



BUSINESS  
MANAGEMENT  
SOFTWARE

# *HIRING HACKS*

IN LANDSCAPING

## HIRING HACKS AND PROCESSES IN LANDSCAPING - KNOW BEFORE YOU GROW

Here's how to streamline your hiring  
in landscaping and the skilled trades.





# ***INTRODUCTION***

If you're in the skilled trades, you know how hard it is to source enough applicants, let alone find the right people that fit your company and your team's needs.

The early signs of spring often trigger a sense of urgency to hire and meet company productivity goals, and the onslaught of customer inquiries. Whether it's for your maintenance team or your design and build division, the goal is often to find a hardworking and motivated individual who brings a valuable skillset to the company.

Throughout this book, we dive deep into skillset vs. cultural fit, strategies, and tactics to find new team members and create a usable hiring process that any owner can quickly implement.

# CHAPTER 1

## THE HIRING DEBATE: SKILL SET VS. CULTURAL FIT

This chapter discusses **skillset vs. cultural fit** and what you as an employer should be looking for depending on your business goals and needs.

### What is Cultural Fit?

Cultural fit is the concept of screening potential candidates to determine what type of cultural impact they would have on the organization. This is based on the alignment of values, beliefs, and behaviors between the employee and employer. In landscaping, employers frequently choose heart, motivation, and personality traits over skillset.

### What is Skill Set?

Skillset refers to a particular range of individual's skills, experiences, and abilities necessary to perform a job. For example, suppose you were looking to hire a new crew leader. In that case, that individual should have some customer experience skills, a variety of leadership skills to lead their team, and enough experience to train and advise team members on equipment, standard operating procedures, and more. It's pretty common for owners to seek out entrepreneurially minded crew leaders in landscaping because each crew within each division could be looked at as its own business within the company. The crew's success is heavily dependent on the crew leader's ability to lead the team.







## What's Right for your Landscape Company?

Former landscape business owner and now LMN CEO Mark Bradley said that he didn't necessarily look for the most talented or skilled people when he built his Landscape Company. He knew that if a potential hire had a good heart and was motivated and capable. They would likely be a natural fit for the team and everything the company was trying to achieve. He believed that the skills would come quickly with the right processes and mentorship amongst the group but emphasized the importance of processes. He also mentioned that 99% of miscommunication, waste in landscaping, and inefficiencies stem from not having the proper processes and procedures.

## But Why Does Cultural Fit Matter?

When you bring someone new onto the team, you want that person to be a long-lasting, valuable employee within your organization. With the ongoing labor shortage, it's essential to provide the resources and tools to help employees get better at their jobs, but you can't teach someone to align with your company's cultural values. Yet, that's who you want to join your work family: individuals who value people, understand our customers' priorities, work well together and look out for others' best interests before their own. The ultimate goal is for these people to grow and be promoted as the company grows and achieves its growth goals. If this sounds like your landscape company's priority, there are several ways to build cultural fit into your recruiting and hiring processes.

## CHAPTER 2

# FINDING THE RIGHT PERSON

Now that you have identified your company's needs, we share some **recruitment strategies and tactics to find the right people** for your landscape business.

### No Stone Goes Unturned

When it comes to effectively landing good people, we see a consistent restrainer across the board in landscaping and other skilled trades. But there are two primary restrainers we see consistently.

### Contractors do not invest enough time and money into recruiting.

Take a look at your spending last year. What did you spend on marketing? How about recruiting and hiring? You likely spend more money looking for customers than you do for employees. Yet the search for good staff is remarkably similar to the search for your customer:

- You have to know who you're looking for, which, hopefully, we helped you define earlier on.
- You need to know where they are and how to advertise your offer to them.
- You need to connect with them and show them what your company values are to align, hopefully.
- They might have many options and will need to be sold on why working for you is their best option.
- And lastly, you need to assess whether you can work together before making a final commitment.



Landscapers and businesses in general with outstanding teams, regardless of size, aren't shy about allocating an appropriately sized budget towards their search for top talent, just like they do when finding clients to serve.

Now, pull out your calendar. How much time did you spend marketing, estimating, selling, and managing production? Now, in comparison, how much time and money did you spend actively recruiting? If you're like most contractors, it's like comparing an elephant to a peanut. Once you've filled your applicant quota, it's time to begin the interview process, but are you trying to find skills or cultural fit like we mentioned previously?



## Ask The Right Questions

The interview is the most critical tool an owner, HR leader, or crew leader has in the toolbox to determine whether a candidate fits. Listing past accomplishments and skills are often easy for candidates, but how do you get at the more intangible elements of an applicant's personality and values?

