



# CAN'T FIND SKILLED EMPLOYEES? BUILD YOUR OWN DREAM TEAM

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Registered apprenticeships are filling jobs in high-growth industries such as health care, high tech and advanced manufacturing. Benefits include reduced employee turnover, increased productivity and a solid return on your training dollar. Funds for developing a registered apprenticeship may be available.

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Headline Breakfast Series report: Laboring over labor – minimum wage, coworking and other workforce trends

Date 2/22/2019

URL <https://idahobusinessreview.com/2019/02/22/227844/>

Source Line Idaho Business Review

Body by staff

**Introduction**

With the unemployment rate throughout the U.S. at 4 percent and Idaho's rate at 2.6 percent as of December, employers are finding it increasingly difficult to attract and retain top employees for their organizations. It's a battle for talent, with many qualified job seekers fielding offers from multiple companies. So how do you set yourself apart?

At IBR's Feb. 7 Breakfast Series on the labor market in Idaho, six expert panelists discussed a variety of topics that can make the difference, ranging from recruitment trends to diversity to company culture.



Photo by Liz Patterson Harbauer

**The Panel**

**Moderated by Carsten Peterson, attorney with Hawley Troxell**

**Ashley Davis**, Project Manager for Global Talent, a program of Jannus

**Patti Perkins**, head of Calyx-Weaver, a workplace management services company

**Wendi Secrist**, Executive Director for the Workforce Development Council under the Office of the Governor

**Crystal Severson**, Human Resources Manager for the Pacific and Northeast regions for Boise Cascade Building Materials Distribution

**Craig Shaul**, analyst for the Idaho Department of Labor

**Louisa Waldman**, regional vice president for Robert Half

**Unemployment rate at historic lows**

Patti Perkins

**Patti Perkins:**

I believe 2.6 percent is the December unemployment rate in Idaho, which is pretty unheard of. It seems that everybody that wants to be working is working. It's difficult I think, to find the right person. There's a lot of layers to that because there are pockets that are more difficult than others to

find qualified people.

Then the expectations of the job seeker are very different than they used to be. Since many of the decision makers are still those of us in my generation, we think, "Oh wow, you are just entitled or you are this or that," when in fact, work has changed. I do think the applicants and the candidates are very definitely in the driver's seat these days.

in the jobs that they're in, you're not going to have to go find new people.



Wendi Secrist

**Wendi Secrist:**

When you look at North Idaho where you've got Washington sitting on the border and higher wages and so forth, employers are much more challenged to not only hire but retain their employees, and that's where they're being very creative about how they

train.

The Workforce Development Council oversees the state's workforce development training fund, and we're able to give grants to employers to help train their employees. There's a project that was funded in early 2018, with the health care industry in north Idaho where they have CNAs that need to be upgraded to medical assistants or patient care technicians because that's the direction the industry is going. They can't recruit. There aren't enough patient care techs to fill those jobs. So, they had to look internally and say, "Alright, where do we have really stellar individuals who are currently in a CNA role, and then how can we train them through a combination of on-the-job training and partnering with North Idaho College for the more traditional part of it?"

The message that those companies are sending to those employees is that we value you, we're going to invest in you. They can clearly see their pay rise as they learn new skills, and that's the beauty of a registered apprenticeship model, is that it's a combination of that structured on the job training, the education through the more traditional methods, and wage progression.

An employer who can clearly outline this is how I'm going to invest in you, this is what our development plan looks like, I think that sets you apart to be able to handle some of those wage issues.

**Patti Perkins:**