

Finding Workers...In Surprising Places ©

Several years ago, I told the story of a client of mine who, while eating at a fast-food restaurant, observed the leadership exhibited by a store employee, not the store manager, when a major shutdown of their drive-thru lane speaker took place. No speaker means angry and hungry customers that leads to no business!

The contractor was so impressed with the young employee's efforts (when his own store manager had erupted in anger), that he offered the young man a job on the spot. A few years later, this same contractor attended one of my workshops at the NPE and introduced me to his newest foremen, the same individual who had been hired at that restaurant.

Now, before you start thinking about all the fast food restaurants you will visit in the future, understand the message behind this real event. We need to be open to looking in sometimes, very surprising locations, to find potential candidates for our company. Like the contractor in my illustration discovered, finding a potential employee, much less a future foreman, was not even on his recruiting radar. For us today, maybe we need to include more surprising places to look and find workers.

In the spirit of finding future workers who, while they may not have the experience and skills currently, but who possess an attitude and willingness to learn, we may need to be more open to such places, non-traditional places, to recruit a future workforce.

Consider a few surprising places when seeking new recruits for your discerning eyes.

- Visit your retail hardware and lumber stores. This "oldy but goody" remains a great pool of potential workers.
- Tap into not only your local churches but look for those churches that are quite influential to reaching many people through ministries they may have in place to help those in need, including looking for full time employment.
- Get engaged with local training and educational organizations involved with building up the skilled labor force. A Skills USA local or state group might

have just the right sort of young person who would be interested in a career in construction.

- ❑ Reallocate some of your marketing budget and invest in a booth at Job Fairs around your town, especially those geared at attracting young people looking for job ideas.
- ❑ Post job ads in the schools such as business colleges, arts and science areas, psychology and science buildings. Many students often work construction for summer jobs and may only be getting degree in something that they like...while they may not be able to make a great living being a school teacher or social worker.
- ❑ Hold your own "Get to Know Us" Saturday fairs where you send invites to local schools and social gatherings frequented by younger workers.
- ❑ Regularly contact government and/or military bases where workers might be looking to leave/retire and would be interested in staying in area.
- ❑ Also, and this is a big one, take off the paradigm blinders to only looking for men to recruit. There are more and more women proving that they can be, and are, fantastic workers in our industry.

Finding workers through our more traditional avenues will not be enough to keep the number of applications coming in to find and hire the needed number of workers. So, don't be afraid to seek out some new and surprising places to find what you need.

Here's to looking in new and surprising places to find tomorrow's workers and leaders in the pavement maintenance industry!

Brad Humphrey

Known as The Contractor's Best Friend™, Brad continues to write and speak in support of the construction industry. His international podcast, sponsored by A.C. Business Media and Caterpillar, continues to be one of the favorites of suppliers and contractors alike. As Vice President of Pavecon LTD, a large and growing pavement maintenance contractor, Brad continues to develop, teach, write, and share his thirty-five years plus of industry knowledge. Visit Brad via several industry groups on Facebook.com.