Consider the questions you're asking, and incorporate open-ended questions surrounding the qualities your organization most values. For example, questions to frequently use could include:

- What do you value most at work?
- What do you like most about working on a team?
- Can you give an example of when you went out of your way to help a coworker or create a positive customer experience?
- Why do you feel each customer so necessary in landscaping?

LMN CEO Mark Bradley emphasizes the importance of transparency within the company. Interviews are two-way streets: Candidates should demonstrate their capabilities and values, but interviewers should clearly define your company's overall mission and hit home on culture. Emphasize things like your core customer service importance, how your company recognizes achievement or certain expectations for working and ensuring jobs are completed on time, on budget, and to the standard of the company's goals.



## CHAPTER 3

# CREATING YOUR HIRING PROCESS

In the final chapter, we share a thorough and **repeatable hiring process** that you can implement today if you choose to.

### Define Your Hiring Process

Your hiring process refers to the process of finding, selecting, and hiring new employees to a company. This process has three key segments: planning, recruitment, and employee selection. Whether you're in landscape construction or landscape maintenance, we've taken the time to outline a thorough and repeatable hiring process that you can begin using today.

### 13 Steps To A Better Hiring Process

Use our simple but effective 13 step hiring process to streamline your hiring process and set you and your company up for success when hiring new team members.

#### Identify Your Needs

In the hiring process's initial step, human resources, crew leader, or owner needs to identify the hiring need. When looking into the upcoming projects, you should establish some long-term and short-term hiring needs.

#### Make a Plan For Success

Creating a good plan for your hiring will make you more efficient and help you understand the company's current and future needs. If you've ever hired before, you know how lengthy and time-consuming a process it can be. For that purpose, it is beneficial to specify starting dates and other objectives with your team. Like Jobsite deadlines, being objective and having a plan makes the process more efficient.

#### Create a Job Description

When creating a job description, make sure to include the following elements: company description, job requirements, duties and responsibilities, and ultimately, cover letter. Besides mentioning all the necessary details within your job description, make sure to make that text as eye-catching as possible and use keywords related to the job.

#### Involve Your Team

The purpose of an intake meeting with your team is to clearly understand all the new hire's needs and expectations revolving around the role. The goal is to find compatible team members, so you want those working directly with the new hire to be involved. This meeting takes place before posting a job opening online, and its purpose is mainly to define all crucial details about the position.

#### Post and Promote Your Job Openings

Like every other business these days, posting jobs online became an essential way of making sure that people see and apply for the position. For that reason, companies are often trying to spread the word as much as they can by posting their job opening on various job boards, different social media, or some online portals.

#### Screen Your Applicants

After the applicants finished their application, it is time to look into their application forms and evaluate their CVs, cover letters, or any other type of document they might have attached to the application. The screening process results in eliminating candidates that are a mismatch for the role. From there, you can create a shortlist of candidates and move onto the final stages of interviews.

#### Begin Interviewing

When planning an interview, there are several things that you should always take into account before conducting it. Interviews require planning and preparation. Firstly, you should create a list of interview questions. Keep them simple and try and understand their personality and goals. Afterward, it would be best if you determined how the interview process is going to happen. Whether you will be conducting an in-person or a phone interview, how long will the interview last, and what type of knowledge will you examine during the interview.



## Assessment of Skills

Understand their skills and experience with some critical questions about the role and why you are hiring them. Again, this should be a simple line of questions that gives you a snapshot of their experience in the industry and how much specific training you need to dedicate to onboarding.

## Complete a Background & Reference Check

Background and reference checks refer to a recruiting process method used by hiring managers/recruiters to get more information about a candidate by contacting his/her previous employers, schools, etc. Conducting a reference check helps recruiters check the validity of data and make decisions based on a conversation with a person who used to work with your potential future colleague.

## Make a Decision

Finally, after all, interviews and checks, it is decision time! Evaluating which candidate will be the best cultural fit while satisfying all requirements is never easy. But when all the previous steps are thorough, there is no space for uncertainty. After all, the goal for those longer-term employees is to find someone that can grow with the company and contribute value in many ways for the customer and the business.

## Send Them A Job Offer

It's time to make a job offer letter/email and notify your new hire. Making all the aspects of a job as straightforward as possible to the new hire is extremely important for both the new team member and your company. As strange as it might feel, this is why it is necessary to send a formal job offer letter/email.

## Officially Hire Them

Only when your candidate decides to accept your offer and signs, the contract can should you finally share the news about the new team member.

## Onboard Your New Team Member

More and more companies are starting to understand the importance of good onboarding. Even more so, once a company hires new people, some believe this is only when the job begins. Onboarding the candidates means introducing them to the culture and the people and giving them all the necessary information and training to excel at their job as soon as possible.

Thanks again for downloading our e-book!

