



For Immediate Release

Inaccurate perceptions of trade jobs, new study reveals

(November 27, 2014 – Vancouver) - A new study released today by the Independent Contractors and Businesses Associations (ICBA) reveals that 59 per cent of young adults are unaware of how to get into the trades because of their inaccurate perceptions of construction.

“There are misconceptions about working in the construction industry and we all have a role to play to change them,” said Philip Hochstein, president of the ICBA. “The reality is once you pick up a trade, there is a pathway to a long-term rewarding career in construction with room for advancement.”

With one million job openings by 2022 and 44 per cent requiring skilled and technical training, the ICBA commissioned NRG Research Group to conduct a poll to understand the current perceptions of skilled trades among British Columbians aged 18-29 years old.

“The provincial government is leading the way with the Skills for Jobs Blueprint and we are starting to see the benefits of this work,” said Hochstein. “The construction industry needs to do a better job of showing youth that learning a trade can lead to coveted positions such as estimators, project managers, business development managers and company owners.”

The poll revealed that when given a list of different types of trades’ job opportunities with approximate wages and salaries for B.C. overall, the 12 traditional trade jobs were ranked at the bottom of the list. The greatest interest was in office opportunities such as office managers, business development managers, estimators and project managers.

“Youth are interested in office jobs but do not realize that those opportunities often start with trades training,” added Hochstein. “The takeaway for me is that we need to start promoting careers in construction not a job in the trades.”

The poll also showed that:

- less than half of the respondents (48 per cent) see a job in the trades as a long term career with opportunity for advancement because they are always in demand, they can learn new skills and it pays well
- 52 per cent see a job in the trades as either career limiting or didn’t know because it is physically demanding work, there is no room for promotion and once you are in you are stuck with your trade
- the first things that came to mind when they heard a “job in the trades” were: manual labour, good pay, training or certification required and hard work.

- The top factors to seek a trades job: discovering they loved the work, more money, job security, career advancement

“As an industry, we have some work to do to change the way young people perceive skilled trades,” said Hochstein. “ICBA and the open shop construction industry are rolling up our sleeves to make sure we do.”

In 2015, the details of a new industry-driven body which will address some of these challenges will be announced.

The Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of B.C. services and represents B.C.'s construction sector. ICBA is the single largest sponsor of construction apprentices and trains the largest number of management personnel in B.C. Our 1,200 members build in the multi-family residential and Industrial, Commercial and Institutional (ICI) construction sectors and are involved in virtually all major capital projects in British Columbia.

NRG Research Group is a leading Canadian public affairs and market research company, with offices in Vancouver, Calgary and Winnipeg.

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