



2018 Top 15 RCS Influencer Insights



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We have been asking important questions to our diverse group of RCS Influencers that have expertise in different areas of a contractor's business. Often times, we see articles written on a subject with one person's opinion or suggestions, but there are many sides to the coin.

With our RCS Influencers opinions, tips or advice a reader gets a feeling for all sides of a topic. A beneficial twist is including companies that are not only roofing contractors but also companies that service the contractors. All will have an interesting perspective based on their interactions with the roofing industry.

We would like to share the top 15 blogs of 2019 for your education and enjoyment. RoofersCoffeeShop is honored to share their expertise that they are generous enough to share back with the industry they love through regular posts on our website and social media channels.

We hope you enjoy reading the valuable input by this group.

Vickie Sharples and team



The Hidden Risk: Cell Phone Use on Jobsites

By Trent Cotney

We live in a mobile world. With so many useful and entertaining features, we've quickly become dependent on our phones. This can be problematic when it comes to cell phone use and activities that require our full attention. According to a study by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center, 80 percent of the 94 million cell phone owners in the U.S. use them while driving. This is a major factor in the 284,000 accidents per year involving distracted drivers.

These stats translate to the construction site where the daily use of heavy machinery combined with cell phone use can also have a disastrous impact. There are stories of workers who have severed fingers on construction sites because they were using their cell phones while operating a saw – among other stories. For worker safety, it's important to have a cell phone policy on your construction site.

Here are a few reasons why a cell phone policy is necessary in reducing the likelihood of workplace accidents.

Safety of Employees

A number of reports have indicated that using a cell phone while operating an automobile may be more dangerous than drinking and driving. Most sites have policies prohibiting intoxication while working. Cell phone use should be prohibited on job sites, especially if workers are using heavy or dangerous equipment. Even if workers aren't operating heavy machinery, cell phone use is dangerous because it's important to stay focused to avoid contact with vehicles or machinery.

Reduction in Productivity

Loss of productivity has been an issue in nearly all industries. Cell phones allow us to do so much more, but their allure tends to distract us from daily work. There are times when workers need to use cell phones and that's why it's important to integrate "cell phone" breaks into the day. Also, it's important to have a protocol should family members need to reach employees in the event of an emergency.

Liability Issues for Drivers

If an employee gets into an accident while in a company vehicle, the company can be found liable. As mentioned previously, cell phone use can be a tremendous distraction for drivers. Not having a cell phone policy in place opens the door to a potential lawsuit, should an accident occur.

Beyond safety concerns, there are legal ramifications for not having a cell phone policy. Below are a few reasons why a cell phone policy is important for legal protection purposes.

Text Messages Can Be Used in Litigation

Text messages are becoming a part of discovery in many cases and being used to prove or invalidate claims. Also, photos from cell phones can be used in daily reports, providing visual evidence of issues on the construction site.

Protecting Confidential Information. We use cell phones so much that the lines between work and personal usage get blurred. Confidential information can get shared via text. Disgruntled former employees can use it to hurt companies. A cell phone policy can set guidelines for distribution of company information. It can also establish a protocol for departing workers.

A New Type of Harassment

The use of cell phones to harass others is prevalent in all walks of life, including the construction industry. To combat this, amend your harassment policy to include threats made via text message.

Cell phone usage has permeated nearly all parts of our society. Cell phones are indeed valuable tools in the field, but they can also be a cause for concern. Cell phones are so easy to use that we are deceived into thinking that we can perform tasks while using them. This dangerous practice not only leads to accidents on the jobsite but can also have serious legal ramifications should your company enter litigation. Make sure to establish a cell phone policy so that workers are aware of what they can and cannot do while on the job.



With Safety in Mind, Cell Phones are Not Allowed on the Roof

By Rudy Gutierrez

While cell phones have clearly changed our business culture and improved our communications capabilities, it can be a double-edged sword on the roof. Cell phones have created safety hazards and loss of production time throughout the construction industry. More than ever we are hearing of accidents on jobsites involving cell phone use. Employees are less productive due to the use of cell phones.

