

Cover Story

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Upping the Allure

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It seems as though every retail store I enter has a “Now Hiring!” sign posted in plain sight. And it’s not just for the year-end holiday sales rush, either. The labor market—from retail to registered nursing, from agriculture to aeronautics—is tight and has been so for a good year or more. And, it’s getting tighter.

All this goes to say, it’s an applicant’s market. Hirees are scarce and they have the option of choosing where they’d like to work. Believe me, they’ll kick your tires to determine if your garden center is the right fit for them.

As we prepared for the 2019 *Green Profit* Wage & Benefit Survey (our tenth!), we were curious how you planned to be attractive to qualified workers. What changes would you make to get them, and more importantly, keep them in your employment? Many of you said you’re offering flexible scheduling and competitive wages and benefits. That’s a good start, for sure. But what more can you do? Some garden retailers are upping their allure by creating fun and satisfying work environments and cultures, cultivating relationships that speak to the ethics of the younger generation and offering skilled and creative on-the-job opportunities.

Here are more alluring ideas from respondents in their own words:

“More flexibility, more money and more authority.”—A retailer from Ontario

“Trying to improve working/environmental conditions.”—A retailer from Wyoming

“Continuing to offer the best customer service and sticking to our focus on organics and sustainable practices. Applicants regularly mention that our mission is what drew them to our store.”—A retailer from Virginia

“Staff training, looking to the future and bring up the next tier.”—A retailer from Illinois

“Good work environment, competitive pay, flexible hours and benefits.”—A retailer from Illinois

“We are a family-run business and we treat our employees like extended family. If we are doing well our employees will know. We cultivate a relationship with each employee.”—A retailer from South Carolina

“Thinking and working ‘younger!’”—A retailer from Arizona

“Training, growth in skills, opportunities, flexible hours, fun environment, creative opportunities.”— A retailer from Ontario

“Increase wages, improve staff facilities, make work fun and satisfying.”—A retailer from Wisconsin **GP**

Thanks so much to Allison Westbrook and Adriana Heikkila for their hard work collecting and tabulating the data!

Comparison

United States and Canada

HOURLY EMPLOYEES

(per hour)

	United States	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%	10%	33%	42%	13%	1%	
Part-time General Labor	1%	7%	30%	42%	17%	3%	
Full-time General Labor	0%	0%	9%	31%	44%	17%	
Head Cashier	0%	0%	8%	31%	39%	22%	
Temporary Cashier	0%	6%	29%	46%	16%	3%	
Canada							
Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	0%	0%	14%	79%	7%	
Part-time General Labor	0%	0%	0%	8%	77%	15%	
Full-time General Labor	0%	0%	0%	0%	33%	67%	
Head Cashier	0%	0%	0%	0%	31%	69%	
Temporary Cashier	0%	0%	0%	8%	83%	8%	

SALARY EMPLOYEES

(per year)

