

StanleyBlack&Decker

The Inaugural Makers Index

What's keeping young people from careers in the skilled trades?





Drilling into the skilled trades shortage: Stanley Black & Decker's inaugural Makers Index finds few young people seriously consider skilled trade careers despite seeing their value

Skilled laborers and tradespeople have a deep, proud history in the U.S, serving as the engine that has built our country's infrastructure and economy, dating back to the very founding of this country. In fact, even George Washington served an apprenticeship to become a land surveyor, and since then, millions of Americans have worked to build a national infrastructure that has fueled America's rise, from shipping to railroads to iconic skyscrapers to the cables that power the information superhighway.

A projected **650,000** construction jobs are open in the U.S. alone, and **10 million** manufacturing jobs are unfilled worldwide. The pandemic has exacerbated the need, with millions of workers displaced since early 2020. In addition, the shift to remote and hybrid learning has reduced enrollment at career and technical education (CTE) schools, which rely heavily on hands-on learning.

For example, our research shows that despite skilled trade work being highly respected among high school students, only one in four (28%) are headed to a community college, trade program or apprenticeship – and even fewer expect to go directly to a full-time job.

Today, this need is as critical as ever, with demand for additional housing, alternative energy, new means of transportation and a rapidly expanding digital infrastructure that has been the basis for remote work during the recent pandemic – emphasizing how essential skilled trade jobs and the people who hold them really are.

And yet, at a time when we are in the midst of a national discussion around once again re-building our infrastructure and creating a build landscape that provides opportunity for all, there's a substantial gap between the number of job openings and the number of workers with the skills to fill them, including in fields ranging from carpentry to electrical

work to masonry to manufacturing, and many more.

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The bottom line is that we don't have clear insight into what's driving this gap. There is little research examining young people's perceptions toward skilled trade careers and what might motivate more of them to explore these opportunities. To help fill these positions, we need a better understanding of how young people considering their post-high school careers view the skilled trades and what's driving those perceptions.

To get to the bottom of these questions, illuminate a path to closing the perception gap, and draw more people to the skilled trades, Stanley Black & Decker created the inaugural "Makers Index."

We spoke to both high schoolers and their parents to understand how jobs – particularly in skilled trades – are seen across generations, what new workers hope to achieve in their careers and what their parents wish for them. We also spoke to people currently working in the trades to understand the realities on the ground and how those may or may not be reflected in the minds of the young men and women about to enter the workforce. This survey will serve as a guide for understanding what factors may keep the next generation from entering the trades, where the biggest misconceptions lie, and how we can combat them.

Survey responses were used to create two original indices: the **Knowledge & Perception Index** and the **Advocacy Index**.

The Knowledge & Perception Index measures factors that potentially influence young people – and their parents – to consider careers in the trades.

The Advocacy Index measures the factors influencing whether a skilled trade worker would recommend that career path to a young person.



Key findings from the 2022 Makers Index

The research brings the reason for the skilled trade shortage into sharp focus: While 85% of young people value a skilled trade career, only 16% are very likely to consider such a career. Perhaps most interesting, the survey found that young people value jobs in the skilled trades generally – *just not for themselves*.



Despite skilled trade work being highly respected among high school students, **only one in four (28%)** are headed to a community college, trade program or apprenticeship – and even fewer expect to go directly to a full-time job.

In this benchmark study, youth score a 62.4 out of a possible 100 on the Knowledge & Perception Index, while parents score a noticeably higher 76.0, meaning there is a significant opportunity to improve youth knowledge and perception of these careers. On their own index, workers score very high as advocates – at 84.6 – driven by strong fulfillment in their chosen fields.

This summary will explore those findings in detail, as well as possible solutions, including better communication about the financial security, making the work seem more accessible, broadening understanding of skills needed, and combating myths through direct exposure to those currently working in the skilled trades.

Misunderstanding of financial stability

The survey found that this ambivalence is at least partially driven by widespread misconceptions about both the quality of life and especially the income level the trades can offer.

71% of young people say good future earning potential or pay progression is very important when considering future careers. Yet, only 18% of young people doubt there is good pay potential in the skilled trades. More specifically, only 42% of young people think skilled trade workers earn at least \$50,000, and 19% think starting pay is less than \$20,000, when in reality, half of current skilled trade workers with less than 10 years' experience earn at least \$50,000 to start.

There is some discrepancy between how young people and their parents perceive starting salaries. Only 39% of young people reported that they expect to earn at least \$50,000 annually at the beginning of their careers, while 54% of parents expect their child to make that much starting out.

43% of youth in the survey were much more positive about a skilled trade career when presented with the fact that after five years, a person who attends trade school and then starts working will be \$140,000 “ahead,” on average, compared to a student who enrolls in a four-year college before working. With 81% of young people reporting being concerned about the potential cost of education after high school, there is a clear opportunity to teach young people that a career in skilled trades can provide a good pay and financial stability.

