

New Year, Same Problems for Contract Glazing Companies

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Workforce shortages remain a problem throughout the contract glazing industry. Debbie Baker, Binswanger's director of human resources, thinks all industries will face significant challenges finding talent in 2023. The key will be implementing solutions to keep current employees engaged and motivated. This includes pay raises and bonuses.

Workforce shortages have impacted the glazing industry for years. It's been tough to get people in the door, says Thomas Cornellier, CEO of TSI Corp., a designer, engineer and installer of building envelope glass systems, ornamental metals and aluminum metal panels in Upper Marlboro, Md.

"It's difficult to hire for the trades," says Cornellier. "It's tough to get younger people into the trades despite the great benefits that come with it and the skills that you learn."

To mitigate that problem, Cornellier says that pre-fabrication has become more important. Pre-fabricating components mean fewer workers are needed in the field. For instance, Cornellier says that rather than managing multiple trades and "80 different people on-site, you're hanging these panels with ten guys," thanks to most of the work being done offsite.



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In addition to doing less with more people, companies are turning to current employees to help lure workers.

Nataline Lomedico, CEO and president of Giroux Glass, says her company offers a generous employee referral program.

"We do this to fill key positions, and it saves us time and drawn-out vetting and background processes as well as recruitment fees," says Lomedico. "Our employee-owned company culture holds high regard to our values of respect and unity, and we've discovered team approach is always best."

To combat the shortage of workers, Binswanger plans to offer even more competitive pay and benefits in 2023, says Brady Nails, director of operations. Along with pay increases, companies are investing in technology to compensate for the lack of workers.

According to the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) 2023 hiring and outlook survey, nearly 72% of companies reported increased base pay rates in 2022. This was more prominent in the South, where 76% of firms increased base pay rates in 2022 more than in 2021, compared to 73% of firms in the West, 72% in the Midwest and 65% in the Northeast.

Companies add that they expect difficulties in hiring to persist in 2023. Only 15% of companies say that it will be easier to hire workers in 2023, compared to 58% that say it will be harder to hire workers this year. As tough as finding new workers is, 69% of companies expect their headcount to increase.

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