



## Hiring Your First Technician!

A guide for successfully growing your team!

For more information about the Gazelle School of Business visit:

[www.growwithgazelle.com/school](http://www.growwithgazelle.com/school)

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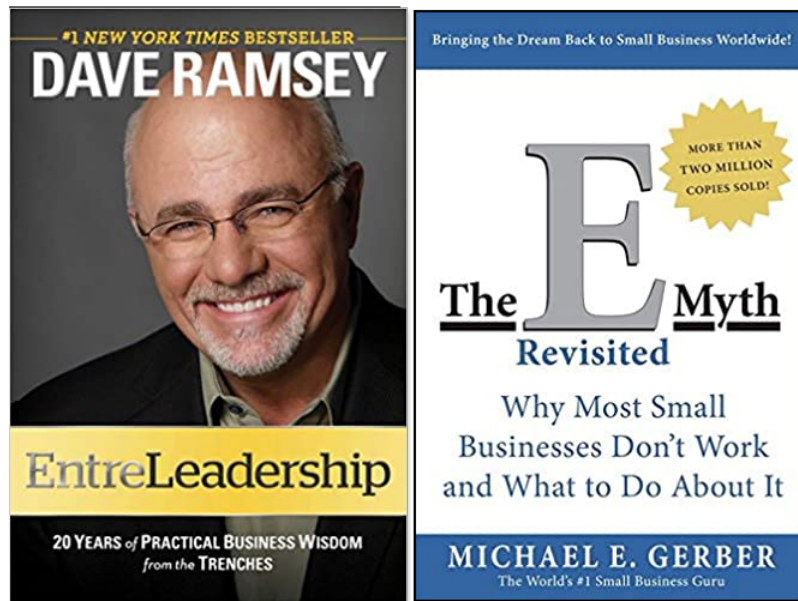
Gazelle makes it easy to run your business so you can focus on building your brand and managing a team of technicians and/or subcontractors!



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## Reading Material

Two books our team has read that will help you during this transition are [EntreLeadership by Dave Ramsey](#) and [The E-Myth Revisited by Michael Gerber](#). The concepts of building a team and thinking about how this will impact your customer's experience with your company are two of the biggest things we would recommend you consider as you read these books.



## Watch our past webinars that lay the foundation for hiring a team:

### [Selling Your Story & Building a Powerful & Simple Website:](#)

These two webinars lay the foundation for your branding, marketing, and new customer experience. How you adapt to having a team will impact these areas of your business.

### [Running a Profitable Piano Service Business:](#)

It is imperative that you prove to yourself you are capable of running a profitable piano service business before you take on the adventure of building a team. If you can't be profitable on your own, hiring a team isn't going to solve your profitability problem. Be profitable first, then hire a team.

### [Tripling Your Revenue](#)

To address stage change challenges (which often coincide with growing your team) watch our Tripling Your Revenue video.

### [Simplifying Your Service Model](#)

Inviting your team to sell a complex service model isn't a good idea. If you want to succeed in building a team and adding technicians focus on making it easy for your customers to do business with you, make it easy for your team to work in your company and successfully provide service to your customers, and make it easy for you to manage your team. Running a simple service model is the way you achieve all of this.

### [Creating Estimates that Sell](#)

As soon as you add a team member you need to fill their calendar. Selling additional work becomes an essential part of how you do this. Teaching your team members how to successfully walk into an appointment for a basic service and walk out with hundreds (or thousands) of dollars of extra work is a great way to help your team grow their income and help you grow more profits in your business.

## Finding subcontractors

Finding subcontractors is a lot easier than finding employees. We have included links to additional resources for each category below.

### Office staff:

With Gazelle and a VOIP phone service you can subcontract an office staff from anywhere. Just give them an 'Office Assistant' access to your Gazelle account, forward calls to their cell phone, and give them access to an email account to manage. If they need to make outgoing calls on behalf of your business just make sure the VOIP provider you use allows for this set up (most of them do). Watch ['Hiring your first office assistant'](#).

### Young technicians:

[Subcontract young / inexperienced technicians](#) to service all your spinets and older uprights during your busy season (or keep them on year round as needed). Depending on their skill you can even use them to sell regulations and voicings on spinets and older uprights. They will appreciate the experience and you will free up your schedule to focus on higher value customers. Simply give them limited access to your Gazelle account as a 'Technician User' then connect their calendar so you can fill holes in their schedule. One appointment a month covers all your added costs and fills holes in their calendar.

### Experienced technicians:

If you don't want to do certain repairs (or you are an inexperienced technician who doesn't yet know how to do all this work), you can [subcontract a more experienced technician](#). Just add them as a limited 'Technician User' on your Gazelle account and then connect their calendar so you can fill holes in their schedule. One appointment a month covers all your added costs and fills holes in their calendar.

