

# STRATEGY 10+1



A Marine Industry Guide to  
**GROWING THE  
WORKFORCE**



Featuring a guide for national, regional  
and employer-level implementation.

# Supporting Partners



Dear Industry Partners,

Take a look again at the previous page of this report. The logos you see there represent the numerous local, state, regional and national marine trade associations on the front lines of addressing our workforce crisis. These are the organizations, as your industry trade associations, that show up to work for you and on your behalf every single day. Their sole purpose is to support you and your business.

We've noted them front and center here because they are taking the lead in navigating our industry toward workforce solutions. Many of them are already out there, building programs and opportunities you can take advantage of. All of them have committed to ramping up their efforts on your behalf. And this publication serves as a business plan of sorts for our industry to collaborate on this critical issue.

Let's revisit, for a moment, the idea that our workforce shortages are crippling this industry. On its face, our industry is performing quite well. Underneath the shimmering gold headlines of boat show successes, sales records, and profits growth, however, are the realities of our day-to-day struggles. Internally, we're unable to meet the demands of today's market which inhibits our growth.

Without sufficient staffing and technical expertise, increased boat sales simply translate to service wait times that will drive boaters to a different choice of recreation. Increased boat sales mean more challenges filling dealer orders when manufacturing employees are not readily available to help meet demand.

This isn't just a workforce problem. It's a customer service problem. If we can't build the boats that we can sell and we can't service the boats that we have already sold, boating will suffer.

The combined efforts of those organizations you see on the previous page are leading the way in addressing this issue. They realize that while our national organizations might be serving as the fulcrum for the industry's effort, we must address workforce issues at the state and local level. At the employer level. Our national organizations may be able to pull everyone together, but it's your state and local associations that will help deliver you the means by which you can overcome the workforce challenges in your business.

This publication is simply the start of those efforts. Take a look at where we believe we can put in our most effective efforts, watch for specific programs and services to roll out, and by all means, let us know what ideas you have to create more workforce development opportunities for you and your business.

Sincerely,

**Matt Gruhn**  
MARINE RETAILERS ASSOCIATION




**Thom Dammrich**  
NATIONAL MARINE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION




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# About the Authors

Our appreciation to the executive staff of the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association for sharing its proven expertise on this topic and for leading the effort on researching and authoring this extensive publication on the workforce issues and solutions our industry has available to it. RIMTA and its staff are uniquely qualified as this plan's author — due to both its experience of building a demand-driven talent pipeline for the past 10 years and operating in a state that has proven to be an effective testing ground for marine trades workforce development programs.

Because of Rhode Island's high concentration of marine companies, dedicated marine-trades technical and trade schools, its close working relationships with state and local government and funding organizations, and its staff's combined experience in both workforce development and the marine industry, RIMTA has been able to craft a menu of options for cultivating its workforce.

RIMTA's programs have ranged from helping local employers obtain funding to upskill their incumbent workers; programs at local middle and high schools that give students exposure to marine-trades career paths and hands-on skills; working with local public schools to knit technical education into their curriculum; and coordinating with local employers, trade schools and state funders on a range of short-term training programs, including its flagship seven-week Pre-Apprentice Training Program that moves

unemployed and underemployed individuals directly into Rhode Island's workforce.

Promoting RIMTA's efforts has been an integral part of its strategy; along with its membership, RIMTA has benefited from the increased awareness that elected officials have gained due to the local and national limelight these training programs have generated.

RIMTA's approach has been created with vision, strategy, commitment and thoughtful execution. During the past decade, the organization has learned — many times, the hard way — what works and what does not work in training and workforce program development. There were significant investments, both financial and timewise, that were and still are required for ongoing success and continuous growth. Investments like these require employers to set competition aside and work collectively toward the industry's sustainable future.

The RIMTA team believes that a rising tide will lift all boats, and its goal as our chosen author of this impressive publication is to disseminate the information and experience it has generated to the national marine-trades industry so together we can have a higher degree of success. The time and experience required by RIMTA to create this plan was largely provided with the intention of fostering partnership and camaraderie among our entire industry. ☼



*The Rhode Island Marine Trades Association team, from L to R, Brian Dursi, Director of Programs; Jen Huber, VP of Operations; Wendy Mackie, CEO; Susan Daly, VP of Strategy; Tricia Yeoman, VP of Events. Photo taken by Billy Black @ Herreshoff Marine Museum, Bristol, R.I.*

## Executive Summary

The Strategy 10+1: A Marine Industry Guide to Growing the Workforce is a new, instructive document designed to help solve the workforce challenges currently facing the marine industry. By providing action-oriented, solution-based approaches, interconnected resources and strategic outlines, we intend to provide a clear direction for successful growth. Whether you are a national or regional trade association or an individual business owner, you will learn something that can assist critical decision-making. This workforce plan is written like a roadmap for employers to begin taking matters into their own hands, wherever they are and whatever their existing supports or budget limitations may be.

In 2016, the Marine Retailers Association of the Americas released the results of its nation-wide Marine Industry Workforce Assessment to reveal the magnitude of the workforce problem we are currently experiencing. Spearheaded, informed and constructed by our own industry leaders, and ultimately commissioned as an outcome of a joint board meeting between the Marine Retailers Association and the National Marine Manufacturers Association, this plan provides a strong response. Facing the problem means that the recreational boating industry must build a workforce that will allow for growth, success and sustainability. Beginning with a situational analysis of both the accessible workforce and the industry, emergent themes give light to key areas our industry needs to focus on most. A comprehensive section on the existing workforce pipeline describes the different ages and stages of potential workers to assist you in choosing where to invest your individual time and resources.

The 10 strategies laid out in this plan are built with the entire industry in mind. They intend to cultivate a unified approach toward building our workforce locally and nationally. When

executed well, they will position our industry to be top of mind when candidates are making career choices as well as when key stakeholders are disseminating funding for quality workforce building initiatives.

The added +1 Strategy of hiring a dedicated person to coordinate workforce efforts at the national and regional levels represents the most effective way to implement the plan. The roll out of such a position at the national level will provide cohesive messaging and structure for regions and local employers. At the regional level, a workforce professional could coordinate and manage employer needs and implement specific programming to address them. The national workforce plan will shape the overall effort from the top and disseminate the information out; employers and regional groups will implement and grow the workforce effort from the ground up using the tools and standards provided.

The Strategy 10+1 guide is meant to serve as a resource for employers who wish to start fresh or build upon the steps they have already taken toward creating a solid workforce. At the end of the guide, the Employer Toolkit can help you determine what your needs are and where the best place to begin really is. The charts and graphs included are intended to be easy to use. The links connect you to live resources that can increase your knowledge on a topic or connect you to your local assets.

Confronting the future of workforce development in the marine industry is no simple task. Through the steps provided, this collaborative plan intends to turn the challenge of engaging and retaining productive employees into a collective pathway that can lead us to strengthen our industry identity and cultivate a successful business environment for all. We look forward to joining you on this journey of opportunity. 🌐



# Situational Analysis

The face of the marine industry workforce is changing. Contrasted by more than age alone, today's wave of new labor is looking for different things compared to their predecessors. Work-life balance, flexible schedules and purpose-driven work are a few of the workplace perks these arriving generations are looking for.

As an industry, recreational boating provides a fun, lifestyle-based career pathway that can be very attractive to the rising employment pool. Collectively we, as advocates for marine trades, must be prepared to provide a workplace that showcases the strength of our exciting occupational opportunities.

**First and foremost, we are faced with a pipeline problem.** With very low unemployment nationally, there are fewer workers and an increased labor demand. Our industry can no longer ignore younger workers in favor of hiring the seasoned technician. We need to figure out how to engage employees, train them ourselves and ultimately retain them. Identifying key influencers such as teachers, parents and business mentors is part of that. In addition to secondary and post-secondary students, marine trade employers can take an active role in engaging entry-level or incumbent workers, as well as veterans and candidates from other industries whose abilities may apply to marine trade applications. Tapping into locally sourced, skilled labor can allow businesses to expand capabilities and increase overall employee retention.

To attract new workers to the industry, we need to highlight our strengths and address our weaknesses. The recreational boating industry has a great deal to offer its worker base, particularly in the areas of lifestyle, work environment and career ladder advancement on the job (with little or no college education necessary). Inconsistencies in wages offered and a perception that the industry is largely seasonal reinforce a negative message. These need to be addressed.

Opportunities exist to cultivate a talent pipeline by aligning with other industries on marketing, recruitment and training. Highlighting innovative, technology-based career pathways will attract candidates from all walks of life, whether they are just entering the workforce, are veterans searching for a career, or others who may find an interest in the marine industry. Proper messaging, particularly around the lifestyle and work environment of the industry, can reinforce the industry's appeal and reduce threats.

