

SPECIAL QUESTIONS COMMENTS

These comments have been edited for publication.

Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods

- > Availability of trained technicians is still an issue for us. We have at least 60 technician openings around Texas and can't seem to find people to fill the jobs. We are trying to train prospective employees through workforce internships in high schools and working with the community college districts in our territory.
- > Increased costs are very difficult to pass through on government contracts.

Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods

- > We are not always able to pass on increased labor costs to customers.

Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers

- > We are laying off less competent people in order to hire more qualified people that can perform better and receive higher pay. The more qualified people can lower overall costs with better output, but are hard to find.
- > It is difficult to raise prices with falling commodity prices. We must make up for higher labor costs with improved productivity.
- > We are being more selective as our business softens. More people are available; however, they are generally less qualified.
- > Qualified service technicians are extremely hard to find. We work closely with high school and community college technical training programs in order to find good applicants that we can hire and provide additional training.

Building Material and Garden Equipment and Supplies Dealers

- > Labor has always been an issue. What we see getting worse is too many people going to college and not enough to tech schools. In 47 years of business, we have always had problems finding good mechanics. We should implement an apprentice system.
- > We are doing our best to increase sales and margins, but the market is still very competitive. We are watching expenses, but employees are the largest expense when looking at payroll and benefits, and we were forced to give pay increases last year since it had been three years since the last pay increase.
- > The biggest problem we face is finding people that are interested in working. A poor work ethic is fairly common.

