ESCA SUMMER
EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

BUILDING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE | SAM POTOLICCHIO

THE CHALLENGE

We're facing a critical gap - not in ability, but in awareness. The next generation doesn't know we exist. To grow our workforce we must start early, be visible, and work together.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

START WITH EXPOSURE

- There's no formal prerequisite to enter our industry - just a major awareness deficit.
- We must engage early, especially in vocational education spaces like SkillsUSA
- Young people (26 and under) often haven't heard of our industry - we need to change that narrative

ELEVATE THE TRADESHOW FLOOR

- Let students see the energy of the show floor - it's one of our strongest recruitment tools
- Invite student organizations to trade shows with your company.
- Shift the perceptions of what it is like working in our industry: different avenues, sales, marketing, building, etc.

CREATE A INFORMATION HUB

- Create a repository of resources to help schools, parents, and students understand our industry.
- Equip educators with the language and tools to present our field as a viable, respected career path.
  - For more information, please visit **Exhibitions Industry Collective Workforce Initiative**

MEET TALENT WHERE THEY ARE

- Go beyond traditional college recruitment - we don't hire for college prestige but skills.
- Young workers want balance, purpose, and human connection.
- We must listen, mentor, and relate - especially through voices that reflect them, Rising Leaders and peer role models.

The future of our workforce is in our hands—and in our stories. We can't wait for talent to find us. Let's go out, show them who we are, and build the next generation together.