**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

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**RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

**INTRODUCTION**

Managing a successful company is a complex and often daunting responsibility. One of the major challenges is the balancing act between managing the volume of sales with having the right number of employees with the right skills at the right time. For most Landscape Horticultural companies the ability to grow the business and retain customers is dependent on the calibre and skill set of its workforce.

Maintaining that workforce is an expensive proposition and necessary cost of doing business. It is estimated that the average company’s cost (wages or salaries and benefits) is over 25 percent of its total revenue.[[1]](#footnote-1) That percentage cost goes up if the employee leaves, as added costs are then spent on recruiting, onboarding, training, and managing new employees.

The starting point in ensuring quantity and quality of people match the company’s sales volume is the recruitment and selection process. Sourcing and hiring the right people for your company will take time and careful planning. It is well invested time as it is critically tied to your business success. The Landscape Horticultural industry has the added complexity of managing seasonal volume of business, which impacts the ability to recruit and retain the best calibre individuals. The industry is experiencing a shortage of skilled labour which puts greater focus on effective recruitment and selection processes.

This section is a practical guide that will assist fast paced, deadline driven companies to implement or enhance existing recruitment and selection processes with a systematic approach that works for supervisors/managers who are often out on job sites. Information and tools are divided into the following sections:

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**RECRUITMENT**

1. **Legal Considerations**
2. Compliance to human rights legislation
3. Application form
4. **Job Descriptions and National Occupation Classifications (NOC)**
5. Purpose of a job description
6. Writing job descriptions using NOC codes
7. **Attracting Candidates**
8. Writing a job posting
9. Resources for recruiting applicants

**SELECTION**

1. **Legal Compliance**
2. Human Rights Code
3. Reference checking and Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)
4. Employment contract and Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000
5. **Screening Applicants**
6. Screening resumes
7. Interviews: Steps in conducting an interview and sample interview questions
8. **Reference Checking**
9. Steps in conducting a reference check
10. Sample reference check form
11. **Making a Job Offer/ Offer of Employment Letter**
12. Procedures in making an offer of employment
13. Sample offer of employment letter

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. *I like to ask questions about whether the applicant owns a home and has a family. I’m not discriminating; I just want to know what type of obligations he has because it will tell me how stable he’ll be in the job.*

It is absolutely against Ontario Human Rights laws to ask about family and marital status. Applicants are very knowledgeable about the types of questions that should not be asked in an interview. It will be very costly to your business if an applicant lodges a complaint with the Human Rights Commission.

Instead gauges for a person’s job stability can be:

* How many companies has the person worked for;
* Taking into account normal lay-off periods in the landscaping business, assess how long the individual worked in each job;
* Were there any lengthy gaps between jobs;
* In referencing checking ask how many days was the individual absence or late.
1. *Because of access to the Internet, applicants are interview savvy and have prepared answers to the questions. It’s so hard to assess whether everything they say is the truth or if they are putting on a good show.*

Applicants have lots of access via the Internet and YouTube on what type of questions will be asked in interviews so are more prepared with ‘canned’ answers. The other issue is hiring decisions are subjective based on the interviewer’s biases when assessing applicants. Therefore hiring decisions should be made based on a variety of assessments i.e. multiple interviews; job related testing; reference checking; or job simulations. Also take the time to probe more in the interviews by asking ‘how did you do that’ or ‘why did you do that’ types of questions.

A structured interview where a mix of job-related, skill-related, behavioural-based and situational based questions are asked will be a better predictor of job success that an unstructured interview where the decision is made based on ‘gut-feelings’.

The Public Service Commission of Canada has an excellent resource for structured interviewing: <http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/plcy-pltq/guides/structured-structuree/index-eng.htm>.

1. *What’s the point of doing references! Past employers aren’t going to tell me if the person did a bad job for fear of being sued.*

There are companies that have a policy of only verifying dates of employment and salary and will not share any other information. One has to be persistent. Ask the applicant if you can contact his/her immediate supervisor or team leader and get written permission to be able to do so. Just as in interviewing, it’s all in the type of questions you ask. Ensure you are asking behavioural based questions instead of closed questions where the answer is ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Appendix XI: Reference Check Form has examples of questions to ask. Building your network with other employers will be invaluable in getting solid reference check information.