The marine trade industry is competing for talent against bigger, better organized and better financed industries. These other industries have the same problems – limited public awareness, blue collar connotations and a greying workforce. Compounded by the push from high schools and parents to get young adults into college, industries with limited public awareness or that are perceived as “dirty” are at a serious disadvantage. While perception can be powerful, the modern marine trades employment landscape is a differing reality; lifestyle, work environment and a variety of career development pathways reflect unique options that our employers offer.

**Marine industry employers must commit to an active role in training for the potential workforce, for new hires and for their existing workforce.** There will occasionally be a perfectly trained person available to hire when you need them; however, this is not a reliable way to build your business or your workforce plan. Building training and workforce cultivation into your budget will help to ensure your business has the employees it needs now and into the future. On-the-job training opportunities with workplace mentors can offer lower-cost upskilling options while leveraging in-house talent and coaching. As the workforce pool continues to shrink, hiring will need to take on a new appearance as well. The characteristics and interests of the emerging workforce need to be taken into consideration to maximize talent acquisition.

“ There is no silver bullet to the workforce challenge. ”

**State or regional Marine Trades Associations and/or Chambers of Commerce can be excellent workforce intermediaries.**

These groups may already have some of the relationships that are necessary to start solving local workforce problems. If these groups are not options in certain areas, opportunities exist to partner with a community college, Workforce Investment Board or other industry association to find an entity that can gather and facilitate a group of employers and help navigate the workforce development process. Mapping out industry wide alliances not only helps to illustrate potential sources of resource assistance, it can also unite employers facing similar challenges related to training access, seasonal retention or skilled-labor availability.

There are increasing opportunities for employers to grow a supportive talent pipeline through the establishment of local and regional partnerships. These partnerships can be as simple as one employer working with one high school or something more robust, which includes a consortium of employers, training institutions, local non-profits and workforce investment boards. For the latter, it makes sense to identify some type of workforce convener or unifying intermediary that can delegate the variety of tasks that make up the operation.

The vast number of small or very small businesses in recreational boating present an opportunity, if not a necessity, to partner with industry colleagues and related industries. Understanding and identifying the collective challenges and opportunities within a regional network or within companies can allow small businesses to pool resources and information for the enhancement of the consortium. Sustained growth within a shared workforce is beneficial for all, though it requires competitors to work cooperatively.

**There is no “silver bullet” solution to the workforce challenge.** However, clear commonalities exist that can attract critical

**CHART 1: SWOT ANALYSIS ON WORKFORCE PIPELINE** (\*Specific to Older Workers)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b> <i>(Internal to Workers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainable age</li> <li>• Value mentors and constant feedback</li> <li>• Raised with technology; tech savvy</li> <li>• Environmental awareness and appreciation</li> <li>• Don't differentiate work life and personal life - elements of a greater whole</li> <li>• Want work that is meaningful and has positive impact on the world</li> <li>• *Relevant experience, ready to work</li> <li>• *Career-minded, stable work wanted</li> <li>• *More work-focused</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Perceived Weaknesses</b> <i>(Internal to Workers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft skills: Not work-ready, not resilient, inappropriate responses to problems, no work ethic</li> <li>• Communication (verbal and written) and math skills</li> <li>• Need clear directives and monitoring</li> <li>• Helicopter parents are involved in decisions</li> <li>• Lack of role models - advisors, influencers don't know industry</li> <li>• High expectations for wages and perks</li> <li>• *Pay expectations are higher; more important</li> <li>• *Family, financial obligations</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b> <i>(External to Workers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational reform - focus on technical training in schools</li> <li>• Trades are coming back into fashion</li> <li>• Millennials are largest demographic group</li> <li>• *Baby boomers are working longer (maybe)</li> <li>• *Work-life balance desirable</li> <li>• *May be willing to take pay cut to enjoy life more</li> <li>• *Second career shift away from "rat race"</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b> <i>(External to Workers)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited awareness of industry</li> <li>• Geographic industry differences</li> <li>• Education system focused on college track</li> <li>• Budget/funding pressures on local school systems</li> <li>• Limited value put on blue collar jobs</li> <li>• High levels of student debt</li> <li>• Cost of living and availability of services in marine communities - transportation, housing, day care</li> </ul>

*This analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats focuses on the pipeline of available talent and how our employers may attract employees into marine industry jobs.*



partnerships and increased funding. There are already excellent program models through the industry-wide training continuum, from career exposure to incumbent worker training that our industry can utilize or replicate to achieve specific objectives.

This workforce plan is **written like a guide for employers** to begin taking matters into their own hands, wherever they are and whatever their existing support or budget limitations may be. The guide is meant to serve as a resource for employers to start fresh or build upon the steps they have already accomplished.


The charts and graphs included are intended to be easy to use. The links connect you to live resources that can increase your knowledge on a topic or connect you to your local resources.

**To remain relevant, you need to rethink the way that you do business.** It's going to take more than just getting involved and cultivating your workforce. As the face of the labor pool continues to change, employers must reflect on the identity of their entire business and its operational existence to survive the long haul. Fortunately, the marine trades industry of today is uniquely positioned to radiate its collective strength in ways that benefit all employers large and small to growing a self-sustaining 21st century workforce.

The implementation of a comprehensive workforce development plan for the entire recreational boating industry is a multilateral and ongoing process. As the Baby Boomer generation continues to exit the workforce, the available labor pool will continue to shrink – both on a national and international level.


An informative Ted Talk presented in 2014 by Rainer Strack called **[“The surprising workforce crisis of 2030 and how to start solving it now”](#)** explains the disintegration of the labor pool and

**USEABLE RESOURCE**



**TED TALK**

***The surprising workforce crisis of 2030 and how to start solving it now***  
presented by Rainer Strack

 [\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)

skill mismatch that will continue to take place over the next decade. Strack states that workforce planning will become more important than financial planning in the coming years. Employers and industry groups that understand this and implement changes now will be best positioned to succeed and grow their businesses now and in the future. 🌐



## CHART 2: SWOT ANALYSIS ON INDUSTRY

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Strengths</b> <i>(Internal to Industry)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle, work environment, pride in product</li> <li>• Project-based work; team-based</li> <li>• Innovative, technology-based, cutting edge</li> <li>• Variety of work; multiple entry points, career pathways/ladders</li> <li>• Entry level jobs provide livable wage; mid-level jobs above average wage</li> <li>• Diversity and questionable past okay</li> <li>• No college degree required for some entry level jobs</li> <li>• Industry technical training and national certifications (ACMA ABYC, AIM) exist</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Perceived Weaknesses</b> <i>(Internal to Industry)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seasonality, inconsistent wages</li> <li>• Hire skilled workers or steal from other companies</li> <li>• Limited employee loyalty (due to job hopping or layoffs)</li> <li>• White, male industry - people don't relate</li> <li>• Pay levels vs. other industries</li> <li>• Lack of comprehensive benefits packages</li> <li>• Small size of businesses; no HR functions</li> <li>• Limited understanding of real cost of hiring</li> <li>• Limited understanding/tolerance of younger workers</li> <li>• Lack of formal in-house training program</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Opportunities</b> <i>(External to Industry)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal push for (advanced) manufacturing</li> <li>• Federal push for apprenticeships - awareness, \$\$</li> <li>• Economy on upswing</li> <li>• Take advantage of younger generation's trends</li> <li>• Transferable skills - use to attract from other industries</li> <li>• Environmental angles - attract millennials Water, solar, wind, biodiesel</li> <li>• Align with industries use that cross-over technologies</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Threats</b> <i>(External to Industry)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aging workforce; nobody new entering</li> <li>• Global decline in workforce size</li> <li>• Economy at full employment</li> <li>• Other major industries (e.g. manufacturing) face same perception and recruiting problems</li> <li>• Economic cycles affect lifestyle brands</li> <li>• Manufacturing moving offshore</li> <li>• Limited industry awareness; blue collar brand</li> <li>• Shrinking marine industry, access to water, availability of leisure time</li> <li>• Connection to water important for participation in boating and careers; lack of connection</li> </ul>

*The marine industry features many strengths and offers career opportunities to a wide variety of job seekers; however, the weaknesses and threats that the industry faces today have not previously been addressed in an industry-wide approach.*

# The Workforce Pipeline

The face of the marine industry workforce is changing. More than its age alone, workers of today are looking for different things in their career compared to generations of the past. Work-life balance, flexible schedules and purpose-driven work are a few of the workplace perks this new generation of job candidates are seeking. As an industry, recreational boating provides a fun

lifestyle-based career pathway that can be very attractive to the rising employment pool. As an industry, we must cultivate our own workforce and be prepared to provide a workplace that showcases the strengths of our exciting career opportunities. On the next page, we'll take a closer look at our workforce pipeline and the opportunities it presents.

