

# GROWERTALKS

## Features

12/1/2017

## Running Low on Resources

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This past September, the U.S. Department of Labor came out with data from a study they conducted showing there were 6.17 million job openings that employers could not fill. As of November, that number had not changed. And as most of you already know, many of those are in the agriculture/horticulture sector. (Schools and hospitals have the most job openings, with 1.2 million.)

As we've reported in these pages during the past few years, there are many reasons for this disparity, but the No. 1 reason we hear most often is just a lack of "good" workers to fill those positions. Our industry also has strong competition for workers with construction and manufacturing companies, who together posted 613,000 job openings this year. Combine those two things with less available seasonal migrant labor and it makes for employers working leaner, paying more overtime and working more hours themselves.

With the lack of a labor force front and center in the minds of our readers, for the last question of our survey we asked, "Are you experiencing a labor shortage, and if you are, what are some of the things you've been doing to handle the lack of resources?"

We had lots of responses, admittedly with some saying they weren't having a problem finding workers. But those numbers were small. Most of the people who took our survey said they indeed were having a difficult time finding labor and that they've had to come up with some creative ways to fill the gaps. Many said they were hiring more refugees and non-Hispanic foreign workers; others mentioned they're investing in more automation or have increased their wages; some have decided to try the H-2A program; and a few in states that have legalized it respondents said they're losing good people to cannabis growers.

Here are some of the responses:

"Finding good help is difficult, especially if you're only open seasonally. We find that treating employees well and with kindness works well to encourage return employees. Word gets around in our community when a place treats others with respect. We work with what we have and have automated when we can (flat filler, automatic transplanter, seed). We've also increased our signage to help with customer service."

"Using volunteers a lot, friends, working too much."

"Everyone works long hours."

"Try to recruit people who are retired or retiring shortly; willing to pay above minimum wage to start."

"Growing less, working longer hours."

"We advertise locally, via social media and through government websites."

"Hiring less skilled and training more."

"We are looking at different ways to find employees either on social media, online resume posting sites, etc."

"We are in contact with a community action board—a recruiter for the county."

"I am searching harder for employees, adding employees so we can make a split schedule to get Sunday covered."

"Quality seasonal personnel are becoming harder to find. We are settling for college students who can't work the full season."

"We've been having difficulty filling our seasonal staff. We've been reaching out to technical high schools and have had some high school students as interns and as co-op students."

"Employing landscaping employees during winter months."

"Our business is switching to H-2A guest workers next year to avoid paying the ridiculous payroll taxes here in New York."

"Paying my employees more per hour."

"Very difficult to get new employees, but once we have new ones, they stay. Increase of wages, benefits and flexible hours all help to retain employees."

"We've beefed up our training program."

"Allowing overtime to interested employees and broadening the advertising of our listings."

"We've been lucky in 2017. We hired a few young laborers we had to pay a better starting wage, more overtime and meet their needs to make them successful. Hopefully, long-term employees."

"Trying to be more efficient mechanizing."

"We have been increasing our starting rate for several years, but the real problem that we are having is finding youth that is willing to do manual labor (and show up regularly). 2018 will be our last year without foreign labor."

"We share labor with other farmers."

"We are employing more refugees with the help of the local Catholic Social Services office."

"Temp agency has been able to supply seasonal needs. Challenges come in retaining employees that we want back year after year, but don't have enough work to keep them going December to February."

"It has been a struggle to get and keep seasonal employees with greenhouse or nursery experience due to marijuana growers paying more. Dividing up more watering needs and tasks, cross training as much as possible and getting everyone involved in decisions when possible."

"We hire temporary or seasonal general laborers from parking lots of Home Depot and hardware stores."

"Matching or surpassing wages offered by chains, including restaurants."

"Use head hunters."

"The labor shortage has prompted us to raise wages and minimize expansion into new markets."

“Implemented Lean Flow.”

“We work with other seasonal businesses—pumpkin farm, potato farm, Christmas store—to share seasonal employees. It works well for everyone. The businesses find seasonal employees that want to work and the employees like the variation.”