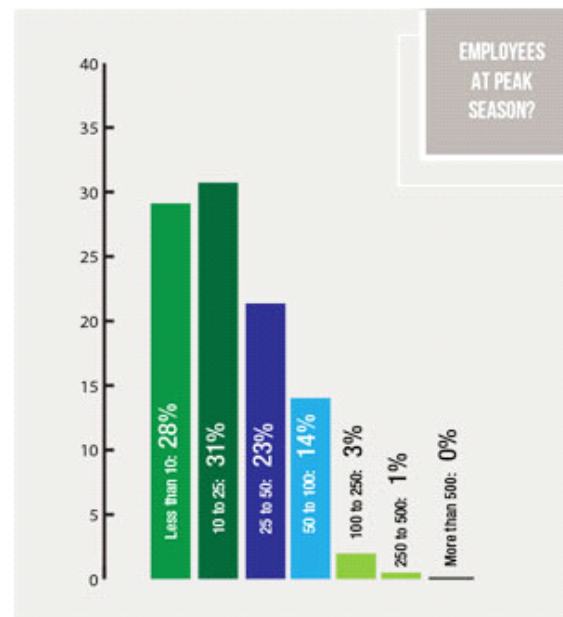
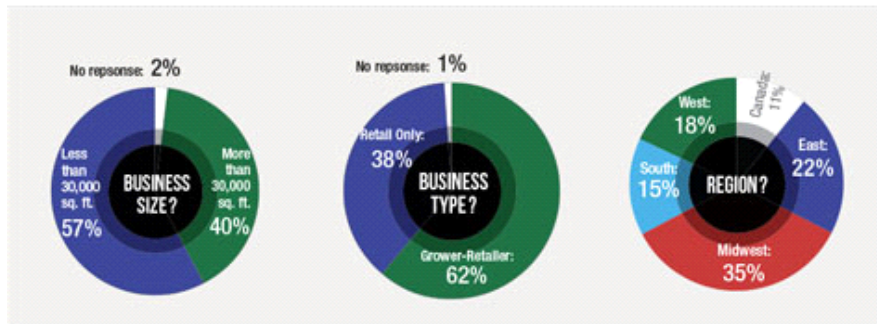
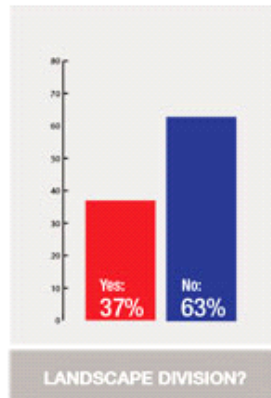
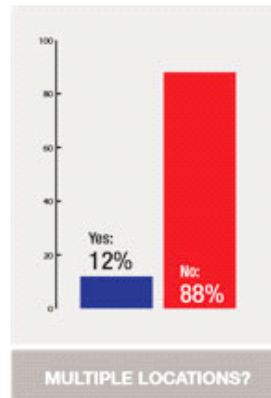
United States

	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
Buyer	12%	14%	24%	30%	14%	4%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Floral Designer	23%	16%	39%	16%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%
Landscape Designer	0%	18%	21%	27%	21%	3%	3%	3%	0%	3%
Landscape Foreman	0%	19%	30%	30%	16%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise	7%	27%	36%	23%	5%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Mgr.	3%	18%	23%	30%	18%	5%	0%	0%	5%	0%
General Manager	0%	11%	17%	18%	22%	17%	2%	6%	6%	2%
Garden Center Mgr.	3%	12%	23%	25%	17%	10%	5%	2%	2%	2%
Department Mgr.	2%	21%	25%	29%	15%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Owner	5%	4%	7%	17%	11%	16%	6%	6%	5%	21%

Canada

Buyer	0%	0%	14%	29%	14%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Floral Designer	0%	0%	67%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Landscape Designer	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Landscape Foreman	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise	0%	29%	29%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Mgr.	0%	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
General Manager	0%	0%	13%	25%	13%	25%	25%	0%	0%	0%
Garden Center Mgr.	0%	10%	20%	10%	40%	10%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Department Mgr.	0%	33%	17%	33%	0%	17%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Owner	0%	8%	8%	0%	25%	25%	8%	0%	8%	17%

The value between the U.S. and Canadian dollar is about a 31-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 Washington D.C., Washington state, California, Massachusetts, Arizona, Vermont, New York, Colorado, Connecticut and Hawaii at \$10.00 or over. Some states passed legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$15.00 as soon as the next few years. ** The minimum wage in Canada across all provinces averages between \$10.00 and \$14.00 an hour.



	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME
401(k)	31%	6%
Pension	2%	0%
Bonus	42%	18%
Health Insurance	46%	3%
Dental Insurance	27%	2%
Life Insurance	18%	1%
Sick Days	37%	9%
Disability	19%	2%
Paid Vacation	66%	11%
Paid Holidays	52%	15%

*Survey takers were asked to check all benefits that apply.

