

Analyzing the Causes of Labor Shortage in the Commercial Carpentry Trades in the San Francisco Bay Area

Jack Crayne

California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA

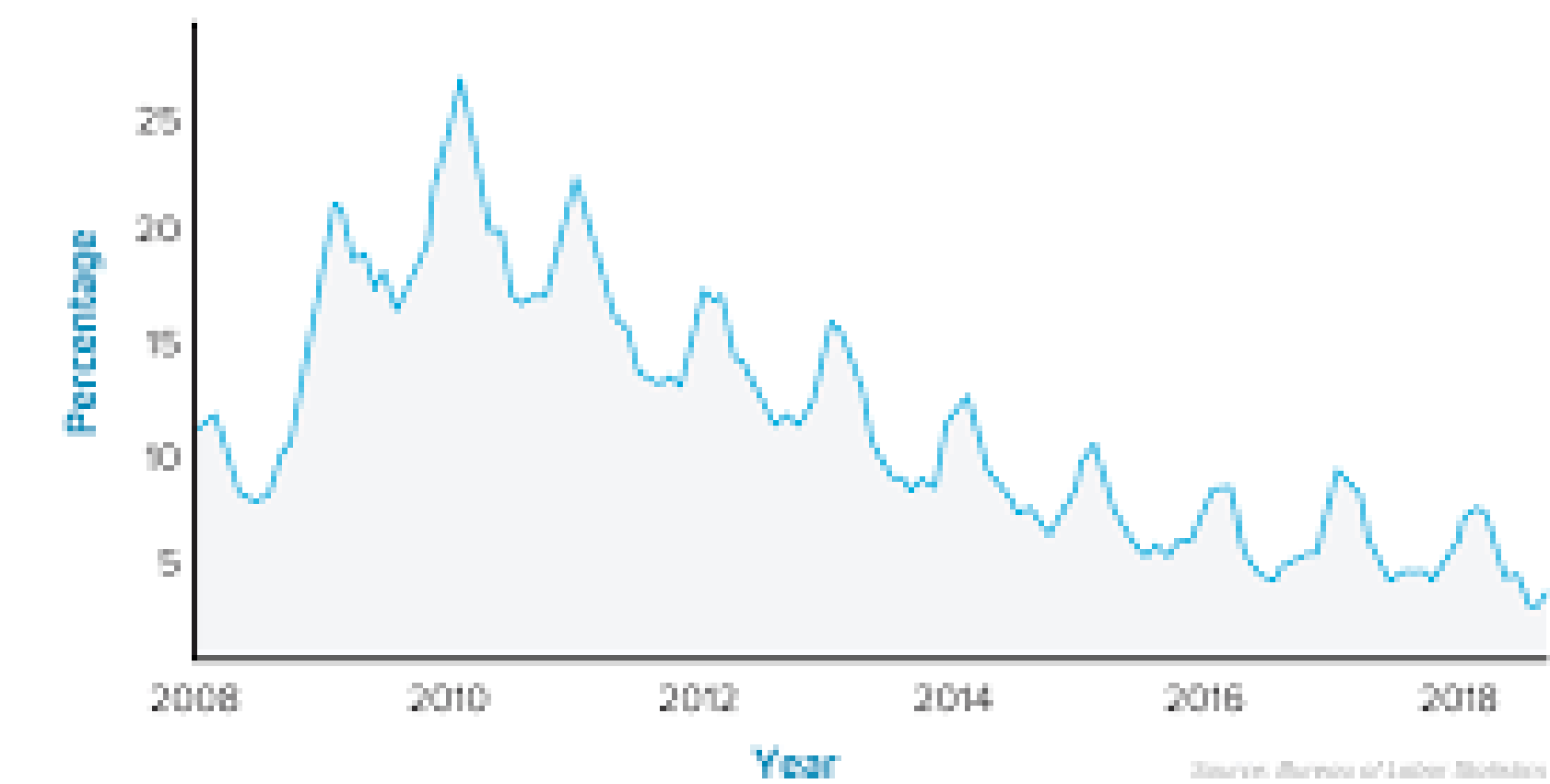
Skilled labor is vital to the success of any construction project, and no contractor would be able to operate without the skilled laborers that they employ. The construction industry has been subject to a shortage of skilled labor for the last two decades for many reasons, including the poor image of construction workers among the public, inadequate training measures, and an aging workforce. The research process of this project suggests that the leading cause of shortage is low pay and increasing age of the workforce overall, while the demand for labor grows at a faster rate than the supply of labor grows. Poor worker retention practices were also identified as a cause for shortage and a reason for workers leaving the industry, and proper retention tactics are also assessed. Recruiting practices among labor unions and contractors are assessed through interviews and research, with the results suggesting that a greater emphasis should be put on improving the image of construction workers in the public eye, increasing the prestige of a job in construction and leading to increased participation in the construction industry among young people.

