

Training our future workforce

Last fall, a group of CEOs met during PCI's Committee Days and Membership Conference in Louisville, Ky., to brainstorm issues facing the precast/prestressed concrete industry. This group of industry leaders identified the number one item critical to growing the industry: finding qualified people for plants and jobsites. Attracting, training, and retaining quality workers was far and away the highest priority.

This workforce shortage affects us all. It increases the costs of hiring, training, and retaining employees and, when there's more demand for workers than supply, we're not able to expand our businesses.


Coming out of that meeting last fall, the Trainable Labor Task Force was created under the Business Performance Council to guide and oversee the development of training materials for new plant employees. The task group is chaired by Hagen Harker, president of Mid-States Concrete Industries, with Alex Morales, PCI's managing director of membership and education, as the main staff liaison. We are pleased to report that the group finalized a plan for an industry-wide training program focused on plant-floor employees. Proposals were reviewed, and the task force is finalizing the details with professors from the Concrete Industry Management (CIM) program (<http://www.concretedegree.com/>) at Middle Tennessee State University to complete the training program.

PCI identified a need for entry-level training for five different crews: setup, pouring, stripping, finishing, and yarding. In the proposal, the CIM program recommended a module for each subject area that will contain the following items:

- a list of all tools utilized in performing the task
- the underlying technical and theoretical concepts written in simple language
- details of every task
- a video presentation of each task being completed
- the consequences of not completing each task from an overall product quality perspective

The task group plans to have the first module ready in time to present at the next CEO Summit during the 2016 PCI Committee Days and Membership Conference this October in Rosemont, Ill., with the remaining modules rolling out over the next year, about one per quarter.

These training materials will be available in the PCI eLearning Center for all PCI members to use. We will also be offering the materials in education tracks at PCI conventions.

Developing this level of training materials represents a new and exciting aspect of the institute and creates value for our members. We welcome any thoughts you may have on the program as it develops. Feel free to contact me at brisser@pci.org. 

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