

Strategies for Recruiting a Dependable Workforce



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If you want to be successful, you need to have the right team.

Over 2 million employees left the construction and landscape industries during the economic downturn. Construction and remodeling activity in the landscape industry have rebounded to levels not seen since before the great recession.

In 2017, landscape and irrigation contractors will need to have a solid recruiting plan to attract, train and retain employees to grow their companies.

A leading industry expert said it best: “the contractor’s biggest marketing challenge in 2017 will be attracting qualified job candidates.” Here are some ways you can address that challenge head-on:

1) Recruit Continuously

You must be looking all of the time. And do everything you can to let people know you’re looking for candidates even when you’re fully staffed.

Adopt the tactics of retailers and fast food outlets. Post signs on your building, on your trucks and circulate flyers in every location you can imagine. Make a deal with on-line recruiting websites to run ads all-season. Create a dedicated page and application form on your website to greet potential candidates.



2) Start an Employee Referral Program

Where do you find great new employees? Ask your existing team members. Drive more referrals by establishing a referral bonus program for current employees who refer a new team member. You **MUST** promote this program to make it work!

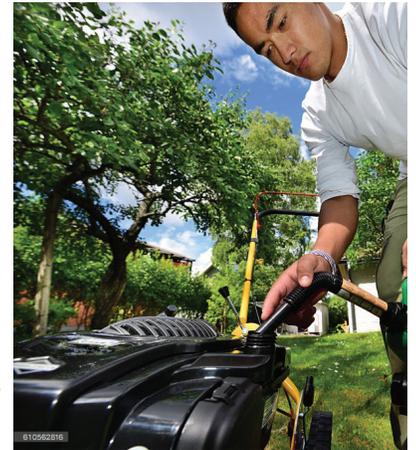
- Give your referral program a name and make a flyer with its details
- Reinforce its importance at every team meeting
- Pay bonuses when the new hire stays for at least 90 days



3) Make a Special Effort to Reach Hispanic Workers

Many of the green industry's hardest working and most loyal employees are Hispanics. Tuning your recruiting tactics to this special audience can result in you connecting with experienced, productive employees.

- Ask your current employees to post flyers in apartment buildings and shops in Hispanic neighborhoods
- Explore Spanish-language radio or newspaper ads
- Hold a "career days" open house where current employees can invite prospective candidates to visit your operation.



4) Stealing Employees from Competitors is a Risky Solution

At first glance, stealing a valued employee from a competitor seems like the ideal solution when you have an open position. It's fast, it seems easy and it drives results, right? Maybe not. Be careful

The positives of hiring a competitor's employee:

- Work experience. You get someone with general knowledge of the topic.
- Fewer surprises. The employee knows the standard job duties, so there's less chance for a mismatch of expectations and motivation.

The negatives of hiring a competitor's employee:

- Higher cost. You typically have to offer a raise or greater work flexibility (less flexible hours, overtime, etc.) to lure an experienced worker.
- "Pay me more or I will leave". There's a good chance once an employee is mobile, he'll fall for the same thing again.
- Baggage and bad habits. Often the competitor's employee most willing to leave is the one under the most pressure for poor work habits or bad behavior.



5) Treat New Applicants Like Valued Customers

First impressions matter. Give candidates a warm welcome to your company before and during the interview process.

- Have a website that shares your company philosophy and story. Candidates will look at it before coming in for the interview. Encourage on-line applications and respond to them by email.
- Have a pleasant waiting area for candidates that has seating and is appropriately climate controlled.
- Be sure the interview process is smooth and comfortable. Tough questions are okay, but be polite and friendly to the candidate.
- Be prepared to make a decision quickly. Don't drag things out with a candidate or keep them wondering. You don't want a reputation of being an interview mill.
- Give candidates time for a transition from their prior position.



THE BOTTOM LINE:

Recruit, Recruit, Recruit.

Start early and be prepared to work harder to find great candidates to fuel your company's growth in 2017. Let your Central representative know how we can help your efforts.

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