1. *It’s the busy season when we do most of our hiring and I don’t have time to do long interviews. Anyways I can just look at someone and know if they can do the job.*

If this approach is working for you there is no reason to change hiring practices because you’re hiring and keeping good employees. That doesn’t seem to be the universal trend in the industry – consistently employers say employees leave because they don’t like the work or can’t do it. The time and money spent in doing thorough interviews is considerably less than dealing with the challenges caused by high turnover. A thorough interview for a crew member can be a half hour with good behavioural/situational questions to identify the applicant’s fit for the job – the investment will reap growth in your business because of customer satisfaction.

1. *Posting jobs on an Internet job board is a waste of time because most of the applicants replying are not suitable for the job. What can I do to attract qualified applicants?*

The difference between a successful job posting that attracts qualified candidates and a job posting that attracts few is the effort put into ‘promoting’ the benefits of working for the company. Good job postings catch the attention with ‘what’s in it for applicants to work for the company’. Think in terms of why your customers use your company and translate that positive feedback into why your company is a great one to work for. In this section there is detailed information on how to write a job posting and Appendix VIII is an example of a job posting.

**RECRUITMENT**

1. **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**
2. **Compliance to Human Rights Legislation**

To ensure legal compliance, a systematic and non-discriminatory process should be a company policy for recruiting and selecting qualified applicants to fill job vacancies. It is essential that the criteria used throughout the recruitment and selection process are based on the principle that employment decisions are made on the applicant’s ability to do the job. Each applicant has the right to equal treatment when going through a company’s recruitment and selection process. The Canadian Human Rights Code prohibits discrimination in employment on the grounds of:

 *“Race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, record of offences, marital status, family status and records of offence.”[[2]](#footnote-2)*

All documentation i.e. the application form, remarks on resumes and cover letters, answers to interview questions, completion of interview assessment form or answers on reference check forms should make reference only to the applicant’s job related qualifications, experience, and past job performance.

As of February 1, 2013, The Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has introduced a policy to remove barriers in employment for newcomers to Canada.[[3]](#footnote-3) An employer must ensure that its recruitment/hiring practices and job descriptions including accreditations required do not present any barriers for newcomer applicants. For example, on an application form under ‘Work History’ it cannot asked for the locations of the companies the applicant previously worked for as that would disclose the country, which could create a bias against the applicant. What is relevant is the positions the applicant held and duties within those positions.

The recruitment process must only use a job competency based process for assessing a candidate’s eligibility for the job. Employers cannot require applicants to have prior work experience in Canada to be eligible for a particular job. When advertising a job posting an employer cannot ask for Canadian work experience only.

“The OHRC’s position is that a strict requirement for ‘Canadian experience’ is discriminatory on its face and can only be used in limited circumstances. The onus will be on employers and regulatory bodies to show that prior work experience in Canada is a *bona fide* requirement based on the legal test set out for this policy.” [[4]](#footnote-4)

1. **Application Form**

It is standard procedure for applicants to submit a cover letter and resume for a job positing. If a decision is made to interview an applicant, it is recommended that the applicant completes an application form, which provides additional job related information. Appendix I:’ Permissible and Non-permissible Questions in an Application Form’ not only guides ***what an employer can ask on a job application form but also can be used when preparing interview questions***.

Appendix II is a sample of an Application Form provided by the Human Rights Commission as a guide that meets legislative standards.

1. **Job Descriptions and National Occupational Classifications (NOC) 2011**
2. **Purpose of a Job Description**

A well-constructed job description is an excellent communication tool that can be used in:

* ***Recruitment*** to develop the job posting and to screen qualified applicants based on the duties and qualifications outlined in the job description ;
* ***Selection*** to design interview questions; reference check questions; and a hiring criterion.

With respect to recruitment and selection, the benefits of developing and keeping job descriptions up to date are:

* Ensures that hiring decisions focus on the job requirements by using the job description as an objective ‘measuring stick’ when assessing the applicant’s suitability;
* Focuses interviewer on asking interview questions that will uncover if the applicant can do the job;
* Gives the applicant realistic information on the accountabilities, responsibilities, and working conditions.
1. **Writing a Job Description**

A job description describes the purpose of the job, the essential duties and responsibilities, qualifications, and working conditions. It is the touch stone for a variety of Human Resources functions that range from recruitment and selection, orientation, training, salary administration, and training. Although they are time consuming to develop and at times there is a cost factor, companies cannot effectively manage their employees without having good ones in place.

