



Article #2

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It's Up to Us – The Role of Contractors in Recruiting HVACR/Plumbing Technicians

Your service business is growing. There are more opportunities than ever for mechanical service contractors in energy services, facility operations, plumbing service, building automation, etc. Eighty-five percent of all buildings that will exist in urban areas in 2030, exist today! Our growth potential is unlimited except for the fact that to keep up with these expanding opportunities, we need a constant stream of new, qualified manpower to perform this work. We can no longer rely on traditional methods of recruitment to attain these new employees but must develop our own strategies and procedures for on-going recruitment.

UA apprenticeship programs are a great resource for hiring entry level employees. However, many apprentice programs are not training specifically for service and, in the very near future (if not already), these apprenticeship programs will be unable to keep up with the demand for new hires. In addition, in order to meet customer demand and operate at a competitive rate, contractors need to employ a range of employee classifications beyond the traditional apprentice/journeyman classifications. Servicemen are essential if contractors hope to remain competitive in the light commercial/packaged equipment market as these employees work at a 50 – 80% of journeyman scale and with reduced benefits. Tradesmen are needed for routine maintenance work, systems operation, residential work, truck driving and other less technical tasks. As contractors, it is essential that you take the lead and pursue and hire these varying employee types and integrate them into your business operations.

Service companies are unique in another aspect too which separates them from their mechanical contractor counterparts and reinforces the need to undertake your own hiring. Most good service employees become part of your “business family” and remain with your organization for a long period of time. Successful service companies create their own “team” which includes employees that understand your company procedures and policies; feel like they are being appreciated and recognized for the work they are performing, are loyal to your company and fellow “teammates,” and understand they are representing your company. This feeling of “family” among service company employees makes it essential that you are actively involved in the selection and hiring of appropriate individuals to ensure their long-term allegiance and dedication. Oftentimes it may be more important to hire solely for attitude and compatibility with the skills training to come later. Plus it is more than likely that you will be investing a great deal of resources into these new hires – in terms of tools, equipment, service vehicles, TRAINING, etc. and you want to be certain that this is a long term investment.

Coming next month: The Perfect Recruit: What do you look for when hiring