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Promoting Indiana's Building Trades Unions in Cost Effective Ways

Union trades have been hurting to find workers for years now. While wages for union workers are continuing to increase, the number of union workers is not. A data chart from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has reported, "in 2000 wages increased by 3,126,00 however total members decreased by 143,000." Whenever analyzing the data chart twenty years after 2000 "in 2020 it shows wages decreased by 9,563,000 and members total decreased by 321,000" (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). When breaking this information down from 2000 to 2020 it can be interrupted that an increase in wages does not guarantee more workers. The way to solve the union trades worker shortage is through advertisement and inclusion.

Social media is a large portion of "Generation Z's" (1997-2012) lives. It is used daily as a source of entertainment, buying and selling items, connecting with friends and family, and many other things including job searches. The outreach social media has is unmatched, just from one post, a sponsored post, or a shared post. If the Indiana Building Trades Unions used social media; Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, Streaming Sites Commercials (Hulu, Netflix, HBO Max, etc.), etc, once a week to promote a different building trades program it has the potential to see a large impact at little to no cost. One Facebook or Instagram post, posted by Indiana's Building Trades Unions platform has a major outreach to the community. If ten shared that post onto their feed and they have 300 friends or followers each, that singular post has the potential to reach 3,000 other people. That post may inspire someone unaware of Indiana's Building Trades Unions to contact them, it also shares more information about building trades, the opportunities associated with Indiana's Building Trades Unions, and the benefits of being a part of it. Along with reaching people who didn't know about Indiana's Building Trades Unions or a specific trade and it may spark their interests.

High school students are large users of social media and it is implemented into most of their daily lives, however face-to-face contact is still of importance. Indiana's Building Trades Unions already have outreach in vocational school programs within Indiana High Schools but what about the students who do not attend those programs, or know they exist. Having call-out meetings during high school lunches, after school, and during other "down-time" periods of the day could reach more students. Providing school counselors with Indiana's Building Trades Unions information to reach them if a student has questions, informational pamphlets, and posters to hang within schools are other good options for outreach. Several high schoolers know they do not wish to attend a college or university but they don't know any other options for themselves. With college being the "go-to route" pushed onto students for years, being made aware of other opportunities is helpful to provide students with the best perspective for their future. If the schools and Indiana's Building Trades Unions worked together they could provide students with better knowledge of trades, contacts to reach each trade, and the benefits of working in a trade.

With the target group usually being associated with high schoolers, since they are the next individuals joining adulthood and the workforce, Indiana's Building Trades Unions should target all groups of students. Stereotypically building trades is interpreted as a "man's line of work" but that is not always the case. When young women are unsure about their plans and don't wish to attend a post-secondary school, cosmetology seems like the only route for them. According to Family Handyman, "Women make up less than ten percent of trades." Advertising that women are welcome, and wanted in Indiana's Building Trades Unions have the potential to provide a larger pool of applicants. Another source states, "Cultural differences allow for diverse perspectives and new ways of thinking" (Fieldboss). The benefits of having young women and

minorities in Indiana's Building Trades Unions have the potential to spark new ideas, efficiency on job sites, and other beneficial traits.

Focusing on a target group of Indiana's high schoolers paired with the use of social media, school visits, informational pamphlets and videos, and including trades that are welcoming to anyone despite gender, race, etc. there is a large room for large quintiles of growth from these actions. So, a small action like posting every Friday, labeled with a catchy slogan like, "Find Your Trade Friday" would have significant community outreach. Featuring a different trade every week would also make people aware of trades they might not know were out there, or may catch their interest. Indiana's Building Trades Unions is a great opportunity for so many individuals and advertising the great qualities of building trades will go a long way.

References

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