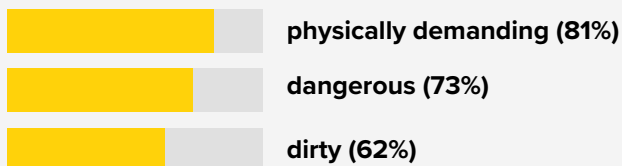


Incorrect knowledge of required skills

There has long been a narrative that young people do not enter the skilled trades due to their dislike of manual labor as a primary cause. However, 56% of young people cited that the primary reason is due to poor fit or lack of skills.

Most young people have outdated perceptions of what a skilled trades career entails, especially when it comes to technology. 23% of young people disagreed that a job in the skilled trades work with cutting edge technology. Those beliefs are in contrast with the reality: 89% of those in the workforce say they work with cutting-edge technology.

Further underscoring the divide between the respect for trade jobs in principle versus a desire to seek out such opportunities, the survey found that many young people don't imagine trade work to be appealing. Many said that it is:

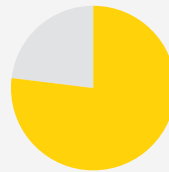


Additionally, 23% of young people disagreed that skilled trades work with cutting-edge technology, and 19% doubted the work is in demand.

Broadening the understanding of skills and technology needed for a skilled trade career can help address this sentiment.

Lack of exposure to individuals in trade professions

It's not particularly surprising that high school students spend a lot of time thinking about the future and the career path they'll take to a full-time job. Many young people lean on the people they know to help them with their post-high school planning, including parents (48%), friends and classmates (44%) and teachers (43%).



Significant percentages of young people surveyed said it's very important to have work that interests them (**77%**), and that job satisfaction or happiness (**76%**) is a priority.

A four-year college remained the preference for most (56%), and only 28% planned to seek a trade or apprenticeship immediately after high school.

What this tells us is that despite skilled trade jobs being well perceived – and delivering the financial stability and job satisfaction young people seek – there is something keeping these careers from being seen as accessible.

Underscoring the first point, 85% of high schoolers surveyed and 94% of their parents felt that skilled trade work is a good quality career option, with 45% of young people and 60% of parents strongly agreeing.

But only 49% of young people have ever considered a skilled trade career for themselves, and far fewer (16%) were very likely to consider a skilled trade career.



Parents surveyed showed somewhat different attitudes about trade work than young people, as 64% of parents reported considering a skilled trade career for their child.

The skilled trade workers we surveyed told us a very different story about their careers. For most, workers say the trades offer good pay, interesting work and high levels of job satisfaction – exactly what young people reported desiring in their careers. Perhaps most importantly, nearly all (96%) of skilled trade workers are satisfied with their careers, and 94% say they are glad they chose their career path. 95% would be likely to recommend the skilled trades to a young person. A vast majority of workers (93%) surveyed agreed that their job offered them opportunities to be creative, and 85% agreed that it enabled them to impact the world.

What’s the reason for this gap? A lack of exposure. Majority of high school students look to people they know for guidance and information about potential careers. Yet only about four in ten (42%) have ever had a conversation about skilled trade careers with someone currently working in these fields, and 37% have never had a conversation with anyone about skilled trade careers. Which explains why only 29% that felt very well informed about how to start a career in the trades.

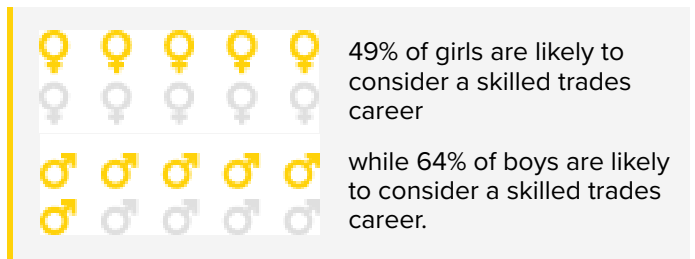
Continued male-dominated industry

Skilled trades industries have been historically dominated by men and it’s no surprise that there are discrepancies in knowledge, consideration and appeal between genders.

When it comes to familiarity, teen boys are much more familiar than teen girls (53% vs 36%), and boys are generally more likely to consider a skilled trades career in the future (64% vs 49%).

More than half the boys (69%) agreed that a skilled trade career seems like a good option for them compared to the 48% of girls who agreed. This dynamic is echoed among parents as well with men more than twice as likely as women to say a skilled trade career is a very appealing option for their child (47% to 22%).

There needs to be more effort in driving engagement with women to build awareness around careers in the skilled trades and its benefits.



Key takeaways

The survey shows there is an apparent lack of education about the trades generally among young people, and to a lesser extent their parents -- but also an opportunity to start a meaningful conversation.