Cultivating the Talent Pipeline					
Who	Middle School Students	High School Students	Post-Secondary Students	Entry Level Workers	Incumbent Workers
<b>Why Engage This Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beginning to consider possible careers</li> <li>Limited to no awareness of marine trades industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Often in tech program at school; gaining exposure to careers and skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrolled at trade or technical school, community college, 4-year college with marine trades or related programs; learning relevant/ applicable skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work ready, with basic skills; may have graduated from school/program focused on marine, or may just be ready to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current employees who are looking to increase their skill sets</li> </ul>
<b>How to Get Involved</b> <i>Programs, Events, Training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interactive career fairs</li> <li>Company field trips and tours</li> <li>After-school programs</li> <li>Vacation camps</li> <li>Bench projects</li> <li>Employer presentations at schools</li> <li>In-class or on-site mentors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job shadows</li> <li>Internships</li> <li>Summer work experiences</li> <li>After-school programs</li> <li>Vacation camps</li> <li>Dual enrollment program with community college or post-secondary school</li> <li>2 to 4 year career tech program</li> <li>Apprenticeship articulation with course credit</li> <li>Participate on curriculum committee or as a guest instructor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Internships</li> <li>Summer or part-time employment</li> <li>Career days</li> <li>Industry tours/presentations</li> <li>Participation on curriculum committee or as guest instructor</li> <li>Teacher/instructor externships, training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-Apprenticeship or other short-term skill/competency training that provides exposure to industry and skills</li> <li>On the Job Training (OJT)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apprenticeships</li> <li>Certifications</li> <li>Train the Trainer</li> <li>Conference workshops and seminars</li> <li>Group trainings</li> <li>Continuing education</li> </ul>
<b>What's the Role of the Employer</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide real connection to industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide work experiences for students (future employees)</li> <li>Provide teacher externships</li> <li>Join a Curriculum Advisory to inform demand-driven curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide input and feedback for demand-driven programming</li> <li>Host interns-Hire graduates</li> <li>Student mentoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide onboarding process</li> <li>Create internal career pathway model</li> <li>Provide on-site mentorship model</li> <li>Provide input and feedback to trainers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide on-the-job training</li> <li>Create talent cultivation plans</li> <li>Budget for ongoing training</li> <li>Attend professional development</li> <li>Demonstrate employee investment</li> </ul>
<b>Who Can Help</b> <i>Relationships and Partnerships</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools/PTAs</li> <li>Youth centers</li> <li>Sailing schools/teams</li> <li>Yacht clubs</li> <li>Local community youth organizations (e.g., Boys/Girls Clubs, Boys/Girl Scouts, YMCA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools/PTAs</li> <li>Teachers and instructors in career tech programs</li> <li>Career, guidance counselors</li> <li>Post-secondary schools at community colleges or trade schools</li> <li>Local community youth organizations (e.g., Boys/Girls Clubs, Boys/Girl Scouts, YMCA)</li> <li>Youth centers</li> <li>Sailing schools/teams-Yacht clubs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program instructors and directors</li> <li>Career counselor and job placement offices</li> <li>Product distributors or manufacturers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Career and youth centers</li> <li>School and training providers</li> <li>State or local economic development or workforce agencies (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Investment Board (WIB))</li> <li>State agencies (e.g., corrections, human services, veterans)</li> <li>Local organizations focused on placing adults (e.g., community action, GED/Adult education programs)</li> <li>Other related industry associations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local or national marine trade associations and/or Chambers of Commerce</li> <li>Community colleges or post-secondary training providers</li> <li>ABBRA, ABYC, AMI, NMMA, MRAA, etc.</li> <li>Other related industry associations</li> <li>Product manufacturers or distributors</li> <li>Workforce Investment Boards, regional economic development organizations or Department of Labor</li> </ul>
<b>How to Pay</b> <i>Funding Sources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community or foundation grants</li> <li>School board</li> <li>Fundraisers</li> <li>In-kind employer contributions</li> <li>Department of Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paid work experience through WIB</li> <li>Career tech education funding (e.g., Perkins Act)</li> <li>Community or foundation grants</li> <li>WIB/WIOA</li> <li>In-kind employer contributions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAFSA financial aid</li> <li>Pell grants</li> <li>Scholarships</li> <li>Tuition reimbursement programs</li> <li>Hiring incentives through WIB/WIOA</li> <li>Wage reimbursement programs such as OJT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hiring incentives through WIB/WIOA</li> <li>Wage reimbursement programs such as OJT</li> <li>State training funds</li> <li>Apprenticeship funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wage reimbursement</li> <li>Training funds</li> <li>WIB grant funding</li> <li>Scholarships</li> <li>Apprenticeship funds</li> </ul>
<b>Costs of Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$7-10K for afterschool program, vacation camp or summer work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$7-10K for afterschool program, vacation camp or summer work</li> <li>Additional costs may include buses to industry site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depends on program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$10-100K or more depending on size and content</li> <li>Additional cost for program administration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Depends on program</li> </ul>

## CHART 3: WORKFORCE PIPELINE CONTINUUM



*It's important for marine industry employers to understand that the workforce pipeline does not begin and end with finding an employee. To effectively manage their own workforce, employers will need to explore on-the-job training programs, apprenticeships, professional development and certifications to continue to offer opportunities to today's workforce.*

### In-School Populations

Students provide a captive audience for career awareness and basic skill building for our industry. We know where to find them and we know that they will, one day, be seeking a job. In most cases, their decisions are influenced by their parents or significant adults in their lives. As an industry, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to inform both groups about the exciting career opportunities that exist in recreational boating.

**Middle School Students:** Working with Middle School students can be very fun and personally rewarding. The goal for working

age group cultivates career opportunity awareness for young people as well as their parents.

**High School Students:** If you are looking for seasonal summer workers or have an interest in mentoring, working directly with high school students can be a perfect fit. If you are hoping to hire a full-time, entry-level employee, a high school graduate connected to a worksite mentor might do the trick.

High school students and recent graduates can lack the real-world experience that employers require to create billable hours. Working with your local high school or career tech school to provide internships or work experience opportunities while

“ There is a significant cause for employers to rethink their current hiring practices and create a culture of continuous improvement. ”

with this group is to generate career awareness. Guest speaking on career days or supporting an afterschool boat building program are two effective examples of ways that you can work with this population. This age group is inquisitive and explorative in nature, so sponsoring a scavenger hunt at your local boat show or starting a “take a kid fishing” day might be a great way to get started. If you are the type of employer that likes to give back to the local community, this may be a great place to begin your long-term worker cultivation, even on a very small budget.

Working with this specific student population, no matter what activity you choose, typically provides great photo opportunities for local publicity and many times requires parent knowledge or involvement. Getting a story and photo in your local paper can provide better brand awareness for your company, too. Obviously, these middle schoolers will not be filling any of your key management positions any time soon, but they do have parents who are mid-career that might be prospects. Working with this

students are still in high school can offset the learning curve when they come to work full-time. Employers can offer input on competencies and skills that would increase hiring potential, establish internships, provide workplace tours, supply bench projects and create mentorship resources for the students.

**Post-Secondary Students:** Post-secondary schools can provide employers with semi-skilled to skilled workers who have already made the decision to focus their career pathway on the marine or related industries. Their baseline technical skills and interest in learning makes them perfect candidates for continued in-house training and/or apprenticeship. Employer input on curriculum relevancy and internship opportunities are highly sought after by these schools to enhance the graduation-to-work-placement ratio. Career counselors hired by these schools can help to match pending graduates with internship experiences and job placements. Internship stipends and hiring expenses can be offset by special hiring programs in some areas.

## Available Workforce Populations

As we move into lower unemployment rates across the nation, hiring skilled workers is going to get more difficult and/or much more expensive. Growing your talent base from within should be considered as a primary option for filling middle and high skill positions.

**Entry-Level Workers and Career Changers:** The existing worker population, or the available labor pool, consists of entry-level workers and career changers including dislocated workers. This group of workers, more than any other, are emotionally ready to work and desire a job that provides them with stability and pride.