SHELL Roofing does not allow the use of cell phones on the roof. If we need to contact a Shell Roofing employee such as a superintendent and or the foreman, we will call and leave a message. They in turn will move the to a safe area and return the call. For our team, this is a zero-tolerance policy. Productivity is very important to maintaining profit on a project. However, safety is the highest priority at SHELL Roofing.



Well-trained employees make fewer mistakes, minimizing risk and optimizing opportunities

By Wendy Marvin

At Matrix Roofing & Home Solutions, we create a work environment that values education. Additional learners are openly praised. Certificates of Completion are proudly displayed. Our owner even discusses her own ongoing training and how it impacts her work in the industry.

Our new hires are put into a 90-day probation period. All are paired with a seasoned roofing professional to oversee, and to assist in the implementation of OUR way of installation and repair. Roofing is challenging, often with more than one way to complete a task. Our company values consistency. The consistency of our customer experience is one way to ensure future referrals. We also understand that by replicating our processes in the field, there is a consistency of quality throughout our installations. This is a huge part of the success of any company.

We look for ways to invest in our current employees through training. With the current workforce shortages, employee retention is key to reducing costs. Employees who feel invested in and valued are more likely to stay. Customers who feel that we care enough to train our employees adequately, are more likely to trust our company.

We utilize our industry safety and product training. Safety training meetings occur daily (teams), weekly (divisions) and monthly (entire company). Our company also tries to focus on manufacturer training opportunities and often brings

trainers in house to work with our staff. We train with the NRCA programs, utilize other industry resources, and have recently contracted with our local Washington State University Vancouver extension to tap into additional business resources available outside of industry norms.

Inclement weather days are optimized by conducting in-house training. Our warehouse becomes a hotbed of knowledge shared, comradery, kidding and employees feeling valued. Each roofing professional is given a live chance to demonstrate their skills and to receive feedback from their team. We're often told our employees are grateful for a company that invests in their continued success.

Customer service training is a current focus. Identifying what creates a good opportunity for interaction, how to add value by accomplishing small acts of trust, and what it feels like when that customer is appreciative of your efforts are all priorities with our company.

Training isn't a "luxury" or a "bother" for our business, it is the lifeblood of our company. Part of the foundation that we build our company upon. Well trained employees make fewer mistakes, minimizing risk and optimizing opportunities. Employees who feel valued and invested in tend to stay longer. Making the time for training is a priority for us, as it should be for anyone who has a desire to not just exist, but to succeed in our industry.



Work with employees on compensation for personal phone use

By Charles Antis

Good day, Roofers Coffee Shop, this is Charles Antis with Antis Roofing in Irvine, California. And today's question is about cell phone use. What are your cell phone policies? Do you have them in your company?

Wow, that just set me on a whole memory hole I went down, and I remembered cell phones. I remember in the roofing business before we had them and then I remember like, do you remember when the first person you know had a cell phone, how proud they were. And they were like, "Hello?" Do you remember the big brick? I remember that. And I remember some of the abuse problems in the beginning, like 25 years ago. You'd give somebody a cell phone that you don't know, as a new employee, they could tack up \$500 in long distance bills overnight, that you were left hanging. But a lot has changed about cell phones in the last 20 years.

In fact, plans are very well regulated, and you can get the carriers, the providers, to do all the work for you. For example, if you can have limits on the storage that you have for the data plans for the phone. And you can have spending limits, and by doing that you can mitigate some of that risk. I think one of the best ways that I use when I think of a phone is, some companies don't want to pay for cell phones because we hardly ever use it. But consider this, if you use their phone at all, then you should consider paying it. I always go to this, long ago I learned that I needed to make sense. So, if something wasn't fair, I would tell my employees, tell me where it's not fair. And in that vein, we discovered something about trucks and cars. If an employee's using their transportation just to get to work, then we don't compensate them. But if they use their truck as a tool at all to carry any other people or equipment, then we pay for it.