73% of young people say they are familiar with skilled trades — but only 26% say they are very familiar. Those in the skilled trades need to ensure that young people are more exposed to people who work in these fields, which will help ensure that such jobs are perceived as **viable and accessible career paths**. Showing that these jobs offer the financial stability and job satisfaction so many high school students seek for their future careers could help make headway in filling the much-needed skilled trades positions across the country.



There is a silver lining to the survey findings: While 84% of young people expressed at least some confidence in their likely career plans, only 37% were very confident in their most likely path. Only 3 in 10 youth felt very well informed about their options for immediately after high school – and while parents fare slightly better in comparison, half still say they do not feel very well-informed.

There remains a real opportunity to close the perception gap and show young people and their parents how the skilled trades could provide financial stability and a deeply fulfilling career. The Knowledge & Perception and Advocacy indices will be critical tools in tracking progress moving forward.

How Stanley Black & Decker is doing its part

At Stanley Black & Decker, we are committed to bringing the next generation into the skilled trades, educating them on the opportunities available in these challenging and rewarding fields, and giving them the skills and expertise needed to thrive in this changing world.

As these jobs evolve with technology and other global events, we are uniquely positioned to help prepare the workforce with the tools they need to get the job done, and to highlight the value of the builders, makers and protectors – those who create our world. As part of our Corporate Social Responsibility strategy, we are on a mission to empower 10 million makers around the world by 2030.

We aim to do this through programs that help grow the skilled trade talent pipeline and that help change widespread misconceptions about skilled trade jobs.

To that end, in September 2021, we launched the Global Impact Challenge, a five-year, up to \$25 million commitment to fund vocational skills training and reskilling programs in the construction and manufacturing sectors. The “Empower

Makers” Global Impact Challenge seeks to skill and reskill up to 3 million makers over the next five years. Learn more about the “Empower Makers” program at <https://www.stanleyblackanddecker.com/social-responsibility/empower-makers/impact-challenge>.

For the past four years, we have also celebrated Maker Month in October, an annual celebration of the makers, creators and tradespeople shaping the world around us. This annual, month-long campaign helps build excitement around vocational career opportunities through educational content, social-driven campaigns to engage young people, scholarship programs, and the introduction of workforce development partnerships such as our Vocational Leadership Program, a unique, cohort-based program offering individuals the opportunity to learn the ins-and-outs of manufacturing by working hands-on in one of our facilities while also participating in formal leadership skills training.

We also partner with other leading organizations on STEAM initiatives and apprenticeship programs. We have an ongoing partnership with Discovery Education to introduce STEAM curricula across the nation’s schools. As a Global Partner of WorldSkills, we are helping to inspire thousands of young people from all over the world in skill competitions including carpentry, automobile technology, cabinetmaking, concrete construction work, joinery, landscape gardening, and more. At each WorldSkills competition, we help empower more than 1,000 of the best young makers, creators and fixers from more than 50 countries.

These are in addition to ongoing programs with Greenlight for Girls, to inspire young women to pursue STEAM subjects, and Autism Speaks to develop a community college curriculum focused on skills that will prepare people with autism to pursue skilled-labor jobs in manufacturing.



About this survey

The Stanley Black & Decker Empower Makers Survey was conducted by KRC Research from August 30 to September 13, 2021. The survey was fielded among:

- 801 young people who are high school sophomores, juniors, or seniors;
- 200 parents of students in these grades; and
- 502 workers in skilled trade professions.

Moving forward, the same set of questions will be asked annually of these audience groups so that changing perceptions of the skilled trades can be rigorously tracked and analyzed, and movement in the Knowledge & Perception and the Advocacy indices measured over time.

By 2030, Stanley Black & Decker plans to enable 10 million creators and makers to thrive in a changing world, innovate our products to enhance the lives of 500 million people, and, be carbon positive in its global operations.

Learn more at <https://www.stanleyblackanddecker.com/social-responsibility/our-mission>.

About Stanley Black & Decker

Headquartered in the USA, Stanley Black & Decker (NYSE: SWK) is the world's largest tool company operating nearly 50 manufacturing facilities across America and more than 100 worldwide. Guided by its purpose –for those who make the world –the company's more than 60,000 diverse and high-performing employees produce innovative, award-winning power tools, hand tools, storage, digital tool solutions, lifestyle products, outdoor products, engineered fasteners and other industrial equipment to support the world's makers, creators, tradespeople and builders. The company's iconic brands include DEWALT, BLACK+DECKER, CRAFTSMAN, STANLEY, Cub Cadet, Hustler and Troy-Bilt. Recognized for its leadership in environmental, social and governance (ESG), Stanley Black & Decker strives to be a force for good in support of its communities, employees, customers and other stakeholders.

To learn more visit: www.stanleyblackanddecker.com.