. Yet starting your search from scratch each time, or trying to improve the quality of new hires by taking the time to thoroughly vet them isn't always feasible.

Low applicant numbers can also be a result of your application process. Evidence shows that mobile devices are often the main or only connection to the internet for low income workers. If you're not making the application process simple and mobile friendly, you may be missing out on qualified applicants.

That's why we created cleaningjobs.co - a free tool designed for the janitorial industry to help managers find cleaners quickly.

## **SAVE TIME, AND MONEY**

CleaningJobs.co creates a simple application process that saves you time. As applications are submitted, they are automatically ranked based on their answers for best fit. This allows you to spend your time connecting only with the cleaners that are looking for the exact position you have to fill. It's important to consider all the factors that make up fit in your hiring process because attracting the right people is the first step in any employee retention strategy.

Best of all, this tool allows you to have an ongoing hiring program without being a drain on your resources. You can advertise on an ongoing basis to build a database of qualified applicants that you can access when you need it. As new contracts are won, use CleaningJobs.co as your database to search if previous applicants match your new job.

**Using CleaningJobs.co is completely free! Get started by creating an account today!**

**CleaningJobs.co**

# Writing the Perfect Job Description

A great deal of cleaning companies fail to make the connection between the job posting, and dysfunctional cleaner turnover in their company.

A well crafted job description not only helps you communicate the needs of your company, but also attracts the right type of applicants. In this section we'll break apart the different aspects of a job description we have found will drastically improve the quality of applicants to your company.

## 1. JOB DESCRIPTION

When describing the position, don't just post the obvious. There are a lot of great people out there looking for work that might not have considered cleaning, but would be a perfect fit for your team.

Start by describing what your position has to offer the cleaner. The goal of the description should be to answer the following key questions your applicants will have...

- Why is this company any different from all the other cleaning jobs?
- What type of job is this?
- How much will I be paid?
- Is there flexibility in time I can work?
- How far away is this job from where I live now?
- How many hours do / can I work?
- Do they offer any type of health coverage?
- Will any training be provided?
- Who will I report to?
- Will I be a contractor or employee?

## **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Setting expectations of what is required is critical. The job posting is the first interaction that your prospective cleaner has with your company. It's important to use this job posting as an opportunity to specifically tell them what will be expected of them. Questions to answer in this section are.

- What equipment do I need to know how to use?
- What duties are expected of me?
- Will I need to work in a team or by myself?

## **3. JOB REQUIREMENTS**

Believe it or not, this is the best place for you to make sure people do not apply to your position. What will the applicant need to be successful? A critically important aspect of finding great cleaners is to make sure the job is a good fit for both you and them. Be clear what an applicant will need before they will be considered.

Questions to answer in this section are...

- Do I need to pass a criminal background check?
- Do I need my own car or can I use public transportation?
- Do I need experience?
- Will I need a cell phone?
- Do I need to speak English?
- Do I need to be able to read English?
- Will I need to be able to lift heavy things or operate any equipment?

With these questions in mind, the following page shows an example job posting to get you started. We hope this approach helps you as much as it did our team.

# Sample Job Posting

## Evening Office Cleaner Needed

Top Notch Cleaning has been in business for over 10 years, employs over 20 full and part time cleaners. We take pride in the team that we've built over the last decade by recognizing that our service is only as good as the members of our team.

At Top Notch, our goal is to help you find a position that provides you and your family an opportunity to make an income and be part of a team that values your contribution.

We're on the lookout for a new cleaning professional for a position we have in an office building close to Xavier University here in Cincinnati. This position offers three nightly shifts between 6 pm - 11 pm. This part time employee position pays \$13.50/hour.

While this position alone would not qualify for benefits, Top Notch does offer health coverage for employees that work more than 30 hours / week. We promote from within, so if you're interested in working with us please review the responsibilities and requirements to see if this job would be a fit for you as much as it would be for us.

### Responsibilities

- Cleaning of common areas including but not limited to hallways, common areas, public bathrooms.
- Cleaning duties to include, but not limited to, dusting, sweeping, vacuuming, mopping, etc.
- Communicating with team members pro-actively should any aspect of your cleaning not be completed.
- Following all health and safety regulations provided

### Requirements

- Must be able to successfully pass a criminal background check.
- Own or have access to reliable transportation.
- Speak and understand English
- Own a cell phone (preferably a smartphone) that allows you to be contacted reliably.
- Comfortably lift 40 lbs without risk of injury.
- Be available to 10 hours / week.

