

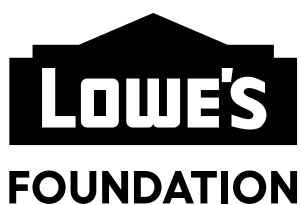
Industry Insider

CONSTRUCTION

Educator Toolkit




SkillsUSA®



Industry Insider: Construction

Educator Toolkit

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Event Overview + Skills Gap Context

Construction Industry Skills Gap

The construction sector in the United States is facing a pressing labor and skills shortage. This industry skills gap is only widening. The industry faces a unique challenge of not just recruiting “more bodies,” but also ensuring they recruit qualified, up-to-date talent with modern skills (e.g., digital tools, building codes, green construction, project management). The industry is competing not just on wages, but on skills, knowledge, and readiness.

Some hard-hitting facts about the construction industry today:

- In 2025 alone, the construction industry must attract 439,000 net new workers to meet demand. This needs to rise to nearly 499,000 in 2026. ([abc.org](#))
- According to a recent survey, 94 percent of construction firms report difficulty hiring to fill open roles. ([agc.org](#))
- About 20 % of construction workers are age 55 or older, posing a looming exodus of institutional knowledge. ([investigatetv.com](#))

SkillsUSA, alongside The Lowe’s Foundation, hopes to bridge this gap with the upcoming Industry Insider: Construction Event.

At SkillsUSA’s Industry Insider: Construction virtual event, you’ll get the inside scoop from pros who started out just like you. Ask your questions, hear about real experiences and learn the skills that make you stand out in today’s workforce. With a live panel of industry leaders and a moderator bringing your questions to the table, you’ll walk away with insights, inspiration and the confidence to explore your next step. This event gives you the insider edge to get ahead in your career!



Educator Needs

Career and technical education (CTE) teachers, community college instructors, and workforce development professionals are the backbone of the solution. Yet, educators face their own set of challenges:

- **Keeping the curriculum aligned with industry needs**
 - Emerging tools like Building Information Modeling (BIM), drones, and green construction materials require ongoing updates to classroom instruction.
- **Limited access to industry exposure**
 - Many educators teach the fundamentals but lack direct insight into how today’s contractors, engineers, and safety professionals are evolving in real time.
- **Recruitment barriers**
 - Persistent misconceptions about “blue-collar” careers make it harder to attract diverse, motivated students into construction pathways.
- **Professional development needs**
 - Teachers benefit from hearing firsthand about certifications, trends, and technologies shaping the field so they can prepare students for the workforce of tomorrow.

Educators want to connect their classrooms to the real world. This involves showing students that construction is not only stable and lucrative, but also deeply innovative. That’s exactly where SkillsUSA’s Industry Insider: Construction event steps in.

Value of Industry Insider Event

After attending the Industry Insider: Construction event, students will gain a clearer understanding of the many career paths available in the construction industry, the skills and certifications that matter most, and the emerging trends shaping the future of the field. They'll walk away with practical advice directly from industry professionals, inspiration to explore opportunities that fit their interests, and the confidence to take their next step toward a rewarding career in construction.

What Students and Educators Gain

After attending Industry Insider: Construction, participants will:

- Understand the range of career paths available—from skilled trades to management and technology.
- Learn which skills, certifications, and credentials employers value most.
- Discover emerging trends like green building, automation, and safety innovation.
- Gain confidence and clarity about next steps toward a rewarding career.
- See that construction is not “old-school”, it’s forward-thinking, innovative, and vital to America’s future.

For educators, this event delivers fresh insights straight from the field, helping them adapt their teaching and better guide students into sustainable career pathways. It also provides a unique opportunity to connect with employers who are eager to partner with schools to close the skills gap.

It's Time to Build the Future, Together

The skills shortage is a shared challenge that demands collaboration between educators, students, and industry leaders. SkillsUSA's Industry Insider: Construction serves as a bridge linking classrooms to careers and ensuring that the next generation is ready to take the lead in building our communities.

