

Features

1/1/2025

What's It Worth?

Jennifer Polanz

Data compiled by Industry Insights

Positive attitude. Responsible. Hustle. Hard-working. Enthusiastic. Motivated to learn.

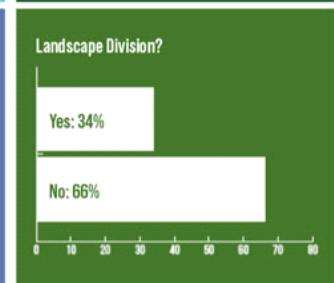
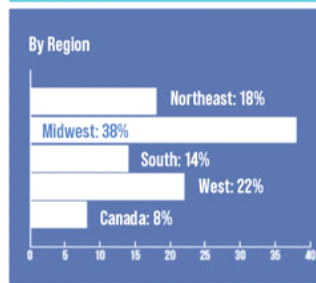
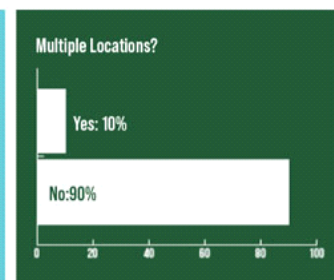
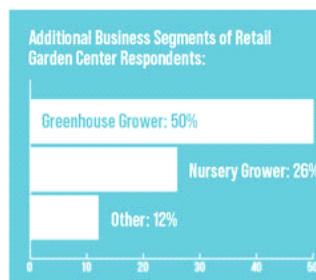
For the past two years, we've worked with AmericanHort to survey the industry on salaries and benefits. For the 15 years prior to teaming up with AmericanHort, we called it the Wage & Benefit Survey, and now with the partnership it's a more robust questionnaire yielding additional information that can help retailers and growers figure out how to attract the best talent out there (and pay them accordingly). This year, we asked about the qualities of employees you'd like to clone as our annual open-ended question. The responses were seen in many of the replies from both growers and retailers.

What we only saw pop up rarely in the answers is plant knowledge. Perhaps that was a given? Or perhaps it's something that can be taught, whereas these other skills are more about the person and how they show up to work rather than what they know at work.

And while we didn't have the amount of responses we'd like to have this year (of course, we want everyone to participate to give us the best data possible for the entire industry), there were a few areas where we could tease out some discussion topics.

For example, on the wages side, consider those attributes described earlier. What dollar value can you place on them and what they bring to the business? Let's take the position of cashier. If you found someone who's responsible, motivated to learn and has a positive attitude—as the person who has the last interaction with customers (and the one who's ringing out your inventory)—what's that worth?

On the benefits side, there may be a bit of a disconnect between benefit offerings and offerings for attracting and retaining new employees. In this year's survey, annual bonuses seem to be very popular, ranking pretty highly across the board in current benefits, and benefits that are considered important and valuable. Yet, taking a look at



the benefits offered for attracting and retaining employees, it's goose eggs across the board for signing bonuses and retention bonuses. So, while not everything is about the money, some things are about the money.

And that bottom line of doing nothing to attract or retain employees? It gets harder and harder to convince people of any age to work at your operation unless you have something additional to offer because the other retail businesses you're competing with for workers certainly offer more.

In a recent survey conducted by Paychex on 2025 priorities for business leaders, employee engagement and retention was in the Top 3 concerns under the People Management category. The No. 1 employee retention strategy was improving benefits. And the cost of losing those employees? Turnover costs on average \$9,379 per employee, the survey found. It's expensive to continually turn over employees. **GP**

BENEFITS OFFERED

These charts highlight three different metrics related to benefits: what's currently offered, what benefits employers think employees value the most, and what benefits are being offered to attract and retain talent.

Which benefits do you currently offer your employees?	Full Time	Part Time	Seasonal
Health/Medical Insurance	69%	12%	5%
Dental Insurance	52%	12%	5%
Life Insurance	45%	0%	0%
Sick Leave	62%	56%	36%
Disability Insurance	28%	4%	0%
401(k)	62%	24%	5%
Pension	3%	0%	0%
Annual Bonus	72%	56%	36%
Paid Vacation	97%	32%	14%
Paid Holidays	83%	36%	23%
Employee Discount	90%	92%	95%
Other	21%	16%	18%

Which benefits do your employees consider the most important/valuable?	Full Time	Part Time	Seasonal
Health/Medical insurance	70%	9%	0%
Dental Insurance	22%	4%	0%
Life Insurance	7%	0%	0%
Sick Leave	15%	35%	29%
Disability Insurance	7%	0%	0%
401(k)	22%	9%	14%
Pension	4%	0%	0%
Annual Bonus	52%	48%	100%
Paid Vacation	78%	30%	0%
Paid Holidays	26%	35%	29%
Employee Discount	45%	74%	86%
Other	4%	4%	0%

Which benefits do you use to attract and retain employees?	Full Time	Part Time	Seasonal
Flexible work schedule	65%	71%	71%
Added vacation days/PTO	27%	13%	5%
Added medical benefits	15%	0%	0%
Above market salaries	15%	17%	19%
Tuition reimbursement	19%	8%	5%
Profit sharing	31%	8%	5%
Incentive compensation	8%	8%	10%
Telecommuting	8%	4%	0%
Mentoring program	4%	0%	0%

Retention Bonus	0%	0%	0%
Fuel allowance	8%	0%	0%
Signing Bonus	0%	0%	0%
Stock options	4%	4%	5%
Childcare services/reimbursement	0%	0%	0%
Other	12%	17%	5%
We are doing nothing to attract or retain employees	15%	17%	14%

STAFFING CHANGES

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025 (projected)
Add Staff	29%	29%	40%	47%	33%	52%	31%
Reduce Staff	2%	3%	4%	2%	20%	14%	7%
Keep Same	61%	62%	46%	44%	48%	35%	52%
I Don't Know	8%	6%	10%	7%	0%	0%	10%

WAGES OFFERED

These are the responses for 2024 salary and hourly wage rates across the country.

Job—Full Time	Average Salary	Average Hourly
Cashier	\$30,383	\$12.17
Crew Leader	\$43,912	\$18.59
Department Manager	\$69,883	\$28.56
Floral Designer	**	**
Garden Center Manager	\$57,653	**
General Labor	\$36,443	\$17.09
Head Cashier	\$38,311	\$16.17
Landscape Designer	\$47,731	**
Landscape Foreman	\$56,373	\$22.36
Marketing Manager	\$70,255	**
Merchandise Manager	\$68,208	**
Merchandiser	**	**
Owner	\$100,867	**
Purchasing Manager/Buyer	\$58,406	**
Receiving Clerk	\$41,172	\$17.60
Sales Associate	\$39,823	\$17.29
Truck/Delivery Driver	\$43,455	\$20.82

Job—Part Time/Seasonal	Base Pay Hourly	Weekly Hours Worked
Cashier & Sales Associate—Part Time	\$15.39	23
Cashier & Sales Associate—Seasonal	\$15.01	32
General Labor—Part Time	\$16.29	24
General Labor—Seasonal	\$16.15	40
Truck/Delivery Driver—Part Time	\$19.24	18

