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Where Are They? Working with Local Technical Training Schools

Whether you have an immediate need for qualified or entry-level service technicians or are anticipating future needs, it is important to develop a strategy now for finding and recruiting these employees. Although your local UA hiring hall should be the first place you check for potential recruits, it is unlikely you will find available service technicians there. So, where do you look?

Local technical training schools can be a great resource for discovering potential entry-level employees. Many technical training schools have HVAC degree programs, which provide students with basic courses in mechanical systems, electricity, blueprint reading, refrigeration, etc. in both classroom and field settings. In addition students often learn basic customer service and business skills – such as the importance of showing up on time and presenting themselves in a clean, respectable manner. Probably the single greatest benefit for considering these students is that they want to be in our industry and have an understanding of it. They have already made an investment of time and money, often spending thousands of dollars to enroll in these schools, and have demonstrated a commitment to our industry. It will be well worth your time to get involved with these schools. Technical training schools are always looking for business partners to mentor students, serve on advisory boards, and participant in classroom programs. A primary goal of the school is to place these students in jobs once they graduate. By getting involved and building a relationship with the program, you will have a great advantage in recruiting the top students.

How do you find these schools and determine which offer the best programs? The answer is HVAC Excellence, which is an organization that works closely with MSCA. Since 1999, HVAC Excellence has accredited HVACR training programs in the United States. This programmatic accreditation provides independent third-party review of an HVACR educational program to ensure it meets established standards of excellence. Such standards are designed to ensure that our future workforce receives the quality of training necessary for success in the HVACR industry. A list of accredited HVAC Excellence accredited schools can be found here: www.hvacexcellence.org/accreditedprograms.aspx. In addition, students graduating from an HVAC Excellence-accredited program can take advantage of an Articulation Agreement that HVAC Excellence has established with the UA. This Agreement provides the graduate with credit for courses already completed and direct entry into a UA apprenticeship program in the appropriate year – i.e. they can begin an apprenticeship in year two or three and not necessarily year one. This is often an additional incentive to the graduate to come work for you.

Remember, the UA has developed some excellent recruitment videos specifically for the HVAC industry. These are available to you from the UA website (www.ua.org/trades) or by downloading the app (Search for *UA Training* in the Apple or Android store).