Also common among this population is the need for skill training – whether to bring them up to speed on basic industry-specific terminology and safety standards or to adapt their existing skill base to the marine industry, such as with an automotive mechanic. Shorter-term training programs can be developed to ensure basic competencies are acquired. This group of workers are prime for structured on-the-job training and/or apprenticeships.


Hiring workers at the start of their career or those that are career changers can offer employers an opportunity to hire at an affordable rate while training the employee on the job. Though these employees can sometimes require the most financial investment, there are usually regional and federal funding sources available to support this population through short-term, train-to-hire programs, Individual Training Accounts, On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Apprenticeships.

Students graduating from high school are thinking about their career options with a debt-to-earning power ratio. Because new workers can enter the recreational boating industry with limited training and have options to learn and earn through on-the-job training and apprenticeship models, there is a significant cause for employers to rethink their current hiring practices and create a culture of continuous improvement.

Military veterans are a natural fit for jobs in the recreational boating industry, as well. Most regions have special programs that help veterans transition back into civilian life and a connect to a job or career opportunity. The National Association of Manufacturers provides several great resources for employers, including a website featuring tools, studies and researched information on best practices to identify and develop workforce solutions. One such veteran transition opportunity, NAM's **The Manufacturing Institute** offers a **Heroes MAKE America** program: A 10-week career skills program that seeks to build a pipeline from military to manufacturing careers. It gives manufacturers direct access to industry-credentialed and industry-qualified veteran candidates with workplace skills.

**Incumbent Workers:** Incumbent workers, simply defined, are the employees you already have. Your current workforce can be your greatest asset, acting as mentors for interns and entry-level workers or training them to move up your internal career ladder. Your existing employees already understand your work product, environment and cultural norms. Investing in them with ongoing

**USEABLE RESOURCE**



***From Military Front Lines to Manufacturing Front Lines***

*Veterans and Your Workforce*

[!\[\]\(af5b8d1a4296998418c1af32d6bb0cad\_img.jpg\) \*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)

training and upskilling opportunities fosters retention, improves morale and increases your overall capability.

There are many benefits to training your incumbent workforce. As with apprenticeships, investing in the workforce that you already have builds your employees' skills and confidence levels. This ultimately results in better productivity, a decrease in rework and reduced turnover rates.


Training for your incumbent workforce can take on many forms from onboarding of new employees with safety training to mechanical certifications for mid-level employees to management and leadership skill development for managers. It includes training on software, hardware or anything that builds capacity, efficiency and productivity for your employees and your business. ✪





# 10+1 : The Marine Industry Workforce Strategy

*There is no “one size fits all” solution to the workforce crisis that the marine industry currently faces.*

It is safe to assume that hiring talented workers will only get more difficult with time if corrective actions are not taken. To create a comprehensive plan to address the workforce challenges that are currently affecting us, the entire industry – from individual employers to national organizations – have a part to play. A series of strategies have been created to address this issue. Role delineations have been showcased for national and regional associations as well as for local employers.

 **National Associations** are perfectly positioned to address broad-based issues that are affecting the entire industry and help to organize large scale efforts that can be customized at the regional or local level, aggregate industry-wide data, standardize programing and lobby for resources at the federal level.

 **State or Regional Marine Trade Associations or Chambers of Commerce** (collectively referenced below as “regional role” in each strategy), can provide access to local employers, survey members to locate regional industry trends and needs and act as an employer convener or industry liaison to workforce resources for their membership.

 **Employers** are at the heart of any workforce development effort. They must commit to and take an active role in any workforce cultivation effort.

1. Train the Trainer Programming
2. Professional Development Series for Employers and MTAs
3. Increase Career Awareness
4. Support Initiatives in K-12 Schools
5. Align with Industries Seeking Workers with Similar Competencies
6. Generate a Library of Effective Program Models and Standardize for Replication
7. Aggregate Industry Data
8. Communicate and Distribute Information
9. Advocate for Funding
10. Cultivate Regional Employer Collaboratives
- +1. Hire a National Workforce Development Coordinator



## Strategy 1: Train the Trainer Programming

Hosting an intern or starting a formalized apprenticeship program requires planning and an internal organizational structure that can support those who are learning on the job. Many employers are hesitant to take on an intern or an apprenticeship program because they lack the internal supports such as on-site mentors or a structured learning plan required to carry out these programs effectively. A Train the Trainer program can help to make your existing skilled workers better coaches and ensure the transfer of legacy industry knowledge to the next generations. A program like this should include topics like workplace diversity, intergenerational communications and supports, and the best ways to transfer essential knowledge through on-site training. An example of an active Train the Trainer program can be viewed [here](#).

USEABLE RESOURCE



Compiled by Stuart Bass  
Keystone Development Partnership  
February 2017

### Mentoring for Apprenticeship

Train the Trainer for On-the-Job Training (OJT)

CLICK HERE



- Create, vet and/or endorse a Train the Trainer program that can address the issue of job-site mentoring with nuances the marine industry can directly benefit from.



- Aggregate interest in and host small group trainings for regional employer member base.
- Interface with a state's Department of Labor and/or elected officials to locate and garner funding for incumbent worker training to provide membership benefits and accelerate the implementation of these types of trainings.



- Purposefully understand the capabilities and interests of your current workforce to determine who on your staff can be developed into workplace mentors.
- Provide access to training and professional development specific to workplace mentoring.
- Hire for competencies rather than skills, then train on the job.



## Strategy 2: Professional Development Series for Employers and Regional Marine Trades Associations

The recreational boating industry is flush with opportunities to enhance professional development for those who fill key positions in our workplace. Utilizing the vast network of trade shows, conferences and boat shows around the country, an ongoing training series can be implemented to address topics specific to building an employer coalition, creating a workplace culture that attracts talent, advocating for local training funds, and many other topics. Many of these types of workshops already exist and are offered at these annual events. Collectively rebranding, organizing and tracking these opportunities to create a comprehensive workforce-building program for employers will allow for structured professional development in our industry.

### USEABLE RESOURCE



#### CAREERS IN BOATING

*If you love your job, it isn't work*  
from MMTA

 [CLICK HERE](#)



- Create a standardized track of seminars and workshops available to employers and marine trade associations at existing national events, trade shows and conferences.
- Create a seminar series tailored for regional marine trade associations to up-skill and inform them on ways they can support workforce talent pipeline development.
- Develop an ongoing fee-for-view webinar series for employers who are unable to attend annual conferences.



- Attend training seminars at national conferences or local workshops on workforce development and pipeline cultivation.
- Coordinate workshops for membership utilizing local workforce professionals as speakers to serve employers and association staff simultaneously.
- Host a local forum that can provoke necessary conversation and connection between employers and the workforce system.



- Inform yourselves and act.
- Utilize the existing workforce development resources being offered by national and regional associations.
- Communicate workforce challenges to industry associations via survey responses and one-to-one conversations with industry leaders.
- Offer feedback on the worthiness of the workshops and seminars you have attended.
- Provide case studies that can be used as industry-specific examples of lessons learned and/or effective practices.



## Strategy 3: Increase Career Awareness

Workforce marketing and branding for the industry and for individual employers should showcase the work environment and employer culture to attract new workers. The recreational boating industry has entry-level jobs which provide higher-than-average starting wages, offer upward mobility through on-the-job training and require little or no college education. This is attractive not only to new workers who are unable to carry post-secondary debt, but also to Workforce Investment Boards looking for affordable work placement solutions. See the recent Massachusetts Marine Trades Association Career Awareness [video](#) for an excellent example of marketing to industry strengths.

**Boat Shows:** Research has shown that people who have already been exposed to or have a connection to the water are more likely to go into a career in the marine industry. Every region has access to one or more boat shows taking place each year. Boat shows offer a natural gathering of regional employers that showcase the breadth and depth of the recreational boating industry in a defined area.

Reaching out to high schools, community colleges, veteran's offices and American Job Centers to invite job seekers, as well as those who are working with job seeking populations, to invite them to your regional show can offer a rich career awareness opportunity or provide a highly visible job fair prospect. National and regional marine trades associations can work with the owners of boat shows to coordinate space and time to conduct career awareness events at shows as well as provide a toolkit with suggestions for activities that will not impede the business that needs to take place there.

Many regional associations are already taking advantage of this opportunity by hosting job fairs, creating interactive youth activities, crafting on-site scavenger hunts with school groups or providing booth space to local trade schools for a live boat build. Integrating career awareness with boat shows allows employers to leverage the existing high-profile event and the thousands of water-enthusiasts that it attracts. See the [Seattle Boat Show Career Fair](#) for an example.