By sparking curiosity, building confidence, and connecting learning to real opportunity, SkillsUSA empowers students to see themselves as future builders, managers, and innovators. The industry's future depends on it, and the time to act is now.

See you at the Industry Insider: Construction Event!

Discussion Questions

A prepared list of 10 engaging, student-friendly follow-up questions that teachers and student leaders can use for classroom or chapter discussions.

10 Discussion Questions

1. What's one thing that surprised you or changed your perception about construction careers?
2. Which panelist's story or advice stood out to you most? Why?
3. What kinds of people or skills do you think thrive in the construction industry?
4. How did the panelists describe the different paths into construction (college, trade school, apprenticeship, direct to work)? Which seems most appealing to you?
5. What's one misconception about construction that you'd want to correct after hearing the panel?
6. Which skill, certification, or mindset did the panelists say helps students stand out when starting out?
7. How do SkillsUSA Framework skills like communication or teamwork show up on the job site?
8. What did you learn about how technology (like drones, AI, or VR) is changing construction careers?
9. What advice or life lesson from the panel applies not just to construction, but to any career?
10. What's one action you could take this year to explore or prepare for a career in construction?

Teacher Lesson & Reflection

Post-Event Classroom Discussion & Reflection Activity

Event: Industry Insider: Construction – Exploring Careers, Training Paths, and Growth Opportunities

Audience: High school or college students

Facilitator: Classroom teacher

Time Needed: 25–40 minutes

1. Warm-Up Discussion (5–10 minutes)

Start by asking students to share first impressions or key takeaways from the panel.

Prompts:

- What's one thing that surprised you from the panel?
- Which panelist's story or advice stood out to you the most? Why?
- Did the event change or confirm how you see careers in construction?

Teacher Tip: Capture key ideas on the board or in a shared doc (e.g., skills, opportunities, career paths, misconceptions, etc.).

Technology Tip: Use a collaborative tool like a Miro Board or Mentimeter for student to share their thoughts anonymously.

2. Small-Group Discussion (10–15 minutes)

Divide students into small groups. Assign each group one of the three event themes to explore using the guided discussion questions below. Have groups discuss their answers and write them on a poster board/tear-sheet. Provide 10 minutes for small group discussion and 5 minutes for groups to present to the class.



A. Exploring & Choosing Construction

- What are some common misconceptions people have about construction careers?
- What kinds of people or personalities might thrive in this industry?
- After hearing the panel, what factors would you consider when deciding between college, trade school, or an apprenticeship?
- How is the industry becoming more inclusive? Why does that matter?

If students finish early, have them complete this extension question: Think about your own strengths and interests. How might they align (or not) with construction careers?

B. Training & Starting Out

- Which certifications, skills, or experiences did panelists highlight as most valuable for beginners?
- How can someone stand out when applying for construction jobs or apprenticeships?
- What SkillsUSA Framework Skills (like communication, teamwork, or responsibility) did you hear were important?
- What did you notice about how panelists described their first jobs — what lessons did they learn?

If students finish early, have them complete this extension question: If you were to start in construction tomorrow, what's one skill or habit you'd focus on building first?

C. Growing in the Industry

- How is technology (like drones, AI, or VR) changing the construction field?
- What are ways workers can keep their skills current as the industry evolves?
- What advice from the panel could help you grow or adapt in your own future career?
- How do panelists describe the culture or teamwork on the job site?

If students finish early, have them complete this extension question: What's one piece of advice you'd give to your "future self" about career growth?

Have each small group present its poster/tear-sheet to the class. Allow other groups to add to the group's ideas if time allows.

3. Individual Reflection (10–15 minutes)

Students complete this reflection (in writing or digitally) to process what they learned and connect it to their future choices.