So, if the phone is needed to perform at the work and you're going to need to call somebody offsite and they need to answer that phone, then you should compensate for that phone. How do you compensate? This is evolved too. If it was five or ten years ago, I would say you pick a plan, you make sure everyone has one of your phones. That way you control it. Today with software and the compatibility of phones, you can get your software in your data plan that you're using. You can download the software you're using for your apps, for your phones, for your storage of pictures and you can put

it onto anybody's phone. So therefore, I would recommend that you allow the flexibility of your employees to choose whether or not they want to use your phone or have their own. Because there's no sense in requiring somebody to have two phones. That's just a wasteful idea.

I would say another thing about phones that used to be the case. It used to be the case that we worried about our employees when they were on their phones when they were not working. I believe that the work gets done, speaks for itself. But I can tell you this. A lot of the people that are on their phones during the day are your brand protectors. They're the ones that are commenting and lifting up and protecting your brand. With all your other stake-holders out there, your employees are the most important. So, I wouldn't worry about phone use unless you're noticing that the expectations of their jobs are not being completed. So, that's about where I'm at. Don't worry too much about, you can control a lot with the plans that you have with your provider and I would say phones are cheap. This is a really good spend, you get great value. So, invest in a plan, then make it available to all your employees and learn to say yes.



Creating Diversity Means Engaging with and Educating Local and Regional Demographics

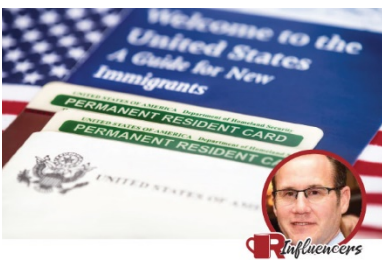
By Rudy Gutierrez

In today's business environment adopting a diversity strategy is very important to the future of an organization. Organizations must take the time to understand their local and regional changing demographics, all with diverse cultures.

There is a real opportunity. Underrepresented groups such as, Latinos, Women and Millennials are vital to the future of the roofing industry as a whole. Latinos represent 60% of the labor force in roofing, women represent only 9% of the workforce and Millennials are not signing up to be roofers. The opportunity is to develop our current Latino workforce, take advantage of the tremendous opportunity with women in roofing and engage with young talented men and women to fill in the growth opportunities in roofing.

Creating diversity in an organization must include, engagement of the local and regional demographics, developing resources to educate the roofing staff and creating opportunities in leadership roles.

Learning from the diverse cultures and understanding the cultural practices of ourselves and others is essential to advancing diversity in an organization and the roofing industry.



Our government needs to understand who our skilled workforce is and what would happen if they were gone

By Jennifer Stone

Last month at the RCS Influencers breakfast meeting at the International Roofing Expo, the topic of immigration came up. After the breakfast I started asking people within my company their thoughts on this topic. I had the liveliest discussion with Doug Duncan. President of our Nations Roof Illinois office. Doug chose to take the topic to his crews – the ones who are most affected by this issue. Here's what he had to say after speaking with them.

What is your ideal outcome in this immigration debate?

I believe the ideal outcome would be for dreamers and immigrants who can contribute to the overall good of the

country, to have a better, more efficient path to residency or citizenship. As we all know by now, our industry is facing a near crisis with skilled labor shortages. I'm confident our government does not understand the makeup of our workforce. My company's labor force consists of 95% Hispanic employees. All of these employees are currently legal to work in this county. Recently, we started a conversation with our employees and asked how THEY feel regarding current and possible changes to the immigration laws. Most of them are worried because their wives are scared, and their cousins, aunts, and uncles are nervous. These people have a right to be here through the DACA program, however some of them and their family members are dreamers and they are scared. I even have some employees who refuse to travel out of the state because their wives are nervous of deportation. Our people see news clips of people being deported and they become scared for their dreamer family members. There is a lack of trust in our administration and this distrust is negatively affecting our workforce.