- Make space and time available at Boat Shows to accommodate local efforts for industry career awareness as an in-kind contribution
- Develop a database of interactive activities, effective career awareness practices and sample collateral materials for dissemination



- Make space and time available at local and regional boat shows to accommodate local efforts for industry career awareness as an in-kind contribution or work with the local show producer to lead the effort toward the same result
- Organize the effort yourselves or partner with a local organization with more expertise, such as a community development organization or American Jobs Center
- Promote existing technical training and standards-based certifications already existing in the industry.



- Communicate your willingness to support and/or participate in career awareness efforts at regional shows to show producers
- Provide interactive activities or sponsorship of these activities to heighten your brand visibility to the consumer audience
- Designate a company representative to take the lead on these activities so that it accents, rather than hinders, your consumer sales opportunities at the show.

## Strategy 4: Support initiatives in K-12 Schools

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics connected curriculums are defined as course programming that fosters knowledge and problem-solving in these core academic areas. Middle and high school boat building, construction or mechanical training programs can readily compliment the STEM priority areas identified by the Department of Education.

Access to a sanctioned, standards-based curriculum available to employers and associations will provide the support and “shovel-ready” programming necessary to navigate local or regional implementation of industry-specific career development efforts. This type of curricula or bench project activity can be added efficiently to existing K-12 science, shop or afterschool programs. Implementing effective short-term programming can be the

foundation for building and executing a more comprehensive program using a high school curriculum like that offered by [ABYC](#).

Teacher Externships are one-week on-the-job work experiences that allow K-12 teachers to integrate into your workforce for the purpose of connecting academic subject matter to the world of work. Teacher Externships are an opportunity to showcase the use of new technologies and to reduce the industry connotation of traditional blue-collar employment. Following an externship experience, teachers build lesson plans and create classroom projects connected to the industry or workplace which hosted them. A Teacher Externship Toolkit created by the Get Into Energy Career Pathway Community can be found [here](#).



- Create a database of industry-relevant, short-term programming and bench projects connected to K-12 learning objectives
- Connect efforts to success stories that showcase programming effectiveness
- Advocate for funding to support experiential career exposure programming to be disseminated to industry collaboratives on the regional level



- Outreach to schools in areas where there are employer concentrations willing to support middle and high school career awareness activities.
- Utilize examples of effective programming models as examples of the types of interactive hands-on activities that can actualize work-based learning objectives.
- Partner with local community organizations to provide the youth development programming support needed to start an industry-specific afterschool program.
- Organize a Teacher Externship program between schools and willing employers.

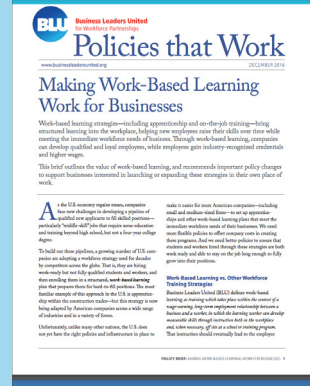


- Offer your time and/or facilities to support local efforts that align and connect learning with industry-specific work-readiness competencies.
- Join a school industry advisory council to help cultivate those connections and provide connective activities such as an industry tour, guest speaker, job shadow or internship.
- Take on interns and host job shadows to increase career awareness and promote the “pride in product” work ethic
- Invite parents, career counselors and other workforce development professionals to tour your workplace or the local boat show to familiarize them with the industry culture as well as the scope of positions available to their constituency.
- Hosting an instructor for a week-long Teacher Externship can ensure that in-school subject matter connects to real-world application in the workplace.

## Strategy 5: Align with Industries Seeking Workers with Similar Competencies

There are a plethora of effective workforce training programs and educational curricula that have already been created by regional groups in the marine trades as well as by industries who require similarly skilled workers, including manufacturing, automotive and maritime. National associations are positioned to build high-level relationships with other national industry associations to cultivate workers with cross-over skill sets and competencies. Relationships at the national level can translate to local efforts via introductions to willing partners and connections to effective practices related to supportive data or programmatic outcomes. This effort can easily be applied regionally by associations or by an individual employer. **The National Maritime Education Council** is an example of a national effort to organize and address the workforce issues of an entire industry.

**USEABLE RESOURCE**




**BUSINESS LEADERS UNITED**

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**Policies that Work**  
**Making Work-Based Learning Work for Businesses**

[\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)




**NATIONAL ROLE**

- Reach out to other national industry associations that are seeking a workforce with similar competencies to create an alliance and share in the effort and expense of workforce pipeline development.
- Share examples of effective programming models that lend to the cultivation of these competencies and those that have been successful at attracting funding sources for implementation.
- Consider co-investment opportunities for further development of these programs and marketing opportunities.
- Extend partnership opportunities to the regional and/or employer levels.



**REGIONAL ROLE**

- Reach out to other industry associations in your area to seek out like-minded groups that are trying to address their workforce crisis.
- Learn what other industry groups have done, are trying to do or where alignment with them can create a mutually beneficial outcome, such as advocating for training funds or programmatic support.
- Bring actual employers to meetings with elected officials, state agencies or WIBs to showcase the need and highlight the employer involvement.



**EMPLOYER ROLE**

- Reach out to employer colleagues and/or to employer member organizations in your area to find out where similarity in workforce needs exist, such as use of technology, processes or safety skills.
- Call your elected officials or WIB to share this information and request assistance in training and/or hiring.

19

## Strategy 6: Generate a Library of Effective Program Models and Standardize for Replication

As referenced in other areas of this document, there are exciting examples of effective workforce development programs currently being implemented in our industry around the United States and the world. These programs, curriculums and one-off efforts can be collected, adapted, standardized and made available for replication by local or regional employer collaboratives. Creating a database of these existing efforts would enable and foster replication of effective programming for every age and stage of worker.

When seeking programmatic funding for workforce development efforts or employer collaboratives, regional associations or Chambers of Commerce would benefit from referencing positive outcomes and replicating effective programs with a successful track record. The creation of an easily accessible database of pre-vetted, replicable workforce development programs with



- Reach out to regional industry associations to compile a database of program and the segments of the talent pipeline they are cultivating.
- Get permission to share workforce development examples with success rates and expected outcomes to share with regional associations, employer members and elected officials.
- Endorse those programs with the best outcomes and effective funding sources to encourage replication and standardization across the industry.
- Align with relevant federal workforce development initiatives such as apprenticeship, to maximize funding opportunities and stay relevant with current trends.



- Make your national associations and employer members aware of what is happening in your region to address workforce development issues in your area.
- Leverage the current economic upswing to promote industry economic impact and career pathways, secure grant funding and attract workers.
- Share models of effective programming where possible.
- Reach out to other industry associations and/or your national association to seek guidance and examples of programs that you might be able to help implement.



- Become an active participant in the creation and implementation of workforce development programs that address your workforce concerns and needs. It is proven that those workforce programs that have actual employer participation are the most effective and produce the best employees. Getting involved with the training in any way will position your company as a primary recipient of the product and allow for direct feedback for areas of the program that need improvement.

## Strategy 7: Aggregate Industry Data

Nothing speaks better to those who distribute funding than reliable data depicting the number, type and wage range of open positions that exist in a region currently and that are expected on a horizon of 1, 3 or 5 years (when available).

With the ease of access to electronic survey taking, such as is available through online software like **Survey Monkey** or other options, real time information can and should be gathered and aggregated with relative ease.

**USEABLE RESOURCE**

### Return on Investment Calculator


Cost-Hire      Business Impact      Possible Savings

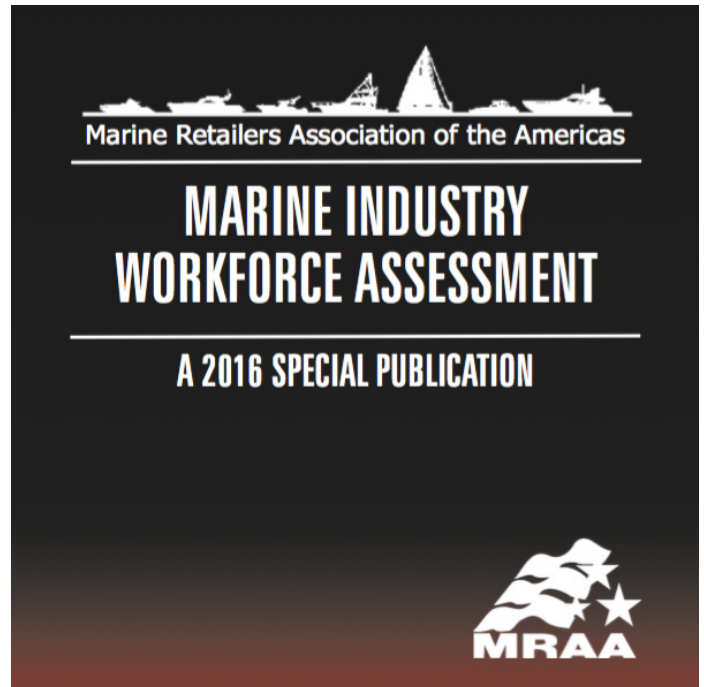
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**How much is the skills gap costing your business? It might be more than you think.**


