
The Disappearance and Shortage of the Skilled Trades on the Job Market

Finding and Hiring Skilled Trades Is Getting Harder

Getting the right team in place is an essential part of any successful business, but if you are a company or industry that relies heavily on hiring skilled trade workers, you may notice that it's harder to find them.

In a recent study conducted by the National Association of Home Builders, nearly 82 percent of its members said that the cost and availability of laborers was their biggest problem. This skilled trade labor shortage affects many industries including HVAC, Plumbing, Welders, Carpenters and more. Statistics predict that it is expected to get worse as a generation of Baby Boomers begin to leave the workforce.

By the year 2020, it is estimated that nearly 31 million Baby Boomers will retire from skilled trade positions. Many billion-dollar manufacturers estimate that these skilled workers leaving the market will cost them nearly \$100 million in lost productivity over the next five years.

While many industry analysts realize that there is a shortage in the skilled trades market, few of them have any viable solutions. What are the underlying issues and what can be done to address it head on?

How is This Worker Shortage Affecting Our Country?

With countless Carpentry, Electrician, HVAC, Plumbers, Welders and Mason positions going unfilled, the construction industry is having a hard time keeping up with demand. Not only has this worker shortage affected the building of new homes and improvements to infrastructure, it has made dealing with the fallout from natural disasters much harder.

Following Hurricanes Irma, Maria and Harvey, disaster relief crews had a very hard time finding skilled workers to help with the rebuilding of these water-damaged areas. This not only slowed relief efforts, it made it difficult for the people affected by these disasters to get back in their homes.

Over 95 percent of construction contractors say they will hire new employees in the coming year. However, they claim finding experienced individuals to fill key positions within their companies is becoming increasingly harder. Without a well thought out solution to this problem, the coming years will bring more problems and a higher degree of difficulty for service-based companies.

The Main Causes for These Skilled Labor Shortages

While it is difficult to pinpoint the exact cause of this shortage, there are a number of factors that have brought us here.

The skilled trade workers in today's industries are getting older and are retiring in record numbers. People who are 45 years of age and older made up nearly 53 percent of the skilled trade workforce. Statistics show that for every five of these older workers that retire, only one new worker will enter to replace them. This is why companies are finding it difficult to continue with business as usual when older skilled workers retire.

When you consider that 70 percent of high school graduates go to college instead of trade school, you can quickly see what an epidemic this shortage is. Only around 3 percent of young people polled claimed to have any interest in skilled labor trades as a career choice. Getting these young people interested in these types of jobs is a big issue that needs to be addressed.

How Can This Problem Be Fixed?

Paying higher wages to skilled laborers is a great way to increase the interest in these jobs. Georgetown University Center found that nearly 30 million of the jobs available in the United States pay an average of \$55,000 and do not require a bachelor's degree. This means young people coming right out of high school can start making money without taking out an outrageous amount of student loans.

Trade school grads are also more likely to land jobs than college grads. Even with the knowledge of these stats, only around 8 percent of undergrads are enrolled in skilled labor certificate programs. Most industry analysts agree that spreading awareness about these job vacancies to younger workers will help out greatly. Many school districts in the United States have started to push many students into careers in the skilled trade industry. Most of the agriculture classes in today's schools teach things like welding and woodworking. While this push towards skilled trade careers won't fix this problem right away, it is definitely a step in the right direction.

Working with the Right Recruitment Process Outsourcing Firm is Essential

If you own a business that relies on a skilled trades workforce, finding the right Recruitment Process Outsourcing firm is a must. A key RPO firm function is to create, grow and cultivate a large pool of talent to pull from, which can help you get the right people in place quickly. Trying to handle all of the work involved in interviewing and hiring workers can be a daunting task. Passive candidates are often the best opportunity to find a skilled trade worker, but it can be hard to find them, let alone a large pool of them, on your own. A professional RPO firm has the experience, technology and a 100% focus to find and nurture a candidate pipeline. Not only does this give you resources back to invest in other functions, it will also help you get the highest-quality employees.