What would be best for your business?

The best outcome would be for our government to understand who our skilled workforce is, and what would happen if they were gone. I have been involved in the roofing industry for 31 years. When I first started working for my father's roofing company, the workforce was probably 50/50 (mostly non-skilled) Hispanics vs. (skilled) non-Hispanic. I believe that number is probably closer to 90/10 Hispanic vs non-Hispanic now. Our experienced people are now Hispanics. Just think for a second what would happen and how long it would take if these skilled people were suddenly gone. How long would it take to train a new workforce? Is there a new workforce available? I think it would take another 30 years. Can our industry or country wait 30 years for a new workforce? Please participate in Roofing Day in Washington D.C. Bring one or two of your skilled Hispanic workers. Let our government see who our workforce is, let them hear the voice of our employees and let them know they are needed to continue to grow this country.



Why Training is Important and It's Not What You Think!

By Charles Antis

Hi, this is Charles Antis with Roofers Coffee Shop and I'm the CEO of Antis Roofing and Waterproofing in Irvine, California and this month's question is: Training programs, do you utilize them? Do you believe in them?

Short answer: Yes. Tell you a story. Couple years ago, our COO Karen Inman, and I went to a Vistage breakout. 500 local CEOs went to this all-cities Vistage meeting. So, we went to a construction breakout of this meeting and there were a dozen people sitting around a table in the trades. I've done this year after year and this year people weren't smiling; people were complaining. They were complaining about a lack of employee retention.

One of the things that came up in that discussion was why should we train an employee when they're going to take this skill and go give it to another company? So, companies that previously spent thousands of dollars, even tens of thousands of dollars, on employee training per capita, per person, suddenly were going to a zero pay ... A zero-train philosophy because they would lose them to ... They would lose their talent to someone else.

I want to tell you that those businesses will not stay. They have zero chance of staying in business. The trick is to say yes. If you can build the bridge all the way to your employees, if you can train them in all of the capacities, train them to be the best at what they do, train them to assess themselves and understand themselves with emotional intelligence and DiSC® assessments. Find out what fulfills them. Now you retain your people and now you learn and do great things.

We believe in training on every level. I'm super excited about the NRCA, Reed Ribble, our current CEO, is bringing in certification and education in a big level and we will sign our people up to have them certified. It's all about training, especially in the next generation of survival of companies.



The Immigration Debate Poses a Real Economic Threat to the Roofing Industry

By Rudy Gutierrez

The best possible outcome to the immigration debate would be comprehensive immigration reform that allows for the expansion of the guest worker program and provides an opportunity for undocumented immigrants to apply for work permits.

According to the economic summaries presented at The World of Concrete conference; based on the current market conditions, there 1.0M jobs available across the United States in the areas of construction. Current unemployment level is at 4.3% and GDP is at 5%. If unemployment drops below 4% our industry will be challenged to keep up with market demand. This poses a real economic threat to the roofing industry.

Extending deferred action to undocumented immigrants will allow them to work legally and apply for jobs across the labor market. Expanding the guest worker programs will allow the industry to fill the needs of short-term employment and reduce the labor force challenges in an already impacted construction industry.

In terms of what is best for SHELL Roofing? We don't hire undocumented workers. We E-verify so that we don't have these challenges. The challenges that we face is not having skilled people to hire.



Elite Roofing Supply Uses Technology to Create an Improved Customer Experience

By Sarah Weiss

Each year at Elite Roofing Supply, we have implemented a technological solution that changed the way a department or area of our business is run. Last year we went live on Billtrust to allow our customers to pay their bills online and view their invoices and statements online at their convenience. This eliminated the stuffing of thousands of envelopes each month, created a new channel of communication between us and our customers and it answered a need our customers had to have access to their information on demand.