**ROI CALCULATOR**

*How much is the skills gap costing your business? It might be more than you think.*


 [\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#)




*MRAA's original workforce assessment first quantified the workforce challenges on the retail side of the industry in 2016. Plans from this workforce strategy include an updated research project to reflect the challenges in all sectors of the marine industry.*

- 

**NATIONAL ROLE**

  - Compare national survey results to and combine with regional results.
  - Provide survey templates to regional associations to cultivate supporting documentation and to ensure alignment with and support of national data aggregation.
- 

**REGIONAL ROLE**

  - Create and use a standard survey template with the same questions so that the data collected can be compared and contrasted year after year.
  - Issue your survey at the same time each year so that employers begin to expect it and prepare for it.
- 

**EMPLOYER ROLE**

  - Take the surveys issued by your regional and national associations so that they have the data necessary to work on your behalf.
  - Do the work necessary to understand your urgent and long-term hiring needs so you can easily report out when asked by a survey or when speaking to workforce partners and elected officials.

## Strategy 8: Communicate and Distribute Information

Ongoing communication with the entire industry through a dedicated newsletter and the creation of a singular career development website would synchronize the efforts currently fragmented across the U.S. recreational boating industry. The [Marine Industry Career Network](#) is an excellent start toward this effort, though it is currently limited in scope and use.

Enhancing the MICN website to include attractive photos, informational videos and engaging content for job seekers and job providers will take coordination, collaboration and a monetary investment (however, the content already exists). A great example of a job seeker focused website is [www.mainemarinecareers.com](http://www.mainemarinecareers.com). This website, developed with federal grant funds secured by a regional collaborative partnership including the Maine Marine Trades Association, showcases and delineates career pathways available in the marine trades (and the aligned composites industry) while providing a breakdown of the training required to get there. The Massachusetts Marine Trades Association recently launched a [website](#) which showcases a superbly executed [video](#) targeting young career seekers. Additionally, the [Grow Boating](#) initiative has a collection of videos and written copy that can be repurposed to support career awareness efforts and the development of a dedicated online resource for job seekers.

Video efforts such as [Salty Jobs](#) created by the Marine Industries Association of South Florida should also be utilized. This video series targets younger workers using engaging content and highlighting a variety of exciting industry jobs and career tracks.

Enhancements to the MICN website could also include data collection, programming models and professional development opportunities for incumbent workers and employers. Locating the entire spectrum of industry and career advancement opportunities in one place will showcase the industry's commitment to lifelong learning and professional skill building. This level of unified effort across the industry would enhance funding opportunities on every level.

### USEABLE RESOURCE



**SALTY JOBS**  
*Highlighting the diverse and interesting job opportunities in the recreational marine industry*

 [CLICK HERE](#)



- Create a single “one-stop-shop” website for industry workforce development.
- Cultivate sponsorship and/or charge employers for use of the site to support the ongoing content management costs of the site.
- Repurpose content from other efforts such as Grow Boating or Take Me Fishing to keep cost low and leverage existing high-quality efforts.
- Develop a career marketing campaign highlighting points that target specific worker populations; i.e. showcase environmental stewardship to attract purpose-driven millennials; or attract career changers by focusing on transferable skills from other industries such as automotive, manufacturing or the building trades.



- Connect your website to your national associations’ websites and the unified website when available.
- Provide relevant and current written content, photos and videos to highlight the regional differences and career spectrum across the industry.



- When posting a job opening, make sure to also send it to your regional or national association so they can post it on their website. It is important to have a critical mass of open positions at all times for the site to be optimally effective. This also puts the association on alert that you have open position and increases the possibility of a referral.
- Utilize and support the national website when it is available.

## Strategy 9: Advocate for Funding

At the Federal level, our national associations act as a unified industry voice while lobbying on behalf of recreational boating interests. **The American Boating Congress** offers an unmatched opportunity for employers to meet with our Congressional representatives in Washington each year. Elected officials understand the current workforce crisis because it straddles all industries in every state. Targeted and standardized messaging showcases an organized effort from the recreational boating industry and can stimulate focused funding opportunities to support workforce development efforts. The ABC offers a unique opportunity for our industry to come together in critical mass to present a unified message.

The **National Skills Coalition** is an advocacy group that aggregates information from its more than 3,200 members across the country and organizes efforts that support broad-based workforce development strategies. **Business Leaders United** is a specific effort of the larger Coalition that supports explicit strategies and policies that have shown success in our industry. The boating industry is well represented among these groups ensuring our best interests are being considered.

Workforce development strategies that should remain top of mind when lobbying include the support and development of regional industry partnerships, incumbent worker training grants, on-the-job training grants to include but not be limited to apprenticeships, and an increase and ease of access to hiring incentives for newly trained workers. See details below:

**Development of Regional Employer Collaboratives - Industry Partnerships** utilize regional workforce intermediaries to coordinate collaborative training efforts that serve multiple employers. Employer collaboratives can utilize regional marine trade associations, Chambers of Commerce or other partners as their intermediary. This model has been implemented in the marine industry in several states including Maryland and Rhode Island with great success. There is significant opportunity to replicate this model in states or regions with similarly strong marine trade associations or Chambers of Commerce that have workforce development as a part of their strategic plan. A

free curriculum on how to create an employer collaborative is available [here](#) from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation. National associations can advocate for the availability of funding to replicate this model in an industry-specific way while regional employer groups or individual employers can request funds to support more local efforts.

**Incumbent Worker Training grants** can be used for a variety of internal up-skilling for the existing workforce as well as apprenticeship programs. Access to this type of funding varies depending on local and regional priorities set by elected officials, WIBs, Governor’s Workforce Board and others. Efforts to make these funds more accessible would support employer efforts to increase their individual capacity and standardize internal training programs. The State of Rhode Island has a robust incumbent worker training grant program which can be viewed [here](#).

**On-the-Job Training** including apprenticeships, offer the recreational boating industry an excellent way to transfer the knowledge of seasoned workers on to new and rising leaders at a workplace. Apprenticeship and OJT are national programmatic efforts, however, access to and implementation of these funds can take on different looks depending on the state or region of an employer. Supporting these programs as a national and local priority will allow for continued development and expansion of these objectives while increasing access and ease of use of the funds.

**Hiring Incentives** - Tax credits for hiring specialty populations such as veterans and those who have been unemployed for an extended period of time currently exist under the **Work Opportunities Tax Credit**. Accessing these tax credits can be difficult, especially for smaller employers. Advocating for easier to use hiring incentives that are channeled through local WIBs and/or industry partnerships and provide an expedited bottom line result for smaller employers should remain a focus. This type of funding will provide additional benefits as the skilled labor pool continues to shrink.



- Lobby elected officials at the state and federal level.




- Lobby elected officials at the national, state and local levels.
- Give generously and at least annually to your regional association’s Political Action Committee (PAC) and the national **BoatPAC**, both of which advocate for your business in an ongoing manner.

## Strategy 10: Cultivate Regional Employer Collaboratives

As mentioned previously with the industry partnership model, demand-driven training programs facilitated by employer coalitions have proven successful across the nation in many industries. In December 2017, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation released a free curriculum, called **Talent Pipeline Management**, for use in developing an employer collaborative in all areas. Fee-based technical assistance is available for those groups interested in tapping into customized support for creating and implementing this type of regional workforce development program.



USEABLE RESOURCE




TALENT PIPELINE MANAGEMENT ACADEMY

**TALENT PIPELINE  
MANAGEMENT  
ACADEMY**

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**Curriculum**



CLICK HERE



- Act as a connector to contacts and resources available to stimulate local or regional demand-driven workforce development programming.
- Provide technical assistance for standards-based, industry-specific program development.



- Engage your members in focus groups to garner interest and need.
- Create regional workforce goals.
- Build partnerships that can help realize results against those goals.



- Reach out to industry colleagues to locate employers with similar workforce needs.
- Partner with neighboring employers or similar industries to cultivate a new pool of skilled workers rather than only seeking previously trained workers that are currently employed.
- Contact your regional or national association and or WIB to seek assistance.
- Make yourself available to attend meetings with like-minded employers and partners in workforce development.
- Work with schools, local non-profits, WIBs or other workforce intermediaries to create soft-skills training that addresses basic work readiness concerns, then hire from these training programs.



