



Takeaways from the Construction Roundtable on 2/22/17

How to Read: the red text are the **Gaps / Needs Improvements** identified by the businesses, the green text are the **Possible Solutions / Recommendations** identified by the businesses. Black text are the general comments that apply to the section.

1. Pipeline Issues:

- A. Difficult positions to fill
 - Laborers
 - Truck drivers
 - Having to re-evaluate disciplinary policies because drivers can get another job the next day)
 - Employers needing painters
 - Partnered with community college's auto collision program to expand into construction painting/coatings
- B. Not enough young people coming into the trades
 - Younger generation does not view construction as a worthy career and it is beneath them
 - 1. There is a need to put the "gleam" in young people's eyes about construction
 - When recruiting on college campuses, "Curiosity is a great indicator" to business if their message is tailored for the audience
 - Younger people have a sense of entitlement
 - 1. Expect higher than starting wage with no experience
- C. Trying to figure out "what makes millennials tick?" (example research shows they don't want formal reviews, they'd rather just have supervisors talk to them along the way.)
 - Find out what do employees want from the employer.
 - 1. Microsoft offered a workshop on how to talk to Millennials.
 - Millennials appreciate authenticity, be straight with them, express clear expectations
- D. There are 20-30 year olds graduating with construction management degrees
 - but lack construction experience
 - 1. They also expect to start at the top
 - Anticipation of higher wages to start
 - 1. Do not understand wage progression
 - a. Average occupation wage is not a starting wage



- E. **Bigger differential between supervisors and laborers**
 - It is more difficult to find people who want to get their hands dirty
 - F. **Middle and High Schools don't have shop classes anymore**
 - How do students get exposure to the trades?
 - Need to start in elementary school with building blocks and advance to geometry, etc.
 - Something needs to be done to get students more interested in the trades (or at least exposure to opportunities) career fairs, etc.
 - G. **Potential hires cannot pass drug test**
 - **State may of legalize weed, but still cannot have it on jobsites**
 - H. **Workers are looking for dependable companies**
 - they want to keep busy throughout the year
 1. A lot of Construction is seasonal
 - I. **Long wait lists for apprenticeship opportunities (CITC) <http://www.citcwa.com/> specifically mentioned carpentry and HVAC – up to a year to get on wait list (Marysville training center?)**
 - J. **State does not have electrician reciprocal certifications so workers from other areas only are permitted up to 90 days**
 - K. **Private and public sides of this sectors experiencing similar workforce challenges**
 - L. **Using temp hiring because they cannot find full time employees**
- 2. Retention issues:**
- A. **Worker's lack soft skills**
 - Not showing up on time or at all
 - Punctuality
 - **One thing they have found that has helped with tardiness, etc. is to explain how it impacts the whole crew/team. Some people respond to that.**
 - Politeness
 - Human interaction (trouble reading people)
 - Customer service
 - Lack of dependability
 - B. **Younger people have a sense of entitlement**
 - Do not take instruction well
 - C. **Aging workforce**
 - Older workers can't continue the physicality that the job demands and knowledge base will leave with retirement
 - M. **Need "old-fashioned work ethic" it still takes hard work to get ahead**



- N. Lack of trained workforce bumps the schedule, slows down productivity, and affects the bottom line of the construction businesses and the businesses that are relying on construction to be on time
 - O. Construction is “old school” and change is slow
 - It’s hard to change older workers’ mindset
 - P. Safety First
 - Some workers don’t understand why they must turn off phones, headphones
 - Need to build-in safety issues in training so workers can easily identify
 - Need to get training standards higher
 - Q. In exit interviews, some workers state that the reason they are leaving is because
 - Health insurance premiums are high
 - They aren’t busy enough
 - R. Job hopping is a chronic issue in the field
 - When workers see, their project ending, they will jump to another employer to make sure they have secure employment.
 - D. Hire veterans and sprinkle them through workforce because their good habits sometimes rub off (dependable, punctual, etc.)
 - E. Pair older workers with younger workers to form mentorships
 - Do a mind meld with best workers to gain their knowledge
 - Encourage supervisors to see their roles as mentors.
 - F. Employers are having to change with the times
 - Culture needs to change, i.e. yelling at employees is no longer okay
 - G. Company has tuition reimbursement program
 - But they are so busy, workers don’t have the time to go to school
 - H. Government contracts have specific workforce diversity targets
 - But there is still too few women and minorities in the trades (need to reflect the general population)
 - There is still an “old boys network” that some find distasteful
 - I. Huge need for high schools to help identify opportunities for students (Career Days, Touch-a-Truck, etc.)
 - J. Project Labor Agreement (PLA) has phenomenal training programs
<http://www.soundtransit.org/About-Sound-Transit/Doing-business-with-us/Project-Labor-Agreement>
- 3. How do you identify people to upskill into upper jobs?**
- A. Reliability
 - B. Takes initiative



- C. Eager to learn, and open to learning
 - D. Willing to learn from their mistakes
- 4. Why do you do this work?**
- A. Immense respect for the hard workers, their contribution is undersold
 - B. Grew up in the business
 - C. Take pride in building things and seeing the project to completion
 - D. Enjoys taking a vision and making it a reality
 - E. Wants to see something built from the ground up
 - F. Likes the company they work for
 - G. Enjoys the diversity of projects and opportunity to collaborate
 - H. Wants to help people get good jobs (S3 – women, people of color)
 - I. I use my hands to make the vision real
 - J. Work as a team to finish a project
 - K. Former middle school math/science teacher, sees the need for hands-on work for students who may not be college material
 - L. Job always changes, lots of diversity in the work
 - M. Love seeing things built from the bottom up
 - N. Pride in building something from nothing (and with no safety issues)