

## Five Essential Tips to Recruit and Retain a Gen Z Workforce in 2025

Written by: John Lack, Construction Consultant, Acuity Insurance

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, nearly 23% of construction workers are at least 55 years old. Since the average U.S. construction worker retires in their early sixties, nearly one-fourth of the industry's workforce is expected to retire within the next decade. This industry exodus could indicate an imminent labor dilemma for construction business owners. But there is hope on the horizon: Gen Z workers.

Gen Z, those born between 1995 and 2010, currently represents a quarter of the U.S. workforce. And as many aspiring professionals are choosing to bypass college in pursuit of vocational training programs, there is excitement that they could choose meaningful careers in the skilled trades.

Despite this promising possibility, there will be plenty of competition for Gen Z professionals in the years ahead, making it critical for contractors to understand how to recruit and retain them successfully. Fortunately, a wealth of research has indicated five key areas in which contractors can focus their efforts to attract Gen Z workers and keep them around for years to come:

### **CAREER GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

Results from a LinkedIn survey indicated that Gen Z professionals want to learn and develop their skills for three key reasons:

- » 62% - to improve at their job
- » 59% - to make more money
- » 46% - to get promoted



To recruit and retain this valued group of future employees, contractors should take their desire to develop new skills to heart. Detailing potential growth opportunities during the recruiting process can show prospective employees that their development is taken seriously. However, new hires need to understand how work differentiates between commercial, residential, and remodeling projects before they can progress in their career. From safety considerations and scope of work insights to project sequencing and standard building practices or designs, there are numerous areas in which young professionals must hone their skills. That is what makes construction technologist roles appealing to many young professionals.

Because construction technologists work closely with other experts to ensure new tools and software function

properly, this role can expose Gen Z workers to a variety of unique positions in which they may be interested, including staff accountant, foreman, mechanic, and layout person. Granting young professionals the chance to work with these construction counterparts may lead to future training opportunities that can help turn their dreams and aspirations into a full-time reality.

### **FAIR COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS**

While research conducted by Concordia University, St. Paul, shows that 70% of Gen Z say salary is a top motivator in their career, contractors should not overlook the value of a comprehensive compensation package. For example, 70% of respondents from the same study noted employee-sponsored health insurance as a must-have offering from potential employers.

Other benefits that can attract Gen Z professionals include retirement savings programs, paid time off, and certification programs. Put simply, the more construction businesses can offer to prospective employees, the more inclined those prospects will be to join their team and stick around for the long haul.

### **A HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

Gen Z craves a healthy balance between work and time away, and perhaps expresses that craving more explicitly than members of other generations. In fact, HireBasis reports that 70% of Gen Z workers prioritize a work-life balance. Construction projects demand time and energy, but offering flexible hours or compressed workweeks can help contractors prevent employee burnout and elevate retention efforts.

Related tactics that can showcase a commitment to a healthy work-life balance include:

- » Leveraging project management tools to set achievable goals for jobsite efficiency
- » Accommodating early departures for birthdays, appointments, and/or other important events
- » Hosting work events that welcome employees and their loved ones

From the hours they work on the jobsite to the time they spend with friends and family offsite, providing a healthy work-life balance is one of the best ways contractors can position a

career in construction as a desirable landing spot.

### **A SENSE OF APPRECIATION**

Even though 83% of Gen Z professionals say they want to feel more appreciated at work, less than half say they receive recognition on a weekly basis, according to Newsweek. These insights are particularly noteworthy in the construction industry, which has one of the highest employee turnover rates in America.

Recognizing employees for a job well done can elevate morale, enhance productivity, and showcase company culture. Effective tactics that reward high-performing employees include everything from bonuses and extra time off to provided lunches and company outings. Even thank-you cards or shout-outs in meetings can be used to recognize personal milestones, achievements, or persistent hard work. Regardless of the format, consistent recognition opportunities appeal to current and prospective employees alike.


### **SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION**

Communicating regularly with employees plays a pivotal role in ensuring construction projects are completed on time and within budget, but it is important to also connect with employees individually. Concordia University, St. Paul, reports that 40% of Gen Z workers want to communicate with their bosses daily. These conversations allow employees to ask questions, express interests, and confirm the focus of their work. This routine engagement can also help to facilitate professional development opportunities and to ensure employees know they're valued and heard.

While regular communication is important, few Gen Z professionals want to be micromanaged. In fact, 60% wish they had more autonomy, according to Deloitte Digital research. Instead of prescribing a step-by-step plan for specific projects or monitoring the onsite performance of employees, contractors who set clear expectations, desired outcomes, and a collaborative team environment can empower employees to ask questions, communicate their needs, and support each other on the jobsite. This approach can efficiently identify productive training opportunities, specify project-based goals, and provide the support young employees need to remain productive and motivated.

## THE TOOLBELT GENERATION IS HERE

An increasing number of Gen Z students are pursuing a career in the skilled trades. While this is great news for construction businesses, how contractors work to meet the desires and expectations of Gen Z workers will likely dictate their success in filling the industry's current employment void.

Construction is a field in which young professionals can grow and thrive, but contractors hold the key to ensuring their dreams meet fruition. Focusing on these essentials can help construction businesses attract the next wave of skilled-trades professionals and ensure they stay with their business for many years to come. 



---

### About the Author

---

John Lack brings over 35 years of experience in the construction industry in both jobsite and office positions to [Acuity Insurance](#) including carpentry, welding, project management, contract negotiation, and much more. His main focus at Acuity is to help his customers better understand insurance and offer products and services that meet their unique needs.

---

### About the Article

---

Republished from [Construction Executive](#), a publication of [Associated Builders and Contractors](#). Copyright 2025. All rights reserved. Associated Builders and Contractors is a national construction industry trade association representing more than 21,000 members. Based on the merit shop philosophy, ABC helps its members develop people, win work, and deliver work safely, ethically, and profitably for the betterment of the communities in which they work.

Any views and opinions expressed in this article may or may not reflect the views and opinions of the Construction Management Association of America (CMAA). By publishing this piece, CMAA is not expressing endorsement of the individual, the article, or their association, organization, or company.