“Increasing our recruiting budget to sponsor ads on Indeed; target recruiting toward social media.”



## By Region

### EAST

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	\$8.51-\$10.00	\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	2%	27%	58%	13%	0%
Part-Time General Labor	0%	4%	26%	50%	15%	4%
Full-Time General Labor	0%	0%	2%	33%	43%	22%

(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	4%	37%	33%	11%	7%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	4%	4%	39%	21%	21%	7%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	4%	8%	12%	38%	8%	19%	0%	12%	0%	0%
Head Grower	3%	3%	6%	15%	15%	18%	27%	0%	6%	6%
Merchandise	0%	33%	17%	25%	17%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	0%	17%	17%	0%	50%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	0%	10%	40%	15%	15%	10%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Manager	0%	4%	8%	24%	28%	12%	8%	8%	0%	0%
General Manager	0%	3%	6%	16%	16%	9%	9%	9%	13%	19%
Owner	7%	7%	10%	5%	7%	5%	17%	7%	7%	29%

### MIDWEST

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	\$8.51-\$10.00	\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	6%	51%	31%	12%	0%
Part-Time General Labor	0%	10%	40%	40%	10%	0%
Full-Time General Labor	0%	2%	11%	31%	38%	18%

(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	19%	28%	38%	9%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	0%	20%	34%	29%	11%	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	0%	8%	26%	36%	21%	8%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Head Grower	2%	5%	7%	29%	20%	17%	12%	5%	2%	0%
Merchandise	10%	20%	30%	20%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	5%	25%	5%	30%	10%	15%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	5%	5%	32%	11%	16%	11%	5%	11%	5%	0%
Sales Manager	0%	15%	15%	19%	15%	12%	8%	8%	4%	4%
General Manager	3%	5%	13%	21%	10%	13%	13%	8%	0%	15%
Owner	4%	8%	6%	10%	8%	14%	10%	4%	6%	30%

### WEST

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	\$8.51-\$10.00	\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	0%	12%	74%	9%	5%
Part-Time General Labor	3%	3%	16%	61%	16%	3%
Full-Time General Labor	0%	0%	5%	38%	45%	13%

(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	8%	28%	36%	20%	4%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	0%	15%	25%	30%	20%	5%	5%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	0%	0%	21%	26%	21%	21%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Head Grower	0%	0%	0%	26%	7%	11%	19%	19%	11%	7%
Merchandise	10%	40%	30%	0%	10%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	0%	9%	18%	27%	27%	0%	18%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	0%	0%	15%	10%	35%	5%	15%	0%	0%	20%
Sales Manager	0%	4%	0%	8%	19%	15%	8%	19%	4%	23%
General Manager	0%	7%	0%	7%	15%	15%	11%	11%	7%	26%
Owner	10%	10%	0%	3%	17%	3%	3%	0%	10%	41%

### SOUTH

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	\$8.51-\$10.00	\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	3%	21%	50%	21%	6%	0%
Part-Time General Labor	0%	23%	40%	31%	3%	3%
Full-Time General Labor	0%	0%	19%	40%	26%	16%

(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	22%	30%	26%	13%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	24%	19%	24%	14%	10%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	19%	14%	10%	24%	10%	19%	5%	0%	0%	0%
Head Grower	10%	7%	13%	20%	23%	3%	3%	13%	3%	3%
Merchandise	36%	36%	7%	7%	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	33%	17%	17%	17%	0%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	21%	16%	32%	11%	11%	5%	5%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Manager	19%	0%	29%	10%	10%	24%	5%	0%	0%	5%
General Manager	10%	7%	20%	10%	13%	17%	7%	10%	3%	3%

Owner	13%	3%	0%	16%	19%	16%	6%	3%	0%	25%
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## By Size

