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www.floridaconstructionconnection.com | Phone: (305) 361-0094 | employment@flccmail.com

INDUSTRY MATCHMAKING

Florida Construction Connection digs deep to align
jobseekers with the right employers



By Erica Bender

Florida Construction Connection, Inc. (FLCC) is an employment consulting firm based in Deerfield Beach, Florida, that assists construction and real estate development companies with hiring, employee retention and professional development. The organization also works with professionals in the construction industry to help them obtain their career objectives and make their next career moves.

FLCC, which was founded in 2004 by Suzanne Breistol, does not fit the mold of a traditional staffing firm. For Suzanne and her staff, they take the hiring process much more personally, viewing the potential for long-term relationships between employees and employers as key to ensuring positive outcomes.

Making the Connection

The FLCC team consistently uses dating and marriage terminology to make the hiring process personable and relatable.

They understand employment is a serious commitment, a courtship if you will, to unite employees with the companies that will bring them the most fulfillment—and vice versa.

Even if the potential employer leaves a great first impression or offers an attractive compensation package, before the “employment vows” are given, FLCC encourages candidates to invest time in shadowing the company’s employees, visiting job sites or going out for a meal to see how these future colleagues interact with others.

“Hiring is much like dating,” Suzanne says. “It’s about the right timing, effective communication, and honesty about expectations and goals from both parties in the relationship.”

Defining Decisions

Suzanne founded FLCC after working several years with a national staffing agency. She excelled in her role, but felt the agency was more fixated on collecting fees than cultivating relationships with jobseekers and their employers. “I wanted to create a platform where currently employed professionals could go, confidentially, and work out the timing to advance their careers versus just taking the next job that’s available,” she says.

Jason Read is one of FLCC’s “Career Matchmakers,” a role where he helps pair candidates with the “right” employers. He comes from a work history similar to Suzanne’s. “At the medical recruiting agency where I worked, the biggest concern was placing as many people as possible in a certain amount of time. We didn’t form any real bonds with candidates; we didn’t really get to know them or understand their situations,” he shares. “Here at FLCC, we form those relationships. Even if individuals are not matched with companies right away, we stay in contact because we understand what they want to achieve. We always aim to put them in the places that will provide the most rewarding opportunities—for both the present and the long term.”

Finding the Best Fit

“Many of our candidates are happy with their current jobs but want a new opportunity in order to advance their career goals,” Suzanne explains. “What we do is help them identify realistic future goals to make the next job a great ‘honeymoon’ experience. Our process helps to eliminate false expectations.”

She adds, “I know a lot of people who are ecstatic about a first date, only to find out after spending more time together that the chemistry is missing. Cultural fit is 80 percent of a long-term employment match, just as chemistry is a large factor in a lasting love connection.”

Jason agrees, adding, “I’ve had so many candidates here at FLCC who have told me, ‘You guys are definitely different from any other recruiter that I’ve ever worked with.’ And it’s just because of the process of what we do.”

Peggy Moranz recently celebrated her one-year anniversary as a Career Matchmaker, a role she is passionate about—but it’s not the one she originally set her sights on.

“I actually interviewed for an administrative opening at FLCC,” she says, “but when Suzanne profiled me, she told me I was interviewing for the wrong position, explaining that I was better suited to be a Career Matchmaker because I thrive better in structured, process-driven roles. This experience was so different from my past interactions with other staffing agencies, the ones that just want to send you out on every interview and claim you’re perfect for every position. We don’t do that here. It has to be the exact match, the right fit for both parties.”

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We Don't Push, We Mediate

FLCC thrives on helping management-level leaders build and maintain healthy company teams. As part of this process, the firm helps employers prequalify candidates and determine a good cultural fit through in-depth interviews, references checks and skills and personality assessments. In addition, FLCC assists with organizational planning, creating job descriptions, facilitating meetings with job applicants, conducting salary reviews and professional coaching.

“For clients, our services are beneficial because we provide an in-depth analysis of each candidate we select to recommend. Comparatively speaking, a traditional staffing firm might have the client look at 15 candidates, 13 of which may be wholly unqualified. Or, if the right questions had been asked, certain candidates obviously wouldn't have been a good fit,” says Ryan Stone, FLCC's Lead Career Matchmaker.