We also implemented Fleetmatics a couple years ago which has enabled us to give customers real-time updates on when their material will be arriving on site without having to call our crew while they are on the road.

Just as it has in our personal lives, the iPhone has truly changed the way we conduct business. All Elite drivers and salespeople are issued iPhones. We have our sales software on the phone, so our salespeople can provide quotes when on the road. Our drivers use their iPhones to FaceTime with their Ops Manager if they're trying to assess how to best load the roof or gain access to a job site. And both sales and operations use the phones to capture photos of a completed delivery or a prospective job site. We believe in having one cell phone platform for all employees in order to have a united strategy on how Elite will use the technology we issue.

We have a few new technologies that we are considering today but we've learned to spend the extra time up front doing our due diligence, creating our rollout plan, etc. to ensure a successful implementation.



Safety and Training Should Be Conversations that Take Place Every Day

By Jon Stantz

The how, what and why on training at Pell Roofing and Siding is pretty basic. Job safety is first and foremost, and we hold weekly discussions about literally everything we face daily. Driving to the job site, setting up the project, customer safety, OSHA inspections, equipment use are all items we deal with.

Driving home the need for better inspection of workplace hazards is sometimes difficult as we all get in too big of a hurry to get work done. I guess my biggest concern is personal protection devices such as fall arrestors, safety glasses and ear plugs. Getting everyone on the same page can be frustrating as new employees think that they can't get hurt. This can cause some serious issues as they don't understand the ramifications of workmen's comp insurance expenses and the cost to all when someone gets hurt, let alone the injury itself.

I will say that we have been very successful with our fall prevention especially on flat roofs. Teaching our workers, the limits when working the edges of a commercial building is especially important as most accidents happen there. We have our new hires go through a safety presentation with videos and formal personal instruction but getting them to utilize all this information can be challenging at times though.

It's just part of the daily grind – you have to continually talk and show them the proper methods, whether it's installation of product or safety.



Make Sure the Technology You are Using Will Make You a More Efficient Operation

By Martin Stout

In 1984 when we got our first two car phones, we thought we were “on the cutting edge” and we were. Contractors need to embrace technology to continue to be competitive. They should also ask themselves, ‘what technologies are we not using?’

At my company, we are actively implementing all of the technology we can get our hands on.

Here is a look at the technology we are using:

- We use a cloud-based platform for our CRM which we have programmed to be our job file from first phone call to the reminder we get to make a phone call to the customer when the warranty has run out so we can sell another Tune Up. This allows us to address a question from anywhere at any time.
- We use a cloud-based platform that routes our incoming calls to the next available call center person who is working from their home.
- We use aerial imagery for take offs for both estimating and material breakdowns. These are attached in our job file and are then reviewed by our estimating team (who work from remote locations) so that pricing can be completed.
- We use the Facetime app for collaborating with inspectors while they are on a job that may have a tough detail or an odd question that needs to be addressed.
- We use mapping programs to help route our teams to be efficient.
- We use iPhone attachments that make the camera infrared, so we can see moisture.

- I haven't signed a document with an ink pen in I don't know how long. PDF files are a standard. We are as close to a paperless office as we can be, and I continue to work to eliminate what little paper is left.
- Without the internet we could not run our business to the size and scope we do. The key is to make sure that the technology you are using will in the long run make you a more efficient operation. The down side is that most technology is not cheap.



A Culture of Technology is Important

By Heidi Ellsworth

In today's world, we have almost everything on our phone. The weather, email, text, airplane tickets or sports results, every day we are more reliant on our smartphone. In honesty, they are not that different from a toolkit or briefcase. They hold all the tools and information that we may need. The problem is that we are still learning how to work with them. Finding a balance so that we do not become distracted or place ourselves and others in danger.