Under 100,000  
Square Feet

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	\$8.51-\$10.00	\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00				
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	1%	7%	26%	45%	21%	0%				
Part-Time General Labor	1%	14%	22%	40%	19%	5%				
Full-Time General Labor	0%	1%	5%	27%	39%	28%				
(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	26%	28%	33%	7%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	8%	27%	27%	22%	8%	5%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	8%	8%	27%	24%	16%	8%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Head Grower	4%	7%	11%	29%	22%	9%	11%	7%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	15%	46%	19%	15%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	5%	35%	20%	20%	5%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	13%	4%	42%	29%	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Manager	7%	11%	22%	26%	19%	11%	0%	0%	0%	4%
General Manager	5%	10%	10%	27%	15%	17%	10%	5%	2%	0%
Owner	8%	15%	11%	10%	20%	10%	8%	4%	1%	11%

More Than 100,000  
Square Feet

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	\$8.51-\$10.00	\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00				
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	5%	34%	48%	10%	2%				
Part-Time General Labor	0%	4%	31%	50%	10%	4%				
Full-Time General Labor	0%	0%	11%	32%	39%	18%				
(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	5%	32%	33%	18%	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	5%	9%	31%	26%	19%	8%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	4%	6%	15%	31%	15%	21%	4%	4%	0%	0%
Head Grower	2%	4%	7%	19%	14%	16%	16%	10%	7%	5%
Merchandise	15%	18%	23%	15%	10%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	10%	8%	13%	21%	26%	8%	15%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	3%	8%	25%	10%	24%	8%	11%	3%	2%	6%
Sales Manager	2%	4%	9%	16%	16%	15%	11%	11%	7%	9%
General Manager	1%	3%	9%	10%	13%	13%	8%	13%	7%	21%
Owner	5%	1%	3%	6%	7%	13%	10%	5%	11%	41%



## By Business Type

Wholesale Grower

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	\$8.51-\$10.00	\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00				
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	1%	4%	31%	47%	15%	2%				
Part-Time General Labor	0%	5%	29%	49%	12%	5%				
Full-Time General Labor	0%	0%	10%	30%	38%	22%				
(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	7%	26%	36%	21%	5%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	4%	7%	28%	29%	21%	7%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	4%	3%	14%	27%	17%	23%	9%	3%	0%	0%
Head Grower	2%	1%	4%	15%	15%	14%	21%	13%	8%	7%
Merchandise Manager	23%	8%	15%	27%	12%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	12%	4%	4%	15%	38%	12%	15%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	3%	3%	21%	18%	25%	8%	11%	2%	2%	7%
Sales Manager	3%	1%	6%	14%	17%	17%	11%	11%	8%	13%
General Manager	1%	2%	6%	10%	10%	15%	9%	15%	10%	22%
Owner	3%	3%	4%	6%	7%	12%	11%	6%	8%	41%

Retail Grower

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	\$8.51-\$10.00	\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00				
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	7%	30%	48%	14%	1%				
Part-Time General Labor	1%	12%	25%	41%	16%	4%				
Full-Time General Labor	0%	1%	6%	32%	39%	21%				
(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	22%	37%	31%	2%	6%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	9%	27%	34%	16%	7%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	6%	13%	25%	33%	13%	8%	0%	2%	0%	0%
Head Grower	5%	10%	14%	33%	19%	12%	5%	2%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	10%	41%	27%	7%	2%	12%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Representative	6%	26%	24%	24%	6%	9%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	11%	14%	50%	7%	7%	4%	4%	4%	0%	0%
Sales Manager	5%	13%	23%	26%	18%	8%	5%	3%	0%	0%
General Manager	5%	9%	16%	22%	18%	13%	11%	4%	0%	2%
Owner	11%	11%	9%	9%	18%	11%	8%	3%	5%	15%



## Hourly Employees

### United States

(per hour)	Less than \$7.00	\$7.01-\$8.50	*\$8.51-\$10.00	**\$10.01-\$12.50	\$12.51-\$15.00	More than \$15.00
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	1%	6%	36%	<b>46%</b>	11%	1%
Part-Time General Labor	1%	9%	31%	<b>45%</b>	11%	2%
Full-Time General Labor	0%	1%	9%	35%	<b>38%</b>	17%

### Canada

Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	0%	0%	<b>56%</b>	41%	3%
Part-Time General Labor	0%	0%	0%	<b>46%</b>	32%	21%
Full-Time General Labor	0%	0%	0%	7%	43%	<b>47%</b>

The value between the U.S. and Canadian dollar is about a 26-cent difference. Because of space constraints, we're not showing both.

