

To our PEP Family of Volunteers,

We need your brain power!

A small group of volunteers have been working on a problem that exists for PEP graduates. We are hoping that the vast pool of our Executives, Volunteers, and MBA Students can offer some ideas to help solve this problem.

Let me paint a picture of the current situation:

Upon release from prison, PEP Participants face several common major hurdles that can impact their chances for success. While most of the PEP participants are well positioned for success upon release from prison, there is a certain portion of each class (about 30% - 40%) that faces more challenges than the rest of the class. The biggest of these challenges are listed below:

- **Transportation** – This is a multi-faceted issue:
 - Many of the guys are facing thousands of dollars in fines and penalties that must be paid before they can get a license.
 - Many “good” jobs are passed up because they are not on a bus line.
 - Not all of the guys are eligible to get a driver’s license.
 - The cost of a vehicle, insurance, repairs, etc is beyond the reach of most of the guys when they get out, and may require months of saving, after they get a job.
 - Many of the “good” jobs require transportation due to changing work locations.
- **Job and Work Skills:**
 - Many of the guys have limited job skills and will require training for all but the most basic labor positions.
 - Some of the guys have never held a real job and don’t know how to act in a working environment.
- **Getting a Job:**
 - Due to the issues above and all the others that you are aware of, it may be an extended time before these guys can find any job.

What needs to be done?

A small group of Volunteers is currently working with PEP on a solution to address these issues directly.

We have identified 3 primary goals of the solution:

- **Occupation** – Provide a single place of employment for PEP graduates that need our help upon release. The challenge of finding employment in this economic environment is tough for anyone. For a convicted felon with no skills or transportation, it can be impossible. We need to provide a job that graduates can go directly into upon release. This job is not intended to be a long term career, but it would provide an immediate source of income and other support needed for a successful transition into the free world. The anticipated need is to employ about 15 graduates at any one time.
- **Transportation** – This place of employment needs to be in the same location for all graduates. Solving transportation issues for each individual graduate is overwhelming. If all graduates are working at same location, the transportation issue becomes easy to solve. (i.e., we get a van to take them to and from work together)
- **Assimilation** - A single place of employment for graduates allows for a greater level of support from PEP staff to assimilate graduates into the free world. Many have not had a formal job in the past. Coaching and accountability become easier if a group of graduates are working together in the same location.

We have discussed two possible solutions:

1. **Find an existing business** that consistently needs low skilled workers that could provide around 15 jobs. We would work with this employer to determine the best structure that would allow PEP graduates to fill existing positions.
2. **Create a whole new business** whose sole mission is to provide employment for PEP graduates.

Our preference is to find an existing business with the ability to employ up to 15 graduates to “partner” with us. There are many employers that use entry level workers. Many of these companies are continually looking for new employees to hire, we just need to know who these companies are. We could really help each other out. They could provide the job, we could provide them with new employees. This would avoid the challenge, cost and risk of starting a new business from scratch.

What do we need from you?

We are seeking your ideas for either course:

1. Do you know of any business that has a need for approximately 15 low skilled employees that would be willing to work with us? If so, give us the name of the company and the appropriate contact for us to talk to.
2. We want your brainstorming ideas on business opportunities that will meet the specific needs of our target group (Single work location, low skill level, affinity to help PEP, etc...).

What can you do now?

Send any thoughts and ideas to randy@autumngrove.net with the biggest list of specific business ideas / opportunities you can come up with. Please note that we want every crazy idea you can think of, so please do not edit your list. If it comes out of your brain, we want it in your return e-mail. Please submit your thoughts / company contacts by February 15th.

Thanks in advance you're your help and ideas on this critical project for PEP and our Community.

Sincerely,

PEP Volunteers:

Randy Vanstory, Bob Fuller, Phil Collin, John Hunter, Jeff Krug, Ken Jones

c.c., Phi Tran, Nelson Duncan