

* BRING TRAINING TO THE SALES FORCE THROUGH MOBILE PROGRAMS.

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SETTING THE PACE

AS THE PACE COMPANIES UNDERGOES A REBRANDING, THE ONE-STOP SHOP DOMINATES THE NYC CONSTRUCTION MARKET.

The Pace Companies President/CEO Andy Coran, Founder/Chairman Martin Block and CEO Robert Levy are the featured subjects in this comprehensive story.

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THE NEW YORK CITY SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY WORKS THROUGH NATURAL DISASTERS, TERRORIST ATTACKS AND EVOLVING SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS.

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BOSTON'S SEAPORT DISTRICT IS GROWING THROUGH SEAPORT SQUARE, WHICH INCLUDES A MIX OF RETAIL VENUES FOR A VARIETY OF SHOPPERS.

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To determine if a given candidate is the right fit for an open position for a construction firm, start with clear internal intentions.

Tips for Recruiting and Retaining Top Talent

By Nicole Cox

The employment market is tight everywhere, and the building and development industries are no exception. As competition continues to heat up, recruiters need best practices to find and assess candidates and keep employees happy and loyal. Many of these suggestions come directly from front-line recruiters who have experience finding talent for clients in building and construction. ¶ Finding the right candidate is all about ensuring alignment of multiple factors: timing, branding, messaging, fit, appeal, location and compensation. For example, if you are

looking for construction project managers during the busiest summer months, your messaging must center on strong selling points – why would a professional leave his or her current job to come work for you?

With that alignment in place, hit the market with an “instant crescendo” of searching, sourcing and networking. Find out where the candidates are (A niche board? Social media? Or will you need to call them, based on a list of competitors?) and hit those sources hard.

Perhaps most importantly, recognize that candidates need to be courted. They have many choices today and they know it. Courting is the bow that ties all of this together.

Mainstream sites like Monster, CareerBuilder and LinkedIn are always good places to start. For management roles, try TheLadders. Digging deeper, look at professional associations or technical schools that match the skill set you are

seeking. These can be fairly niche, such as the Door and Hardware Institute. Survey the job market – what projects are underway that employ the kind of talent you need? One recruiter reported finding a picture in an article about a current project. Right there on a hardhat was a company sticker – that added one more potential source to the list.

To determine if a given candidate is the right fit for an open position, start with clear internal intentions. Are you trying to clone the talent and experience you already have, or are you looking to bring in new and fresh ideas? If the latter, ensure you are clear on what kind of fresh ideas you have in mind. Other points to consider:

- Make sure the job fits the needs, lifestyle, motivations and long-term goals of the candidate. A company of type-A players who think nothing of putting in 12-hour days will not be a match for someone who values work/life balance.
- Make sure the hiring manager's leadership style matches the candidate's needs. If you pair a hands-off manager with a candidate who needs a lot of handholding, you will find yourself re-opening the search very soon.
- Understand the supply versus demand of the talent market and be flexible with job requirements. CareerBuilder and Wanted Analytics offer supply-versus-demand tools. You can minimize the number of open positions by creating a culture that encourages employee retention.

Communication is a pivotal factor in this effort. Truly listen to employee needs and concerns, and make improvements when you can. When change is coming, communicate with employees and involve them in making and owning the change.

In addition:

- Offer growth and professional development opportunities, such as online courses, projects that stretch employee skills, conference attendance and more.
- Coach managers to develop talent, act fairly and approach problems and performance issues in a constructive way.
- Keep compensation competitive with the market. An employee whose salary is outdated is ripe for picking by competitors.
- Understand and support each employee's career goals.

Even successful, growing companies need to be proactive about keeping employees happy and productive.

The construction and facilities services sector has a leg up in this area, according to TINY-pulse.com, providers of tools for measuring employee satisfaction. In its 2015 Best Industry Ranking Report, TINY pulse found that construction and facilities services ranked No. 1 out of 12 industry sectors in employee satisfaction.


Keep Employee Satisfaction High

- Provide clear expectations.
- Offer workplace flexibility (work from home days, flexible hours, etc.).
- Praise and reward employees for success and ensure they feel valued; some companies “celebrate” mistakes when the employee brings the mistake to management and it offers learning opportunities for all.
- Provide leadership that is authentic, transparent and personable. For example, be understanding about the fact that life happens, and

be thoughtful about milestones such as work anniversaries or birthdays.

- Encourage employee involvement in decisions, changes and improvements in the workplace.
- Ask employees for ideas and listen and implement those ideas when possible. Employees who are in the trenches daily may have a better understanding than management of customer needs and ways to improve.
- Stay on top of satisfaction by conducting regular employee surveys.

Employee rewards do not have to be monetary. A simple “thank you” from senior leadership can go a long way. If you have an employee of the month program, provide a choice parking spot, or rename a conference room after the current winner each month. One clever idea is Employee Appreciation Day, when managers wash their employees' cars. This kind of activity breaks down barriers and promotes teamwork.

Those top candidates are going to land somewhere, and with a strategic approach, that somewhere can be your company. 

Nicole Cox

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