\* As of now, the average federal minimum wage in the U.S. is \$7.25—though it's higher in most states, with Arizona, California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont and Washington at \$10.00 or over. Some states passed legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$15.00 an hour within the next few years.

\*\* The minimum wage in Canada across all provinces averages between \$10.00 and \$13.00 an hour.

## Salary Employees

### United States

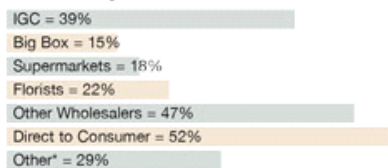
(per year)	Less than \$20,000	\$20,000-\$30,000	\$30,000-\$40,000	\$40,000-\$50,000	\$50,000-\$60,000	\$60,000-\$70,000	\$70,000-\$80,000	\$80,000-\$90,000	\$90,000-\$100,000	More than \$100,000
Grower (0-2 Years)	13%	31%	<b>34%</b>	13%	5%	4%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	6%	14%	<b>32%</b>	24%	15%	6%	3%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	5%	8%	18%	<b>32%</b>	15%	15%	4%	3%	0%	0%
Head Grower	4%	4%	7%	<b>23%</b>	17%	13%	15%	8%	5%	4%
Merchandise	14%	<b>30%</b>	21%	14%	5%	14%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	9%	18%	13%	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	9%	11%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	6%	8%	<b>29%</b>	12%	19%	8%	9%	3%	1%	5%
Sales Manager	4%	6%	12%	15%	<b>18%</b>	15%	7%	9%	4%	8%
General Manager	3%	5%	10%	14%	13%	13%	10%	9%	5%	<b>16%</b>
Owner	8%	7%	5%	8%	12%	10%	10%	4%	6%	<b>31%</b>

### Canada

Grower (0-2 Years)	11%	28%	<b>33%</b>	17%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (3-5 Years)	8%	17%	17%	<b>25%</b>	17%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Grower (6+ Years)	8%	0%	23%	8%	15%	<b>31%</b>	15%	0%	0%	0%
Head Grower	0%	11%	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>16%</b>	11%	11%	0%	5%
Merchandise	18%	18%	<b>27%</b>	18%	9%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Manager	0%	0%	<b>40%</b>	20%	20%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Representative	0%	0%	<b>36%</b>	<b>36%</b>	18%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Sales Manager	0%	0%	8%	<b>38%</b>	8%	0%	23%	0%	15%	8%
General Manager	0%	0%	6%	<b>19%</b>	13%	<b>19%</b>	6%	<b>19%</b>	13%	6%
Owner	0%	4%	15%	0%	11%	<b>22%</b>	7%	7%	11%	<b>22%</b>

## Who responded to our survey?

### Who are your customers?



\*Farmers markets, designers, decorators, landscapers, general stores, restaurants, botanical gardens, universities, fundraisers, contractors, garden clubs, property managers, interior designers, auctions, municipalities, golf courses, resorts, homeowner's associations and online

### Region



## Healthcare & other benefits

### Which benefits do you currently offer your employees?

2017	Full-Time	Part-Time
401(k)	29%	7%
Pension	5%	0.5%
Annual Bonus	49%	23%
Health Insurance	47%	5%
Dental Insurance	27%	3%
Life Insurance	24%	2%
Sick Leave	40%	11%
Disability	19%	3%
Paid Vacation	67%	12%
Paid Holidays	61%	17%
*Other	8%	4%

2007	Full-Time	Part-Time
401(k)	36%	7%
Pension	9%	1%
Annual Bonus	50%	18%
Health Insurance	57%	4%
Dental Insurance	18%	1%
Life Insurance	20%	2%
Sick Leave	36%	4%
Disability	15%	1%
Paid Vacation	75%	7%
Paid Holidays	N/A	N/A
*Other	N/A	N/A

