



RECRUITING FOR HVACR AND PLUMBING SERVICE TECHNICIANS

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Are You Prepared?

The United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) projects that by the year 2020 (five short years away!), growth in the HVACR industry will increase by 34.4% - compared to 14.3% for the 300 other occupations the BLS tracks!! In addition, the BLS estimates that another 31.2% of the industry workforce (i.e., baby boomers) will retire and need to be replaced. These projections could have serious implications for your company, your workforce, your productivity and success if you do not take steps now to hire and train service technicians.

In a recent MSCA survey, 85% of responding companies indicated that they will need to hire one to five new technicians within the year; 87% of companies indicated that they will need to hire one to 15 new technicians within the next 5 years and 63% of companies project that they will need to hire six to 30 additional technicians within the next 10 years! These are significant numbers and, keep in mind, these results only represent MSCA members. Open shop contractors, other technical trades, equipment manufacturers, and facility owners will all be competing for “qualified” technicians and those individuals who have the aptitude for and desire to be in the trades. Currently UA apprenticeship programs for service technicians are just beginning to gear up again after the 2008 recession when many programs took in very few new apprentices – and even with the current growth in apprenticeship numbers, those UA-trained technicians will only represent a small percentage of the number needed for the continued growth of our industry and to replace retiring workers.

And it is not simply a matter of hiring a new technician to replace a retiring one. The majority of technicians that will be retiring from the industry in the near future have probably been in the industry thirty to forty years. Their accumulated “brain power” and expertise, not to mention their familiarity with your company and your customers, is not something that can be replaced overnight. It took them years and years to attain their current levels of proficiency and it will take new hires years and years to amass at least a portion of that knowledge and experience. This new generation of workers is also less likely to dedicate their entire working life to one company but will be more apt to change employers numerous times over their careers.

But the outlook is not all doom and gloom if you start preparing now for future manpower needs. Over the next several months we will focus on:

- The many benefits of a career in the HVACR/plumbing industry
- Partnering with technical training schools
- Finding the “Perfect” recruit
- “Selling” parents and guidance counselors
- Successful “model” recruiting programs around the nation
- Training Tools and Programs