

Jason Altmire ([00:04](#)):

We have a special episode for you today of Career Education Report. This is gonna be a live podcast that we recently recorded at the CEO Summit that career education colleges and universities holds annually. I think we had a really interesting open and engaging conversation, and I, I really think you're gonna enjoy it.

Jason Altmire ([00:27](#)):

Hello and welcome to another edition of Career Education Report. We are with one of the key partners in the career education sector, and we have Gina and Rich Camacho. And they are a couple that has done amazing things in career education and, and CQ career education colleges and universities has a partnership with their new enterprise called Blue Recruit. So I want to introduce Gina and Rich Camacho. Rich is an interesting guy. He's a West Point graduate, so impressive. Right from the start, he flew Black Hawk Helicopters and when he was done in the military, he decided he wanted to help veterans find jobs. So he worked with Corporate America, did great work in that sector, and then realized that there was an untapped market for veterans that wanted to get into sort of more blue collar trades and jobs and, uh, finding a mechanism to help them and help employers identify those type of workers. And he had the idea, but Gina, his wife, was the brains behind the implementation of that operation because she comes from a technology background and it turned into Blue Recruit. And I will first say thank you Gina. And Rich, thank you for being with us today.

Gina Camacho ([01:45](#)):

Thanks for having us. Yeah,

Rich Camacho ([01:46](#)):

Thanks so much for the invite, Jason.

Jason Altmire ([01:47](#)):

Tell us a little bit about Blue Recruit. How did it come about? What does it do and what are your goals for it in the future?

Gina Camacho ([01:55](#)):

Yeah, so the idea initially came about from my father. Uh, he owned a body shop for number of years and he put out a job post asking for auto body painters. And what he got instead was a lot of resumes for house painters. So with Rich's background in recruiting, he called and was like, I, you know, me and computers, I must have done something wrong. What did I do wrong? Why did I get so many house painters? Now, he had been struggling rich with finding for some of his customers. They, he'd be able to help them find managers, project managers, but then they'd ask for a rough neck. And he's like, I don't know where I can find a rough neck <laugh>. So it was kind of all of these things happened at once between the issues he was having, finding those skilled trades people for his customers, and then my dad, just not finding the right people to fill his positions.

Gina Camacho ([02:48](#)):

And so, uh, he and I talked about it one night of what resumes are doing is a keyword search. It sees painter in a job post it, sees painter in a resume, puts the two together even though they have to do with each other. And so we began developing a database. We started with about, it was five, 6,000 skills and certifications within the trades. Um, we are up to just over 13,000 now. But what we have been able to develop is really a perfect match between someone's experience and the job requirements of a company because a job seeker can create a profile listing all the skills certifications they have, and then the employer is able to search with the same skills and certifications that they're looking for so we can match the two together.

Jason Altmire ([03:35](#)):

And I think what this is like for most of our listeners would be familiar with this sort of like a LinkedIn for these type of jobs. Cause if you think about what LinkedIn offers right now, it's a way to communicate and, and socialize about business. But it's also a way to find jobs. But there isn't a way to find these type of trades. And this is one of the fastest growing sectors. We're about to spend 2 trillion on infrastructure in the country. We're gonna need welders and truck drivers and HVAC and underwater construction divers and aviation auto techs. And, and these are the type of people that Blue Recruit serves, right?

Rich Camacho ([04:11](#)):

Yep, absolutely. I, I fought it for a number of years when some of our employees would bring it up, but I now just fully embrace the fact that we are match.com for plumbers. So we don't do long walks in the beach, we'll do EPA certifications, but that's, uh, that's probably the best way to, to describe what, what we do.

Jason Altmire ([04:28](#)):

And how have you engaged employers and gotten them interested in what you're doing?

