

## Build a Case for Workplace of Choice

Fast growing, dynamic companies are often considered the place to be. But the construction industry's recent talent crunch spells trouble for attracting and retaining the top talent that fuels fast growth.

Construction isn't seducing young executives the way more glamorous industries are. Trends show that engineers are heading to Hollywood and MBA graduates are beating down the doors of biotech.

Based on demographics and educational trends, the talent challenge isn't likely to lessen any time soon. According to the Construction Labor Research Council, the industry will need to hire nearly 100,000 people a year just to replace industry retirees over the next decade.

This will make it harder to locate candidates and even harder to get them to sign your offer letter. So what measures can you take to differentiate your organization as a destination for talent?

**Start with your Web site.** Make it a recruitment tool. While corporate clients are not going to consult your Web site before awarding you a contract worth millions, candidates will surely go online to check out your site before applying for a position. It may sound cliché, but your people



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are your strongest asset. They're the only thing you've got that your competitors don't. So place them front and center, and let their unique personalities do the talking on your website.

*It's all about money....and a lot of other stuff.*

Compensation must go beyond competitive when you're vying for the hottest candidates in the field, but don't stop there. Entry level executives are seeking more than dollar signs. Candidates are more civic minded, taking part and pride in corporate volunteerism. If your firm thinks community service is important, why not put that commitment into action by implementing a 24 Hour Club? Once an employee completes 24 hours of community service on their personal time, reward them with three extra vacation days.

**Families need flexibility.** Offer parents flexible options, so they aren't torn between cultivating a family and a career. Don't start regularly scheduled meetings before eight, allowing families to manage day care logistics without angst. Think less about face time and more about virtual work spaces.

**Keep your culture open and fun.** Don't let fast growth turn your

healthy culture into a backdoor culture. Consider an open-circle dialogue, where delegates from across the company join in a discussion about the ways your firm communicates internally. Ironically, the majority of today's employees don't know their companies' visions, let alone their role in helping to achieve them. Talk to your people. Share your goals, achievements, and even your financials. It doesn't have to be all business all the time. Fourth of July picnics, softball leagues and the occasional dodge ball tournament can keep your unique culture thriving and attractive.

**Be ready to demonstrate** which rung of the ladder execs stand on. Consider developing a matrix of competencies that outline exactly what your executives must do to nail their current positions, and what they have to do to take their career to the next level.

**Once you have them, never, never** let them go. Mentor your people by pairing them with more experienced colleagues, and charge your executive team with developing young potential. A strong mentoring program is attractive to potential candidates and can help you identify and retain your brightest stars.

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