

Unlocking Success

Strategies for Employee Retention, Labor Shortages
and Technology Integration

By **David Trask**, National Director, ARC Facilities



Introduction by David Trask



I'm on the road all the time at customer sites, doing field verification walks, and working closely with facility leaders and technicians. When I'm not onsite, I'm speaking at conferences and on webinars, so I do a lot of listening and learning.

Believe me, sometimes it can be a therapy session and I truly feel for where some people are today. I'm also active on LinkedIn – sharing articles, industry statistics and photos from facility teams in the trenches.

It's a fast paced and evolving world out there and I've been fortunate to make thousands of connections, meet industry peers and make many new friends. It's a true passion for this industry.

We're reaching a tipping point in facility management where three trends are happening simultaneously – labor shortages, employee retention, and the integration of technology that enables organizations to keep teams enthused, engaged, and excited.

Labor shortages are impacting every industry. Just go into nearly any hospital, school, manufacturer or even a grocery store. Help wanted signs are everywhere and long lines aren't getting shorter.

In facilities, when you're down a person or two, everyone's to do list becomes longer, people need to work longer hours, and there's a greater likelihood that some things just won't get done right away. While delays, deferred maintenance and downtime have always been a challenge, we're now dealing with several years of labor shortages, and **teams are feeling tired of being pushed to the limits.** They are burning the candle at both ends.

Employee retention tactics have evolved over the years and will continue to change.

The new generation doesn't just want a pat on the back or pizza parties.

They want to see clear career pathways and opportunities to grow, while taking on more responsibilities, with increased compensation. They want to genuinely feel appreciated, and they're counting on improved work-life balance.

Having the time and flexibility to run quick errands, take your kids to school, and not having to take time off for doctor appointments are important. **So is being appreciated and taken care of.**

While some departments were able to work remotely or have a hybrid schedule, facility teams never left. You can't fix most equipment failures from home. Facility teams are in your buildings every day taking care of equipment, handling work orders, budgeting, planning, preparing for inspections and the likelihood of emergencies. Facilities teams wear multiple hats every day with the sole purpose of maintaining a healthy, clean, and functioning environment for anyone who walks through the doors.

Cross training goes a long way to retain employees as do opportunities for continued education – especially when companies sponsor those growth opportunities.

The industry is rapidly changing. Understanding that technology is a tool for recruitment, training, engagement, and action is becoming more and more prevalent – bridging the generations, helping everyone in the organization see big picture changes, and providing critical data for decision-making.

Technology adoption is an indication to potential new hires that the organization is forward thinking. Life will be less stressful and easier to manage. That's a big deal!

Facility leaders are asking: How fast can I respond when something happens? How long is it taking me to fix or inspect something because I don't know where it is? **Many of the people who could have answered those questions in the past are gone.**

I've had thousands of conversations with folks, and I'd like to share 5 big takeaways.



ONE:

Labor Shortages and the Importance of Retention Strategies

We need to develop effective strategies for employee retention. One individual shared an idea about creating a resource ‘toolbox’ to help companies attract and retain workers, with a focus on employee retention, career growth ladders and the transfer of knowledge before workers retire.

“How are we attracting people to our organization? How are we keeping people,” he asked. “If I achieve these goals, will I go up a level with increase in pay and benefits?”

Those are the career growth ladders I keep hearing about as a tiered growth within the organization to help maintain and keep the people we’ve got.

Another individual suggested transitioning retiring workers to part-time roles to allow for knowledge transfer and continuity. This was especially attractive when working with unions by reclassifying the retiring team members to the open position that could be posted before those team members retire.



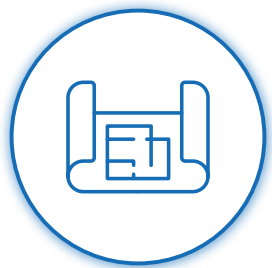
TWO:

The Importance of Internal Apprenticeship Programs

Several people shared the importance of internal apprenticeship programs in addressing labor shortages. While these programs are beneficial, most agree that they often can’t keep up with the rate at which employees are exiting organizations.

“Developing an internal apprentice program is a great idea, but that only impacts a fraction of the people we’re losing. So even though we’ve got this apprentice program, it’s not keeping up with the people who are going out,” said one person.

To combat this, several people proposed overhiring to account for future job vacancies.



THREE:

The Need for a Shift from Legacy Systems to Mobile-First Platforms

There is an industry shift from legacy systems to mobile-first platforms. Most legacy systems are typically accessed via a local network and can be inefficient and slow. Many are unable to be updated to adapt to modern architecture.

They proposed a shift to mobile-first platforms, to provide instant access to information, as a solution.

“It’s impossible for people to remember where everything is,” said one individual.

“I think we should dive in on legacy old systems that weren’t built mobile friendly or mobile first,” agreed another.

“If you can’t find something in 30 seconds, that means you’re not in control of your building information,” added one facility manager.



FOUR:

Effective Use of Technology for Ease and Efficiency

Work smarter, not harder! Industry trends have shifted focus to using technology to make work easier and more efficient, including the use of voice-to-text features and recording and attaching videos to equipment records as ways to simplify data entry and documentation.

“Can you voice to text? Can you do that to enter the information about your equipment?”

There are ways to capture legacy knowledge “in their own words” and take the burden off trying to remember every detail about a building.



FIVE:

Ownership and Control of Building Information

Taking ownership and control of building information is paramount to facilities teams. Having instant access to this information and being able to respond quickly when something happens is crucial in facility management. Information lives with the building and not with a person.

