

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

Guests: Rich and Gina Camacho, Co-Owners of BlueRecruit

Run Time: 28:23

Questions or Feedback: thefix@oatey.com

00:00:06 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Welcome to The Fix, the podcast made for the trades, where we sit down with inspiring individuals across the trades to discuss their unique take on the industry, including career paths, job site stories, overcoming challenges, and everything in between. I'm your host, Katherine, a marketer here at Oatey with my co -host and friend, Doug, one of Oatey's resident experts in all things trades. The Fix is more than a podcast. It's a community, a community built to support tradespeople and inspire the next generation of essential pros. Let's start the conversation.

00:00:50 **Katherine Lehtinen**

All right, Doug, talk about Dynamic Duo. It is on today.

00:00:56 **Doug Buchan**

I'm going to tell you, 2024, give me more, give me more, right? Okay. So, you know, being a single guy, Katherine, I don't cook very much and I always try to at least get one good meal a month. So I'm thinking today's guest reminded me of that three -star Michelin restaurant that I'll try to find every now and then because it's excellent cuisine. And I'm willing to travel to get that, right? And these folks are serving up education, they're serving up resources to find a job, they're serving up resources to find employees for a job. They have 135 scheduled trades programs, over 600 accredited. Okay, so this is a

00:01:39 **Katherine Lehtinen**

three -star Michelin guest we've got going on today. Love it. Well, welcome to Gina and Rich Camacho.

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

00:01:46 **Rich Camacho**

Thank you for joining us today. Glad to be here. Doug, I gotta start off by saying though, thank you for that reference. However, I am not the cook of the duo, and whenever I try assisting in the kitchen I'm told that I'm quote too helpful to get the blank

00:02:05 **Doug Buchan**

out. Rich to be honest with you most of that was directed towards Gina I just

00:02:14 **Rich Camacho**

figured I would include you as a couple on that.

00:02:21 **Rich Camacho**

Well that's a great leader then

00:02:29 **Katherine Lehtinen**

So, can you tell us about both of your backgrounds and what inspired you to start Blue Recruit?

00:02:36 **Gina Camacho**

Absolutely, yeah. So, I'm Gina Camacho, co-founder. Also married to this guy, Rich. He'll introduce himself in a second. I was born and raised in Florida, went to Florida State, and graduated with an interior design degree. Actually graduated in 2008, which a lot you probably remember as it was impossible to get a job in kind of construction and housing back then. So, I ended up falling into software a couple years later and I have been in the tech industry now for about 14 years. I also kind of in the middle of that was a teacher so education and technology have been in my background for a while now. And Rich will kind of go into why we founded Blue Recruit here in a second, but it's kind of one of those things where all of those different things that happened in my life that I wasn't expecting led up to us founding this company. So, Rich.

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

00:03:40 **Rich Camacho**

I'm Rich Camacho. While I'm a tech CEO, I know absolutely nothing about computers. And so I leave that up to Gina and her team. But really the idea for BlueRecruit came about because after the military I got into who, for lack of a better term, headhunting and helping companies find kind of entry -level corporate -type jobs, had a lot of customers in the construction, in the trades, but we weren't supporting field workers. We were supporting more office space, and kept having companies like, hey, thanks so much for sending us over this project manager, this estimator. We also need some welders and forklift operators and crane operators. Can you help us out? I was like, I have no idea where to find a crane operator, but we'll send you a Pima next quarter." And ultimately, Gina's dad, since he was in high school, was painting cars. He's not retired, but he had a couple of body shops down in the West Palm Beach area. And he's like, Rich, I don't know what I'm doing wrong. I'm trying to hire

00:04:41 **Rich Camacho**

a painter for one of the shops, and I keep getting resumes from house painters. He's like, it's not like a house painter is going to come over here and start rolling cars. And so, Gina and I looked at it, we're like, you're not doing anything wrong, it's basically running keyword searches and every time it sees a painter in South Florida that's in your price range, it sends you a resume. And so, ultimately what we did was kind of copy the dating app space and we built a platform that connects skilled workers with hiring companies and really tailored to those certifications, those experiences that are required in the trades that aren't, you know, as necessary or as required in traditional white -collar roles, which is, you know, what a lot of job posts and job boards are really tailored for.

00:05:28 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah. That's really interesting. And I love that concept. I think it really works well. You know, could you share some of your success stories or examples of how Blue Recruit has helped tradespeople find the right job opportunities?