# Conducting a Great Phone Interview

What should you ask on a phone interview? The phone interview is the second step in your 3-step hiring process. Cleaningjobs.co helped you screen applicants, and the phone interview will help you determine if the applicant's skills and goals align with those of the position you are trying to fill. Phone interviews are the most efficient way to get this information and will help you make sure your time is well invested by allowing only applicants who are likely to be a fit pass through to the final in-person interview.

We know that finding someone with passion for janitorial cleaning is rare, so the objective of the call is to look for signals that the job you have matches the needs of your applicant in more ways than just income. It's important on this interview to find out what is motivating them to take this job over another one, and uncover any red flags that might signal they won't be a fit in this role.

Cleaning can often be an unforgiving job because you are quite literally dealing with messy situations and working alone at odd hours. That's why you need someone who is going to be able to persevere through the tough situations even when you are not around. You need someone who is positive and can keep their eye on the prize and remember why their work is important to them, to your company, and to your clients.

Here are seven questions that will help you discern to what level your candidates are self motivated, have good common sense, can work independently and with others, and what relevant skills they already have.

## **WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS POSITION AND OUR COMPANY?**

This is a great question to start out with because it is broad and will get the applicant talking about their personal and professional goals for this job. You're trying to get a sense of whether they see this opportunity as a short term fix (e.g. to bridge them until they can find something better), or long term fit (e.g. stable opportunity to supplement their income, opportunity for growth within the company, etc.). Take into consideration what stage they are in their life and what other factors could be driving them to seek new opportunities.

## **WHAT TYPE OF WORK DO YOU LIKE DOING? WHAT TYPE OF WORK DO YOU DISLIKE DOING? (DO YOU HAVE ANY HOBBIES?)**

You're looking for someone who likes to do manual and sometimes repetitive work. By asking these questions you can get a sense of the types of tasks they excel at. Hobbies also show you what types of activities they are naturally drawn to (stuff they love to do vs. stuff they have to do).

## **TELL US ONE PERSONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT YOU ARE PROUD OF. HOW DID YOU PULL IT OFF? WERE THERE ANY OBSTACLES YOU HAD TO OVERCOME?**

In a cleaning position you're looking for someone who will be able to follow-through, think critically and get the job done. Getting them to describe a personal accomplishment allows you to see whether they are able to set clear goals and what their thought process is

to achieve them and overcome obstacles. Depending on their level of enthusiasm in this answer, you'll also be able to get a sense for whether they take pride in their work.

## **WHAT RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE OR SKILLS DO YOU HAVE?**

How much previous experience an applicant in the cleaning industry has can tell you two things: 1) whether this type of work is for them; and 2) how much training they'll need. Someone who has been working for 5-10 years will already have a good sense of what they are getting into. In this case probe further to assess what technical skills they already have.

Ask specific questions like: What approach would you take to clean a public restroom? What on the job equipment have you used before? It's easy to put a lot of weight on this answer but keep in mind that it isn't always a good predictor for whether they'll be successful in your company. In most cases they will still require some level of training to learn your company's procedures and it may actually be more challenging to change any bad habits they have developed over the years rather than train them from scratch.

If the applicant doesn't have any previous cleaning experience, get them to describe their roles and responsibilities at each job to uncover what transferable skills they might possess. For example, if they have done landscaping or construction work, they will likely be good at operating equipment, lifting heavy objects, working on their feet for extended hours, arriving at work on time and following a scope of work.

**COULD YOU DESCRIBE A SITUATION AT WORK WHEN YOU RAN INTO A PROBLEM AND HAD TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION ON YOUR OWN?**

Most of the time, you won't be on-site with a cleaner when issues comes up so you need someone who can use common sense and be resourceful. By getting them to describe a situation where they ran into a problem and had to come up with a solution on their own, you get to see their problem solving skills. Is their solution creative? Does it makes sense?

**ARE YOU MOST COMFORTABLE WORKING INDEPENDENTLY OR IN A GROUP? WHY?**

This is a practical question since there will be times when you need your cleaners to be able to work alone on site, and others when the job requires you to send in a team.

It's important to identify the applicant's comfort level with each scenario to know if it fits your needs and also to gage how flexible they can be.

**WHAT KIND OF BEHAVIOUR FROM OTHERS IRRITATES YOU MOST AND HOW DO YOU HANDLE IT?**

Even in cases when a cleaner is working independently on site, they still have to be able to work well with the other members of your team including your supervisors and managers. This question is great because it shows you their level of maturity and whether they are able to separate people's personalities from their behaviours, and whether they have a strategy to work through those kinds of problems.

**MAKING A DECISION**

These seven questions will help you cover the basics and determine if the applicant's goals and skills align with the position you need to fill. To insure your time is well invested, you should only move applicant's through to your final stage, the face-to-face interview, if you are satisfied with their answers.

