

How to lure employees? It's simple: 'Raise pay'

By Tim Barker

SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

Surviving in today's job market requires employers to use a mixture of strategies beyond simple signing bonuses.

One of the easiest solutions — albeit most painful for employers — is to take a hard look at wage scales.

Too often, the reason a job isn't being filled is because the employer is unwilling to accept reality, said David Scott, an economist and finance professor at the University of Central Florida.

"It's really a pretty simple model," Scott said. "Raise the pay."

Other ideas, suggested by Workforce Central Florida, a federally funded nonprofit that helps the unemployed find jobs:

■ Employee referrals. Offer incentives to workers who suggest candidates who get hired.

■ Consider reaching out to nontraditional workers. Retirees and high-school students, in particular, can boost a company's ranks, particularly if work schedules are friendly.

■ Don't neglect the workers you already have. Training programs — the agency has a program that awards training grants of up to \$25,000 — can keep workers focused and feeling valued.

But perhaps most important is not relying on any one tactic, said Kimberly Cornett, Workforce spokeswoman.

Employers in the past that "might have relied on one recruitment strategy are now really starting to diversify and try a lot of different things," Cornett said. "Even we're telling employers not just to rely on us."