Examining the Labor Shortage in the Construction Industry and Possible Solutions Presented by Industry Members

Whether it be through the lens of general contractors, trade partners, or suppliers, all parties associated with the built-environment have experienced a form of labor shortage or an increase in older employees with few replacements readily available. The main purpose is to gather enough data and opinions from construction industry members to formalize the few key factors of the diminished labor force, primarily in California’s commercial construction sector. This has impacted the amount of work general contractors can partake in. An additional aim is to garner potential solutions that industry members have that can not only expand the current construction labor force, but to also increase awareness of the construction career path to high school students and young individuals.

The main objective of this project was to identify what possible solutions industry members had to curtail the ongoing labor shortage. The construction industry cannot keep pace with its ambition labor projections. Consequently, firms have either had to reduce the amount of work they can attain or focus a larger portion of their efforts on recruitment and retaining of current employees. Ideally, there would be sufficient plans such as the ACE Mentorship program in place to boost the number of young architects, contractors, and engineers entering the workforce.

The main solutions offered by construction industry members is to increase awareness of the benefits and opportunities that construction (more specifically, the trades) can offer young people. An excellent alternative to college with high-pay and high-skills should be advocated for in high schools. Engaging young people may be the only long-term solution regarding reducing this decades-long labor shortage.

Q5 Who, in your company, is responsible for outreach and training to replace the shortage of skilled workers?

Q8 Are professional organizations such as Associated General Contractors (AGC) and the California Homebuilding Foundation promoting the construction industry well enough to young people?