

Several years ago, the construction industry was faced with

company assessments, conducting team training, and ensuring continuity of values from the top down, you can help foster a space that appeals to this younger demographic. Creating an inclusive culture demands involvement and commitment at every level of your company. Another strategy to help prepare your company for a more diverse workforce is investing in field leaders who are trained and have the people skills to manage people of different demographics. If your company is not set up to help minorities thrive, recruiting and retaining younger employees will prove difficult.

Many secondary and post-secondary schools, such as career, and technical education schools, offer construction programs with a strong potential pool of workers. As a team, you should be thinking through what your construction company's presence at these institutions should involve and how to develop a relationship with the institutions' leaders. Establishing a relationship with the dean of the program, for example, could develop a key pipeline for you. Having a presence in schools does not require only in-person engagements; a hybrid approach including in-person workshops and virtual speaking engagements could be effective strategies.

Presence in the community is good; but providing value in your interactions will help progress relationships and build up your pipeline. At schools, is there an opportunity for you to help update their curriculum in construction-related subjects so that students are learning applicable skills? Or maybe you can volunteer to lead a workshop during the school day to harness the curiosity of young minds. You should also seek out community organizations that are involved with young people, especially if they are engaged with young Hispanic, Black, and female populations. Offer to speak on career opportunities or provide hands-on experiences with these organizations.

Since millennials and Generation Z are more diverse than past generations, finding ways to meet these groups where they are and provide value to them can help you build relationships with potential candidates for future hiring.

The most visible part of every construction company is the worksite. Worksites provide ample opportunity to interact with people in a physical setting that showcases potential career opportunities. Consider hosting site visits, virtual walk-throughs, and work-based learning opportunities; giving young people hands-on applications of skills can open their mind to the real potential that a career in construction could have. Think about how you can create exposure for your company while educating potential workers at your project sites.

You simply cannot fix a problem if you do not understand what caused it. For that reason, you should have metrics set up to test the effectiveness of your internship, mentorship, and new-hire programs. This will allow you to evaluate the structures in place, the reach of your programs, and your standard operating procedures. If the goal is to attract and retain young talent, then how you introduce the construction industry to them is important. An easy way to analyze your practices is setting up a process for feedback. This will help you align leadership strategies with employee opinions. It also shows that you value the voice of everyone on your team, which is important to younger hires who want to know that they are not just a cog in the machine, but a valued member of the team.

Preparing to fill the impending gap in the construction workforce must begin now, as it is already starting to affect many organizations. There is a huge opportunity to hire from the younger generations, but a focus on understanding this unique group and how to best communicate with them is imperative to effectively recruiting them. Additionally, it will take time to implement the significant changes to your company culture and processes needed to attract this demographic. The key is to be forward-thinking in your strategy and lead in vulnerability, as the actions you take today are the building blocks for the future of your construction company. By embracing these talented individuals with a welcoming and nurturing environment designed to help them grow professionally—not simply filling empty positions in your workforce—you will see your company thrive in 2022 and beyond.

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After a long and varied career in construction at Target Corporation, Paul Robinson founded [ConstructReach](#) in 2018. Since then, ConstructReach has become a partner for many brands and general contractors across the country looking to connect with millennials and Generation Z. This meant creating a network for all industry stakeholders including students, educators, general contractors, and other industry professionals. Robinson holds a degree in construction management from Kansas State University.

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