This section provides information on developing a ***basic*** job description using the NOC 2011guide ‘Job Descriptions: An Employers’ Handbook’[[5]](#footnote-5). It needs to be noted that when developing comprehensive job descriptions, a job analysis is usually the first step in the process. Conducting a job analysis requires a subject matter expert and is a complicated and time intensive process. Companies would normally contract this function to specialists and therefore is not covered within the scope of this Toolkit.

An excellent resource available to employers to develop job descriptions is the NOC 2011 as the job descriptions are based on research and interviews with workers, employers, and specialists. NOC can be accessed at <http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC>. The jobs are divided into ‘occupational groups’ and each group contains the following information: example titles; main duties; and employment requirements.

**Accessing Landscape Horticultural Groups in NOC**

On the ‘Main Page’ of the NOC website:

* Click on Search NOC (first title on right hand side)
* Select search by ‘index of titles’
* Select method: select the one that best helps you find the job

A template for writing a job description can be found in Appendix III, Appendix IV gives a sample job description for a Landscape Designer, Appendix V gives a sample job description for a Landscape and Horticulture Technician, Appendix VI gives a sample of a job description for a Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Labourer, and Appendix VII gives a sample job description for a Nursery and Greenhouse Worker.

**Landscape Horticultural Occupational Groups**

Landscape Ontario website gives an overview of the landscape horticultural occupation groups in NOC 2011: <http://www.horttrades.com/national-occupational-classification>. The NOC should also be used when writing job description to reflect proper job titles and when completing a Record of Employment (ROI) when an employee leaves the company. This assists individuals having to take low skilled or wrong skill jobs when unemployed during the off-season or when laid off.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **NOC Code** | **Occupation Group** |
| 2152 | Landscape Architects |
|  | Landscape Architect |
|  | Landscape Planner |
| 2225 | Landscape and Horticultural Technicians and Specialists: |
|  | Arborist |
|  | Golf Course Superintendent |
|  | Greenskeeper |
|  | Horticultural Technician |
|  | Horticultural Specialist |
|  | Horticulturist |
|  | Hydroponics Technician |
|  | Landscape Architectural Technician |
|  | Landscape Designer |
|  | Landscape Technician |
|  | Landscaper |
|  | Landscape Gardener |
|  | Lawn Care Specialist |
|  | Tree Service Technician |
| 8432 | Nursery and Greenhouse Workers: |
|  | Forest Nursery Worker |
|  | Greenhouse Worker |
|  | Horticulture Worker |
|  | Hothouse Worker |
|  | Hydroponics Worker |
|  | Nursery Worker |
| 0822 | Managers in Horticulture: |
|  | Christmas Tree Farm Operator |
|  | Flower Grower |
|  | Greenhouse Manager |
|  | Greenhouse Operator |
|  | Nursery Manager |
|  | Nursery Operator |
|  | Plant Grower – Nursery |
| 8255 | Contractors and Supervisors, Landscaping, Ground Maintenance and Horticulture Services |
|  | Greenhouse Supervisor |
|  | Grounds Maintenance Contractor |
|  | Groundskeeping Supervisor |
|  | Horticulture Workers Supervisor |
|  | Interior Plantscaping Contractor |
|  | Landscape Contractor |
|  | Landscape Foreman/woman |
|  | Landscape Supervisor |
|  | Lawn Care Contractor |
|  | Nursery Foreman/woman |
|  | Park Maintenance Supervisor |
|  | Tree Service Contractor |
| 8612 | Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Labourers: |
|  | Bulb Planter |
|  | Cemetery Labourer |
|  | Gardening Helper |
|  | Golf Course Worker |
|  | Grass Cutter |
|  | Grounds Maintenance Worker |
|  | Landscape Labourer |
|  | Maintenance Worker, Parks |
|  | Sod Layer |
|  | Transplanter |
| 6211 | Retail Sales Supervisor: |
|  | Garden Centre/Nursery Supervisor |
| 6421 | Retail Salespersons |
|  | Garden Centre Salesperson |