Reflection Prompts:

1. What are two key lessons or insights you gained from this event?
2. Which construction career path (college, trade school, apprenticeship, direct-to-workforce) most interests you now, and why?
3. What's one action you could take in the next year to explore or prepare for a career in construction? (Example: job shadow, certification, school course, SkillsUSA event, or interview with a professional.)
4. What skill, mindset, or value from the panel do you think applies to any career field?
5. How did this event change the way you think about the construction industry?



Student Handout

Online Presence & LinkedIn Guide

Why a Professional Online Presence Matters

Before you start building your LinkedIn profile, it's important to understand why it matters. Your online presence is often your first impression to potential employers, apprenticeship coordinators, or college programs. The construction industry values professionalism, reliability, and character. Your digital footprint should reflect those traits.

Remember:

- Anything you post online can be seen or shared.
- Ask yourself, "Would I be proud for the boss of my dream job to see this?"
- LinkedIn helps you stand out as someone serious about their future and ready to take initiative.

A professional online presence shows employers that you are organized, goal-oriented, and eager to learn. These qualities are in high demand across every level of the construction industry.



Click the following links for examples of great LinkedIn resources to get you started:



[9 Examples of Great LinkedIn Profiles](#)

[Profile Summary Examples](#)

[Exemplar LinkedIn Profile](#)

Build Your LinkedIn Profile: A Guide for Students Entering the Construction Industry

Step 1: Build a Strong Profile

Think of your profile as your digital resume + personality snapshot. It tells your story—where you've been, what you've learned, and where you're headed.

Profile Photo

- Use a clear, friendly, and professional headshot (no filters or group photos).
- Choose a background that isn't distracting.
- Dress as you would for an interview, like business casual or construction gear, if it reflects your career goals.

Headline

Your headline appears right under your name. This is a short sentence that tells those who are looking at your profile what your career goals and what you are working toward. This headline should highlight your goal or what you're working toward.

Examples:

- "High School Senior | Aspiring Construction Manager"
- "Looking for a Construction Apprenticeship | Summer 2026"
- "Civil Engineering Student | Interested in Project Management"

About Me

This is your elevator pitch, which is 2–4 sentences that show your enthusiasm for the industry. Be sure to include your current status, interests, and what motivates you.

Example on next page

Examples:

- I'm a senior at Central High School, passionate about learning how things are built from design to completion. I'm especially interested in sustainable construction and plan to pursue an apprenticeship after graduation.
- I'm a high school senior passionate about working with my hands and being part of a team that builds something lasting. I've taken construction and carpentry courses at my school and love learning new skills each semester. My goal is to start an apprenticeship after graduation and continue developing my trade skills.
- As a student in the Building Construction program at North Valley Community College, I'm focused on learning the technical and leadership skills needed for today's construction industry. I take pride in problem-solving and working safely and efficiently. I'm looking forward to connecting with companies that value craftsmanship and teamwork.

Experience

List any experience that shows responsibility and skill development:

- Part-time jobs, volunteer work, or internships
- Leadership roles in clubs or teams
- Job shadowing or industry visits

Example:

- Volunteer | Habitat for Humanity
- Assisted in building and painting houses for local families, learning teamwork and basic tool safety.
- SkillsUSA Chapter Secretary (2024 - 2025): Recorded and maintained meeting minutes, organized chapter documents, and communicated with members and advisors. Strengthened leadership, communication, and teamwork skills.

Education

Include your high school and (if applicable) college. Add certifications or programs that show your dedication to the trade.

Example:

- Smith High School | Class of 2026
- Piedmont Community College | Pursuing Associate's Degree in Construction Management | 2024–Present
- North Valley Community College | Pursuing Associate's Degree in Building Construction Technology 2024–Present
- Westfield High School | Class of 2024
 - ▷ Career Pathway: Architecture and Construction

Awards & Accomplishments

Showcase moments you're proud of, honor roll, SkillsUSA medals, or leadership awards. Your commitment to excellence shows future employers your work ethic and self-motivation.

