

Natural Grocers Discussion

2/17/16

PERMANENT HIRES

- Store is anticipated to have 24-28 employees
- Approximately half will be General Store Employees or Department Assistant
- Natural Grocers is strongly in favor of promoting from within for management positions so these are likely to be filled with existing employees

Starting Pay and Benefits:

- General Store Employees: \$11.50/hr plus \$1/hr in "Vitamin Bucks" and benefits
- Dept Assistant \$13/hr plus \$1/hr in "Vitamin Bucks" and benefits
- Health/Nutrition Coach - \$18/hr plus \$1/hr in "Vitamin Bucks" and benefits
- Asst Store Mgr - \$45,000 per year plus benefits
- Store Manager \$65,000 per year plus benefits

Notes:

- The Nutrition Health Coach is a specialized position involved in nutrition education. Good potential for local hire. Needs special focus for recruitment. \$18/hour.
- Vitamin Bucks can be spent throughout the store on any product not just vitamins. In addition there is an employee discount on purchases.

Characteristics and Requirements of Employees:

- Strong customer service skills
- Strong alignment with company culture including: enthusiasm and commitment to natural and organic products; non-GMO products; humane treatment of animals
- Nutrition knowledge is a plus but not a requirement
- Availability to work retail hours including weekends, evenings, early mornings and late evenings
- Ability to lift heavy objects, stand for long periods of time, withstand hot and cold working conditions, ability to climb ladders, good manual dexterity
- Attention to detail and strong memory are required.
- Team environment – employees are cross-trained
- Perfumes cannot be worn by employees; employees who smoke cannot carry this odor to work.

Store Opening:

- Anticipated in May 2017 (schedule subject to change)

- Natural Grocers will bring on hourly employees on a temporary basis to assist with preparing the store for opening (approximately 6-weeks prior to store opening). Those individuals that perform well during this period will be offered permanent employment.

Potential Ways for the Public Workforce System to Assist Natural Grocers in Hiring Permanent Employees:

- Outreach to potential candidates
- Pre-screening and testing of potential candidates to match job requirement
- Hiring fair with potential pre-screened candidates
- There may be potential to use the On-the-Job Training resources administered by WSI through their WorkSource Portland Metro centers. Under this program employer provides occupational training in exchange for the reimbursement of up to 50 percent of the wage rate paid to participants to compensate for the training cost. This program can apply to any type of position. It is used when employer wants to or is willing to hire someone who has most but not all skills needed for the position and can train on the missing skills. Jobs must be \$10/hr or more with some contribution by employer to benefits. Funding for this program is limited and additional discussion of this benefit will be needed. We discussed the potential for this to be applied to management positions.
- Kate/Lene will work with partners to develop a specific plan and proposal for Natural Grocers

LOCAL PRODUCTS AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

General Information

- Products need to meet rigorous quality standards and have UPC barcode
- A lot of potential for local goods in “Grab and Go” section (already have products from one local company – Origami Sushi – in this section)
- 80-90% of products are the same in stores nationwide
 - 10-20% flexible for local goods
 - Special orders program for customers to request. Employees research new products several times a week
- Store will have free community space with kitchen –local chefs or product owners could host cooking classes or sample product
- In addition to “Grab and Go,” local products could do well in:
 - Body care
 - Frozen foods
 - Flowers
 - Spices, sauces, spreads
 - Beverages (i.e., chai)
 - Music (live)

Potential Partnerships/Ideas for Collaboration

- Natural Grocers could consider a pilot where they dedicate 1-2% of shelf space for a newer, riskier products which are still being market tested, knowing that these businesses would be receiving support from a technical assistance provider
- Open House/Competition with several businesses enrolled in business development program; winners would get guaranteed shelf space in the store
- PDC can facilitate RFP-type process to assist Natural Grocers in obtaining auxiliary services such as janitorial, landscape maintenance, parking lot cleaning
- PDC and the Providers can help Natural Grocers connect with the following entities to learn more about how they might collaborate on product testing, vetting, and delivery:
 - Food Innovation Center (product testing, Get Your Recipe to Market business course)
 - B-Line