Key Words: Labor Force, Labor Shortage, Skilled Labor, Labor Demand, Labor Recruitment

Aims and Objectives

- Identify the causes of labor shortage in the Carpentry trades in the San Francisco Bay Area
- Examine strategies being undertaken to combat the effect of decreased labor pool
- Analyze the effectiveness of these strategies with regards to a existing literature on the subject
- Recommend a best course of action in this area moving forward

Unemployment % in Construction



Methodology

- Personal Interviews
- Semi-Structured
- Attitudinal Research

Findings

The findings of this project are that there is a shortage of labor on a national level, and that issue is less prevalent in the Bay Area in the carpentry trades. The main strategies that are employed to recruit and retain employees are training and education, fair wages, and other non-monetary benefits ranging from health insurance to flexible scheduling. Companies also "share" workers to equally distribute the workforce when employment imbalances exist.

Jack Crayne

jjcrayne@calpoly.edu

(707) 775-5414

Number of Unfilled Jobs in Construction

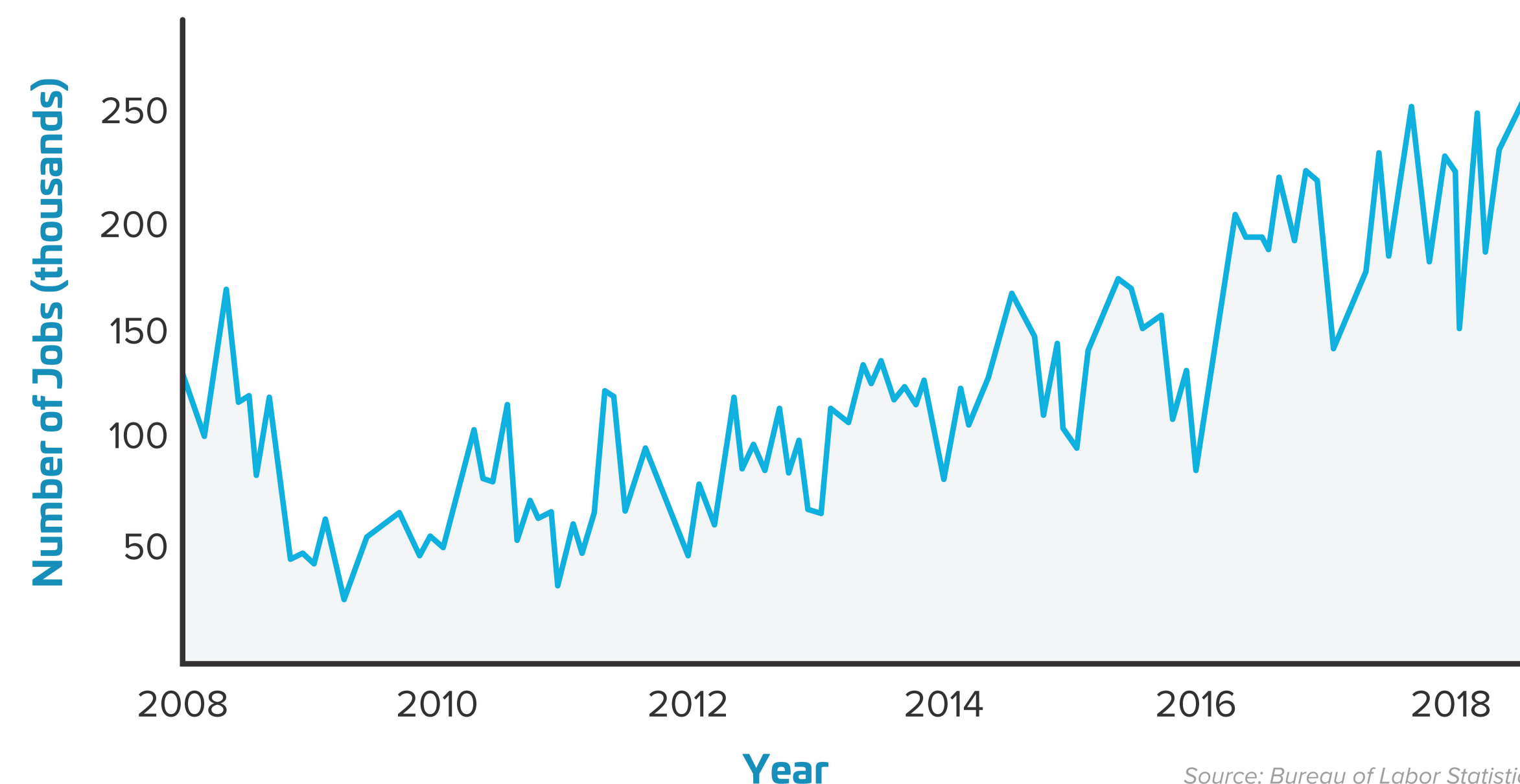


Image References

- Builtworlds. (2018). *6 ways emerging tech is addressing the construction industry's labor shortage*.
<https://builtworlds.com/news/6-ways-emerging-tech-addressing-construction-industrys-labor-shortage/>
- Learning Alliance. (2019). *Selling Tower Careers to the Next Generation Workforce*.
<https://www.mylearningalliance.com/selling-tower-careers-to-the-next-generation-workforce/>