**III. Attracting Job Applicants**

1. **Employer Branding: The Secret to Attracting Applicants**

Attracting individuals who fit your philosophy of work ethic and customer service and who possess the technical and soft skills to do the job is a tough undertaking in today’s hotly competitive labour market. So how can a company set themselves apart from competitors to appeal to that good calibre of applicants? Compensation and benefits are an important factor but as important to applicants is:

*“Will this company be a good place to work?”*

*“Will this company be around two years from now?”*

*“Will I get training so I can continue to develop my skills?”*

Employer branding is a “company tag that places the image of a ‘good place to work’ or ‘employer of choice’ in the minds of job applicants.”[[6]](#footnote-6) Using a ‘brand’ message in your job posting can assist in drawing those applicants who identify with your values to respond.

An employer brand message answers the question: “Why should someone work for my company instead of a competitor?” It sends a clear message of what it’s like to work for your company.

Answers to the following questions can assist you in developing your brand statement:

* Who do I want to attract?
* Why would someone want to work for my company?
* What do our customers say about who we are as a company?
* Why do employees like working for us?
* What are the exciting future possibilities for employees within our company?

Branding is a deliberate message about the company that appeals to the emotions. For example, “PepsiCo promotes the tag line ‘PepsiCo – Taste the Success!” to applicants to convey the excitement about its combination of powerful brands, passion for growth, culture of shared principles, commitment to results, ability to make an impact, and quality people..... “Employer branding is not just an initiative for big companies, because everyone can (and does) develop a reputation. Ask a landscaper about three local lawn service companies and he’ll tell you the differences amongst them – this one says you’ll work with the best crew chiefs; that one says it pleases every customer every time and the third one creates a fun work environment so employees want to come to work.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

1. **Advertising**

Creating a job posting

A job posting is a factual description of the experience, education and skills required to do the job. That information in itself will not necessarily entice applicants to submit their resumes. As in any form of written communication the first few sentences catch the reader’s attention to want to read more information. The difference between a successful job posting that attracts qualified candidates and a job posting that attracts few is the effort put into ‘promoting’ the benefits of working for the company. A job posting is comprised of three sections: (1) information about the organization, (2) information about the position, and (3) how to submit a resume.

1. *Information about the company*: this section is the attention grabber and should describe your company in ‘colourful’ and action oriented words. Information about why the company is a good place to work and what employees like about it (i.e. team oriented, flexible, opportunity to learn new skills, etc.) is highlighted. An attraction feature is stating any opportunities for career development or advancement or if the company is going through some positive changes and growth.
2. *Information about the job*: using the job description, describe the roles and responsibilities of the job and the working conditions. Be realistic in describing the work conditions as it will discourage applicants who, for example, do not want to work in extreme weather conditions from applying for the job. Information about educational and skill requirements need to be included and could be stated as ‘prerequisites for the job’ or ‘highly preferably for the job’.
3. *How to submit a resume*: applicants are advised how you would like them to submit their resume i.e. online, email or mail. An application deadline is also included and a statement on how you will handle resumes i.e. “all resumes are appreciated but only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted”.

A sample job posting for a Landscape Technician can be found in Appendix VIII.

Recruitment Resources

For many companies deciding where to invest advertising dollars is a dilemma and the guarantee of attracting qualified applicants is nebulous. Using a variety of methods is a better approach than putting ‘all your eggs in one basket’ and works more effectively when your hiring needs are immediate.

*Your employees*: If you have a good reputation as a fair employer and have created a positive work environment, your employees will be an great resource to go out into the community and publicize that your company is hiring. Offering an employee referral bonus is an excellent way to source out qualified individuals as employees know what it takes to succeed and they understand the company culture so tend to refer suitable candidates. Referral bonuses are usually set up so that the employee who did the referral does not get the bonus till after the individual who was referred passes his or her three month probationary period.

*Resume Database*: creating a database where you create folders by job title and store qualified resumes for up to a year can help reduce hiring time when suitable positions come available.