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

00:05:42 **Rich Camacho**

One of my favorite stories is actually from near when we first launched the product. We had a really interesting time to start a company, it was March 2020. For all of us that remember what was going on in March 2020, about a week after we launched is when America and the rest of the world shut down. We were like, huh, what a fantastic time to start a company. But it actually turned out to be for the good. But one of the local companies here, one of our very first customers, they were trying to hire water purification technicians for their facility because they were in the pharmaceutical manufacturing business. And so, obviously, you know, you need really clean water to do that. And they were just not having any luck trying to find a water purification technician, you know, very specific kind of work. And so, they found BlueRecruit, put in the certification or selected the certifications, the experience that they need. It turns out a diesel mechanic fits about 90 % of the requirements

00:06:46 **Rich Camacho**

of water purification technicians. And that was a really cool way to find out that regardless of what's happening in the economy, there's going to be recessions, downturns, upturns. Something's always going to be in demand. Something's always going to be slowing down. We see it right now with the weather. Lawn care, not a huge demand right now. Snow removal, huge demand.

00:07:10 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure, yep.

00:07:11 **Rich Camacho**

Furnace. Furnace maintenance. Huge demand. And so that was just a really cool thing to see that we could now assist job seekers in finding employment regardless of, you know, how of their particular demographic, how it's doing because now a diesel mechanic, maybe they're not doing so hot, hey, you now have another industry to work in and vice versa for employers.

00:07:35 **Katherine Lehtinen**

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

That's great. I love it that they're looking at the attributes and the skill set of different people and you have just other opportunities to go into and not necessarily just also

00:07:43 **Doug Buchan**

pigeonholed into one trade. Yeah, absolutely. You know, it's here at the manufacturing industry, we look at something like that as a cross training. Yep. You know, where we'll train you in multiple areas to get more value out of it and it sounds like you were able to figure out that that diesel mechanic was the right fit for something completely out of his job scope. What diesel

00:08:06 **Rich Camacho**

mechanic would ever even think of applying to a water purification job, and what HR manager is even going to entertain a decent mechanic, and it turns out, y'all should be looking at each other.

00:08:16 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah.

00:08:17 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Well, that kind of almost goes right into my next question, and this might be case by case then, but I was going to talk about what are the key qualifications and certifications that BlueRecruit focuses on when matching tradespeople with hiring companies, and it might just be that, that how do you look at that broad scope of people's skill set and

00:08:37 **Doug Buchan**

and

00:08:37 **Katherine Lehtinen**

then make sure that they have options.

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

00:08:40 **Gina Camacho**

Yeah. So, we... So, the way that our platform works is we are basically a database of skills and certifications. And we've got, what, almost 50,000 skills and certifications within 16 different skilled trades industries and about 135, 140 trades. So, you do see, when you're building that hierarchy, the repetition of certifications and skills from job to job. And so the way that our platform works and how we were kind of able to discover that similarity between the two is when you're a job seeker and you sign up on our platform, you select your trade, you select all the skill certifications you have, and when an employer is looking to fill a role, they're running a search with the same skills and certifications. So they're selecting a particular skill or certification that someone outside of the trade that they're actually looking for has, and that person's going to pop up in the results. And so that really has, like Rich said, kind of leveled the playing field in terms of, doesn't matter

00:09:48 **Gina Camacho**

if you were specifically a job seeker looking for that job, trying to apply for that specific job because you felt you were qualified. We're allowing people that might not have thought that they were qualified actually be qualified in that employer's eyes because they're seeing the skills and certifications they have.

00:10:03 **Doug Buchan**

Right. Yeah, that's impressive. Yeah, that is impressive. You know, I'm a big education guy. I love to learn and teach, right? So your education format, you know, really piqued my interest, especially when you had listed out, you know, over 600 accredited, you know, trade programs. So when that individual reaches out to you and they're looking for employment, they could start off by having zero technical capabilities, and then enroll in those programs to enhance their value within that market. Does the school, once those people enroll into those schooling programs, does the school stay in contact with you folks so that you see the progress of that student and then help them look at higher positions possibly?

