

# VOICE OF THE BLUE-COLLAR WORKER

THE NATION'S LARGEST SURVEY OF HOURLY WORKERS



## Paradigm Shift in Blue-Collar Labor Demand

A paradigm shift in labor supply and demand trends following the U.S. recession (December 2007 to June 2009) has created renewed emphasis on the importance of the blue-collar workforce. For over a decade prior to the recession, America's recruiting focus was largely on white-collar workers, a term which has become synonymous with "knowledge workers."

However, out of the post-recession labor market has emerged a new set of dynamics creating an empowered blue-collar workforce like never before. Beginning with the 2010 recovery, goods-producing jobs grew as rapidly or more so than service-producing jobs for the first time since 1984. From January 2010 to January 2019 labor data further demonstrates the importance of focusing on blue-collar talent with the same priority previously reserved for white-collar talent. During this period, jobs have grown at a comparable pace for both worker groups, but among blue-collar workers, the pool of available talent has shrunk more rapidly and voluntary quits have risen faster.

### LABOR DEMAND SHIFT BY THE NUMBERS

2010 to 2019	White-Collar	Blue-Collar
<b>OPEN JOBS</b>	<b>Up 200%+</b> 475K to 1,472K	<b>Up 200%+</b> 138K to 452K
<b>UNEMPLOYMENT RATE</b> Number of Available Workers	<b>4.9% to 2.4%</b> Down 51%	<b>13% to 3.3%</b> Down 75%
<b>VOLUNTARY QUILTS</b>	<b>Up 74%</b> 381K to 664K	<b>Up 162%</b> 81K to 212K

*Revised as of 8/9/2019*

Source: Jan. 2010 and Jan. 2019 Bureau of Labor Statistics. White-Collar Worker statistics based on "Professional and Business Services" or "Professional and Related Services." Blue-Collar Worker statistics based on an aggregate of "Manufacturing" and "Transportation, Warehousing and Utilities." Occupational data for voluntary quits and "Manufacturing, Durable Goods" data for Job Openings.

This dramatic shift has created new realities uncovered by the 2019 *Voice of the Blue-Collar Worker* survey that are likely to surprise employers from across all aspects of the supply chain, including manufacturing, warehousing, logistics and distribution. Employers who rely on blue-collar workers to meet customer demands must change their recruitment and retention strategies to meet the expectations of an increasingly empowered hourly workforce. Those who do not run the risk of losing a competitive advantage in what is currently the lowest unemployment market in 50 years.



## The Newly Empowered Blue-Collar Workforce

Labor data further indicates the balance of power has shifted from supply chain employers to supply chain workers. For the first time in over a decade, there are more open jobs than available workers. In response, blue-collar wages are rising, as are the expectations and confidence of the blue-collar workforce.

In short, what has traditionally been perceived by some employers as an easily replaceable segment of the workforce is today more empowered than ever and willing to change jobs if their needs are not met. Employers who do not respond run the risk of high turnover. To learn more about ways to attract and retain the labor force your organization needs to succeed [download the full report here](#).

## About the Survey

The 2019 *Voice of the Blue-Collar Worker* is the nation's largest and twelfth-annual survey of America's hourly, blue-collar workforce. The goal is to shed light on the unique factors that attract, motivate and retain the blue-collar workforce. In total, 18,505 online and written interviews were conducted of workers 18 years of age or older, employed or recently employed on a flexible or full-time basis. Respondents span the manufacturing, warehousing, logistics and distribution industries. Data was collected from February 11, 2019 to March 22, 2019. The survey is sponsored by EmployBridge and its specialty workforce divisions ResourceMFG, ProLogistix, Select, Remedy and Westaff.

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