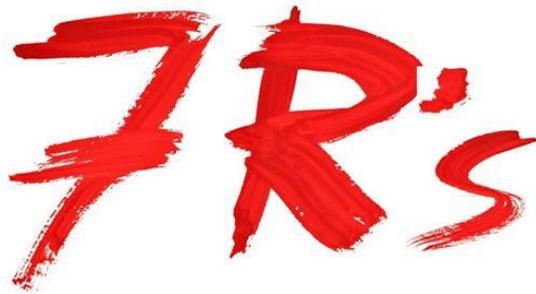




**The Seven R's of
Workforce Development in the
Union Construction & Maintenance Industry**

Download at www.tauc.org/seven



The Seven R's of
Workforce Development in the
Union Construction & Maintenance Industry

- 1. REDEFINE** Our Core Values
- 2. RESPOND** To 21st Century Business Realities
- 3. RENOVATE** Our Business Model
- 4. RENEW** Our Commitment to Safety
- 5. REBRAND** Our Industry
- 6. RETAIN** Our Skilled Craft Workers
- 7. RECRUIT** A New Generation



REDEFINE

Our Core Values

We must redefine our core values so that people from all walks of life want to work in our industry and feel wanted and accepted.

BUT at the same time, we can't abandon the principles that have brought us this far. We must never compromise on quality, productivity, safety and training.

It's time to reject outdated ideas and perceptions. We have to look at our industry not from the inside out, but from the outside in.

When you drive to the jobsite tomorrow morning, take a few minutes to look around. Watch the crews and the contractor. Observe their attitudes. Listen to what they say and how they say it. Are there a lot of four-letter words and angry faces?

Then ask yourself...

If **YOU** were a bright, motivated young person, would **YOU** want to work on this jobsite? Would you fit in?

Would they **LET** you fit in?

In order to recruit the best and brightest, we have to understand how we are being perceived by the people who could potentially join our industry. It doesn't matter what WE think. It matters what THEY think. If we are perceived as being behind the times, or unwilling to accept new people, then it's **GAME OVER** for our industry.



RESPOND

To 21st Century Business Realities

We must respond to twenty-first century business realities and accept that the competitive landscape has permanently changed.

If we want to recruit the best, we have to be straight with them.

It all begins with acknowledging a simple fact...

The good old days are gone, and they aren't coming back.

Our current and potential client base is changing. America's energy boom in the gas and oil sectors means there are more energy companies than ever before.

The truth is, many of these energy companies don't care if the work is done union or non-union. *They just want it to get done.* And although it's painful to admit it, at this point they seem to feel more comfortable using non-union contractors. In some cases, they don't trust us yet – partly because of mistakes the previous generation made, but mainly because we haven't done a good enough job of convincing them that things have changed. We haven't sold them on the fact that we understand the realities of business and know how to bring real value to their bottom line.

THIS MUST CHANGE.



RENOVATE

Our Business Model

A talented worker doesn't want to spend the most productive years of his or her life stuck in an industry that has failed to keep up with the times.

That means we have to get comfortable with change, because change is here, whether we like it or not. We don't need to merely step outside our comfort zones – we need to run away from them as fast as we can.

Our industry has a number of institutional barriers that only we can tear down.

INTER-CRAFT COOPERATION: Every time a craft worker refuses to cooperate with another trade, the job falls further behind schedule.

We cannot compete without effective cooperation between the crafts. Let's replace "Don't talk to me" with "I've got your back."

It's called teamwork.

WORK STOPPAGES: Today's energy industry is predicated on speed. We cannot dismiss our clients' concerns. Labor and management must address the problem of work disruptions *in any form*.



RENEW

Our Commitment To Safety

Our message to workers considering entering the field needs to be loud and clear:

Safety is ALWAYS the most important aspect of the job, period.

It's more important than the schedule. It's more important than the budget. Safety trumps everything.

New workers need to understand and appreciate the culture of safety awareness and injury prevention that we have created over the last twenty years. They need to know from day one that they are expected to buy into the safety culture one hundred percent.

Our emphasis on safety can be a valuable recruiting and marketing tool. When people who are considering a career in union construction see how seriously we take the issue of safety, they will understand that it's more than just a business decision.

When we demonstrate how much time and money we spend to make sure our people go home safely every night, it's going to make an impact on people choosing a career.

They will realize that in union construction, they won't be just another cog in the machine.

They matter, and their families matter, and they will be valued.

SAFETY FIRST. ALWAYS.



REBRAND

Our Industry

We will not attract quality workers to the union construction field until we change our brand.

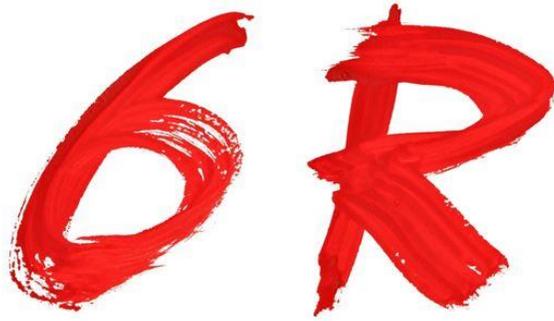
As explained by branding expert Karen Post, “A brand is what a customer – or potential customer – thinks, feels and expects about your organization.”

The union construction industry has a big image problem. Dumb mistakes from the past continue to haunt us. While we've made great strides in the last decade, we still have a long way to go. All too often, we still act as our own worst enemy. We are making it much too easy for our non-union competitors to swoop in and take away work that we should be doing.

We need to take a long, hard look at who we are as an industry and how we are being perceived by the business world – and by young people who are in the process of choosing their careers.

Many of our websites are drab and “old school” instead of appearing fresh and contemporary. We ignore the importance of visuals. As Karen said, “People often make judgments based on what they see, pure and simple.”

We have a lot to offer. We have a great story to tell. But we need to tell that story in a way that young people will find appealing.



RETAIN

Our Skilled Craft Workers

Workforce retention – keeping the people we already have – is just as important as recruiting new workers.

The clock is ticking. Baby boomers with decades of experience in the trades are retiring by the truckload, a “brain drain” and a “skills drain” of epic proportions.

We can't afford to lose more good people.

Contractors need to do more to motivate their most valuable workers and engage them in the process. One easy way is to share more information. Talk to your crew about the local and regional economy. What are you hearing in terms of potential new work? Be honest with them – explain why you lost that last bid. Explain the realities of the business world to them. Let them know about the opportunities AND the obstacles.

In short, give them the big picture. Highly skilled, veteran workers are curious by nature. They are hungry for information. They put everything they have into the job. It's natural for them to want to know more about where the industry is headed – and what THEY can do to make sure the paychecks keep coming.



RECRUIT

A New Generation

Generation Y – the “millennials” in their twenties and thirties – represent our industry’s future. What are we doing to recruit them?

- The Building and Construction Trades Department operates over 1,600 joint apprenticeship training centers across the country that train nearly 70% of all construction apprentices in the United States. Taken together, these training programs are equivalent to the third largest public university system in the country – bigger than the Ohio State university system and the University of Texas system.
- Thanks to provisions in the various collective bargaining agreements, the Building Trades and our signatory contractors are able to invest roughly one billion dollars per year – that’s billion with a B – in their joint training programs.
- The TAUC Labor Committee has created the “Next Generation of Craftpersons Task Force” to determine how to best identify and recruit the next wave of workers. Over the past year, the task force has forged an alliance with 10 of the 14 building trades.

Yes, we face many challenges. But we have a story to tell.

We’re not offering jobs; we’re offering careers.