

# The Frontline & Skilled Trades Hiring Playbook

## *How frontline hiring differs from corporate recruiting*

Hiring technicians, maintenance professionals, supervisors, and other frontline employees requires a different approach than recruiting for corporate logistics roles. Candidate availability, search radius, communication, and decision speed all affect the process.

### CORPORATE VS. FRONTLINE AND SKILLED TRADES HIRING

| Corporate hiring                                                                                                                        | Frontline and skilled trades hiring                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates may be open to broader geographic searches or relocation</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most candidates search within a practical commuting distance</li> </ul>                                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inbound applications and professional networks can produce qualified candidates</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct outreach, employee referrals, trade networks, hiring events and local relationships are often more effective</li> </ul>      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates typically expect a structured interview process</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates may disengage when scheduling or decisions take too long</li> </ul>                                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Role scope, advancement, flexibility, company culture and compensation shape interest</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pay, schedule, overtime, commute, job stability, and supervisor quality shape interest</li> </ul>                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruiters can often communicate through email and scheduled calls</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Texting, phone calls, live events and communication outside standard business hours may produce better response rates</li> </ul>    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional experience and leadership capabilities receive more attention</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certifications, equipment experience, shift availability, safety history, and hands-on skills require early verification</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notice periods may provide several weeks before a new hire can start</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates may accept another job and begin work within days</li> </ul>                                                             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employer brand is often evaluated through the company's broader reputation</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The day-to-day work environment, manager, schedule, tools, and facility conditions carry more weight</li> </ul>                     |

# The Frontline & Skilled Trades Hiring Playbook

## How frontline hiring differs from corporate recruiting

### FIVE WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR FRONTLINE HIRING PROCESS

#### 1. Recruit proactively.

*Experienced candidates may not be actively applying, so direct outreach and referrals should begin when the search opens.*

#### 2. Start with the local market.

*Focus first on candidates within a realistic commuting distance, then expand the search when local supply is limited.*

#### 3. Reduce decision time.

*Schedule interviews close together, provide feedback quickly, and avoid gaps between the final interview and offer.*

#### 4. Address the full employment package.

*Discuss pay, schedule, overtime, leadership, equipment, work environment, benefits, and job stability.*

#### 5. Keep interviews focused.

*Use each conversation to assess specific requirements and avoid adding stages that do not change the hiring decision.*

### TYPICAL HIRING PROCESS

| Corporate search                                                                                                                           | Frontline and skilled trades search                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often takes 3–6 weeks, depending on seniority and interview structure</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often takes 1–3 weeks when the company can interview and decide quickly</li> </ul>                                                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May include several interviews with different stakeholders</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually works best with one or two focused interviews</li> </ul>                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates may remain available through a longer evaluation process</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Candidates may accept another offer within days</li> </ul>                                                                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Search may include regional or national candidates and relocation</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Search usually begins within a practical commuting radius</li> </ul>                                                               |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach can include applications, professional networks, referrals, and direct sourcing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct outreach, employee referrals, local networks, hiring events and trade communities often produce stronger results</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers may follow a longer approval and negotiation process</li> </ul>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same-day or next-day decisions can improve acceptance rates</li> </ul>                                                             |

### Takeaway

*The best skilled trades professionals aren't actively job searching. Companies that recruit proactively, move quickly, and build relationships before hiring becomes urgent are better positioned to secure the frontline talent that keeps industrial operations running.*