00:10:57 **Rich Camacho**

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

Yeah, it's really cool because, one, if we just had a platform where career tradespeople could sign up for, yeah, you know, we don't have to talk to you or your audience, everybody knows that everybody's looking for skilled, certified, licensed skilled workers. That would be a really cool platform for about five years because in about five years we're pretty much going to run out of people to keep filling up our database and what good is a database of nothing but retirees. And so what we decided was we had to not only start creating our own pipeline of talent, but really bring people together that are already creating pipelines of talent, and just making for a more efficient way of getting them into the labor pool and getting them connected. So we work with organizations here in the United States, primarily CQ, up in Canada, NACC. And it's the two largest collection of accredited trade schools in both the U.S. and Canada. And so what happens there is whether that, you know, fresh high

00:12:02 **Rich Camacho**

school graduate finds that trade school through Blue Recruit or they find it on their own, they'll join that trade school, go through the program. And what we then provide is that student, graduate, alumni has a BlueRecruit account. We can connect them to an employer. But what really makes a true partnership is then we then push back the employment verification data to the schools. Because a lot of people don't know this, but trade schools need to provide far more information to the federal government than like a traditional... community college or a traditional four-year school. So those schools need that employment information about their graduates. We have it. So it really is a win-win partnership. They're giving us a constant supply of qualified, certified talent. We're giving them information that they need, and then they can track that individual and that graduate can grow their career and, you know, constantly get better opportunities, more pay, more responsibilities as they grow

00:13:02 **Rich Camacho**

in their

00:13:03 **Doug Buchan**

career. Yeah, that's fantastic. What a great concept. I mean, I love that.

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

00:13:08 **Katherine Lehtinen**

So, can you talk maybe a little bit on the technology side around, you know, what are some of the technology advancements and innovations that you've implemented at BlueRecruit to streamline their recruitment process? Technology? What is that's that was not for you rich mm -hmm I was like kind of surprised you were starting to answer to be quite honest Wow rich I'm gonna take back my earlier

00:13:35 **Doug Buchan**

comments about the Michelin thing I support you fully at this point okay

00:13:46 **Gina Camacho**

So, we've, I've always wanted to embrace AI in our industry, wasn't exactly sure how to do it. And fortunately, I would say over the last year, I've found a couple of opportunities to really be able to embrace that technology and offer it to our users. So, one thing that we noticed, and it was kind of poor company user behavior, is the way that we have companies get in touch with our job seekers is through text message. Email does not work. It has a very low response rate. We do have in -app, but what our job seekers love about our platform is they don't even need to log in. They can communicate via text. And what we were seeing employers do is they were ignoring the fact that everywhere it says it's sent as a text message, and just copying and pasting these really long email templates. It's job seekers, and they were coming over as 17 text messages. Nobody wants that. So we implemented technology of basically, over the years, we've determined what keywords get a good response from a job

00:14:56 **Gina Camacho**

seeker and kind of is like, ooh, that's exciting. I want to hear more about that opportunity, and kind of character length. And so what we've done is whenever someone tries to put in that long extended message, we have something that says, hey, optimize your message, and we will convert whatever that is into a short text message, leveraging all the keywords and that long post that they were about to put in and really tailor it to text

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

message. And so we've seen an incredible kind of response. Job seekers appreciate it. They kind of get the information they need without something really long. And so that was something that I was really excited to launch. We also have another product, which we haven't talked too much about yet, but it's called Blue Career. And this is a product that we've wanted to launch for years, but we knew that we were going to have to have this kind of job placement platform for a couple years first. And what Blue Career is, is it allows someone with really little to

00:16:00 **Gina Camacho**

no knowledge of the skilled trades, explore 135 different trades, they can see what kind of pay they're making, how in demand it is, and all of that information is coming from our platform. A lot of times you'll see platforms like that, it's coming from department labor numbers which can be outdated. Ours are live information, so you're seeing what employers are paying for that job now, how in demand it is now and it allows someone to take an assessment, get matched to skilled trades that are a good fit for them, explore more about a trade that they're matched with, and then we also provide them with different learning paths, whether it's online or going through one of our trade school partners or just getting a job because it's one of those jobs that you can just work your way up. You don't necessarily need school. And we've been able to leverage AI there, as well, because we were hearing from people of, well, I have a high school diploma, or I don't, or maybe I have a different starting

00:17:01 **Gina Camacho**

point than someone else. So we actually are leveraging AI to create personalized career paths for someone. So they give us a little bit of information about their education, where they have some work experience, if they don't, if they're a veteran, and then we build and tailor this career journey for them that incorporates all that information they gave us so it gives them a good starting path on where they need to go next really cool that is really cool I

00:17:27 **Doug Buchan**

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

tell you what I hope someday I can be like be an AI you know just so I can be around for a while and see how successful Katherine because she's doing

00:17:36 **Rich Camacho**

nothing but going up here I actually yeah I actually have the Terminator

00:17:47 **Doug Buchan**

on my list of movies to watch again this weekend because I think it might actually come true.

