

# Shortages in the construction industry



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Construction Trades are the backbone of the construction industry. The trades are a specific practice much like college degrees where one becomes a professional after taking specific types of classes and has a certain number of hours in the field. Some of the most popular trades today are plumbing, carpentry, electrical, and many more. About 20 years ago, the construction trades were the most common job and most practiced job. In the recent years, the trade has declined incredibly. Finding trade workers that are well qualified or just trade workers in general are extremely hard to come by, about eight out of ten of the construction companies are having this issue according to a recent survey by the Associated General Contractors of America (2018, para. 2). With this shortage of trade workers, it could affect the economy and could lead to higher pay, lack of work done, and much more. Without the construction workers, the industry will not be able to keep up with the demand. The shortage might have happened because of several reasons such as retirements, college education verses trades, or from the economic pressure. The construction trade shortage has impacted the economy already, but by adding Esko Vest, changing the trade work schedule, scholarships, immigration changes, and increase salaries, the economy will be better as a whole not only now, but in the future as well.

Trade jobs are some of the most difficult jobs because of all the stress that is put on a trade worker's body day in and day out. The effect it has on one's body is from all the constant moving, lifting, hammering, and many other things. One of the biggest effects on the construction worker shortage may have come from the trade jobs requiring too much body work and overall led to long term injury. With all this labor work, it is very stressful on one's body

creating a lot of pain to workers backs and joints. If the industry was able to add safer precautions like recent design Ekso Vest. The Ekso Vest is a recently released construction tool that goes on the back and arms of the trade workers. The Ekso Vest is a lift assist tool that created less strain on the construction workers body. The Ekso Vest makes heavy construction tools such as a jack hammers feel lightweight. The only downside to this product is that it cost a significant amount of money. With this newly released product, it would create less stress on worker's bodies and lead to less injury on the construction job sites. " Ekso Bionics is best known as the creator of a robotic exoskeleton that helps injured or disabled people walk on their own. But in the last few years, the company has moved beyond medical devices, and is now making wearable robots to help workers in manufacturing and construction", (CNBC, 2018).

The second idea that could create less injury on the worker's body and possibly lead to more workers is to change the construction work schedule. A better work schedule would give workers more time to let their body rest from injury. Occupational safety and health administration (OSHA) have been involved in the industry for decades. Their job is creating a safer job environment such as setting regulations to keep workers safe from injury. Congress passed the " Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, OSHA was created to assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance", (OSHA, 2018) Although OSHA has helped to keep people from getting large injuries, they have not made the steps to helping create workers bodies from everyday injury such as

backpain, foot injuries, and any other types of body pains. The work schedule change would be somewhat like a nurse schedule. The schedule would consist of 12-hour work days where workers would work one day and then have the next day off throughout the week and have the weekend off. With this change, it would give the workers more of a break and allow their bodies time to rest and overall create less strain on their body. The downside would be that the 12-hour days would be very tiring and would be very hard to apply to the work industry. With this change of work day, it would give the construction trades more workers wanting to avoid long term injuries.

Joining the labor force seems to be not everyone's choice when inside high school. Most students seem to choose the path of going to college over joining the trades in today world. The trades have sky rocketed in the amount to money they are getting paid. Even with the good pay they get maybe adding scholarship will help get more students to decide to pick the trades over college. Joining the trades, the company a person works for will pay for most of the schooling for the trade one will be studying but adding scholarships will give the future trade workers help when it comes to books and supplies. " The Home Depot has established the Home Depot Trade Scholarship Program, which will award more than 600 students enrolled in building and construction trade programs \$500 to help offset the costs of tuition, fees, books and supplies" (Targeted News Services, 2009). This is a good start for a scholarship, but this about of money it will not affect the young workforces' opinions enough to have them decide to join the trade over college. It is a good way for the student to get help when getting tools for day to day work or for book and class supplies. The scholarships did come

from a good starting source, but if other major construction stores, other than Home Depot, could help, they would increase the funds, and possibly lead to more students selecting the trades over college.

In the recent couple of years, the government has started to shut down any sort of immigrant coming over to the United States. Most of the trade workers in the past 15 years have been foreign workers. An article from the National Association of Home Builders did a study to see the percent of foreign workers in specific industries, “ Immigrant workers now account for close to one in four workers, the highest share recorded by the American Community Survey (ACS). The share of immigrants is even higher in construction trades, reaching 30%”, (NAHB, 2018). If the government let more immigrants into the United States for the reason of working the construction trades, it would increase numbers for trade workers and overall make the economy better as a whole. This idea would be very hard to make happen, but it could make a major impact to the trade economy. “

Nationally, arrests of undocumented immigrants rose 40 percent in the first half of 2017, compared with the same period last year, according to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.” (Bloomberg, 2017) That goes to show exactly where some of the trade workers have gone. By doing a background check and letting some foreign workers into the United State it would help the economy and boost the trade jobs.

The trade workers are getting a large pay salary because the demand for workers had increased and the lack of workers is driving the prices up. If they increase the pay more for these workers, high school and college student will be coming over to do trade work more often. “ The BLS reported

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that the nation's 512, 290 electricians averaged \$52, 910 a year, or \$25. 44 an hour. The best paid 10 percent could earn \$82, 680 or more per year, while the lowest paid 10 percent earned \$30, 390 or less" (Chron, 2016). Electricians are the highest paid trade workers in the industry, however they need a higher pay. Over the past couple years, these numbers have increased, but not enough to make a difference in a high school senior's life to make them decide to join the trades. Over time, the demand for construction will increase if there is still not enough trade works. By increasing the salary pre-demand, it will create more high school seniors and even college students to join the trades.

In American's society today, trade has taken a fall in the number of workers overall impacting the economy. The best solution that I think can solve the shortage would be to increase safety with the Esko Vest. The construction trade shortage has impacted the economy already, but by adding Esko Vest, changing the trade work schedule, scholarships, immigration changes, and increase salaries, the economy will better as a whole not only now but in the future as well.

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