It is time to start looking at how we use the tools of technology. We cannot just ignore the growing reality that we will use our smart phones as a primary tool, but we also cannot let the technology control us. On the roof, several cloud-based software tools rely on either a phone or a tablet up on the roof. And it is not just project management software, but manufacturers have their specs online, they have warranty information and we all use Google when we need to understand something a little bit better.

So, what is the balance? Like anything it is training and education. When is it appropriate to use a mobile device on the roof and when is it not appropriate? As with anything there is personal and professional time. When do we know if employees are "playing" on their phones or using them for the job?

Training and education on how and when also intertwine with culture. The culture of the company needs to extend to the culture of the roof. A culture of respect that goes both ways will set expectations that work time is for work. There will not be a question of whether employees are "playing on the phone" or using them irresponsibly, but it will be expected that it is being used as a roofing and communication tool throughout the company; from the office to the roof top and back.

Technology and smart phones are not going to go away. Progressively understanding how to safely incorporate them on the roof and in overall training can provide an advantage for the company when it comes to faster communications and higher productivity due to having the right tools at your employee's fingertips. By utilizing mobile devices to document, understand and communicate effectively from the jobsite, better than bad will arise as it would with any tool.



Technology Not Only Makes You the Best Roofing Company, But the Best Company

By Charles Antis

Hi, it's Charles Antis, CEO and found at Antes Roofing and Waterproofing here in Irvine, California, and this month's question on the Roofers Coffee Shop is, "What technologies are you using, and how do you integrate them into your business?"

I will talk more theoretical. There are a lot of great technologies, great apps we're using, harness safety software. I'm not going to mention others. I'll let Karen, our COO, talk more about that, but we are down to have the best company, period.

We're not setting out to be the best roofing company. We are setting out to be the best company, period. And how can we possibly be the best company if we're not integrating the latest technologies? This counts when you're ERP assisting, which is your ability to track all of the communications with your customer.

We have to have the latest. We're integrating a new ERP system now, so every touch we have with any of our stakeholders is recorded. We upload 6,000 to 8,000 photos a day, so we need a compatible tool, which we have a late, recently developed software tool, which works better than our old way of hand manipulating them into the system.

We have a theory that change will occur at a much more rapid place, even though the last 10 years have seen a more rapid change than we've ever seen before. And because this change is going to be so exponential and overwhelming, we have to embrace technology as it occurs in our business.

The roofing industry will change so much with the use of drones, robotics, as solar becomes a more factor in the housing market. So, we have to be ready. We make ourselves champions for change, and we celebrate millennials and new ideas. Have a great month.



Technology Adoption is Slow; Group Forms to Help Speed It Up

By Heidi J. Ellsworth

The need for technology advancement in the roofing industry is apparent. It is a movement that continues to gain strength, not just in roofing but in construction and society overall. Being a part of bringing new and disruptive services to the roofing industry is important to RoofersCoffeeShop.com. We are committed to be the leader in providing a digital network that helps educate, entertain and build the roofing industry. The Coffee Shop has been delivering digital information since 2002 and the growth we have seen in the last three years is phenomenal.

Working and learning from roofing contractors across the country, it has become obvious that we need to help lead the adoption of technology in the roofing industry. We are committed to working across the industry to learn more about new and existing technologies that can help roofing contractors in their business processes and operations.

RoofersCoffeeShop.com was one of the founders of a new group of industry thought leaders that recently came together to form the Roofing Technology Think Tank (RT3).

The think tank includes a wide range of manufacturers, distributors, roofing contractors and technology companies, that are leading the initiative to bring as much information about technology into the industry as possible. It is not an association but a think tank that is dedicated to learning and then implementing innovative solutions that will make the roofing industry safer, smarter and more productive.

