



# Tips for Recruiting & Retaining Installers

**Insulation Institute**<sup>™</sup>  
KNOWLEDGE. LEADERSHIP. CONFIDENCE.



---

According to the Home Builders Institute's spring 2022 Construction Labor Market Report, the residential construction industry will need to train and place 2.2 million new workers within the next three years to meet U.S. housing demands.<sup>1</sup> To make matters worse, construction has had a longstanding skilled labor shortage going back to the great recession in 2008. So how can insulation business owners improve their employee recruitment and retention? The insights in this guide may shed light on how to tackle one of the most pressing issues within the construction industry: finding and keeping workers.

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://hbi.org/wp-content/uploads/Spring-2022-HBI-Construction-Labor-Market-Report.pdf>

---



## Tips for Recruiting Insulation Installers

Insulation contractors have said for years that their biggest challenge is finding new employees. With more than 20 years of marketing, training, and recruitment experience, author and marketing expert Kelly McDonald<sup>2</sup> says prospective employers must use different strategies to attract employees than what they've relied upon in the past. Her recommendations for finding installer talent include the following:

### Develop a Plan

Many potential employees don't know anything about trades positions like insulation installer, so you must develop a plan to meet them where they are and explain the job. Job fairs, professional and community organizations, houses of worship, and nonprofit organizations make great partners in getting the word out that you're hiring.

### Show Your Presence in the Community

Establish a presence in your local community so that people know your company and see its values displayed before you start your recruitment efforts. Sponsoring local schools, civic and charitable organizations, and sports teams is a great way to support worthwhile causes and get free publicity for your company. This will engender goodwill within the local community and help your company achieve name recognition.

### Hire in Pairs

One novel approach is to hire employees in pairs. Young people value working with people that they already know. Having a buddy on the job makes for a motivated employee who can work with someone else who may be new to the job just like them so that they can progress together.

### Identify the Gaps

Identify gaps in the demographic profile of your workers and look for ways to recruit women, LGBTQ populations, and people of color to your workforce. Casting a wider net may lead to greater success in your recruitment and retention efforts.

---

<sup>2</sup><https://www.mcdonaldmarketing.com/aboutkelly>

---



## Retaining Installers: A Tough Challenge

In late 2021, Building Talent Foundation (BTF) released the findings of research it conducted with the Oxford Center for Employee Engagement. The resulting report, the Homebuilding Workforce Engagement Study,<sup>3</sup> revealed why it's so difficult to attract and retain trades workers, including insulation installers.

Tradespeople broadly fall into three categories: promoters, detractors, and passives. Promoters are highly engaged team members – those who would recommend working in the trades, while detractors are the tradespeople least engaged and least motivated. Finally, passives take no active role in influencing others to work in the trades. The behaviors and attributes of each category of survey participants are important because they can directly influence attrition for insulation company workers.

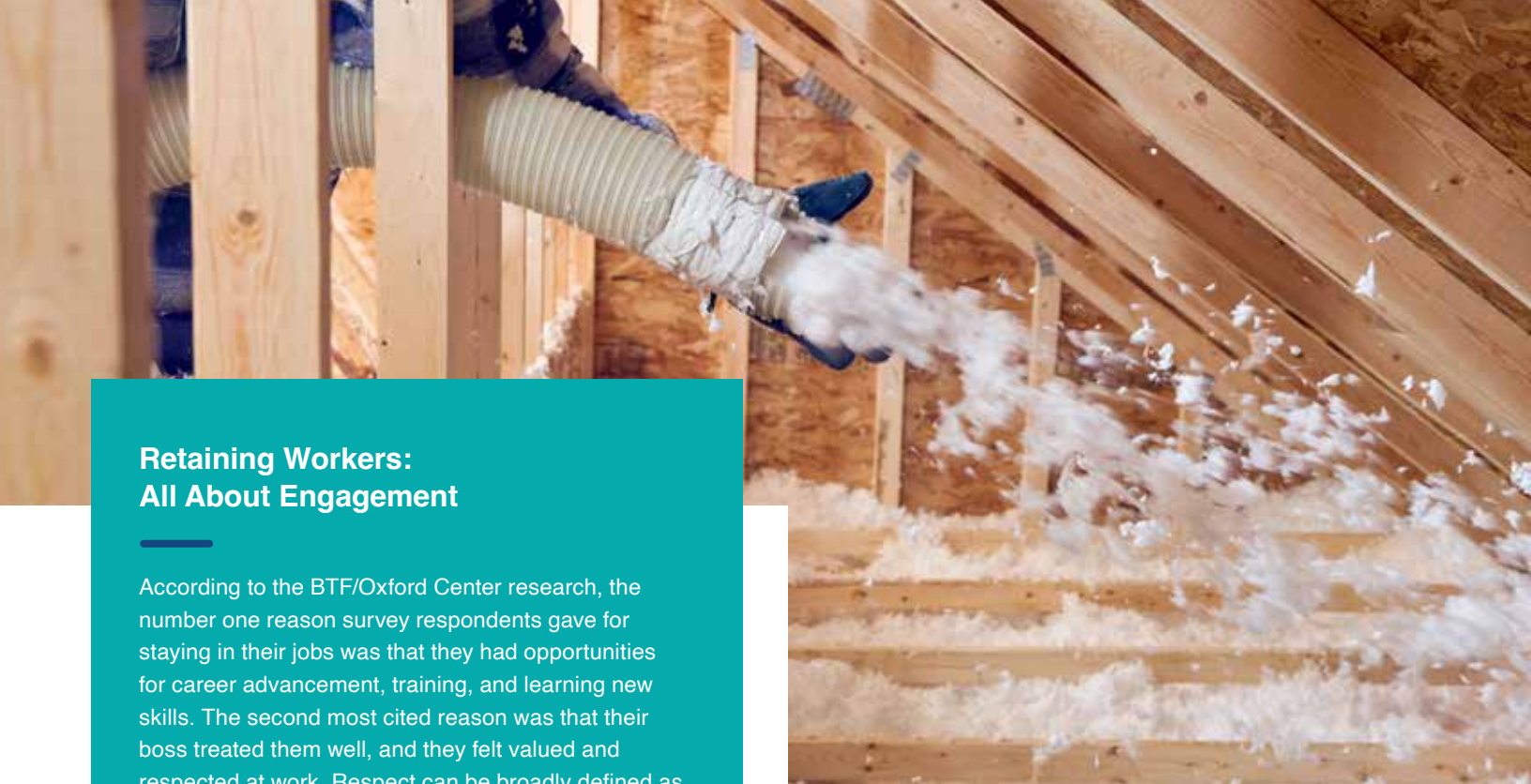
The study<sup>4</sup> also revealed that 42 percent of tradespeople (which includes insulation installers) are engaged promoters, 28 percent are detractors and 30 percent are passives. Tradespeople with one to five years of experience are most likely considering moving to another job. By the time they have been trained and are adding value to their employers, more than 2 out of 5 (43 percent) are thinking of moving on.