Rich Camacho ([04:33](#)):

So, uh, right now the, you know, the interesting thing about when you have any kind of a marketplace, it's one's always harder than the other. And given just everything that's been happening for years and really where the, where the labor market is going, I jokingly say that we have created, kinda like the Kevin Costner business model, if we have them, they will come as long as we have job seekers. The, the employers right now, unfortunately for them, they're just so desperate for ways to fill their talent needs that as soon as they come across, you know, blue Recruit and, and our capabilities, it's like, Oh wow, you have six welders in my area that fit exactly what I need. Yes, I'm gonna go ahead and sign up. So right now it really is a, a chicken the egg type situation. And as long as you have those job seekers on the database, the employers are really just coming in

Jason Altmire ([05:19](#)):

And we are recording this live at the Career Education Summit, the CEO Summit for cq. And there are over a hundred schools that are here represented. And you work with these schools. Uh, so there, there's three aspects to this. There's the students themselves who become graduates and they're looking for jobs. There's the employers who have availability, they're looking to fill those jobs, but then there's the schools and that's where the partnership with CQ comes in. Can you talk a little bit more about how you relate to the schools?

Rich Camacho (05:50):

One thing I'm, I'm really excited to announce and Gina, uh, obviously I am, uh, I am a PowerPoint in Excel. That's my level of, of technology right now. So if you need a really nice PowerPoint put together, I'm your guy. Anything more than that, I hand that off to Gina. But, uh, Gina and her team have been working really hard and, uh, we now have the ability for any of the CQ schools across the country to go ahead, implement their students into our database and, uh, we're gonna release the, uh, the beta here where schools can also start seeing the end result. So yes, great. We put our students into the database, what happens to them? Uh, so we'll now be able to report back to them where they're employed, you know, how much money they're making, what their particular job is, and really being able to track that student throughout their career as they've become a career tradeswoman, career trades man.

(06:43):

And then obviously that that value and that information is a, is a great resource to the school. So we're really excited about that. And then, uh, I'm not sure when this podcast will go out, but one thing we're also really excited about is that any employer that ultimately hires a C CQ graduate, they're actually not gonna pay for that individual at all. We want this to be a true partnership. So, uh, hiring any graduate from a CQ school will be totally free for them. And also if they ever hire any veterans, we're also gonna make that completely free to them.

Jason Altmire (07:12):

Yeah, I think that's a key element of this is you do emphasize the commitment to veterans given your own background and in history and working with veterans. And that's something that is very important in, in the workforce. And I serve on a task force, uh, with the White House that's trying to find jobs for veterans in the trucking and cyber security sectors, for example. And those are things that are very high demand occupations and, um, things that the country is going to need in different ways. Yep. Um, so when, when you prioritize the type of jobs or you think about the, the type of openings that you're hoping to fill, how do you determine which ones it's gonna be?

Rich Camacho (07:50):

Really we let the market decide that Gina, her team, put together some really interesting information. Every single, we, we typically release it on the quarter. We actually just made the, uh, the Arizona report public today, obviously cuz we're all in Phoenix, Arizona. But one really cool thing is because we can track not only, you know, the job seekers are coming in, but also the demand for the employers will release what's called the state of the trades. And it's, it's been absolutely insane to look at where HVAC technicians and automotive mechanics have just dominated that need quarter after quarter after quarter. And it's one of those things like what is happening? Cuz you'd think like, oh, eventually that demand will slow down win winter is coming. Nope, hasn't, hasn't changed anything. The demand is absolutely ridiculous. But Jason, you brought up earlier, you know, the \$2 million investment Q3 was the first time we did see asphalt and concrete finishers start to creep into that top. And clearly that's, you know, there's no, no question that's a result that that money is starting to trickle in.

Jason Altmire (08:47):

You know, you're talking about specific fields, uh, when you work with employers, have they said that the blue recruit in particular has added to their capabilities in identifying certain types of jobs that they just would have no other way of reaching those people?

Gina Camacho ([09:01](#)):

I think my most favorite story is we had a, a company come on board. They were looking for water purification specialists. The way that our matching algorithm works is we look very closely at the skills and certifications someone has, not so much the industry that they might be in. So when they ran a search for water purification specialists, honestly we didn't have that many cuz it's very niche. But they actually found that diesel mechanics had very similar skill sets. And so they were like, well it looks basically like what a, what we need, so let's go ahead and bring some of them in. And they realized that after a week or two of just training them, they were fine. Like they were able to pick it up. So we've been able to show how some of those skills are translatable. We, we saw that we launched right around covid at the height March, 2020. So we saw a lot of that transition of this is the work I've always been in, but that's not an essential job right now. So they moved into other fields and we were able to help companies find those people that they would've, those people would've never applied to a job post and they probably, that company would've never gone after.