As contractors look at incorporating more technology into their business, I would recommend thinking big. Follow both the Coffee Shop and RT3 as they deliver articles and research on innovative programs, tools, equipment and cloud-based solutions that can evolve your business. It is easy to just think about cloud-based software or mobile devices but there is a lot out there that can help with the labor shortage and overall improvements in productivity and profitability. Here are top areas that I currently see stirring a lot of excitement around technology and roofing.

Artificial Intelligence

Imagine if a computer could look at an aerial image of a building and without any human help, create measurements and assess damage within seconds. It is very close to becoming a reality with companies that are utilizing artificial intelligence. According to Wikipedia, AI is the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages. Remember when aerial imagery measurement reports changed the industry? This is the next level and it will re-define the speed that we are able to evaluate and quote roofing jobs. Customer expectations will rise to all new levels, especially when this is combined with websites that support an independent customer experience.

AI is also going to make an enormous difference in safety regulations. There are companies right now who can capture video on jobsites that detect when employees are not in safety compliance and alert supervisors. AI is constantly monitoring and looking for pre-defined rules of what employees should be wearing (hard hat), where they should or should not be (restricted areas) and what they are doing (productivity). It will offer eyes on the site that will save lives and increase productivity.

Drones

Imagine that AI measurement and damage report being sent to roofing contractors minutes after natural disasters. Companies are currently working on pre-arranged flight programs for drones that will deliver imagery as soon as drones can begin flying. With pilots and drone networks appearing every day, the ability to get imagery faster and at higher resolution is a reality that is right around the corner.

Robotics

Imagine the next generation of roofing crews being trained not only on quality roofing installations but also on the ability to operate the robots that are doing the hardest parts of the job. The next generation will be experts in running and repairing robots that are laying membrane and hammering shingles. It may seem very futuristic, but companies are already selling equipment for roofing installation that is more like robots than traditional equipment. Check out Soprema's MINI-MACADEN®, a machine for laying bituminous membranes and you will see what I mean.

GPS

Imagine customers watching their phone as your roofing trucks pull up and their materials are delivered. We do it now with Uber, we watch the car on our phone until it pulls up to pick us up. It is already happening with some contractors who communicate through portals and mobile, to show their customers the material delivery and crew travel details with pictures of little roofing trucks making their way to the job. And in the home office, operations and dispatch is watching too. Along with GPS enabled fleets, watch for GPS enabled tools. DeWalt and others are doing amazing work to help stop theft from jobsites with GPS enabled tools that have auto kill switches when taken out of range.

Virtual Reality

Imagine picking out the color and style of your roof while standing in your front yard with goggles. VR goggles are being actively used in architecture and city planning. Customers step into a new world looking at what could be while relating it to what they are seeing in front of them. Soprema once again is leading the way with sopremavr.com. Check out the future of how customers will be making decisions and watching job progress.

Cloud-Based Solutions

Some of the earliest adoption of technology has been cloud-based software. The cloud has changed our world and cloud-based solutions are changing the way roofing contractors handle sales, marketing and production planning and execution. The Coffee Shop partners with great software companies including Nearmap, FCS, Contractors Cloud,

JobNimbus, AccuLynx and Harness. These companies have taken excel sheets and manual activities and created easy-to-use applications that make your business work better. It is worth the time to see what they offer.

The key to understanding what the technology can do for your company is communication. Use your network here on the Coffee Shop. Ask questions in the forum, explore the technology blog and research the directory. Information is key and the fact that you are reading this is the first step to finding amazing solutions to grow your business.



Training can be a differentiator for your business for recruiting and retaining employees

By Heidi Ellsworth

As a partner with RoofersCoffeeShop® and an industry consultant, I do not have firsthand knowledge of every day training in a roofing company. I know how critical it is and that the companies that focus on training will not only win against their competition but will also win in the recruitment of employees. In today's market with the labor shortage influencing everyday business, every differentiator a company can embrace is critical.

In working with the National Roofing Contractors Association (NRCA), I have watched as the association leadership has made a huge commitment to training. I thought this would be the perfect opportunity to share with the RCS audience what the NRCA is working on and why it is going to be so important to the roofing industry.