---

<sup>3</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5ea08129e26e0e4587370aed/t/62bbab6ba9bdd610defaaa6a/1656466288703/BTF-2021-Homebuilding-Workforce-Engagement-Study.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>Ibid

---



## Retaining Workers: All About Engagement

According to the BTF/Oxford Center research, the number one reason survey respondents gave for staying in their jobs was that they had opportunities for career advancement, training, and learning new skills. The second most cited reason was that their boss treated them well, and they felt valued and respected at work. Respect can be broadly defined as treating others how you would want to be treated and can include listening, taking employee suggestions, providing positive feedback, and encouraging a positive work environment. Giving employees the skills, tools, and opportunities to grow their careers is essential for retaining workers. Here are some ways contracting companies can engage employees:

### Increase Mentorship

Creating a culture where employees feel part of a larger mission or objective is critical, as is the need to support their progress and development. Having a mentor who can help motivate, encourage, and support your new hires' ambitions and goals can be a welcome step toward developing the kind of goodwill that encourages employees to stick around.

### Communicate Advancement Opportunities

Sure, an installer's job may be a straightforward position with limited advancement. However, insulation company owners have said the quality of their workmanship has allowed the company to grow. That growth could make room for advancement, particularly if your company focuses on quality installations. You may eventually find that having a quality control point person, a HERS rater, or a team manager is exactly what your business needs to ensure consistent quality work. If there's room for promotion, let your employees know so they don't think they have to look outside for advancement.

### Create a Team Culture

Fostering a positive, team-centric atmosphere and culture in which team members are encouraged to learn from each other can inspire employees to stay on the job longer. Make sure that your staff members support a team culture among your employees and that disagreements or misunderstandings are resolved so that the overall work atmosphere remains positive, professional, and welcoming for everyone.

### Invest in Their Development

Set aside time to provide resources for installers to pursue professional and skills development. This could be as simple as having them watch a 30-minute "how to" video online or a more substantial investment in professional training certification, like building performance professional certification. Having more knowledgeable, well-trained professionals is good for your business in the long term.

### Conduct "Stay" Interviews

Almost every employer's HR contact asks why an employee is leaving but asking why your long-time employees are staying can provide even more valuable information. Don't just talk to people when they've decided to leave. Instead, talk to them when they're still there about what motivates them to stay. This shows your employees that you care about what they think and may provide some surprising insights as to what makes your workplace a fit for them.



## Free Resources for Skills Development

Skills development doesn't have to be costly or involve formal education. Many training and upskilling resources are available for free or at a low cost to insulation contracting companies and their installers. Here are a few free resources:

### [NAIMA's Grade I Insulation Training](#)

This online video training guides installers on what Grade I installation means for fiberglass batt insulation. It also includes a certificate of completion that can be downloaded once this 20-minute course is complete.

### [NAIMA's 25 Checkpoints for Inspecting Insulation Jobs](#)

This useful downloadable guide provides information to installers on how to improve the quality of installation of insulation products.

### [NAIMA's "How to Install Batt Insulation" Video Series](#)

This three-part video series shows installers how to properly install fiberglass and mineral wool batt insulation to Grade I specifications.

### [NAIMA's Building Science 101](#)

This guide provides a layman's introduction to building science and is an excellent introductory overview of the "house as a system" approach.



## Summary

Understanding what attracts potential employees and keeps employees motivated to stay is essential to maintaining a strong business. By expanding your recruitment strategies, creating a supportive working environment, and investing in skills development, you can help attract workers and turn them into engaged promoters for your business.

# Insulation Institute™

---

KNOWLEDGE. LEADERSHIP. CONFIDENCE.

NAIMA is the association for North American manufacturers of fiber glass, rock wool, and slag wool insulation products. Its role is to promote energy efficiency and environmental preservation through the use of fiber glass, rock wool, and slag wool insulation, and to encourage the safe production and use of these materials. Through the Insulation Institute™, we leverage the collective insulation expertise of our organization and our members to empower homeowners and professionals to make informed insulation choices. Our mission is to enable a more comfortable, energy-efficient and sustainable future through insulation — and we are constantly working with building professionals, homeowners, government agencies, and public interest, energy and environmental groups to realize that vision.

Discover more insulation knowledge at [InsulationInstitute.org](https://www.insulationinstitute.org)