

In a changing industry, **skilled trades need skilled support**

Membership services can help contractors streamline, focus—and thrive

BY JACOB WATSON

The skilled trades represent a long tradition, but little about the profession feels traditional today. The hands-on work that electricians, plumbers and HVAC technicians do is facing rapid change due to advances in technology and changing customer expectations about their homes, systems—and budgets. Meanwhile, the contractor's



other “jobs” keep getting bigger and harder to manage: recruiter, trainer, marketer, sales agent, accountant, and so forth.

Homeowners turn to contractors for qualified, informed support. But where can contractors turn to for help? Frontdoor and other home services companies like it are working hard to

provide an answer. It's true companies like ours offer tools and services that help make a contractor's life easier, but sometimes the most important message we send is: We understand what you're dealing with, and we appreciate all you do.

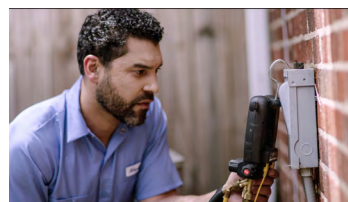
You're dealing with a tight labor market.

Just when people are spending more time in their homes and demanding more support for more complex technologies, the tradespeople in the industry today are quickly aging out of the market. At the same time, fewer young people are entering the trades to take their place. A very low percentage are questioning the presumption that every career has to start with four years of college.

You know better, and so do we; that's why we are working to fuel a pipeline of trades talent through support of organizations like [SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference](#) and “[Be Pro, Be Proud.](#)”

You're dealing with more complicated jobs and systems.

We all have mentors. Whoever trained you early on was probably a master of his or her craft. That person never had to answer a service call because the high-resolution display built into someone's fridge door wasn't working.



Houses have been full of appliances for generations, but now they talk to one another. That means the learning curve for a modern trades professional never

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ends, and the hiring criteria you rely on are less certain than before. Keeping your business abreast of technology is a growing investment in time and resources.

You're dealing with a changing world.

First of all, there's a lot more house out there: In 1973, the U.S. Census [found](#) the average size of a U.S. single-family house was 1,600 square feet. The median size of a new single-family home in 2022 was [2,299 square feet](#). And everyone in the trades has spent time in homes much larger than those averages.



There's a lot of technology and connectivity packed into those big homes. There are also more activities taking place in these spaces. Spurred in

part by the COVID-19 pandemic, more people are buying single-family homes, and they're spending more time inside. Houses that used to be empty during the day now sport multiple home offices, teaching spaces for children, and elaborate home theaters that can cause headaches for homeowners when they don't work as designed.

The good news is that homeowners need your help.

Frontdoor's research recently found that two-thirds of American homeowners are actively searching for a "go-to" home expert. That's partly because their homes are becoming what their cars already are: too complex for a DIY approach. People are quick to embrace home technologies (94 percent of homeowners consider themselves "early adopters"), but less likely to take care of them on their own (84 percent avoid household repairs, and more than half describe themselves as procrastinators). Fewer than half even say they have the tools to address most home repair needs.

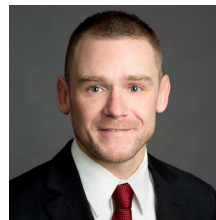
In serving them, you deserve help too.

If demand for your services isn't the problem, making it easier for you to provide them is likely your chief concern. The same technology revolution that makes homes more complicated can also help make a contractor's business life more rewarding.

When homeowners find contractors they trust, they want more than transactions; they hope to foster relationships. Companies like ours can help make that easier. Members of a network like ours get help with customer acquisition, because we function as an intake and vetting mechanism that yields ready-to-book leads. We also amass valuable data that fuels useful analytics and helps contractors to scale and improve performance and customer satisfaction.



Those are tools you probably don't have in your trucks. But when you have access to them, they can help point your trucks toward profitable house calls, and wear a path for return visits. It's a new industry, and companies like [Frontdoor](#) and others are one of many new tool you can use: taking the complexity out of the details so you can focus on your core skills and relationships.



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