### Finish experts:

Detailing pianos is a lucrative service for high end customers. But it requires a unique skill set. Piano galleries subcontract piano detailers all the time, there is no reason you can't do the same and expand the services you offer. Simply add your finish expert as a limited 'Technician User' on your Gazelle account then connect their calendar so you can fill holes in their schedule. One appointment a month covers all your added costs and fills holes in their calendar. [Scheduling finish experts in Gazelle](#)

### Piano movers:

Subcontracting and scheduling small teams of piano movers is possible in Gazelle and it is easier to use Gazelle than it is other generic dispatch software. If the piano mover in your area doesn't have a digital calendar you can even hire a small team of off-duty firefighters in your area to build a qualified moving crew. [Scheduling piano moves in Gazelle](#).

## When am I ready to hire employees?

- Is your business infrastructure in place?
  - Do you have consistent Revenue?
  - Is Gazelle set up for multiple technicians (message templates, service list, etc...)?
  - Are your website and marketing pages updated to reflect a team based approach?
  - Are you addressing stage change challenges (people, product, process) if you are also at this point in your business?
  - Do you have an accountant?
  - Do you have financial reporting in place? Especially the ability to track revenue per technician / employee?
  - Do you have a plan for how you are going to deal with HR as it becomes an issue? (Payroll, direct deposit, personal tax reporting changes, etc...)
- Are you profitable and have you been consistently profitable for at least 6 months?
- Do you have a plan for the slow season?
- Do you have at least 1 month of their salary saved?
  - 3-6 months is better, 1 year is great!
- Is your vision in writing?
  - If the story of your company is clear, the value provided is clear, and the vision you have is clear, then it is easy to put into words and communicate with a potential team member. If it isn't, then you have some prep work to do before you are ready to hire
- Are you ready for an adventure?

If you can check all these boxes you are going to be in a good position to begin looking for potential team members. If you can't check one then we strongly recommend that you pause and take time to sure up your business before taking this step.

*Notice, we didn't start this section by asking "Do you have someone?". If you start thinking this through because you think you found someone, you are doing things backwards. Slow down and take the time to do this in the right order.*

## Finding employees

Keep it simple and add an automated 'Join our team' form to your website, then follow these guidelines:

### Questions to add to your online 'Join Our Team' form:

1. Name & contact info
2. What led you to your interest in the piano?
3. Please tell us about yourself and your story?
4. Please tell us about your work experience and training?
5. Do you need additional training and mentorship?  
(you don't have to provide training but you want to know if they need any)
6. Why are you interested in working with our company?

### When someone submits a response to your 'Join our team' form:

1. Don't give prospects more than 10 minutes of your time. Invite them to an in-person coffee / breakfast if you want to hear more about their story.
2. Focus more on their 'why' rather than talking about working in your company. If you meet for coffee, this is neutral ground. Buy a cup for them and observe. What do they order and how do they accept that? How did they dress? And were they early and prepared?
3. If you are interested, offer to think about it for a few days and tell them you are interested in continuing the conversation with a more formal interview for a specific role. But tell them you will be in touch. You don't need to make a decision today.
4. Feel free to say "We don't have any roles that fit your needs at this time but thank you for inquiring". Then point them to one of the online schools or other educational programs out there so they have something to aim at.

### Point industry resources & job postings to this form:

Contact the schools, PTG classifieds, trade groups, piano teachers, university music departments, and any other job posting / job boards in your area and provide them with a link to this form.

## Interviewing prospects

Getting to know the people interested in working for your company is important.

### Everything is part of the interview:

- How they dress, act, react, carry themselves. There are some things you can't teach. You want them to have these intangible interpersonal qualities about them.
- Have them sit with your office staff for 10 minutes.
- Prep your team to ask questions or have conversation topics ready.
- Get your office staff's input - they'll need to work with this person too.

### Be prepared:

- Read their resume, visit their portfolio, BEFORE the interview
- Have questions about the work you see listed
- Have questions about them personally - most piano service companies are too small of a company for them to not like your staff
- In the US you CAN check social media accounts, but you cannot:
  - Discriminate based on what you learn.
  - Ask for passwords to see private postings.
  - Fire staff for off duty activity.

### You are both being interviewed:

- They are feeling out if they want to work with you.
- Be open and share a little about yourself and your vision for the company.
- Keep them talking 60-70% of the time.
- Ask a question and be comfortable in the silence as they form an answer.
- If you require a non-compete you must make this known upfront.

### Consider a technical interview as a follow up interview:

- Give them a set of tasks to accomplish in a specific amount of time
- Can you live with that quality of work? Do you have the capacity to mentor them from a technical standpoint? ARE THEY TEACHABLE?
- The first interview may have been more about getting the temperature of the water. This meeting is where you are searching for a reason to walk away.
- Make sure to get the non-negotiables onto the table
  - Do they have a specific asking range? Do you have a specific offer range?
  - Do you expect weekend work?
  - Do you need to introduce a non-compete along with an offer?
    - Give them an advanced copy if you have not done so already.

### Check References:

- Find the time and call those references. Do you know people who know their references?