Insights Surfaced

- Labor shortages are a significant issue, and companies need to find ways to attract and retain employees, including using career growth ladders.
- Retiring workers hold a lot of institutional knowledge, and companies need to find ways to capture this knowledge before these workers leave.
- Companies can benefit from creating internal apprenticeship programs.
- Companies should consider overhiring to compensate for potential employee departures.
- Companies need to take control of their building information.

Last Words... We'll See

I'll continue to keep my ear to the ground and finger on the pulse of what people are doing to attract and retain key team members. **Successful teams are nimble and should be able to adjust as needs change.**

We'll be hearing more about these trends and challenges in the coming months at the major facility management industry events. Stay tuned for more helpful insights by [following me on LinkedIn](#) :

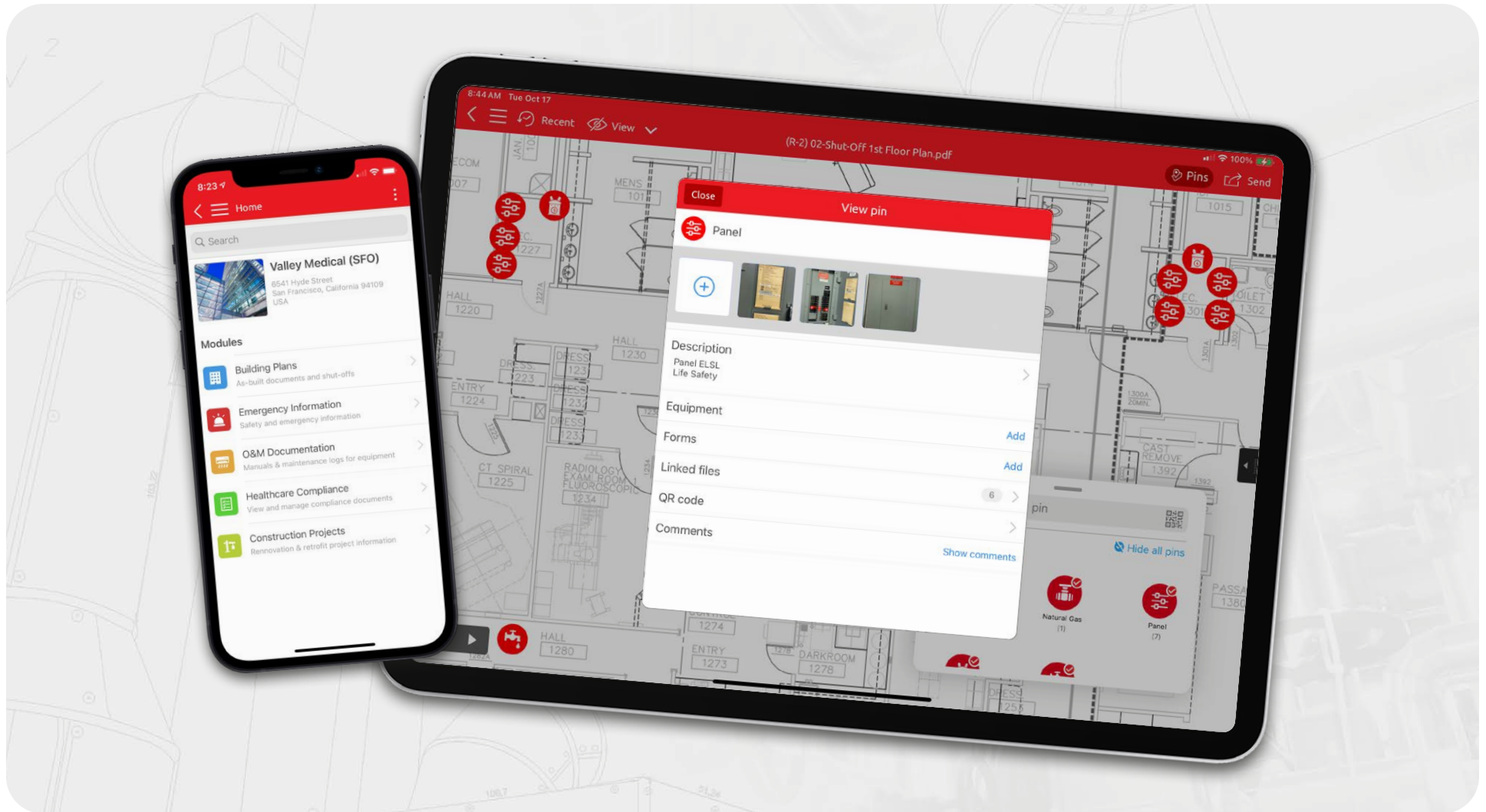
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/davidtrask>



Tune in to the **Facility Voices Podcast** where I have open dialogues with facilities professionals from all over the country, sharing narratives that explore leadership, coaching, mentorship, and a peek into their everyday experiences.

You can also listen to the Facility Voices podcast on [Apple Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), [Amazon Music](#), [Google Podcasts](#), and other platforms.





To find out how ARC Facilities can help you ease the transition to the next generation of facilities management, request a demo today.

www.arcfacilities.com/requestdemo

or send an email to

solutions@arcfacilities.com



ARC Facilities | 855-500-0660 | arcfacilities.com

Copyright © ARC Document Solutions, LLC 2023. ARC, ARC Document Solutions and the ARC logo are registered trademarks of ARC Document Solutions, LLC in the U.S. and/or other countries.