



HIRING TRENDS IN THE LANDSCAPING INDUSTRY

2023 Hiring Statistics & Tips for Recruiting
and Retaining Talent in a Tight Market

Hiring and Recruiting Remain Key Challenges for Landscapers in 2023



SUMMARY

- According to data collected by LMN, 93% of landscapers are stressed about being able to hire enough laborers/field crew to complete jobs, especially during busy seasons.
- Key hiring challenges include too few candidates and low levels of experience: Half of those surveyed can't get enough people to show up to interview and an even higher percentage (57%) get applicants with insufficient experience.
- Landscaping companies need to increase wages to attract quality talent, but while operating within an inflationary, highly competitive environment, few can afford to do it. Those that bite the bullet and pay up for talent could see an increase in the quality and number of job applications.
- A mix of traditional and digital marketing methods rank among the most successful hiring tools for landscapers. Fifty-one percent are most successful advertising through job boards. Nearly a quarter (22%) rank offline advertising, including flyers, billboards, and newspaper ads, most effective.
- Hiring continues to be a time-consuming and expensive challenge for landscaping companies. Nearly half of companies spend between \$101 - \$250 for each new employee and 30% spend as much as twice that.



Introduction

Last year, an LMN survey revealed that hiring and retention were landscape businesses' most pressing challenges. Eighty-four percent said finding and holding onto qualified staff stood in the way of growth. More than half were unable to hire the staff they needed, and many struggled to retain their existing employees. In fact, of those surveyed, nearly one-third had lost a significant amount of staff.

Unfortunately, their struggle to hire and retain people hasn't abated. A labor shortage continues to plague the market, so we reached out to 500 landscapers to understand how they're faring. We asked them about their company's hiring processes, the challenges they face, and for their advice to help other landscapers navigate the labor pinch and find more qualified help.

In this report, we dig into our survey data to uncover key insights about hiring processes and provide tips to help you not only fight, but win the battle for experienced labor.



Landscaping Companies Fight to Hire and Hold onto People

With an unrelenting labor shortage, it's not surprising that 93% of landscapers surveyed by LMN in 2023 are still stressed about being able to hire enough laborers/field crew to complete jobs, especially during busy seasons. High turnover rates are a problem for more than one-third of them, making hiring a relentless pursuit.

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Landscaping companies are competing for candidates and fishing from a talent pool that is dangerously low. Nearly a quarter (22%) of companies surveyed attract only 6 to 10 applicants for each position they post. While a handful of candidates may sound promising, more than half (57%) of companies report that applicants often don't have enough experience to do the job. Even worse, half of those surveyed said candidates are often interview no-shows.

When asked what's keeping more qualified labor from applying for the work, there's a resounding reply from surveyed companies—low compensation. "People think this job cannot meet the needs of life," said a landscaping owner surveyed by LMN.



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While landscaping companies are sympathetic to the plea for higher pay, many lack the money they need to raise compensation levels.

Mark Bradley, CEO of LMN, offers words of wisdom: "People think they can't afford to pay more, and yes, it's hard. So, what do you do? You must understand the economics of your business and what you need to pay to be competitive. And, consider what it means to your pricing structure and mark-ups. If you're consistent in your pricing structure, you can offer competitive salary and benefits packages to your employees and that will drive retention."





Landscapers Dial Up Marketing to Recruit Labor

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No matter the marketing channel, recruiting can be expensive. Nearly half of landscaping companies surveyed spend between \$101 and \$250 per candidate, factoring in ads and time spent interviewing. Some spend over \$500 for each new hire.

The process is as time-consuming as it is costly. Just over one-third of survey respondents spend 7 to 10 hours a week going through job applications.

Where do you advertise or post jobs for laborers/field crews?





Recruiting Tips from Landscapers to Landscapers

Through trial and error, landscapers are learning how to make the most of the time and budget they spend on recruiting. Survey respondents offer tried-and-true advice to other landscapers looking to maximize recruiting efforts, suggesting they host recruitment events or parties, advertise on local radio, and sweeten employment deals with extras such as a small sign-on bonus, free health check, or meal allowance and transportation subsidies.

86% of those surveyed have found that including pay in job descriptions improves the number and quality of applications they receive

Even just a simple tweak to job ads can make a difference in recruiting outcomes. A whopping 86% of those surveyed have found that including pay in job descriptions improves the number and quality of applications they receive.

With decades of industry experience, Bradley suggests landscaping companies cite wage ranges, rather than a set hourly rate, in job descriptions. In addition to highlighting higher compensation, an advertised wage range illustrates the potential for career growth.



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Mastering the Interview Process to Yield Better Results

One of the ways landscaping companies can improve their hiring odds is to finetune the interview process. Of those surveyed, 94% pre-screen labor or field crew applicants using a questionnaire.

"Screening applicants and sending out pre-interview questionnaires saves time and allows you to eliminate waste in the interviewing process," says Bradley. "The extra step empowers you to find the right people."

Looking to retain strong candidates for the long haul, most companies (96%) discuss potential career paths during the candidate screening and interviewing process. Some offer incentives, for instance rewarding employees for referring candidates and reimbursing candidates' travel expenses to and from interviews.



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Training Proves Effective for Attracting and Retaining Landscaping Employees

Providing free training for employees can be an effective way to attract talent and retain existing employees. Nearly all (99%) of companies surveyed by LMN have a training program in place for their employees. Eighty-one percent deliver training on the job which can be time-consuming and cut into resources.

How do you deliver training for all employees?

43%  leverage their local associations

68%  use an online training platform

81%  conduct on the job training

23%  have a training day once a year

Providing training opportunities strengthens employees' skills and gives them greater confidence in their abilities and work. It also shows you are invested in them and helps pave the way to a rewarding career. Leveraging an online training platform can save time and create efficiencies, making it easy to provide onboarding and ongoing training for your employees.



"Jobs are more attractive when you offer ways for employees to learn and upskill themselves and show them a clearly defined career path," says Bradley.



Future Proofing Your Landscaping Business

The landscape industry's troubling labor shortage isn't likely to ease up any time soon. The ongoing hiring challenge requires you to secure the talent you need to complete jobs and win business today while ensuring you have what it takes to succeed at hiring tomorrow. A strong arsenal of hiring and retention best practices and tips like those we've explored, along with the effective use of tools and technology, can arm you for success.



To learn more about how landscape management software can help you anticipate your hiring needs, budget to accommodate competitive salaries, and save you time and money so you can focus on talent acquisition and retention, visit www.golmn.com.