Breakdown By Region

HOURLY EMPLOYEES (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
"MORE FLEXIBILITY, MORE MONEY AND MORE AUTHORITY:" —A RETAILER FROM ONTARIO	EAST						
	Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	0%	27%	58%	15%	0%
	Part-time General Labor	0%	4%	22%	37%	30%	7%
	Full-time General Labor	0%	0%	0%	17%	52%	30%
	Head Cashier	0%	0%	5%	20%	45%	30%
	Temporary Cashier	0%	0%	25%	50%	25%	0%
	MIDWEST						
	Temp/Seasonal General Labor	2%	11%	40%	40%	7%	0%
	Part-time General Labor	2%	5%	43%	45%	7%	0%
	Full-time General Labor	0%	0%	7%	41%	37%	15%
"INCREASE WAGES, IMPROVE STAFF FACILITIES, MAKE WORK FUN AND SATISFYING" —A RETAILER FROM WISCONSIN	Head Cashier	0%	0%	8%	45%	32%	16%
	Temporary Cashier	0%	11%	38%	49%	3%	0%
	SOUTH						
	Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	24%	59%	12%	6%	0%
	Part-time General Labor	0%	22%	33%	39%	6%	0%
	Full-time General Labor	0%	0%	32%	42%	21%	5%
	Head Cashier	0%	0%	20%	40%	27%	13%
	Temporary Cashier	0%	7%	47%	40%	7%	0%
	WEST						
	Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	11%	0%	53%	32%	5%
	Part-time General Labor	0%	6%	26%	44%	39%	6%
	Full-time General Labor	0%	0%	0%	11%	72%	17%
	Head Cashier	0%	0%	0%	6%	59%	35%
	Temporary Cashier	0%	0%	0%	41%	41%	18%

Staffing Changes

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Add Staff	26%	28%	26%	31%	29%
Reduce Staff	2%	8%	5%	3%	2%
Keep Same	62%	57%	62%	58%	61%
I Don't Know	10%	7%	6%	8%	8%

•• **THANK YOU** TO ALLISON WESTBROOK AND ADRIANA HEIKKILA FOR THEIR HARD WORK COLLECTING AND TABULATING THE DATA! ••

Breakdown

By Size

HOURLY EMPLOYEES (per hour)

Under 30,000 Sq. Ft.

	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%	10%	31%	34%	21%	1%
Part-time General Labor	1%	7%	28%	41%	19%	3%
Full-time General Labor	0%	0%	8%	33%	37%	22%
Head Cashier	0%	0%	11%	30%	30%	29%
Temporary Cashier	0%	9%	25%	38%	26%	2%

Over 30,000 Sq. Ft.

Temp/Seasonal General Labor	0%	8%	24%	45%	20%	2%
Part-time General Labor	0%	4%	24%	36%	30%	6%
Full-time General Labor	0%	0%	8%	20%	49%	24%
Head Cashier	0%	0%	2%	24%	46%	28%
Temporary Cashier	0%	0%	24%	48%	22%	7%

SALARY EMPLOYEES (per year)

Under 30,000 SQ. FT.

	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
Buyer	16%	9%	28%	25%	13%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Floral Designer	16%	16%	47%	11%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%
Landscape Designer	0%	24%	24%	19%	19%	5%	0%	5%	0%	5%
Landscape Foreman	0%	17%	26%	30%	22%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandiser	7%	19%	44%	22%	4%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Mgr.	4%	12%	19%	42%	12%	8%	0%	0%	4%	0%
General Manager	0%	11%	17%	25%	14%	25%	3%	3%	3%	0%
Garden Center Mgr.	5%	11%	21%	26%	24%	8%	5%	0%	0%	0%
Department Mgr.	4%	15%	33%	30%	11%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Owner	8%	6%	8%	13%	13%	19%	10%	6%	4%	13%

Over 30,000 SQ. FT.

Buyer	4%	13%	17%	38%	17%	8%	4%	0%	0%	0%
Floral Designer	21%	14%	36%	21%	7%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Landscape Designer	0%	0%	15%	46%	23%	0%	15%	0%	0%	0%
Landscape Foreman	0%	13%	33%	27%	13%	13%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandiser	4%	35%	26%	30%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise Mgr.	0%	21%	26%	21%	26%	0%	0%	0%	5%	0%
General Manager	0%	6%	14%	14%	29%	11%	6%	9%	9%	3%
Garden Center Mgr.	0%	10%	26%	19%	16%	13%	6%	3%	3%	3%
Department Mgr.	0%	29%	16%	29%	16%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Owner	0%	3%	5%	18%	13%	15%	3%	5%	8%	31%