



Winning at Hiring, Training and Retaining
Landscape Employees

Creating Help Wanted Ads That Attract More & Better Applicants for Landscape Positions

ADDS

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If you want to attract and hire the best, you need a plan. There are hundreds of employers seeking the same applicants you're going for. Your competition isn't just other contractors; it's everybody who is looking for people who are willing to work hard. A recent survey of landscape contractors by industry consulting firm Strategic Force, Inc. revealed that over half of respondents (63 percent) indicated that their biggest challenge in recruiting is not having enough candidates from which to choose. Digging deeper, it's not just a lack of candidates, it's a lack of QUALITY candidates.

You Need a Recruiting Marketing Strategy

Attracting the right applicants to your company requires marketing:

- You need to **appeal to the audience's needs and interests** (potential employees)
- You need to **sell your company's unique advantages**
- You need to **connect with your audience in the places they're looking**
- You need to **get your audience to take action**

Stop with the Excuses

It's not helpful to say things like:

- There are no workers out there who care as much as an owner
- If you want something done right, you'll need to do it yourself

There are many dedicated, hard-working, passionate employees out there. The key is finding them. The first step is a great recruiting ad. A great recruiting ad will propel the success of your whole search. The core content for this ad posting can be used across all different types of media: from internet job boards to your customer e-newsletter.



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Before You Start Writing an Ad

Grab a pen and paper and make some lists. If the job is entry level, this will be easy. If it's for a foreman or above, you'll need to invest some time.

The goal of these lists is two-fold. First, define what results you need from the position. Second, define the profile of the person who can deliver those results.

Make lists of:

- What are the objectives of the job?
- What are the key responsibilities?
- What have others in the position done well, and where have they come up short?
- What you'd like to see different from the role in the future?
- Consider the job requirements for the employee in terms of:
 - o Capabilities: mental and physical
 - o Attitude: customer service, attention to detail, reliability
 - o Personality: teamwork, self-starting, perseverance
 - o Skills: ability to work with tools, complete specific tasks



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Check Your Work

Ask yourself these questions about your ad:

- Does it stand out with a message that will catch the reader's eye among all of the others they'll see?
- Does your ad answer the important questions about the position up front? (requiring the reader to dig deeper might cause them to move to the next ad)?
- Does it clearly say what the "next step" is? (where to apply and when)
- Does it communicate your company's values: that you're looking for passionate people who are committed to the business, not just someone looking for a position until something better comes along?

Example of a boring ad (grabbed from a real job board with the name and location changed):

Landscaper, Inc. located in Atlanta is looking for an experienced Crew Field Leader for residential installation. Applicant must have a minimum of 5 years landscape installation experience including equipment operation, irrigation and reading landscape plans. We are looking for someone that is self-motivated and has strong communication skills. Valid driver's license is required. Must speak English. Only serious and qualified applicants accepted. Please send resume to zzz@zzz.com

Why it's bad:

- Lots of duplicate words and common phrases
- Offers the position but doesn't say what's interesting about it
- Every applicant thinks they're self-motivated and have good communication skills; ads don't screen for those things, interviews do
- Not necessary to tell an English reader they also need to speak English

Re-writing the same ad:

There Are Plenty of Average Crew Leaders Out There. Are You Exceptional?

Landscapes Inc. has built a team of talented, motivated people who keep landscapes throughout Atlanta looking their best. We need a Crew Leader who enjoys the value of hard work and creating beautiful results. Work with our cool clients in neighborhoods as diverse as Marietta and Little Five Points, creating results that get plenty of kudos. Bring 5 years' experience overcoming challenges and helping others succeed. Be ready to take on new challenges and enjoy the rewards of pay above industry standards. Build a career with a company that listens to your ideas.

Call now 555-555-5555 or click here to [APPLY ONLINE](#).

Why it's better:

- An interesting headline
- Breezy, enthusiastic copy that reflects the company's advantages and style
- Sells benefits, appeals to questions the applicant may have
- Call to action with options



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Get Started, Keep Going

Writing a compelling ad isn't easy. Don't hesitate: dig in and get started. Get your lists and ideas on paper. Then organize them into phrases and sentences. Crank up your horsepower on making it appealing and fun. Ask others in your organization to contribute their ideas. Have someone who is a good writer tie it all together. Get outside help if you need it.

Where should you run your exciting new ad? In an upcoming guide, we'll share the best recruiting channels for professional landscape contractors.

Hire the Best. Train the Best. Motivate the Best.

Watch for additional resources to help you grow your employee success in the months ahead.

*Have feedback on this booklet? Need copies of the others in the series?
Connect with your ADS distributor for details.*

