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The importance of recruiting and retaining talent - by John Anderson

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There is no bigger issue in our industry right now than trying to recruit and retain talented workers. Although the construction industry is booming, the dearth of talent to meet the demand can be limiting, which is why ABC MA and its members have focused its efforts and committed significant resources towards expanding the construction workforce. Given that talent challenge, I think it's a good time to applaud one of ABC's most adept leaders for the recognition he has received of late.

Nate Peck, current ABC MA board member and President of Kaplan Construction, has had quite a run. Earlier this summer he was chosen as one of Engineering News-Record (ENR) Magazine's "National Top 20 under 40," where he was the only representative from New England on the list. Soon after, he was chosen as one of the Boston Business Journal's (BBJ) "40 under 40," reserved for young executives, entrepreneurs and innovators who are on the rise and making a mark in their respective industries. Before those individual honors, Kaplan was chosen as one of the BBJ's "Best Places to Work" – for the fourth consecutive year.

When Peck came to Kaplan from Turner Construction in 2012, one of the things he was struck by was the longevity of much of the staff. He thought it was unique and that it should be recognized. That led him to the BBJ Best Places to Work process. Company staff are surveyed (with no executive staff input), and a certain percentage of staff members must participate for a firm to qualify. "I still don't even know what the questions are," Peck said.

Kaplan's secret isn't to provide lavish perks like many tech companies do. Rather, they do it the old-fashioned way. "We just try and foster a good environment by building a team of people who like to work with each other," Peck said.

While at Turner, Peck earned the nickname "Switzerland" for his ability to look at all sides of an issue and forge consensus. He's brought that same approach to Kaplan, where he strives to work cooperatively with subcontractors and achieve consensus among the staff. A current Kaplan client recently enthused that "Nate possesses an admirable ability to investigate all sides before making an educated decision. He places great value on all perspectives and carefully weighs pros and

cons, never making hasty or sloppy judgments.”

Nate Peck’s leadership is clearly working at Kaplan Construction, and his effectiveness is being recognized throughout the construction industry. ABC applauds his efforts and those of more than 440 other member companies that are committed to attracting, retaining and developing the thousands of men and women they employ throughout the Massachusetts and beyond.

John Anderson is the 2018 chairman of the Associated Builders and Contractors Inc.-Mass. Chapter, Woburn, Mass. and is the president of Plumb House Inc., Milford, Mass.

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