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# Finding Skilled Employees

They don't just reflect the company; they are the company

**"The biggest key in retaining people is to treat them better than anybody else treats them; chew them out in private and praise in public."**

— Jay Newitt, Brigham Young University professor of construction management

## Ask Around

**T**he best way to find a good foundation crew is to ask the framing crew," says Jay Newitt, professor of construction management at Brigham Young University and construction industry consultant. "And the best way to find a good framing crew is to ask the drywall crew." In other words, tradespeople will always know if the crew before them did a good job.

Newitt also recommends forming a good relationship with the local trade, vocational or technical schools, programs and professors. "Volunteer to be a guest speaker, offer a scholarship or internship or be on the industry advisory committee," says Newitt. Professors will also know which students master a wide range of skills.



## Building a Retaining Wall

**G**ood people want more than a job, they want a lifestyle," says Newitt. "Treat them so they want to stay." How do you do it? Have a good insurance program in place. Make a future with the company visible and attainable by providing training and promoting from within.

Newitt suggests working a rewards program into your budget. "People will stay when they're appreciated," he says. Plaques, write-ups in the local paper, a gift certificate, something to let them know how valuable they are.

Especially if an employee is putting in extra hours, keep the family that is missing them in mind. "If you have an employee that did a particularly good job, put in the extra mile and really took care of the customer, send that employee's spouse a gift or fruit basket," says Newitt.

## Beyond Want Ads

**O**ne link on Rob Boram Construction's Web site reads "Employment Opportunities." The page it leads to shows that the Wellsburg, W.Va., company is always looking for skilled workers and that it offers health insurance, paid time off, an IRA and bonuses. The company recently hired a designer/estimator who sent in his resume because of the site, says CEO Paula Boram.

Her search included contacting trade schools and placement services in the area. She whittled down the resumes she received and brought in three candidates. The company invited each candidate to set up a table with their work and share their work history and reasons for choosing this career.

It was "a great process," says Boram. "We would definitely use it again."

## THE LIST

### 5 Best Benefits

Most firms that made *Professional Remodeler's* 2003 and 2004 lists of the Best Remodeling Companies to Work For provided these:

1. 401(k)
2. Flexible work hours
3. Tuition reimbursement
4. Profit sharing
5. Quarterly bonuses