Those who frequently change careers due to employment circumstances can plunge into a downward spiral known as job-hopping, which can be a turn off to prospective employers.

“It does not look good if you're jumping around from job to job. And while there may be valid reasons, those short tenures could've been avoided had an exhaustive evaluation process been conducted,” Ryan says.

While FLCC works primarily with businesses based in South Florida, it fills positions statewide and even across the country. Most times the staff meets with clients face-to-face—or at least conducts a video chat or teleconference—to establish a rapport and also get a personal sense of each company's vibe and culture.

“Because we get to know both the client and the candidate, we are more effective in helping them understand each other and in making the right connection,” Ryan says.

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This no-pressure philosophy extends to jobseekers, too.

“We mediate the process, we don't push the people,” Suzanne emphasizes. “If a candidate goes and interviews and the client makes an offer on the spot, we're the first ones to go back to the candidate and say, ‘You know that's great that they made an offer, but if you want to go visit a job site, if you want to meet some of their project managers or do something else to make sure it's the right home for you, we'll make sure that gets arranged.’”

Suzanne shares the story of a candidate who verbally accepted an offer, but before making it official he wanted to meet the company's newly hired lead superintendent to see if there was good chemistry between them. FLCC fully supported this decision, an example demonstrating how the firm encourages people to be thorough in making career-defining decisions—no matter what's on the table.

Filling the Staffing Needs of a Colossal Industry

Since its inception 15 years ago, FLCC has focused on making clients feel exclusive and understood, a practice resulting in a lot of repeat business and referrals. Many would consider the company's staff of eight to be small, but the team's heart for making the right connections has great impact in the U.S. construction industry where more than 670,000 employers provide jobs to over 7 million people. "Close to a million of those people work in management, administrative and accounting roles," Suzanne says.

According to a recent survey by the Associated General Contractors of America, approximately 80 percent of construction firms expect to add employees in the coming year. However, most of them reported having difficulty filling some positions—and nearly three-quarters of respondents said they anticipated hiring would remain difficult or become harder.

While skilled trades jobs are most often associated with the industry's staffing shortages, white-collar positions also need to be filled—which is what FLCC specializes in.

Get Personal

Suzanne is a certified DiSC® coach who provides detailed assessments of personalities and behavioral traits and patterns. "Coaching others toward success is a passion of mine," she explains. To feed that passion, she opened a coaching center next door to FLCC—Construction Career Coach, Inc., which does business as Construction Connection. "My goal down the road is to offer more coaching courses and programs and facilitate mentoring to grow leadership skills in the next generation of construction professionals," she adds.

Clear vision, communication and commitment are traits that make a marriage strong; and they clearly represent the qualities that the FLCC team brings to their client relationships.

A Heart for Contractors

If you walk into the FLCC office, chances are you will see a certain poem hanging on many of the building's walls. This special composition was written years ago by company owner Suzanne Bristol, who understands the demands of the construction industry can be really tough on employees and their families. The poem, copied below, reminds her staff of how important it is to show care and understanding to the individuals who seek their help each day.

Contractor Love Poem

The alarm goes off
To greet a new day
I turn on the light
To guide my way

Two feet touch the floor
I head through the door
To a working commode, shower and sink
Then to the kitchen for food and drink

Then into my car to embrace the roads
Travel the bridges, tunnels and tolls
Out my window I take in the sights
Hospitals, schools, hotels, planes taking flight

Inside me a new passion arises
As I realize then there is no disguising
The lives we live are greater each day
Because of the contractors who made it that way!

The electrician, the plumber,
the carpenter and crew
Without each of them what would we do?
Each talented contractor general or trade
How else would it have been made?

Our houses, our roads, places of work and of play
We could dream and design them day after day
But without the contractor to bring it to life
It stays just a plan with no execution in sight

Craftsman they're called for obvious reasons
Without their talents just imagine our seasons
The beach house, the ski lodge,
the place to take view
The race track, the theme park,
the resorts all of new

None would be there for us to take pleasure in
Thank you Contractors for sharing
your talents within
The world doesn't always view you in love
It's now obvious to me, you're a gift from above!