GRIT GUIDE

BY GRIT BLUEPRINT

GRIT GUIDE

NO. 09

TEN TASKS READY IN TWO WEEKS

How to Get a New Counter Hire Ready in Two Weeks

Featuring Michael Tull and Marion Pulse

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THE PROBLEM

Most counter training happens by accident. The new person stands next to whoever is least busy, picks up some good habits and some bad ones, and learns the computer system one mistake at a time. Customers notice. So does the new hire.

A one-page plan that turns two weeks of shadowing into ten tasks a new hire can do alone.

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THE PLAN

8 STEPS

01 WRITE DOWN THE TEN TASKS THAT MEAN “READY”

02 NAME ONE TRAINER AND ONE BUDDY, AND TEST THE LOGINS

03 TEACH THE BUILDING BEFORE THE COMPUTER

04 GET THEM OUT OF THE STORE ONCE

05 TEACH THE QUESTIONS, NOT JUST THE PRODUCTS

06 WATCH ONE, DO ONE TOGETHER, DO ONE ALONE

07 SPEND TEN MINUTES AT THE END OF EVERY DAY

08 CHECK ON DAY TEN AND PLAN TO DAY NINETY

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01

STEP 1 OF 8

WRITE DOWN THE TEN TASKS THAT MEAN “READY”

Ask your best counter person what a new hire has to do without help to be useful on a busy morning. Write ten tasks, not ten topics. “Look up a price and stock for a contractor on the phone” is a task. “Learn the system” is not.

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STEP 2 OF 8

NAME ONE TRAINER AND ONE BUDDY, AND TEST THE LOGINS

Pick one person to own the first two weeks. Other people can teach single tasks, but the new hire needs one person who knows what has been covered and what has not.

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STEP 3 OF 8

TEACH THE BUILDING BEFORE THE COMPUTER

On day one, walk the store and the yard. Show where things are, how they are grouped and where the odd items hide. Have the new hire draw a rough map and mark what they could not find on their own the next morning.

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STEP 4 OF 8

GET THEM OUT OF THE STORE ONCE

In the first two weeks, send the new hire on one delivery run or one jobsite visit with a salesperson. An hour is enough. They should see where the product ends up and who is waiting for it.

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STEP 5 OF 8

TEACH THE QUESTIONS, NOT JUST THE PRODUCTS

Nobody learns every product in two weeks. They can learn the five questions that keep an order from going wrong:

- What is it for?
- What size, and how did you measure?
- How many?
- When do you need it?
- Pickup or delivery, and where?

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STEP 6 OF 8

WATCH ONE, DO ONE TOGETHER, DO ONE ALONE

For each of the ten tasks, the new hire watches the trainer do it with a real customer, then does it with the trainer standing next to them, then does it alone with the trainer nearby.

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STEP 7 OF 8

SPEND TEN MINUTES AT THE END OF EVERY DAY

Ask three things: What confused you today? What did a customer ask that you could not answer? What should we have shown you sooner?

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STEP 8 OF 8

CHECK ON DAY TEN AND PLAN TO DAY NINETY

Go through the ten tasks together. For each one: alone, with help or not yet. Be honest in both directions.

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THE CHECKLIST

TWO-WEEK READINESS CHECK

- [ ] The ten tasks are written down and the new hire has a copy
- [ ] One trainer and one buddy are named, and the trainer has time set aside
- [ ] System access was tested before day one
- [ ] The new hire has walked the store and yard and drawn a map
- [ ] One delivery run or jobsite visit is on the calendar
- [ ] The five questions are posted where the counter team can see them
- [ ] The new hire knows what to do after saying “I don’t know”
- [ ] Each task is marked: watched, did together, did alone
- [ ] The end-of-day notes and the common questions are in one shared place
- [ ] Day ten, day thirty and day ninety reviews are on the calendar

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FINISH LINE

A two-week plan for one new hire: the ten tasks they must be able to do alone, who teaches each one, and a simple check on day ten.

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THE SOURCES

1. Your Building Industry Training Strategy: “Sink or Swim” Isn’t a Strategy Stefanie Couch, Grit Blueprint
2. Training Revolution: Empowering the 2025 Workforce to Overcome Labor Shortages Stefanie Couch, Grit Blueprint
3. The Real Reason Customers Buy Again (Grit Blueprint Podcast, Michael Tull with host Stefanie Couch) Grit Guide
4. Marion Pulse on Confidence, Patience and Finding Your Place in Fenestration (Grit Blueprint Podcast) (December 2024) Grit Guide

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READ THE FULL GUIDE

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