

## **Making an IMPACT: King and Columbus, Post and Courier Campaign Helps Reinforce America's Ironworking Industry**



The Ironworker Management Progressive Action Cooperative Trust was formed in 2003 with a core mission: to support the ironworking industry by creating more jobs, more customers, more contractors, and ultimately more ironworkers. And when IMPACT embarked upon one of the biggest recruitment drives in its history, it called upon the Post and Courier's marketing and advertising agency King and Columbus to help.

The result was a multifaceted campaign that blanketed a majority of four southern states to identify prospective candidates for the ironworking industry and ultimately fill available jobs. Using targeted email and display ads, social media, geographically focused search marketing and other

tactics, King and Columbus was able to help IMPACT greatly streamline the procedure by which people would express their interest in the industry, and in the process identify 1,006 prospective ironworker candidates in the campaign's first 30 days.

"It's worked very well," says Anthony Rapisarda, the King and Columbus account executive handling IMPACT. "They wanted to go big in the Southeast, so we put together a great program for them using email, social media and other targeted display options that generated 1,006 leads over 30 days. That's 1,006 people who responded to those ads with a name, phone number, and email address that IMPACT could build their database with and potentially put to work. The whole purpose of this campaign is to put people to work and to help them find a great job with great benefits and great pay. We've been able to accomplish that."

### **Targeting prospects with precision**



In the U.S., the need for employees everywhere is acute, with 10.4 million job openings in November 2021 according to the most recent figures released by

the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Construction-adjacent businesses have been hit especially hard, with labor shortages coinciding with a large number of workers reaching retirement age. And ironworkers will only be in greater demand after the passing of a federal infrastructure bill that will invest millions in roads, bridges, transportation systems and other essential areas.

IMPACT responded to that need by initiating a program designed to identify potential job candidates in Georgia, Florida, northern Alabama and eastern Tennessee. Crafted by King and Columbus, the campaign used social media to reach a targeted Facebook audience through the use of dynamic ads proven to convert users more effectively; location-based online banner ads that reach a specific audience with pinpoint accuracy; search engine marketing fine-tuned daily to use words that are most effectively converting users; and targeted email with a range of demographic, geographic and lifestyle selectivity to zero in on the right prospects with precision.

“We put it together with the needs of the client, which in this case was IMPACT, and we decide where we’re going to target and what kind of messaging and creatives to utilize” Rapisarda said. “Highly targeted display ads along with a lot of social media and email all work together so we can get in front of the applicant and have a meaningful interaction with our advertising. Because we’re hitting the right people at the right time, anytime they show any bit of interest, we can convert that into a lead.”

Through the use of custom-built landing pages, King and Columbus was able to make the application process simpler for prospective candidates. “We try to cut the whole recruitment process down from what it used to be, which was needing to supply a resume, to basically a minute and a half,” Rapisarda said. “The applicant gives us a name, email address, phone number and any relevant experience they have. We try to catch them when they’re interested,

and then allow IMPACT to get in touch with them and decide whether it's a good fit or not."

This application process is incredibly user-friendly. The custom landing pages simply ask the applicant to check boxes and fill out quick forms. This is all done in an interface built with mobile users in mind, to accommodate any level of technological knowledge.

### **A campaign adaptable to any client**



The leads arrive in real-time, allowing IMPACT officials to get back to the prospective candidates soon after their information has been submitted. Alex Kellner, advertising sales manager for King and Columbus' parent company, The Post and Courier, helped craft the campaign along with Rapisarda and Kenny Waugh, IMPACT's Southeast regional director. Jack Jarrell, vice president of Iron Workers District Council of Southeastern States, was also involved, as was Ben Bell, lead organizer for Ironworkers Southeastern States District Council.

The type of campaign that helped IMPACT can be tailored to fit any other client, Rapisarda, says. "We can certainly extrapolate that kind of result," he says. "It's a recipe that we've fine-tuned over a couple of years. We normally have good results with the approach, but this particular campaign set records."

And along the way, it helped to strengthen an industry essential to the building of America, one that will be needed even more as countless roads and bridges are replaced in the years to come. "It's hard to hire people right now," Rapisarda says. "So to help them be able to hire people and put people to work, it's been a blessing to an awful lot of people out there."