According to the NRCA ProCertification page <http://www.nrca.net/NRCA-ProCertification>, "NRCA's national certification initiative, NRCA ProCertification, is designed to create a competent, sustainable and high-performing roofing industry workforce. Experienced roofing workers can demonstrate their skills and knowledge to become certified roof system installers in specific roof system applications and disciplines. Through a series of assessments, NRCA will certify workers who have met all the requirements for each type of roof system installation allowing them to earn professional credentials while also certifying foremen and other mid-level roofing company personnel."

The goals of NRCA ProCertification are to:

- Create a career path for industry field workers
- Elevate the roofing industry to be on par with other trade professions that currently offer national certifications
- Address the workforce shortage by making the roofing industry more appealing
- Protect consumers by providing national, professional certifications for those doing work on their home or building
- Educate consumers on the value of hiring an NRCA ProCertified roof system installer
- Increase consumer confidence that workers have the knowledge and skills to do the job well
- Certifications, offered in English and Spanish, available in late 2018 and early 2019 include:
 - NRCA ProCertified Thermoplastic Systems Installer (e.g., TPO, PVC)
 - NRCA ProCertified Asphalt Shingles Installer
 - NRCA ProCertified Roofing Foreman

So why is this type of training and certification important. The NRCA <http://www.nrca.net/NRCA-PRO-benefits-of-certification> notes that, "The roofing industry is constantly evolving, and as roofing contractors look for ways to grow their business, they also need to find ways for your workers to grow. This holds true for existing, experienced workers

and new employees. Labor shortages and worker retention continue to be a struggle in the roofing industry, and NRCA is helping address this issue through its national certification program, NRCA ProCertification™.”

“When you invest in your workers, you show them you appreciate their knowledge and skills set and want them to have successful careers with your company. By certifying your workforce, you demonstrate your commitment to professionalism, quality and your employees’ futures while also providing your company with a significant competitive advantage,” continued the NRCA.

And for the employees, “There always will be a strong demand for people who can install roof systems properly and safely. Roofing work allows people to work with their hands to build and create roofs—the single most important component of a home or building that is essential to protecting customers’ most valuable possessions. NRCA ProCertification provides experienced roofing workers the ability to demonstrate their skills and knowledge and become certified by NRCA in specific roof systems installations. Professional certification offers workers the opportunity to take pride in and be recognized for their skills and expertise—recognition that can stay with them forever. The demand for skilled roof system installers is real, and the opportunities are limitless.”

For those of you who have been following Reid Ribble, NRCA CEO, he has been focused on training since starting with NRCA in 2017. In a recent message to membership he gave this update on ProCertification.

“The first phase of NRCA ProCertification™ has launched. We are accepting applications for individuals seeking to become NRCA ProCertification Qualified Assessors. These individuals will observe and assess installers and determine whether they can perform roof system installations at a high enough level of quality to become certified. Our industry currently has no unified, national standard for workmanship quality or installation performance. This results in quality control issues, added costs for contractors and manufacturers, and slower installations and ultimately exacerbates the workforce shortage issues already gripping the industry. If we can certify our workforce, the public is better served, and deficient roofing operations will have difficulty presenting themselves to the public as professionals. This long has been done in a vast majority of competing trades and allows new hires to be presented with career paths and goals to work toward. NRCA soon will begin accepting applications for NRCA ProCertified Installers in asphalt shingles and thermoplastic systems.”

What the NRCA is doing is creating a program that will not only help roofing contractors and their employees but also elevate the industry. As Reid noted, many other trades already have these type of programs. If you are interested in participating, become a member of NRCA (another important part of a good roofing company) and reach out to sign up your employees. It is good for you, your employees and the industry.

For more information, call (866) ASK-NRCA (275-6722) and ask for NRCA’s Certification Department or email certification@nrca.net.