

Can technology help with talent scarcity in trades business?



You're busy, so let's cut right to the chase. As the owner or employee of a skilled trades business in one of the fastest growing cities in the country, you keep Austin running.

But there's a regional labor shortage, which is likely impacting your ability to keep up with the demand for your services. And the next generation of trades professionals is challenging the "business as usual" status quo — meaning to keep and attract talent, you need to bring your business into the era of digital technology.

"The thing that trades business owners are

missing," says VIIZR CEO Jian Wei Hoh, "is that the lack of modern technology in their operations can damage their chances at attracting and retaining the young pool of skilled trades workers who are used to having an app for everything they do."

One of the best ways to improve employee retention is to improve employee experiences with modern technology. You've probably considered buying software to help your business run smoothly. But if you're like most small business owners, you don't believe today's business software tools are designed for companies of your size¹.

That's why Ford collaborated with Salesforce to create VIIZR — an app designed specifically to help small trades businesses get more work done in less time, and improve experiences for both employees and customers. Businesses like yours have used VIIZR to help improve productivity by 48% from reduced paperwork, save 10 hours of work a week, and complete 14 additional jobs every week². In a city like Austin, those productivity gains can go a long way in meeting a dramatic spike in demand.

When your techs are dealing with less paperwork, they can get to more jobs and your business will be more profitable.

A report by the Texas Workforce Commission found that the industry growth rate for trades, transportation, and utilities in Texas is more than double the rate for the country as a whole.

"There's plenty of honest, well-paid work available for people with skills in HVAC and other trades in Austin," says Texas Air Conditioning Contractors Association president Mark Gatewood. "But a lot of business owners are having a hard time finding the workers they need to get their current workload done — let alone grow their business."

Whether you've run your trades business for decades, or you recently took over the reins and are looking for ways to modernize, here are three ways that upgrading your technology can also improve your employee experience so that you can find and keep the talent you need to grow your business.

Scheduling

As a business owner, you know that slapdash scheduling not only frustrates your techs, it also impacts your bottom line. Last minute changes and inefficient routes usually mean less work gets done that day, which hurts both business revenue and employee paychecks. They also tend to put workers behind schedule, which can frustrate both your team and your customers and create a bad precedent for the business.

Then there's the gas. Routes that take workers back and forth across town four or five times a day can add up quickly at the pump.

With VIIZR, owners and admins have all the information they need in one place to quickly create schedules and routes that make sense for your workers and your business — so your team can spend less time in traffic and more time getting work done. Field employees also have easy access to the VIIZR app on their phones so they can track and manage their schedule and assignments without having to call you for updates. A recent study found that owners can increase their scheduling productivity by 42% when they use technology like VIIZR².

Communications

If your field employee shows up to a job without much context, it's possible they won't have the right parts or tools with them and have to reschedule. The customer may have called to cancel, but the technician wasn't updated and they showed up to an empty house. Or maybe a warning about an aggressive dog wasn't passed along and the assignment turns into chaos.

65% of owners track all the job details of their business manually by themselves². That's a lot to stay on top of, and only gets harder as your business grows. So it's no surprise that unreliable and delayed communications are unfortunately common among trades businesses, and they often result in repeat visits that hurt productivity and drive up costs.

But digital natives coming out of trades school or taking over the family business aren't willing to accept this as "the way it's always been." There are new and increasing expectations for the unique details of each job to be shared quickly and accurately, and for changes to be communicated in real-time. It not only makes the job easier, it also helps provide excellent customer service.

Clear communication is the foundation of every business running smoothly. With VIIZR putting all the information you and your team need in one simple app, you can pitch a more organized business to prospective employees and prevent some of the frustrating experiences that drive talent to find other companies or lines of work.

¹ Based on Morning Consult, U.S. Omnibus Survey, November 19, 2021.

² According to the Ford Pro Small Business productivity survey, 2022. Results based on a survey of 113 small business owners nationwide. Respondents were identified as the owner, operator, president, or CEO of their companies, which were selected from targeted trades and service verticals. Respondents were asked about their business processes, tools, and workflows and provided data to substantiate time spent on given business-critical tasks.



Customer Satisfaction

Happy customers have obvious benefits for your business — they're more likely to become repeat customers, leave good reviews, and pay on time. But they also can have a huge impact on employee retention by improving the quality of your employee experience.

No one wants to show up for an assignment with a customer that's already frustrated by a rescheduled appointment or an inaccurate estimate. The VIIZR app helps set up your employees and your customers for success with clear documentation, straightforward schedules, simple quoting and invoicing, and relevant context.

Good customer experiences drive good employee experiences, helping you improve the reputation of your business for finding new talent and keep existing employees on your team by making their day-to-day assignments less frustrating and more rewarding.

VIIZR has a lot of features that help you improve your business, but that doesn't mean it's difficult to set up. Want to learn more about how VIIZR can help you improve customer and employee experience? We're offering a limited number of complimentary in-person business consultation and coaching sessions in Austin to help you move fast. That's right, we'll come to you!

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