To keep things consistent you can use a scoring system but we recommend keeping it as simple as possible. It's important in the phone interview to try and identify any make or break factors for the position or for your company, and if possible take some time to address them.

# Phone Interview Worksheet

APPLICANT	DATE
JOB	INTERVIEWER

## Questions

What attracted you to this position and to our company?  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

What type of work do you like doing? What type of work do you dislike doing? (Do you have any hobbies?)  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

Tell us one personal accomplishment you are proud of. How did you pull it off? Were there any obstacles you had to overcome?  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

What related work experience or skills do you have?  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

(If they have previous cleaning experience) What approach would you take to clean a public restroom?  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

(If they have previous cleaning experience) What on the job equipment have you used before?  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

Could you describe a situation at work when you ran into a problem and had to come up with a solution on your own?  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

Are you most comfortable working independently or in a group? Why?  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

What kind of behaviour from others irritates you most and how do you handle it?  EXCELLENT (4)  GOOD (3)  ADEQUATE (2)  POOR (1)

Recommend for face-to-face interview?  YES  NO

## Other Topics to Discuss

Schedule	Hourly Rate
Use of Technology	Requirements for Getting to Work
Training / Orientation	Equipment Requirements
Responsibilities	References
Commitment Level	Opportunity for Advancement



# Conducting Face-to-Face Interviews

The face-to-face interview is the third and final stage of your hiring process. Cleaningjobs.co helped you screen applicants, and the phone interview helped you determine if the applicant's skills and goals align with those of the position you are trying to fill. The face-to-face interview will help you get a better sense of whether this person is a good cultural fit for your organization.

Studies have shown that over 80% of communication is nonverbal<sup>1</sup> and that's why making sure you meet with candidates face-to-face before they are hired is a critical step in your interview process.

Your customers experience your brand and your service through your cleaners. When they cross paths, the level of professionalism that your cleaner's project will directly affect the way your clients perceive your business.

In the face-to-face interview you'll want to be looking for clues about the applicant's character, attitude, professionalism, and whether they are trustworthy and will make a good steward for your company. Look for physical cues such as personal grooming, posture, eye contact, energy level, and sense of humour.

We've included a worksheet with questions that will get them talking so that you can further assess fit for the position and with your company's culture.

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<sup>1</sup> Blake Eastman, "How much of communications is really nonverbal?", [www.nonverbalgroup.com/2011/08/how-much-of-communication-is-really-nonverbal](http://www.nonverbalgroup.com/2011/08/how-much-of-communication-is-really-nonverbal)

# Face-to-Face Interview Worksheet

APPLICANT	DATE
JOB	INTERVIEWER

## Questions

What is your understanding about the roles and responsibilities of this position so far? Do you have any questions?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
What specific personal strengths would you bring to our organization?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
How do you think that honesty, trust and reliability relate to this position?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
What really motivates you in a workplace?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
How would your former co-workers or manager describe you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
Give us an example of when you received constructive criticism. How did you handle it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
Tell me about a time when you had to work with an individual who was difficult to get along with. How did you deal with that situation?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
What factors do you think will lead to your success in this position?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
After having had this discussion, does this job still interest you? Why?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)
Why should we hire you over anyone else?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	EXCELLENT (4)	GOOD (3)	ADEQUATE (2)	POOR (1)

## Notes

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## Post Interview

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Were they on time for the interview?	<input type="radio"/> EXCELLENT (4)	<input type="radio"/> GOOD (3)	<input type="radio"/> ADEQUATE (2)	<input type="radio"/> POOR (1)
Used respectful language	<input type="radio"/> EXCELLENT (4)	<input type="radio"/> GOOD (3)	<input type="radio"/> ADEQUATE (2)	<input type="radio"/> POOR (1)
Positive body language	<input type="radio"/> EXCELLENT (4)	<input type="radio"/> GOOD (3)	<input type="radio"/> ADEQUATE (2)	<input type="radio"/> POOR (1)
Positive attitude	<input type="radio"/> EXCELLENT (4)	<input type="radio"/> GOOD (3)	<input type="radio"/> ADEQUATE (2)	<input type="radio"/> POOR (1)
Demonstrated pride in their work	<input type="radio"/> EXCELLENT (4)	<input type="radio"/> GOOD (3)	<input type="radio"/> ADEQUATE (2)	<input type="radio"/> POOR (1)
Do they seem reliable and trustworthy?	<input type="radio"/> EXCELLENT (4)	<input type="radio"/> GOOD (3)	<input type="radio"/> ADEQUATE (2)	<input type="radio"/> POOR (1)
Overall professionalism	<input type="radio"/> EXCELLENT (4)	<input type="radio"/> GOOD (3)	<input type="radio"/> ADEQUATE (2)	<input type="radio"/> POOR (1)
Were there any obvious language barriers?	<input type="radio"/> EXCELLENT (4)	<input type="radio"/> GOOD (3)	<input type="radio"/> ADEQUATE (2)	<input type="radio"/> POOR (1)

