

# UA Local 137 Boosts Recruitment and Engagement with Interplay's VR Training



## Key Successes

- Increased training seats by over 30% after implementing Interplay Learning.
- Boosted recruitment efforts with VR, attracting more young people into the trades.
- Catered to diverse learning styles, enhancing training engagement and commitment.
- Produced highly skilled professionals, strengthening workforce and contractor relationships.

## Summary

- UA Local 137's previous training technology fell short in addressing diverse learning needs and lacked an effective recruitment tool.
- In December 2018, UA Local 137 adopted Interplay Learning's training, including its VR component, to address these challenges.
- Implementing Interplay Learning led to a 30% increase in training seats and significantly enhanced recruitment efforts with high engagement at career fairs.
- The VR training was a hit, attracting young talent and boosted overall training effectiveness.



## About UA Local 137

- A Local chapter of the United Association, a labor union representing HVAC, plumbing, and pipefitting workers.
- Chartered on January 1st, 1895, and currently has around 1,000 members.
- Committed to providing innovative training for apprentices and journeymen, ensuring skills remain current and in demand.
- Known for adapting to industry changes and implementing cutting-edge training solutions.

## Training Goals

- Enhance engagement and skill development among HVAC apprentices and journeymen.
- Introduce a training solution that caters to various learning styles and starting levels.
- Utilize training as a marketing and recruitment tool to attract new talent into the trades.
- Maintain a high standard of training that aligns with the UA's commitment to technological innovation.

## Training Challenges

- Existing training simulations were no longer meeting the evolving needs of diverse learners.
- Integrating a solution that could cater to different learning styles and experience levels.
- Creating a training program with a strong 'wow factor' to serve as a compelling recruitment tool at career fairs.
- Difficulty in sustaining high engagement and commitment levels across all stages of the training program.



## Finding the Next Generation of Training

UA Local 137 in Springfield, Illinois, has long been dedicated to providing innovative, cutting-edge training to its apprentices and journeymen. Having already bought into the first-generation of online training simulations, the Local was actively looking for new and improved ways to engage and develop the skills of its HVAC techs.

Andy Fuchs, the training coordinator at Local 137 was no stranger to rolling out new training technologies. After piloting the first generation of interactive, online HVAC simulations in 2014, he was already familiar with the benefits that sims offered. However, being an early adopter of the technology came with some first-mover limitations. As his training needs evolved, the technology began to fall short in solving two of his biggest challenges:

1. His apprentices all approached learning differently, and he required a more integrated solution that accounted for various starting levels and learning styles.
2. He was looking for training with a 'wow factor' that could also serve as a marketing and recruitment tool at career events, attracting more young people into the workforce.

After demoing Interplay and its VR component, Andy was convinced that the additional features and capabilities could help him solve the challenges listed above while keeping consistent with the UA's mission to remain on the cutting edge of technology. Andy started by purchasing a handful of training licenses and VR equipment, hitting the ground running with the next generation of HVAC training.

*"I've been involved in the training program for many years, and it's the first time a tech asked me to take training home"*

- Andy Fuchs, Training Coordinator

## Improving Recruitment and Engagement

UA Local 137 began using Interplay in December 2018 and has since increased their training seats by over 30%.

Andy has seen a big difference in his marketing and recruiting efforts since debuting the VR training at career fair events across Central Illinois. The excitement around VR has gone a long way toward attracting a new generation of digital natives into the industry and is helping to bolster union memberships.

The interactive VR component has been a huge hit at career fairs, often attracting long lines of high schoolers and getting new generations excited to enter the trades. Using Interplay has not only resulted in improved recruitment efforts, but its first-rate instructional design has increased training commitment and engagement at every stage of learning. UA Local 137 can now funnel far more quality professionals into the industry, hugely benefiting their contractor relationships.

With Interplay's fully integrated learning solution, his recruits and seasoned veterans alike have all been able to deploy the specific components of the training that best suit their learning needs. New apprentices have started with short, foundational video lessons to build core knowledge, while veteran employees have advanced their technical troubleshooting skills through the 3D sims.

The response to the VR training has been overwhelmingly positive. Andy reports that his apprentices often ask to take the VR headsets home or use the 3D simulations and learning modules outside school. Interplay's training is now a key ingredient in the local union's recipe for churning out a competent, well-trained workforce.

In addition to UA Local 137, other UA chapters have integrated Interplay into their curriculums. The hope is that the UA at the international level will adopt Interplay as its preferred vendor for HVAC training, influencing a new standard of training across the entire union.