*Network:* Although the working days in the landscape and horticulture industry are long and as an owner you juggle both working in the business and managing the business, investing time in developing your network is vital. If you have a vibrant network, a good candidate can be an email away. Networking opportunities could include:

* Joining a networking group where you can promote your business and use as a job applicant referral source;
* Joining trade associations and becoming active members i.e. Landscape Ontario, Canadian Nursery and Landscaping Association, etc.;
* Using LinkedIn - <http://www.linkedin.com/home>;
* Actively participating in local Chamber of Commerce ;
* Setting up an informal meeting with other business owners to meet on a quarterly basis to share ideas and support.

*Social Media*: Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook open up great opportunities for sourcing qualified candidates. It seems daunting and time consuming for small business owners to market themselves on social media sites but one needs to go where the candidates are – social media. Think creatively how you can access this huge candidate marketplace:

* If you don’t twitter, ask employees who do to tweet your job openings. Ensure that you have a Social Media Policy for employees and that they understand that they have to be professional as they represent you. An example of a Social Media Policy can be found at <http://www.acfe.com/uploadedfiles/acfe_website/content/documents/sample-documents/sample-social-media-policy.pdf>;
* High school students have to do community hours. Hire a tech savvy student to manage your social media;
* Hire a co-op student from a Community College Communications Program;
* Post your job openings on LinkedIn and join LinkedIn Groups that will connect you with potential candidates;
* Pay for advertising on Facebook; create a job posting and share it with a target audience.

*On-line Job Boards*: posting positions on Internet job sites is a common practice as a high majority of people looking for a job will use the Internet as their primary search method. The following are a sampling of the Internet sites available:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Landscape Ontario Job Board | <http://www.horttrades.com/jobboard> <http://www.horttrades.com/landscape-trades---classifieds---employment-opportunities> |
| Canadian Nursery Landscape Association (members only)  | <http://www.canadanursery.com/Page.asp?PageID=122&ContentID=1030> |
| HortJobs | <http://www.hortjobs.com/> |
| GoodWork Canada: Canada’s Green Job Site | <http://www.goodworkcanada.ca/gw.php> |
| Workopolis | [www.workopolis.ca](http://www.workopolis.ca)  |
| Monster  | [www.monster.ca](http://www.monster.ca) |
| Service Canada Job Bank | [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca) |
| Jobboom | <http://www.jobboom.com/> |
| Craiglist | <http://geo.craigslist.org/iso/ca> |
| LinkedIn | <http://www.linkedin.com/home> |
| Indeed | <http://www.indeed.ca> |
| Kijiji Ontario | <http://ontario.kijiji.ca/> |

*High School Counselling Centres, Colleges, Universities and Placement Offices*: educational counselling or placement centres could advertise your job openings to interns, those seeking co-op placements and new graduates. Developing a relationship with counsellors is a long term recruiting strategy. As they get to know your company they will refer suitable applicants on an ongoing basis.

**SELECTION**

1. **Legal Compliance**

It is essential that at any point in the selection process no information is collected or requested that contravenes the rights of applicants as stipulated by the Human Rights Code. Appendix I: ‘Permissible and Non-Permissible Questions on an Application Form’ applies also to questions that cannot be asked during the screening, interview or reference checking stages.

The Personal Information Protection and Electronics Document Act (PIPEDA) necessitates that an applicant must provide written approval for a company to access or request information related to the individual’s job application. Thus, an employer needs to have written consent for an applicant, which usually is incorporated into the Application Form (Appendix II: Template: Application Form), to complete reference checks. The employer can only contact those individuals if the applicant has granted permission to contact.

In writing the Letter of Offer for employment, the employer must meet the statutory rights laid out in the Ontario Employment Standards Act, 2000 related to level of pay, maximum hours of work, overtime, vacation, daily breaks, notice periods on termination, and pregnancy and parental leaves. It will be important to state in the Letter of Offer, when giving an overview of hours of work and overtime, the ‘Landscape Gardener Exception: Regulation 285/01 of the Employment Standards Act (ESA), 2000 as it states that “a person employed as a landscape gardener” is except from the standard hours of work and overtime pay clauses within the ESA.[[8]](#footnote-8)

1. **Screening Applicants**
2. **Screening Resumes**

A job description is used as the screening tool when identifying applicants who seemed qualified for the job. A simple way to screen resumes is to use the ‘three pile approach’. The first pile is the ‘interview’ pile where the experience, education, skills or competencies of the applicant’s resume closely aligns with the job description. The second pile is the ‘possibility’ pile where the applicant has some of the background for the job and may have some interested non-industry experience. The third pile is the ‘no’ pile where the applicant’s background is totally unsuitable based on the criteria in the job description.