Examples:

- SkillsUSA Regional Gold Medalist – Carpentry (2024)
- Honor Roll-4 Semesters
- Student of the Month-Career & Technical Education Department
- National Technical Honor Society Member
- Dean's List, Piedmont Community College (Spring 2025)

Courses

Highlight specialized or technical classes that show career readiness.

Examples:

- Construction Trades I & II
- Work-Based Learning
- Applied Geometry & Measurement

Skills

LinkedIn has a bank of skills that you can choose from. You can choose up to 50. You don't need to share that many as you start. Remember, this profile will continue to grow as you do in your career. Make sure to mix technical and soft skills:

- Blueprint Reading
- Teamwork
- Time Management
- Microsoft Office
- Equipment Operation
- Safety Awareness
- NCCER Core
- OSHA 30

Organizations

List school, community, or industry-related groups. SkillsUSA, Scouts, 4-H, NHS, Varsity Sports, SGA, and many others. Your involvement in organizations shows initiative and teamwork.

Examples:

- National Technical Honor Society Member
- Captain: Smith High School Varsity Soccer
- SkillsUSA Secretary 2024-2025

Step 2: Start Networking

Building your network helps you learn from others and open doors to opportunities.

Connect with People You Know

Start with teachers, coaches, mentors, classmates, and family members.

Send a short note when connecting like the one below:

"Hi [Name], I'm building my LinkedIn profile as I prepare for a career in construction. I'd love to stay connected!"

Follow Companies and Schools

Research construction companies, apprenticeship programs, and colleges with construction majors. This helps you learn more about their work, culture, and opportunities.

Pro Tip:

Search for companies you admire (e.g., Lowe's, The CLA Foundation, Swinerton, NCCER or local organizations) and follow them to see their projects and updates.

Step 3: Look for Opportunities

LinkedIn can help you find real-world experiences to build your career foundation.

Explore Jobs and Internships

Use the Jobs tab to find:

- Internships or apprenticeships
- Entry-level labor or office positions
- College or training program listings

Even if you're not ready to apply yet, reading job descriptions helps you understand what skills are in demand.

Engage with Employers

Follow and occasionally comment (professionally) on posts from companies or industry leaders.

Example comment:

"Great project! This looks like an awesome learning opportunity for future tradespeople!"

Step 4: Stay Engaged

Your LinkedIn profile isn't "one and done." Keep it current and active.

Monthly Check-In Checklist

- ✓ Update your profile with new awards, certifications, or experiences
- ✓ Respond to messages professionally
- ✓ Connect with new people you meet through school or events
- ✓ Like or comment on industry posts to stay visible

Pro Tip:

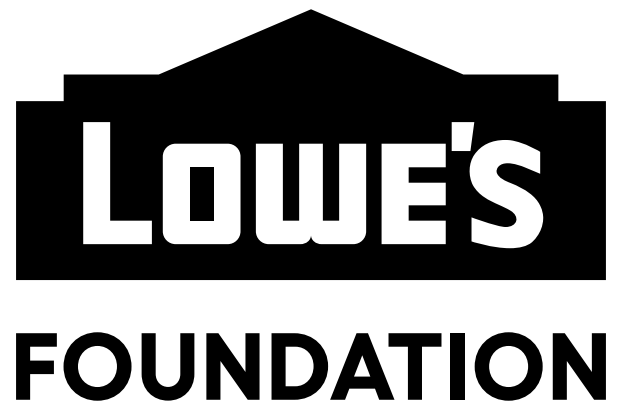
Treat LinkedIn like your career journal. Each update shows your growth and keeps your name in front of potential mentors or employers.

Your LinkedIn profile is your first construction project; you're literally building your future.

Lay a strong foundation with professionalism, add structure with experience, and keep improving over time. The more you invest in your online presence, the more opportunities will be built for you.



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