Recommend for this position?  YES  NO

## Notes

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# Creating an Employee Referral Program

One of the best sources for great employees that many cleaning businesses overlook, or under utilize, is their existing staff. In this section, we will outline six ideas that will help you when developing an employee referral program.

## **1. SET A GOAL**

The first thing you need to think about when starting an employee referral program is knowing what success looks like. When will you know it's working? When will you know it's not working? Being as specific as possible when planning the program will help you stay focused on what it needs to do now, and what it needs to do in the future.

The reason this step is so important is that it will help your business understand the return on the time you're investing into the program. This allows everyone to understand the reasons behind the program, and help you keep it a priority when you have a hundred other things to do in a day.

Are you looking for Evening, Daytime, Weekend cleaners? How many do you need? How long are you expecting this to take? One month? Three months? Writing these goals down, giving management access to them, and making goals measurable, will go a long way to keeping your team accountable and keep you rowing in the same direction.

## **2. MAKE THE PROGRAM EASY TO USE**

The last thing you want an employee to do is jump through hoops. Make the act of referring someone to your company very simple. It could be a form you can send the via text or email, or as simple as asking them to send the name and contact info to you.

### **3. REACH OUT TO EVERY PERSON REFERRED**

One of the best ways to take the wind out of the sails of your referral program is by not following up with the people that are sent to you. Both the person that may apply, and the person that made the referral, will feel unappreciated and sets a bad tone for future success with a referral program.

A tip to make contacting referrals quick and easy is to draft an email template that you save. With each new referral, you can simply copy and paste this saved email as a new contacts are sent to you. The email should include clear directions on how to apply. We recommend using [www.cleaningjobs.co](http://www.cleaningjobs.co) to create an internal job posting that is available for referrals only.

Cleaningjobs.co will help you collect information someone might not think to submit on a resume, but will be important for you when making hiring decisions. It will also allow them to apply using their mobile phone, which makes it even easier!

### **4. COMMUNICATE THE PROGRAM REGULARLY**

Communicating to your team that the program exists, and how it works, may seem like an obvious step, but it is often overlooked. Make sure that each cleaner is made aware more than once. Successful referral programs remind employees on a regular basis, including communications to the entire company. It should also be part of your on-boarding and training programs for new and existing staff.

Consider creating a page on your website that you can link to when discussing this with your team electronically. The page doesn't need to be publicly advertised, but should be available to be viewed if provided the link.

When communicating information about the referral program, include the specifics of how employees can send new referrals to you, and how they will be compensated for the referral. You can also share current positions that you are looking to fill.

It is important set expectations that not everyone referred will be hired. Emphasize that while you greatly appreciate the referral, the availability of positions, and what new applicants are looking for will not always match.

## **5. RECOGNIZE YOUR TEAM'S CONTRIBUTION**

Monetary bonuses are the most obvious way to compensate someone for helping you attract great staff. When deciding what a bonus should be, think about the costs to advertise and process (time & money) open positions. Profit margins are thin in this industry, but referral programs are a proven way to reduce turnover within your organization - make sure to fund it accordingly.

Even though bonuses are great, don't stop there. Make sure to recognize the individuals that are making an effort to discuss your company in a positive way with the people they know. When possible, share the efforts of these individuals as part of your communication about the program to all staff. This will not only recognize the people that are contributing, but it also promotes the positive impact the behavior is making on the company.

## **6. MEASURE, MEASURE, MEASURE**

We improve what we measure. When it comes to your referral program, make sure you are tracking key performance indicators (KPI) that communicate how the program is doing, but also how well you are doing at communicating it. Here are a few examples to get you started.

- Overall hires from referrals
- % of referred candidates you contact - Commit to your team
- % of qualified referrals - Are they sending you the right people?
- % of staff that participate - Do you need to communicate better?
- Cost to hire organically vs. through referral - Return on investment (ROI)

### **QUICK REVIEW**

- 1** Set a goal
- 2** Make the program easy to use
- 3** Reach out to every person referred
- 4** Communicate the program regularly
- 5** Recognize your team's contribution
- 6** Measure, measure, measure



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