For the applicant you will be interviewing highlight the following information on the resume to discuss in the interview:

* Any gaps or information that seems to be missing;
* Spelling/grammar mistakes;
* Critical skills in the job description that are not noted in the resume;
* Achievements.
1. **Interviews**

An interview is a structured conversation conducted to evaluate the applicant’s suitability to perform the job and for the applicant to learn more about your company. A structured interview with a set of job related questions and interview scoring guide should be used for all interviews. The questions should be developed prior to the interview and used consistently with all the applicants applying for the same job.

*Identify the Skills/Competencies to focus on in the Interview*: decide on the key technical and soft-skills (a cluster of personal qualities, habits, and attitudes that make an individual a good employee) the interview questions will focus on. Doing this keeps the interviewer focused on gathering information about whether the candidate can do the job and fits the culture. These skills and competencies would come from the job description. For example using the ‘Sample Job Description: Landscape Technician’ (Appendix V), the soft skills could be good oral and communication skills, excellent problem solving, interpersonal, organizational, and planning and ability to make decisions. The technical skills could be knowledge of plants, shrubs and trees; prepare and read blueprints and sketches; and operate a variety of equipment i.e. bobcats, tillers, rollers, shears, saws, etc.

*Behavioural-Based Interview*: is the process an interviewer will follow for preparing interview questions. The following are guidelines for developing an interview guide:

* The same questions must be used, in the same order, with all the applicants to ensure fairness and give applicants the same chance to provide information related to their experience, skills, and abilities;
* Questions will be related to the job and phrased in such a way that focus applicants on discussing their past performance and experience as it relates to the job;
* The questions developed for the interview are a mix of job-related, behavioural based, and situational questions;
* Avoid asking questions that could be perceived as being discriminatory.

The benefits of behavioural based interviews are:

* Requires candidates to provide answers based on what they have actually done allowing the interviewer to gather information on their actions, motives, and thought processes;
* Promotes equal opportunity as candidates are assessed on what they have accomplished instead of ‘gut feel’ reactions to something the candidate may or may not do in the interview;
* More difficult for the candidate to exaggerate because the questions focus the candidate on specific work related examples.

*Time Allotments for a Typical Behavioral Interview*: the following a guide on how to allot time in the interview for managers/office staff.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction: explain process | 5 minutes |
| Job knowledge questions | 10 minutes |
| Behavioural/situational questions | 30 minutes |
| Applicant questions, share information about company/job and wrap up  | 15 minutes |

*Time Allotments for a Typical Behavioral Interview*: the following a guide on how to allot time in the interview for crew leaders/members.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Introduction: explain process | 5 minutes |
| Job knowledge questions | 10 minutes |
| Behavioural/situational questions | 15 minutes |
| Applicant questions, share information about company/job and wrap up  | 10 minutes |

*Conducting an Interview:* the steps in conducting an interview are: (1) prepare for the interview session; (2) opening the interview session; (3) body of the interview; (4) taking notes; (5) providing information; (6) closing the interview; and (7) assessing the interview.

1. *Preparing for the interview:*
* Develop questions: the three types of questions to use in an interview are job knowledge, behavioural, and situational questions. Job Knowledge questions delve into the technical knowledge and ability to do the job. The purpose of job knowledge questions is to give the interviewer a comfort level in assessing the applicant’s ability to perform the required tasks. Samples of job knowledge questions can be found in Appendix IX: ‘Sample Interview Questions: Landscape Technician’.