# Strategy +1: Hire a National Workforce Development Coordinator

There are many aspects to implementing a comprehensive workforce plan for our industry; however, the most important goal is to create a unified industry approach to becoming (and staying) organized and gathering and disseminating information. Creating a National Workforce Development Coordinator position hosted by a leading national industry association would provide the capacity our industry needs to begin implementation of key strategies within this plan. This position could focus on three key areas and the respective duties:

### 1) Data Aggregation and Communication:

- a. Develop and implement a professional development series across existing trade shows and industry conferences for ongoing, stage-appropriate support for employers and MTAs on topics of workforce and workplace development;
- b. Collect and distribute relevant industry data and examples of effective programming for regional and local replication from marine and related industries; and
- c. Create a workforce development marketing and communications plan.

### 2) Regional Employer Coalition Building:

- a. Act as a connector to contacts and resources available to stimulate local or regional demand-driven workforce development programming; and

- b. Provide technical assistance for standards-based, industry-specific program development.

### 3) Apprenticeship Development:

- a. Act as an overall industry liaison to the various apprenticeship efforts currently underway to aggregate information and help facilitate adoption and replication across the industry.

Seed funding for a position such as this can begin with sponsorships from key industry brands and product manufacturers. The fee-based professional development series at national conferences and trade shows can be a growing source of funding for a national workforce position. Technical assistance for regional employer collaboratives in the form of customized consultation can further support this position. Federal and charitable grant funding should also be sourced to support longer-term initiatives.

Though it is recommended that the industry invest in this position on the national level, a similar position at the regional level is highly recommended if a Marine Trades Association is seeking to implement a selection of workforce services for its members. Workforce development is its own industry, so a workforce development professional should be sought to fill the position.



**NATIONAL  
ROLE**

- Cultivate seed funding and hire a designated person or team that can act as the face of workforce development for the marine industry and execute the strategies outlined in this document.



**REGIONAL  
ROLE**

- Understand the needs of your members and utilize the supports provided by the national effort to address the needs with relevant strategies.
- Hire a workforce development coordinator or partner with a local community organization that can assist in meeting the workforce needs of your members.



**EMPLOYER  
ROLE**

- Communicate your workforce needs to your national and/or regional association or Chamber of Commerce.
- Support and guide them in their efforts to meet your needs.

# Employer Toolkit

Productive, reliable and competent employees are the fuel that powers all businesses. As with any critical resource or commodity, employers need to put plans in place that ensure they will have enough talent to provide a viable product or service to their consumer base. With the exodus of the Baby Boomer Generation from the workforce across the nation, there is a serious talent supply and demand dynamic emerging. Employers must take

an active role in employee cultivation if they are interested in attracting and retaining talent now and in the future.

### Take an Asset Inventory

Creating a workforce development plan will help your business remain relevant and competitive and provide a base foundation for your business to grow. Cultivating your current and future

## CHART 4: INDUSTRY ASSET INVENTORY

Question	Samples Response
<p><b>Training:</b> What schools, training providers and/or training partners exist in your area?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High Schools and Career Tech Schools</li> <li>• After School Programs; Boys &amp; Girls Scouts</li> <li>• Community Colleges, Universities and post-secondary schools</li> <li>• Marine Trades Association or Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Marine Related Organizations, Yacht Clubs, Youth Clubs, Clean Water Groups etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Partners:</b> Are there other industries or employers that are seeking employees with similar competencies?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• XYZ Marina or Dealer or Boat Builder Company</li> <li>• Manufacturing Industry or Employer</li> <li>• Hospitality Industry or Employer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resources:</b> What type of Business Development Organizations are in my area that I can reach out to for assistance or potential funding?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marine Trade Association (MTA)</li> <li>• Manufacturing Association</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce or Small Business Administration</li> <li>• Economic Development Agency</li> <li>• Department of Labor &amp; Training</li> <li>• Workforce Investment Board</li> <li>• Local, State or Federal elected officials</li> </ul>
<p><b>Alignment:</b> Are there activities already taking place in your area that can be aligned with or built upon?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boat Shows</li> <li>• Sailing / Fishing Tournaments</li> <li>• Sailing Programs / Yacht Club Programming</li> <li>• School Career Tech Programs or Summer Work Programs</li> <li>• Career Awareness Programs</li> <li>• Networking, Chamber or MTA events</li> </ul>

workforce can seem overwhelming; know that you are not alone. The need for worker cultivation spans across every industry in every nation. Those who are integrating training and community outreach into their business practices will find the most future success.

Start by taking an asset inventory of your business. This will help to frame out the areas of focus for your specific workforce plan in the short and longer term. See the Employer Asset Inventory Worksheet below and then answer the questions that follow:

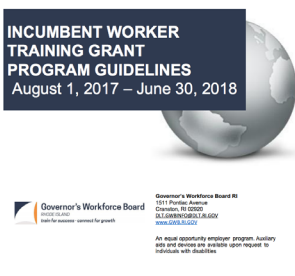
- What open positions do I currently have?  
How important are they to my key revenue streams?
- What skills and competencies drive my revenue streams?  
Do I have the employees I need in these areas?
- How many people do I have retiring in the next 1-5 years?  
Are these people capable of training new or rising employees?  
Can I cross train any existing employees to fill in these positions?
- Are there areas of my business that I plan to develop in the next 1-5 years that will require new skills sets?

Using the results garnered from this exercise, locate your area(s) of greatest need in relation to your short-term goals. This will help you to target where to place your efforts now. For example, if you notice that you have three key people retiring in the next five years, you might consider investing in an apprenticeship or On-the-Job Training program to develop new talent in these positions using your current talent as trainers. If the current talent is not equipped to mentor new workers, it might make sense to locate or develop a Train the Trainer program to address that. Alternatively, if you find that in the next three months you will need four seasonal hires, you may want to contact your local high school or community college to accept interns or offer paid work experience after school and on weekends and/or offer employee incentives for referrals. Formulating a starting strategy will get the ball rolling and provide a launch point for your long-term workforce plan.

Consider integrating your workforce goals into a comprehensive workplace strategy. Using the examples in the previous paragraph, note the compounding value the initiatives provide:

- By creating an internal Train the Trainer program, you will also be changing the culture of your working environment. Your employees will see that the company they work for values its employees and wants to invest in their professional development. This leads to increased job security, something that is known to increase employee morale.
- Coordinating with a local high school or community college to host interns and part-time workers would suggest your company will be top of mind when schools have viable candidates.

**USEABLE RESOURCE**



**INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES**  
August 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018


Governor's Workforce Board  
1511 Puntado Avenue  
Cape Canaveral, FL 32909  
DL.GOV/WORKFORCE.FL.GOV  
904.393.6100

An equal opportunity employer program. Auxiliary job and training are available upon request for individuals with disabilities.

**INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING GRANT**

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*Program Guidelines*

 **CLICK HERE**

The examples provided above are not the end-all to your workforce plan. Longer term solutions for expected and/or unforeseen workforce needs, and continued business development require your ongoing community involvement and cultivation as an employer. You will need to decide where you want to place your investment to get the results you are striving for. Reaching out and developing a network of partners to achieve longer term solutions will probably be required. Understanding the landscape of resources and potential partners in your community or region will help you narrow your focus and leverage the unique opportunities that are available to support your business and your workforce plan. See the Industry Asset Inventory Worksheet located above in Chart 4.

**Hiring, Retaining and Training**

**Cost of Hire:** Understanding the true cost of a hire at your business will help you better understand how to spend money in your business. Costs associated with hiring include hourly staff time for creating a job listing and interviewing potential candidates, advertising, loss of production while a position goes unfilled, new hire onboarding, etc. The Manufacturing Institute created an [online calculator](#) to help employers understand this cost better. The online tool is very easy to use and will provide you with the financial fuel to think differently about investing in your current workforce.

**Hiring:** Hiring in today's marketplace is different than that of the last century. How you advertise your work opportunities is as important as the work that needs to get done. Attracting new workers requires savvy messaging in line with the motivational factors connected to the younger generations. Being environmentally responsible and/or showcasing an exciting lifestyle associated with work are valuable points to make, especially where offered wages are equivalent or lower than competing companies in your area.

**Below is a list of Hiring Strategies that you can consider:**

- Hire for competencies (how someone does something) rather than for skills (what someone can do), then train on the job. This expands your hiring pool and allows you to gain employees that can be taught at an affordable rate versus hiring a seasoned industry professional at top dollar.
- Highlight the work environment, the boating lifestyle and any community good you are doing to attract employees.