### Which benefits do your employees consider the most important/valuable?

401(k)	15%
Pension	3%
Annual Bonus	33%
Health Insurance	43%
Dental Insurance	15%
Life Insurance	5%
Sick Leave	18%
Disability	6%

## And you're hiring

As part of our survey, we've always asked what growers hiring plans were for the year and compared the current year's numbers to the previous five to six years. When we crunched the numbers and saw the total of how many planned on adding more staff, we were curious to see how it measured up to even farther back, going more than a decade. What this year's data showed us is that the number of growers hiring is the highest it's been in over 12 years.

It's an interesting statistic in that it shows that our industry is doing above-average—at least, well enough that you're hiring—which would normally be a good thing. But with the current worker shortage, it's caused added stress to business owners and managers across our industry ... but has also caused them to be more creative when trying to figure out ways to get the work done.

## Hiring the Key Employee

By Bob Zahra

What's more disruptive and difficult than hiring a key employee? The temptation is to cut corners in the hiring process: to seriously consider the unqualified and the unhappy, to be "sold" an individual who's on the market rather than to bear down and expend precious time to identify, approach and secure the best possible candidate.

With a plate full of other problems, it's deceptively tempting for the hiring authority to "just fill the slot" and move on to the next problem—even though it's clear that the properly positioned key employee is the foundation upon which the successful company is built. The most successful business decisions are made in the context of the furthest timeline. An easy, but marginal, hire today may necessitate a termination and re-hire when least tolerable.

The company rises on the shoulders of the key employee. It only makes sense to select that key employee carefully. It's a mistake to be "sold" an individual, either by the candidate or by the candidate's advocate. The individual's proven history is available, both in terms of work history and character. Although

Paid Vacation	51%
Paid Holidays	38%
*Other	5%

\*Other\* included: Flex time, discounts, gifts, family care leave, simple IRA, personal days, free plants/produce, vision insurance, seasonal bonus, gym membership, tuition reimbursement, supplemental insurance like AFLAC and free lunches.

Thank you, Allison Westbrook and Adriana Heikkila for collecting and tabulating the data!

## Staffing

Staffing Plans for 2017

(survey year)	Add Staff	Reduce Staff	Keep Staff the Same	I Don't Know
2017	32%	6%	55%	8%
2016	30%	6%	58%	7%
2015	29%	7%	59%	5%
2014	27%	6%	59%	9%
2013	24%	7%	63%	7%
2012	22%	9%	63%	7%
2011	13%	8%	69%	10%
2010	19%	5%	67%	10%
2009	8%	48%	44%	N/A
2008	10%	26%	59%	9%
2007	17%	9%	63%	7%
2006	21%	10%	61%	12%
2005	17%	10%	61%	12%

How many people do you employ during peak season?

Less than 10 = 31%
10 to 25 = 22%
25 to 50 = 20%
50 to 100 = 12%
100 to 250 = 11%
250 to 500 = 2%
More than 500 = 1%

increasingly more difficult legally to ascertain, degrees can be verified. Criminal records, driving records and sexual offender profiles all can be checked.

Instead of doing the hard work of approaching directly the individual who's truly qualified, who can improve their own family's circumstances plus bring decades of significant strategic value to the hiring company, the easy way out is to hire someone who's available, with whom you have "good chemistry"—even though the truth is (and always has been) that you'll learn to "like" the person who delivers for you in superior fashion, while "good chemistry" fizzles in the face of non-performance.

Our industry is a small town internationally. There are few people who have the proven, demonstrated qualifications required. Everybody knows everybody. The real challenge isn't identification of the candidate; it's shepherding the understandably cautious candidate from first contact through family reluctance, confidentiality concerns, cold feet, multiple interviews, background investigation, negotiations relative to offer, counter-offer from current employer, relocation hurdles, family adjustment, and on and on.

Cast a cold eye on personal chemistry. Give more credence to proven history. Don't be "sold" whomever is available. Select the person who can best contribute to the long-term success of your company.

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