Behavioural questions have been shown to be one of the most effective strategies in interviewing. The questions are framed to draw out how the applicant behaved in previous situations as they are directed at obtaining information about the applicant’s past experience and accomplishments. The premise behind behavioural questions is that past behaviour is often a good indicator of future behaviour and thus behavioural questions can be a reliable predictor of how the applicant will likely perform on the job. Each question should be written to elicit three specific pieces of information:

1. A description of the situation;

2. The candidate’s role, responsibility or action in the situation or incident;

3. The specific outcome of the situation or incident.

Samples of behavioural question can be found in Appendix IX: ‘Sample Interview Questions: Landscape Technician’.

Situational questions ask applicants to describe how he or she would handle theoretical situations that would be typical ones the applicant would encounter on the job. They give the interviewer insight on how the applicant is likely to deal with job-related situations and problems. These questions are often asked to understand an applicant’s analytical and problem solving skills. Samples of situational questions can be found in Appendix IX: ‘Sample Interview Questions: Landscape Technician’;

* Have the applicant fill out an application form before the interview session as it provides the interview with additional information to prepare for the interview. Review the applicant’s resume, cover letter, and application form and highlight areas you would like to discuss or ask questions in the interview;
* Have company information prepared to share with the applicant i.e. job description, web site about the company; marketing material, etc.;
* Prepare the physical setting for the interview. Ensure that you will not be disturbed during the interview therefore turn off your cell phone or pager and notify someone to cover for you while you are in the interview.
1. *Opening the Interview:*
* Begin the interview on time. Introduce yourself and explain your position in the company;
* Briefly explain the general purpose of the interview session, interview process, and interview length;
* Attempt to put the candidate at ease by engaging in a few minutes of ‘small talk’;
* Inform the applicant you will be taking notes: “As we go through the interview I will be writing notes. They will help me remember all the important facts you shared in the interview”;
* Give the applicant a brief overview of the job.
1. *Body of the Interview*:
* Start by asking your job related questions and then follow the format of the questions developed in the interview guide;
* Take notes;
* Positively reinforce the applicant throughout the interview:
	+ “I appreciate your honesty”
	+ “That gives me a better picture of your experience working in team situations”
	+ “It must have been difficult getting such high grades while working full time”.
1. *Taking Notes:*
* Taking notes increases the probability that the interviewer will make a reliable and valid judgement about the applicant;
* Take notes that describe, rather than judge or evaluate the applicant’s responses;
* Don’t worry about slowing the pace of the interview because of taking notes. Write down key words and phrases as much as possible;
* Avoid judgmental or evaluative comments when taking notes i.e. good interpersonal skills, poor planning demonstrated, etc.; instead focus the notes on what the applicant did and said;
* Ensure that your notes in no way identify or differentiate applicants according to the Human Rights Code prohibited grounds.
1. *Providing Information*:
* Allow the applicant to ask questions;
* Provide background information about the company, the culture, expectations from employees and services/products, etc.
1. *Closing the Interview:*
* Communicate the next steps after the interview;
* Thank the applicant for his or her interest and active participation in the interview.
1. *Assessing the Interview*:
* Immediately after the interview complete the Interview Assessment Guide. Appendix X provides a sample of an Interview Assessment Guide.

**III. REFERENCE CHECKING**

Reference checking is another opportunity to gain further insight on the applicant’s suitability for the job and to verify information the applicant shared in the interview. Reference checking is usually completed only on the candidate who will be offered the job. The information gather in the reference checking is a critical step in the selection process as it verifies or discredits information gathered from the applicant through his or her resume, application form and interview.

It is recommended that a minimum of two to three business related reference checks are verbally completed on the potential candidate for the job. Whenever possible it is recommended to contact former supervisors or managers of the candidate as they can give the most accurate information about the individual’s job performance. Ask open ended or behavioural questions about the candidate’s job performance or skills and abilities and try and get as many specific examples as possible.

Ensure that the candidate has signed off on the application form to give you permission to contact references. Exhibit XI provides a template for a Reference Check Form.

