

## **Insights and Analysis**

For 100 years, the Oregon-Columbia Chapter of the Associated General Contractors (AGC) has served as the voice of the local commercial construction industry. Workforce development is one of AGC's key strategic objectives, as its membership is finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain skilled workers. AGC enlisted Quinn Thomas's (QT) expertise to develop a comprehensive brand strategy and communications program to advance its Build Oregon workforce development initiative.

To inform the campaign, QT worked with AGC's member organizations and industry partners to establish a deep understanding of its audiences, communications channels and existing programs. We conducted a member survey, 1:1 stakeholder interviews, focus groups of young skilled workers, a message mapping session and a review of past programs. The result was a comprehensive research report that revealed the following top findings: 1) Misconceptions about careers in construction plague the industry. 2) Inclusion is essential to long-term success. 3) For Gen Z, culture—not pay—is king. 4) It's difficult to access skilled trades career paths.

In addition to these barriers, QT identified three opportunities through audience research: 1)The look and feel of brand and marketing materials did not align with our target personas' interests. 2)The benefits of working in skilled trades were largely unknown to the target audience. 3)The marketing channel strategy must be mobile-first to effectively reach the next generation. The success of the 2021 campaign would hinge on reaching target audiences in an authentic way on their preferred channels.

## **Planning**

We recommended a funneled approach to create awareness (3 million impressions) and interest (10,000 website visits) with the goal of driving 500 referrals to local training programs in the first quarter the program was live. QT recommended two key strategies: 1) Develop a new brand that resonates with the next generation and thoughtfully apply it across Build Oregon's owned properties. 2) Deploy a highly targeted and broad reaching marketing communications program to encourage prospective workers to consider construction careers.

Our target audience included: **Skilled Entry-level Workers**, primarily men, currently in adjacent industries, seeking new opportunities; **Young Job Seekers**, working Gen-Z/Millennials, men and women, not in construction, seeking a new or better career opportunity; and **Entry-level Construction Workers**, primarily men, currently in construction-related positions with some level of training.

## **Execution**

The work occurred in three phases: research and planning (January - December 2020), brand refresh and website launch (January 2021-August 2021) and paid media (September 2021 - January 2022).

**Brand refresh:** The current brand was outdated and failing to connect with target audiences. It was imperative to adapt the brand to attract younger generations to the industry. Leveraging audience research insights, the team developed a new brand centered on Gen Z visual trends like bright teal hues and swiss design elements. To maintain the brand's construction roots we integrated a bold orange often

found on construction sites and authentic local photography that showcased the pride and grit of the industry. A meaningful new tagline that aligned with Gen Z's sense of purpose - *Build What Matters* - completed the new brand.

**Owned channels:** The cornerstone of the campaign was a new mobile-first website that simplified how to access skilled trade careers. Build-Oregon.com now serves as the ultimate hub for resources and information to inspire the next generation of construction workers. Top features include an interactive careers quiz, key details on top careers and a searchable database of training program opportunities. To align with the new brand, QT also developed a digital ad campaign and revamped the program's social media channels, print collateral, blog, partner features and more.

**Paid media:** QT implemented a campaign encompassing a mix of highly targeted digital, mobile-first advertising across Oregon. Media consumption data for Gen Z and younger millennials was used to guide channel placement and spend. We created a suite of digital ads and content including social media, digital display and search. All ads directed users to a landing page developed by QT, where prospective workers could begin researching career and training opportunities.

**Influencer media:** To speak authentically with our target audiences and reach them on their preferred platforms, we partnered with three local influencers in the construction space. On Instagram and TikTok, they shared their own stories about how they got into construction, the benefits it brings to their life and a CTA to visit the Build Oregon website to learn about construction careers. Our standout partner was @biggieclean, a hazardous waste cleaner from Portland. His TikTok video received 360,000+ views and drove 10,000+ visits to the Build Oregon website.

### **Evaluation**

More than two years of time, dedication and passion from AGC members, staff and partners culminated in a highly successful first year for the new Build Oregon workforce development program. We exceeded all client goals: Awareness – 4 million paid impressions (**290% above goal**); Exploration – 23,000 website visits (**130% above goal**); Consideration – 911 referrals (**82% above goal**).

**Digital marketing:** Our primary KPI was click through rate (CTR). The .05% CTR digital display and 3% search benchmarks were exceeded across all channels. Benchmarks were also met for impressions and clicks. We achieved: **Paid Search** – 59,700 impressions and 3.05% CTR; **Paid Social** - 216,382 impressions and .92% CTR; **Digital Display:** 3,459,953 impressions and .06-.30% CTR (varied by tactic).

**Influencer media:** Content reach of over 4,200,000 followers, almost 63,000 engagements and drove more than 10,000 clicks to the Build Oregon website.