- Consider making a video about the job opening and/or your company brand and culture for use on internet and social media sites. See [Skill Scout](#) for examples and related services for hire.

**Retaining:** When developing your workforce plan, the retention of your existing employees must be considered. The shrinking of the overall available workforce places your existing employees in a position to consider other job prospects. Ensuring your key workers feel appreciated and are getting what they need to be content should be a priority for you. Understanding the cost of hire will allow you to leverage or redirect that cost toward employee retention strategies such as training, tuition reimbursement or paternity leave.

**Below is a list of Retention Strategies that you can consider:**

- Create comprehensive benefit packages including ongoing professional development, flex time or other perks that attract the type of employee that fits within the culture of your workplace.
- Provide internal professional development and Train the Trainer opportunities to shrink the generational gap among employees and foster a culture of acceptance and diversity
- Limit seasonal-only positions by cross training employees to develop year-round full-time positions
- Create internal wage standards connected to skill attainment, productivity or other measurable benchmarks
- Empower young workers to take on business enhancement projects that address their need for purpose driven work such as becoming a Clean Marina or speaking at a local high school about their work.

**Training & Resources:** Short-term Train-to-Hire Programs, such as Pre-Apprenticeship Trainings, are small or large group customized training programs designed specifically to address the hiring needs of one or more employer. Depending on the funding streams available in your area through your local [Workforce Investment Board](#) (WIB), these programs can cost the employer very little in up front expenses so long as there is an intent to hire when the participant successfully completes the training. Depending on the competencies required for hire, trainings can be as short as several days or as long as six months. If you have one to three entry-level positions open and need to hire within the next six months, partnering with other employers in your area who are interested in hiring people with the same basic competencies is a strategy that has worked in many industries across the country. Partnering with other employers provides a critical mass of open positions (10 or more). More open positions allow for a larger recruitment effort and reduces the overall cost per participant in the training, which, in turn, increases the likelihood of funding. Identifying an employer liaison, such as a Marine Trades Association or Chamber of Commerce, is the most efficient way to get a program like this off the ground. **See Workforce Strategy 10 – Cultivate Regional Employer Coalitions for more details.**

If your business does not have easy access to an Association or Chamber of Commerce, directly contacting the [Workforce](#)

[Investment Board](#) nearest you is a strong alternative. WIBs have programs and funding in place to connect job seekers with employers as well as programs that support employers throughout the hiring process. Through federal programs such as [Wagner-Peyser Act](#) or the [Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act, American Job Centers](#) are regional service providers that assist un-employed and under-employed individuals and dislocated workers in finding long-term career opportunities. Services from local or regional career centers for job seekers include but are not limited to soft-skill development, resume building and job seeking. Clients taking advantage of these services are also eligible for funding for specialized skill training through Individual Training Accounts and On the Job Training grants.

Federal [OJT](#) funding is an excellent resource for employers who; 1.) have internal training programs; 2.) have skilled craftsman who can transfer knowledge; 3.) who prefer to train at the workplace; 4.) or who have specialized techniques that cannot be learned through outside training resources. These OJT funds can also be used in conjunction with formalized Apprenticeship programs to create an internal career ladder at your company.

Programs such as OJT are useful when a pending hire has some but not all the skills required to be considered a qualified applicant for an open position. There are certain requirements that the employer and the potential employee need to meet, so you will need to plan ahead if you intend to use this funding stream. If you think OJT can work for you, contact your local WIB or learn more [here](#).

Apprenticeships are the latest workforce development trend, for many great reasons. They provide a formalized structure for employers to develop the skills of their employees while setting wage and learning benchmark expectations. Apprenticeships have shown to reduce turnover rates, increase employee productivity and lower the overall cost of recruitment. Depending on the size and location of your company, there are tax benefits and specialized programs to help employers develop and implement this training method. You can learn more about formalized apprenticeship through your local WIB or by clicking [here](#).

Continuing educational opportunities for your current, or incumbent workforce are endless. There are many great industry-specific programs that you can tap into from our national associations and organizations including [MRAA](#), [NMMA](#), [ABBRA](#), [AMI](#), [ABYC](#) and others. Additionally, product manufacturers offer annual or ongoing trainings and certifications. Annual industry conferences offer workshops and hands-on training at affordable rates. If your training budget does not include travel, check with your local community colleges, universities and continuing education programs for local opportunities to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement among your team.

Availability for funding for incumbent worker training differs by region or state. Contact your local [WIB](#) or your state or town Economic Development Office to see what funding might be offered in your area. Alert your local elected official of your workforce needs to help catalyze and organize solutions. ☁

# Appendix *Live Links Resources*

**[ABYC Marine League of Schools](#)** - This is a group of marine training schools that aligns with ABYC standards-based training

**[ABYC Marine Service Technology Program](#)** - Secondary School Curriculum released in late 2017 can also be used at community college or in apprenticeship

**[Apprenticeships by State](#)** - Utilize this link to locate your state contact for apprenticeships.

**[ApprenticeshipUSA Toolkit](#)** - This website will answer all of your questions connected to apprenticeship programming and help you navigate next steps.

**[Business Leaders United](#)** - BLU working groups bring together leaders from small- and medium-sized businesses to collaborate with a diverse group of education, labor, community-based, and public-sector partners to guide and advance an agenda that addresses worker pipeline challenges and closes the skills gap

**[Cost of an Open Position Calculator](#)** - Developed by the National Association of Manufacturers' Manufacturing Institute, this tool will help you understand the cost of a new hire and assist with the allocation of resources according to your workforce needs.

**[Creating an Employer Collaborative](#)** - This link will take you to the Talent Pipeline Management Curriculum from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation; free curriculum to support the development of regional employer collaboratives

**[Employer Guide to Creating a Meaningful Learning Experience](#)** - This guide will help employers to create and manage internships and other quality learning experiences for students

**[Heroes MAKE America](#)** - Heroes MAKE America is a full-time, 10-week career skills program, that launched in partnership with the U.S. Army Soldier for Life - Transition Assistance Program at Fort Riley and the USO Pathfinder Program at Fort Riley. The Manufacturing Institute created the Heroes MAKE America program to build a pipeline from military to manufacturing careers for transitioning service members.

**[Locate a Workforce Investment Board](#)** - WIBs are regional organizations supported by state and federal funds to carry out employer and worker services intended to support jobs and job growth. The boards are made up of local employers and community services representatives.

**[Locate an American Jobs Center](#)** - Sometimes called a One Stop Career Center, these are regional service centers for unemployed or under-employed individuals. They are supported by regional Workforce Investment Boards.

**[Managing for Engagement](#)** - Link to purchasable resources for engaging and retaining a quality workforce from Gallup

**[Manufacturing Institute](#)** - The Manufacturing Institute is the authority on the attraction, qualification, and development of world-class manufacturing talent.

**USEABLE RESOURCE**

**NATIONAL SKILLS COALITION**

## Opportunity Knocks

How expanding the Work Opportunity Tax Credit could grow businesses, help low-skill workers, and close the skills gap.

CLICK HERE

**[National Maritime Education Council \(NMEC\)](#)** - Established in 2012, NMEC is a multi-regional, industry-driven, member-based trade organization working to address workforce challenges facing the shipbuilding and ship repair industry.

**[National Skills Coalition](#)** - NSC prioritizes work-based learning including Apprenticeship, On-the-Job Training, and Career and Technical Education with a work-site component.

**[Rhode Island's Incumbent Worker Training Grant Program](#)** - This program overview offers an example of a well-designed and effective incumbent worker training grant program to be considered for replication in your area.

**[Skill Scout - Transforming Hiring with Job Video](#)** - This link will bring you to examples of hiring videos and a company that can be hired to create videos for you

**[Teacher Externship Toolkit](#)** - Created by the Get Into Energy Career Pathway Community, this toolkit can help you to understand and implement a teacher externship program in your area.

**[The surprising workforce crisis of 2030 and how to start solving it now](#)** - A Ted Talk by Rainer Strack, a human resources expert from Germany (13 minutes)

**[The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration \(ETA\)](#)** provides information on training programs and other services that are available to assist workers who have been laid off or are about to be laid off. Call ETA's toll-free help line at (877) US-2JOBS (TTY: 1-877-889-5267).

**[Train the Trainer Guide](#)** - This free guide is designed to support the development of apprenticeship programs however, it translates to any On the Job Training program

**[Work Opportunities Tax Credit](#)** - A Federal tax credit available to employers who hire and retain veterans and individuals from other target groups with significant barriers to employment.