00:17:53 **Katherine Lehtinen**

No, but I love...

00:17:54 **Doug Buchan**

We're just repeating ourselves. Yeah.

00:17:57 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah. I love, though, taking the technology and putting together what that possibility could be for someone, and it allows someone to quickly get a glimpse versus having to maybe go through something and then figuring out it's not what they want. I mean, and of course, it's not perfect, but it gives you some guardrails and at least some understanding there which is really cool.

00:18:20 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah one of the questions I have for you folks is you know testimonials. It's always good for me if I was someone who who's unsure you know or doesn't have confidence at that point to hear from someone else who had the same struggles as I do or I may be having at that time. How do you guys go about, you know, relaying success stories to, you know, your possible new... Candidate. ...database, candidates. There you go, Katherine. Thank you. Thank you. My AI wasn't kicking in there. No, it wasn't.

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

00:18:56 **Rich Camacho**

Well, one thing I will say is this is a mistake we used to make years ago. After we see successful connections, hires, never email them and ask them for a testimonial because you're never going to respond back. And that was my own ignorance. Was like, oh, they connected, they use your product because they like text messaging and then you tried emailing. So that right there is that bad user behavior that the CEO of the company was now utilizing. But one thing that I love the most, my favorite testimony of all time from our product was actually watching the relationship between an employer and a job seeker. There was a mobile mechanic shop up in the Baltimore area that was utilizing BlueRecruit. They were trying to hire. And they found a really good fit, but it was a traditional 9 -to -5 type job. And this job seeker said, hey, I would love to come work with you, however, I will not be there Thursday afternoons. Every Thursday afternoon my son has a lacrosse game. I will be at his game. And

00:20:03 **Rich Camacho**

so what that shop owner ended up doing was just adjusting this mechanic's schedule to allow for him to have every Thursday afternoon off. You know, maybe it's extra time on Mondays or what have you. And you know, one, you just created, that employer just created an incredibly loyal employee. That individual's never gonna leave because you gave him what he values most is the ability to support his son. But what that was kind of like the story that highlights something that we've seen. And if we can give any kind of tip out there to employers that are trying to hire right now is a lot of we see a lot of times overpaying this job seekers. Compensation is not the number one thing motivating job seekers right now or motivating someone when they when they have multiple offers on the table. And it's actually flexibility of schedule. One thing that did was make everybody want to have a flexible schedule. Obviously, in our industry, no one's going to weld from home, right?

00:21:06 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Sure.

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

00:21:07 **Rich Camacho**

It's not like us right now doing this podcast from home. That's not a possibility if you're a plumber and you have to go to house calls. However, what it means in the trades is you don't necessarily have to have fixed schedules on fixed dates for everybody. People have lives. They have parents to support, children to support, other things that come up and the

00:21:31 **Doug Buchan**

The

00:21:31 **Rich Camacho**

ability to offer a flexible scheduling is the number one motivator for job seekers right now. And if you're offering that, that's going to make you so much more attractive than really all of your competition out there going out to the same talent.

00:21:45 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Yeah. That's a great point. And it did. It really is the pandemic that opened up and said, you know, people desire this and a lot of times you have two parents that are working and you need to have that type of flexibility or kudos to saying, hey, you know, you only get so many years that your son's playing lacrosse in high school, right? You get those four years, and then after that then, yeah, schedules can look to adjust and change, but that's really awesome. So my, you know, my closing question for both of you is, you know, what advice do you have for tradespeople looking to make the most out of BlueRecruit services, either to bring in the right, you know, candidates or to find the ideal job

00:22:24 **Gina Camacho**

opportunities. Yeah, I will say, I'll take job seekers, I'll let Rich do employers. I'll say for our job seekers, you know, what we hear from them most in terms of why they love us is we don't require resumes. There's actually nowhere to put a resume. You can access Blue Recruit. We built it for mobile, so you can go on your phone, you

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

can create a profile, on average, 5 minutes and 19 seconds, no matter the amount of certifications and skills you have to select. I'll use a funny story from Iowa, because that's where we met y'all, back in