Jason Altmire ([10:12](#)):

Yeah. Talk more about the algorithm. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> that, you mentioned it a couple of times and if you are a school, you, you know, you want your students to get placed in a job, you want them to be successful. What, what can a school do and what can a student do to better incorporate within the context of what you're doing and the technology, their background and show that so that the algorithm picks it up correctly?

Gina Camacho ([10:35](#)):

The biggest thing that we are looking at is gonna be skills and certifications. And a lot of those students are going to have at least some of the skills when they start and some of the certifications when they graduate. And so they'll wanna make sure that they have that within their profile. And even if the way that when a company runs a search, we're not just gonna show them a hundred percent matches, we're going to show them other people that are maybe a 50, 60% match. And we do see that companies typically will connect with those people as well. When they're running their searches, they're kind of looking for, this is, we've had some people, they'll click on literally every single button. We'll tell 'em, well you're gonna get a lot of results. Don't think anybody's gonna be a hundred percent. But, um, so they're looking for everything.

([11:20](#)):

So making sure that those students have their skills and certifications, like I said before, we have over 13,000 so those students are going to be able to have a pretty healthy looking profile. But we're also looking at a few other things like are they looking for a night shift? Are they looking for part-time, full-time? Some of that goes within the algorithm, how much they wanna make. And we'll also employers tell us how much they're willing to pay. And so we'll also try to match people based on that. Um, mutual grants upon salary. And then also for the schools, I think this is important because schools are likely gonna be a little more localized with the employer partnerships that they have. When a student signs up on our platform, they can say where they wanna work, where they're currently residing, where they wanna work. We tend to see about 40% of our people that sign up wanna work completely somewhere else. So we also take that into consideration in our algorithm. If I'm running a search in Denver, Colorado and there's someone that lives in Palm Beach Florida but wants to relocate to Denver and they've put that in their profile, they're gonna show up at the top of my results. So it's gonna be a little bit easier for me to find that person.

Jason Altmire ([12:24](#)):

And this is relatively new that you started this within like the last year, right?

Rich Camacho ([12:29](#)):

The relocation piece? Yes. Mm-hmm.

Jason Altmire ([12:31](#)):

<affirmative>. So what, what have you heard overall from employers about the entire experience with Blue Recruit?

Rich Camacho ([12:37](#)):

It's interesting on, on, on the relocation piece, we've gained some very insightful DA data to help our employers really be more competitive in this just insanely competitive, uh, talent pool. Like we found out that the magic number to convince somebody to relocate is \$5,000 of assistance. Cuz that basically covers a U-Haul anywhere in America. A lot of people are like, Oh, we're, we're giving out \$10,000 signing bonuses, please stop if you're do, if you're doing signing bonuses right now, just stop. You're wasting \$10,000 and ultimately you're gonna lose that employee in about a year. Uh,

Jason Altmire ([13:08](#)):

So that by itself is interesting information Yep. That you wouldn't have otherwise had.

Rich Camacho ([13:12](#)):

Exactly. And, and it's that insightful, you know, kind of tidbits that we can then provide to our employers and be like, Oh wow, we're doing this completely wrong. And people care more, probably the most, the single most interesting thing that has happened over the last three years. And for those of us in the technology space, we think about flexible scheduling means, Oh, I get to work from home. Well, let's face it, in a manufacturing facility, there isn't, there isn't working from home <laugh>. However, salary and the desire to make more money is now the third attribute that our job seekers care most about. The number one thing they care most about over and over and over again since the start pandemic has been the ability to have a flexible schedule. And oftentimes employers like, what does that mean, a flexible schedule? Like you have to come to the factory in order to make Widget X.

