



Manpower Closet: providing guidance and clothing for people in need

Manpower employees reach into their own closets to help job-seekers dress for success

The Challenge

In the Fort Worth, Texas area, some job-seekers have extremely limited funds when it comes to purchasing work clothes. Many have fallen on hard times in the difficult economy.

Faced with a growing number of individuals with a need for work clothing, and backed by an organization that cares about its community, we created the Manpower Closet to help them dress for success.

The Solution

The idea for Manpower Closet came to Sr. Staffing Specialist Yvonne Johnson's mind after helping a job-seeker who confided the need for work clothing. The individual had asked to speak to Yvonne in private, and stated that she had no other clothing for her assignment, and needed help. She felt ashamed and didn't know where to turn, but felt comfortable speaking to Yvonne. Yvonne took it upon herself to help with clothing from her own closet. The woman thanked Yvonne, crying, stating that "now I have some clothes to wear to church and work."

As we observed and discussed dressing for success with job-seekers, it became apparent that a number of them didn't know what this meant, or didn't have the means to invest in appropriate attire. Many of them trusted us enough to confide their situation and their need for work clothing. We wanted each individual to leave Manpower not only with the right job, but also with something that would have a lasting impact on them. We set out to create the Manpower Closet in May 2008 by collecting clothing from our own staff, family and friends.

The Manpower Closet Open House helps prepare individuals for their job search with a seminar on "How to Dress for Success" and "Interviewing Skills." We then help the attendees to find clothing from the "Closet" that will give them the confidence and appearance they desire to succeed in finding a job.

We have held five Manpower Closet events so far, with 200+ job-seekers and community members participating. In addition, we have referrals from the Texas Workforce Connection and some job-seekers who pick up items during other times.

Many people have been able to secure jobs after participating in the Manpower Closet Open House. Some have even come in to get clothing and shoes that allow them to dress appropriately for their job until they get paid and can afford to buy their own.

Those who participate have been impacted tremendously. They have asked us, "is this for real?" and "does it cost anything?" They are in disbelief that a company would open its doors to them in such a tangible, helpful way. Everyone feels welcome to participate and leaves feeling good about themselves. With a little advice and a more professional appearance, they leave with the confidence that the quality characteristics that are inside of them will now be more apparent from the outside.

The feedback from our clients has also been positive. Overall they appreciate our willingness to do this for the community. Some have even become engaged in the program and donated items.

The next Manpower Closet event is planned for April 2010.

For more information, or to make a donation, please contact Yvonne Johnson at Yvonne.Johnson@na.manpower.com.