00:23:13 **Doug Buchan**

the

00:23:13 **Gina Camacho**

skill trades there. There was a kid signing up, and I think it was his girlfriend. I'm assuming that was standing next to him, and he was creating his profile right in front of me, and he was selecting all of these skills he had. He was signing up with Carpentry, and she looked at him and goes, wow, you can do all those things? And he's like, yeah, I have a lot of skills. And she was like, I can tell. And it was just the funniest interaction that I've ever seen, and I think he was even proud. He's like, wow, I can actually do a lot of these things. I feel really cool right now. So, that's kind of just my funny story. I love that. It's just really easy to sign up. And impress girls. Yeah, absolutely. While he was

00:23:56 **Doug Buchan**

filling out his profile, yeah I was gonna say while he was filling out his profile he was actually becoming more attractive at that time. You know I told you at the

00:24:09 **Rich Camacho**

beginning that we basically designed the way that we're structured off of you know the dating apps that are out there and it's funny because we've been together longer than that technology came out, so I've never been on one. And so when we started the company, obviously we wanted to do some research, so Gina started creating Match .com accounts and stuff, I was like, okay, I understand the reason for this, but I'm not going to keep it.

00:24:33 **Rich Camacho**

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

It's an interesting way to do customer discovery, but I talked a little bit about the employer side, what job seekers are looking for right now. Now, I would say the other thing to kind of a little bit of advice out there to employers is there's no such thing right now in America as an unemployed plumber, as an unemployed electrician, as an unemployed welder. It doesn't exist. If they don't have a job, it's because they don't want one right now. And so for all of those employers out there, they're like, you know, my business is really unique. We do really high -tech stuff and I need somebody with 17 years of experience in order

00:25:14 **Doug Buchan**

to be

00:25:14 **Rich Camacho**

in order to fill this job, guess what? Unless you find someone from your competitor and you steal them away, that person's not just sitting on their couch at home waiting to get your job. And so I understand that it takes a lot of time, it's expensive, we got a ton of resources on our site to help you out, but you're gonna have to create internal training programs. You're gonna have to give that young kid coming out of trade school, you're gonna have to give her an opportunity to learn. And I think too often we forget that we were once that young kid that didn't know Jack. And somebody trained us. And so if you want to remain competitive in this environment, kind of put that pride down a little bit. Understand that you're going to have to not hire less qualified people, but newer folks that are motivated, that want to learn. And you're going to have to teach them. And that's really going to be the only way to succeed, especially in the coming years as that labor market gets smaller and

00:26:08 **Rich Camacho**

smaller and smaller.

00:26:09 **Katherine Lehtinen**

For sure. That's great advice on both sides.

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

00:26:12 **Doug Buchan**

Yeah, I agree with that 100%.

00:26:14 **Katherine Lehtinen**

Well I want to thank you both for taking the time to talk with Doug and I, get to know a little bit more about Blue Recruit and we would love to continue to have a conversation about how we can support your business and supporting the trades and tradespeople and employers and making sure that there's awareness of the resource that's out there for them because I think it's a great opportunity and I'm happy that we'll hopefully be running into in a whole lot more trade shows this year too. Yeah I think their I

00:26:45 **Doug Buchan**

think their format differs from the traditional recruiting yeah type of you

00:26:51 **Katherine Lehtinen**

know site. What's meeting people where they're at I mean the whole building at mobile first which is still not everyone does and the fact of text messaging you know we talk about that even from how we service our customers today that you know we're still asking people to call on the phone who really wants to pick up the phone and call. You know, there's things that we need to, you know, continue to evolve as an industry to make sure that we're servicing where people are

00:27:15 **Doug Buchan**

and what they need. Yeah, absolutely. Now, you guys might want to consider amending your structure a little bit for people my age, because I'm a true boomer, and I

00:27:25 **Gina Camacho**

THE FIX

A TRADES CONVERSATION

HOSTED BY **Oatey**

still think an app is up my order before dinner, so... You'll appreciate this. The story of where our company came from, my dad, Joe, He we run our technology through him. So it's called the Joe test and if my I love it Can figure it out what she did. I watched him create his job seeker profile and it took him I think he was not

00:27:56 [Gina Camacho](#)

He's got a ton of certifications

00:28:03 [Katherine Lehtinen](#)

That's great, I love it

00:28:08 [Katherine Lehtinen](#)

an iPhone.

00:28:13 [Katherine Lehtinen](#)

Well thank you so much we appreciate your time today. Thank you.