([13:59](#)):

Uh, but what we've seen, one story that I love, an employer of ours, they hired somebody, but in that interview process, the job seeker said, Hey, my son plays lacrosse every Thursday afternoon, I need to be at his lacrosse game. And the employer said, Okay, we'll go ahead and adjust your hours so that you get every Thursday afternoon off and next year it's probably gonna be Friday afternoons or, or whatnot. But that ability to, to work with people's schedule has really made those employers that are willing to do that far more competitive in the space.

Jason Altmire ([14:29](#)):

And do you have plans to take this international,

Rich Camacho ([14:32](#)):

You mean to expand to Canada <laugh>? Well,

Jason Altmire ([14:35](#)):

Canada

Rich Camacho ([14:35](#)):

<laugh> our board, again, I don't know if I'm even allowed to say this, but our board actually just approved it. So we will be in Canada next year. So we'll see you all in Montreal. And, uh, also the board just approved Allied Health, so that is also coming in 2023. Right.

Jason Altmire ([14:49](#)):

I did know the answer to the first question.

Rich Camacho ([14:52](#)):

<laugh>,

Jason Altmire ([14:52](#)):

The Allied Health piece is, is critical because when you think about blue collar trades and you think about the work that our schools do, we do have a lot of allied health as well. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> as as the blue collar trades. And, uh, talk a little bit more about what that is like, the expansion moving forward and what that's gonna do for the growth of Blue

Rich Camacho ([15:11](#)):

Recruit. So the, the growth is absolutely unquestionable. It's, it really gives us the ability to add about 60% more to our current market size. One thing, it is definitely humble to me cuz you know, I, I have a civil engineering background, I can go ahead and talk construction and manufacturing companies all day long. I have no clue what Alli Health people do. And it's like, okay, this is, uh, with, with growth comes, comes outside expertise. So that, that, that has definitely been a learning curve for all of us, but one that really made no question, and it was almost the exact same rationale as, hey, why do, why do construction project managers get LinkedIn and resumes, but welders and crane operators not get something for them? We've saw, we've seen the exact same thing in, in the health space. It's great, there's all these things for physicians and nurses, but there really isn't anything dedicated to really the fundamental piece of our health of our healthcare. So that's where we're really excited to, to expand that and obviously help cq member schools with, you know, what's a huge part of, of, uh, of their, their background as

Jason Altmire ([16:16](#)):

Well. And most people, when they think of LinkedIn, which we used as an example, it it's pretty simple to find. There's an app, you click on it, it comes up, you can search it however you want, you can get news, you can communicate with other people, you can look for jobs. What, how would somebody find Blue Recruit,

Rich Camacho ([16:32](#)):

Blue recruit.com, Blue recruit.us, type in Blue Recruit on Google? We'll, uh, we got I think the eight top, uh, search results now for, for blue collar work. But yeah, Blue recruit.com is the easiest way. And it's funny, you, you mentioned that about, uh, you know, the LinkedIn app. We absolutely love LinkedIn. We use it every single day for, for different varieties. We actually have a good partnership. Uh, we recently met with one of their vice presidents and said, Hey, we'll we're never gonna get into the allied health space and the blue collar space because those individuals simply don't want our kind of a platform. And it, and it's been interesting, you know, 99.1% of our traffic between job seekers and employers has done via SMS text, it's not even through Blue Recruit, right? We convert everything to text and that's how they end up communicating. It's like, hey, let's just build the platform that they want, they want to use. And, um, adjusting business plans for, for how the users are gonna use it.

Jason Altmire ([17:26](#)):

Great. Well, if somebody wanted to find out more about the work that you're both doing, whether it be with veterans with Blue Recruits, they wanted to get in touch with you, how would they do

Rich Camacho ([17:35](#)):

That? Gina dot c blue recruit.com, Rich dot c blue recruit.com, or uh, just jump on blue recruit.com and uh, chat with one of our, uh, very friendly individuals.

Jason Altmire ([17:46](#)):

Thank you. Well, this has been from Phoenix, Arizona, a Rich Camacho and Gina Marie Camacho <laugh>. Thank you both for being with us. Thank you so much.

Jason Altmire ([17:55](#)):

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