## Set up a meeting with your accountant

Before you go live with your employee, you need to contact your accountant and make sure your company is set-up and registered with your local employment agencies to collect and pay their employment taxes, unemployment taxes, and state/federal withholding taxes. This stuff is really easy for your accountant to set up, Each time you hire an employee you will need to fill out a few forms.

## Checklist for adding team members to Gazelle

- Add them as a technician user.
- Set the 'Preferred Technician' setting for their user.
- Update your Master Service List so they can be scheduled for the right services
- Have your new team member set up their scheduling rules in settings.
- Have your new team member connect their outside calendars to their Gazelle account.
- Update your self-scheduling note reflect you now have a team
- Update your website bio pages.
- Update personal / singular pronouns in all your reminder and message templates.
- Instruct your new team member to watch "[Creating Estimates That Sell](#)" if they are a field service technician so they are familiar with how to start bringing new revenue into your business.

## Pay structures

### 100% Commission

- Pay a flat commission on all sales generated by this technician.
  - Calculate this on Gross Profit after cost of goods sold or any discounts have been applied. You don't want to pay on money you don't get to keep.
  - For commission based employees their raise is effective when they choose to become more effective.
- Pay on cash/checks/payments deposited in your bank (not receivables).
- Consider a fixed bonus if they clear \$X in revenue each month.
- Consider a fixed bonus if they sell a job they are not going to complete (like a rebuilding or big shop job).
- Consider a bonus structure that rewards sustaining higher revenue.

### Hourly

- Hourly positions are great for shop jobs and assistants for certain on-site repairs.
- Hourly positions need a fixed 'Start and End' time and need to include travel between appointments if this is a field service position.



- Consider the 'Whopper test' if they could flip burgers at Burger King for this same hourly wage this position will turn over really fast.

### Piecework

- Paying someone \$X for Y service incentivises them to work fast and focus on things they get paid to do. This isn't always desirable if you value customer service and customer interaction.
- This isn't always practical if you can't predict all the different services your technician might encounter.
- This is usually used in a factory setting not field service.

### Salary

- This is the easiest pay structure because you don't have to do any reporting (you just pay the same amount X times a month) and focus on making sure they put in the right number of hours each week.
- When you pay a salary you are usually competing against other jobs that also pay benefits. This is something to be aware of if you don't currently offer benefits.
- You need to think through what paying this person's salary during your slow season will look like.
- Salaried positions tend to attract employees who want stability. But just make sure their desire for stability does not come at the cost of your need for predictable financial outcomes and profitability targets.

### Base + Commission

- You can offer a 'Starvation salary' + commissions on sales to help bridge the difference between 100% commission and salaried roles.
- Base + Commissions models come with lower benefit costs because your "Paid time off" is based on the base because there are \$0 commissions to pay when the employee is not working. But this isn't always desirable for the employee because they feel this tension every time they try to take time off.

### Experience

- Someone with no experience deserves at least minimum wage.
- Minimum wage does not equal a living wage.
- Someone with 5 years experience is considered a professional in most other skilled trades.
- Someone who makes it rain and brings in a ton of new revenue deserves to be compensated higher than someone who doesn't.

## How much can I afford to pay?

The amount you are able to pay depends on your price point, your expenses, and your profitability goals.

- Use other piano service companies with employees as well as other skilled trades as a guide to structure your pay scales for beginner-advanced field service technicians (HVAC technicians, plumbers, mobile auto detailing, carpet cleaning, etc....)
- Your price structure might need to change to support an employee.
- You cannot ever afford to lose profitability. This will kill your company and their job.
  - NOTE: You don't have to apply your profit margins equally across all services. You can earn \$X profit on a tuning and \$3X on a repair (that takes the same amount of time) by using 'flat rate billing' instead of 'hourly billing'.
- You can tuck extra margin in shop jobs to keep your field service rates competitive. This just means you and your employee earn minimal amounts when you don't upsell repair jobs (and this isn't always desirable).
- You need to pay on what they can produce today (not what you hope they can produce). As their skills grow you can bonus them out for achieving months where they produced more revenue.
- Revenue reporting per technician is going to need to become part of your accounting processes. Talk to your accountant about this.
- How much someone earns might keep them from being unhappy. But it will never keep them in a job they despise where they don't feel valued and like they are contributing.
- Paying too little will create a back door problem in your business. Paying too much doesn't solve your front door problem and creates retention problems for you (because you can't afford to keep your employee).
- If someone wants to be paid so much you can't be profitable, they are not a good fit for your company.

## You are not alone!

Your first hire can be scary but you are not doing this alone. The team at Gazelle has helped lots of technicians in your exact situation navigate this change in their business. We are here to help and George (Gazelle's business coach) who has a ton of experience hiring people and managing a team is here to help guide you along this journey. You can email him at: [george@gazelleapp.io](mailto:george@gazelleapp.io).

save your time  
wow your customers  
play more music

