

Small Contractor Quick-Start Guide to New Talent

A Step-By-Step Guide to Recruiting, Training and Retaining Women in the Residential Construction Trades

Finding and keeping talent is tougher now than ever. Talent shortages create longer lead times, project delays, increased safety risk and are especially challenging for small contractors.

The good news is there is plenty of untapped talent out there, which is why we created the quick-start guide on the following pages. This guide is intended to help get you started in recruiting talent that is currently underrepresented in residential construction. The outlined tips and organizations can help you on this journey.

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Team Up

Building talent requires more than just skills training. Workers need support to overcome challenges that keep them from work and affect their performance at work.

No single employer can tackle these challenges on their own. Partner and build relationships with other organizations to reach untapped talent.

1.) Team up with collective impact organizations (partnerships made of employers, nonprofits, government, worker & community) that build workforce programs, especially those bringing untapped talent e.g., women and diverse talent into the field.

2.) Partner directly with pre-apprenticeship and training programs, which can be a source for recruiting new talent. Build relationships through: Speaking at career events, mentoring, hosting mock interviews and job-site visits.

3.) Build relationships with and refer employees to established community organizations and social service programs that offer wraparound supports like childcare, transportation, counseling, etc.

[Building Talent Foundation](#) (BTF) is an organization that coordinates partnerships for collective impact.

Build Inclusion

Workers deserve respectful, inclusive, and dignifying job cultures. While this is important to all workers, it is key to attracting and keeping young and diverse talent.

Many women and diverse workers don't realize construction trades are a path open to them. Let new and existing workers know that everyone is welcome!

- 1.) Communicate that diverse workers are welcome on websites, job postings, and employee materials through inclusion statements, specific language, and diverse imagery.
- 2.) Emphasize a Total Safety Culture that is both physical & psychological safety, where all workers are safe from intimidation and violence.
- 3.) Train employees and managers in respectful job culture. Use trainings that treat everyone as allies working together to building positive culture, and providing practical actions.

The organizations below provide consulting and training on workplace culture to businesses of all sizes and budgets.

[RiseUp by ANEW](#) • [Green Dot by Alteristic](#)
[Empowerment Institute by Twin Cities Rise](#) • [MindWise](#)

Measure Progress

“You can’t manage what you don’t measure.” Set goals to recruit from new diverse talent sources and ensure inclusive culture and measure your progress.

The training organizations mentioned previously include measurement as part of services. Whether using a 3rd party or going at it on your own, below are a few tips.

1) Assess the current state of your business to create a baseline. Does your hiring process reach diverse talent? How do existing workers feel about the culture? What knowledge and resources available to transform hiring and job culture?

2) Test and run small trials to figure out what works and what doesn’t. Every business, and workforce has unique needs. Test out different hiring practices, different partnerships, and different work culture practices.

3) Track your progress against your baseline (just as you might track other business goals or finances). Data tracked should include employee feedback and surveys (again the workforce culture organizations mentioned can assist here).

4) Reiterate. Not every trial will work, but you can learn from each attempt. Be willing to try new methods, learn from mistakes, and try again. Be sure to share learnings with partners!

About the Authors



Misty Farrell is a 2021 Social Impact MBA candidate from Boston University with more than 15 years of professional experience in technology innovation, entrepreneurship, and commercialization. Her mission is to help women and underrepresented minorities (URM) create pathways to socioeconomic success through mentoring, coaching, training and entrepreneurship for marginalized individuals. She seeks to mitigate the effects of the racial wealth and skills gaps that appear throughout the labor economy and manifest as inequities in job placement in the Future of Work through deployment of collaborative educational programs.



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