

Rebranding

There is clearly a need – as well as an opportunity – to “rebrand” careers in building engineering in order to:

- Remove the “stigma” associated with building engineering – and perhaps use the term “building operations” instead of “engineering” or “maintenance.”
- Encourage potential candidates who are already interested in jobs in the trades (HVAC, electrical, plumbing, etc.) to pursue careers as a building engineer.
- Encourage potential candidates who are not aware of positions in building engineering to consider this career pathway as an alternative to college.
- Help parents (and potential candidates) see how lucrative a career in building engineering can be – and help them understand that college is not for everyone – nor is it a guaranteed pathway to success.

Task force members felt it is important for the rebranding initiative to highlight these positive aspects of a career in building engineering:

<i>High tech</i>	<i>Challenging</i>	<i>Stable</i>	<i>Exciting and Creative</i>
<i>Lucrative</i>	<i>Many opportunities to enter field</i>	<i>Many opportunities to advance within the field</i>	<i>Varied skillsets – not “just” doing HVAC, plumbing, etc.</i>
<i>Managing valuable real estate assets</i>	<i>A “people” job</i>	<i>Physical – out and about throughout the day – not “stuck behind a desk”</i>	<i>No two days are the same</i>
<i>A job you can take pride in – “this is MY building”</i>	<i>Low barriers to entry</i>	<i>Sustainability and environmental components can be attractive for some candidates</i>	<i>Transferrable skills (into the field and from engineering to other fields)</i>
<i>Rewarding</i>	<i>Debt-free education (company-paid)</i>	<i>Hands-on training</i>	<i>Earn while you learn</i>
<i>Career advancement</i>	<i>Mentoring</i>	<i>USA-based – will never be outsourced</i>	<i>Analytical</i>

Pain Points

The task force also identified that the rebranding campaign should target these specific “pain points” – perceptions that might discourage potential candidates from pursuing a career in building engineering:

- **Image Issues**

- The building engineering field is perceived to be “blue-collar,” but many would suggest entry-level and mid-level positions are “grey collar” and senior/executive positions are “white collar.”
- There is a perceived “stigma” of workers without a college degree.
- Many see the building engineer position as a 24/7 job, and the after-hours and on call responsibilities of engineering employees are often perceived as negatives. In reality, even for building engineers who are on call, the schedule is usually highly predictable, and emergency calls tend to be “few and far between.” From the opposite perspective, motivated engineers can earn substantial overtime by working extra hours.

- **Lack of Awareness**

- Many potential candidates – including those who are either already working in the “trades” (like HVAC, electric, plumbing, etc.) and those who have an interest in becoming a skilled tradesperson – are not aware the building engineering field even exists.

- **Lack of Parity Between Union and Non-Union Employees**

- Although the number of union engineering positions is somewhat limited in the Washington, DC market, the pay and benefits associated with union engineers are often perceived to be better than the pay and benefits offered to non-union employees. In addition, the barriers to entry to move to/from union engineering positions are relatively low, so engineers can freely move between union/non-union positions readily.

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Based upon recommendations drawn from a May 4, 2016 blog by *Kapost* titled *6 Steps to a Killer Brand Awareness Campaign*, the task force believes the rebranding campaign should focus on these objectives:

- Identify who we are trying to reach
- Figure out where they “live” – particularly online – and how to reach them
- Create an appropriate budget
- Know what success means
- Measure results and outcomes