1. **MAKING A JOB OFFER/OFFER OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER**

Making a job offer is more complex than contacting the candidate and letting the person know he or she got the job. It is preferential to make the job offer in person so that you can answer any last questions and create excitement about the individual joining the company. Once the decision has been made on an offer of employment the following procedures should be followed:

* Prepare an offer of employment letter that includes the job title, starting date, hours of work, salary, benefits, probationary period, vacation, termination of employment, confidentiality/non-disclosure, code of contact, and orientation information;
* Include with the offer of employment letter the following: Employee Handbook, benefits application and benefits handbook, and any other policies that need to be signed off by the new employee;
* Allow the potential employee enough time to review the letter of offer and other included information and to consult a lawyer if the individual wishes further guidance;
* Arrange a meeting to answer any questions and have the new employee sign off on the letter of offer which indicates his or her acceptance to the terms of employment and compliance with the company’s policies and procedures;
* Prepare the new employee for the first day of work and the beginning of the orientation process;
* The signed offer of employment and other signed documentation are placed in the employee’s personnel file. Appendix XII provides a sample of a letter of offer.

**APPENDIX I: PERMISSIBLE AND NON-PERMISSIBLE QUESTIONS ON AN**

 **APPLICATION FORM[[9]](#footnote-9)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Prohibited: Ground for Discrimination** | **Permissible Questions** | **Prohibited Questions** |
| Race/colour | None | * Related to physical characteristics i.e. colour of eyes, hair, skin, height, weight or requests for photographs
 |
| Creed | None | * Related to religious affiliation or membership, religious institutions or religious holidays
* Willingness to work on a specific day which may conflict with requirements of a particular faith
* Requests for character references that would indicate religious affiliation
 |
| Citizenship/place of origin/ethnic origin | Are you legally entitled to work in Canada? | * Related to birthplace, nationality of spouse or other relatives
* Canadian citizenship, landed immigrant status or permanent residency
* Requests for proof of Canadian citizenship or Social Insurance Number
* Questions about Canadian experience
* Questions about the name and location of schools attended
 |
| Sex | None | * Categories on application form or inquiries i.e. surname or last name before marriage; Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms.
* Relationship of person to be notified in case of emergency or insurance beneficiary
 |
| Sexual orientation | None | * Categories inquiring about status i.e. married, divorced, common-law, single, separated
* Information about spouse and their employment i.e. is spouse willing to transfer
 |
| Marital status | None | * Categories inquiring about status i.e. married, divorced, common-law, single, separated
* Information about spouse and their employment i.e. is spouse willing to transfer
 |
| Family Status | None | * Categories inquiring about status i.e. married, divorced, common-law, single, separated
* Related to children or dependants or child care arrangements
* Information about spouse and their employment i.e. is spouse willing to transfer or second income
 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Prohibited ground for Discrimination** | **Permissible Questions** | **Prohibited Questions** |
| Record of offences | * Employers can refuse to hire someone based on a record of offences only if they can show this is a reasonable and bona fide qualification.
 | * Questions related to whether an applicant has ever been arrested or convicted of an offence, has spent time in jail or been convicted under a provincial statute i.e. Highway Traffic Act, has a criminal record
 |
| Age | None | * Questions related to age, date of birth or requests for birth certificates or baptismal records
* Requests for other documents such as driver’s licence which indicates age
 |
| Disability | None | * Questions about or related to health, disabilities, illnesses, mental disorders, physical or intellectual limitations, medical history, injuries or Workplace Safety and Insurance claims or medication
* An employer is prohibited to ask whether an applicant drinks or uses drugs, whether they have had psychiatric care or if they have been hospitalized for emotional problems
* Questions about accommodation of disability related needs and the nature of the accommodation
* Requirements that the applicants undergo pre-employment medical examination
 |
| New Canadians | None - Ask questions only that will assess the individual’s skills and abilities to do the job | * Questions on Canadian experience
* Require applicants to disclose country of origin or the location of their work experience on job application form
* Cannot ask for local references
 |
| Gender Identity/Gender Expression/Transgender People | None | * Employers must have a valid reason for collecting and using person information that identifies a person’s gender
* Transgender people can have their name or sex designation changed on identity documents and other records. Employers must keep this information confidential
 |

**APPENDIX II TEMPLATE: EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION FORM**

## GENERAL INFORMATION

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Position Applying For: | Date available to begin: |
| Name (Last, First, Middle):  |
| Street Address:  |
| Province/Postal Code: | Home Phone:  | Cell Phone: | E-mail Address:  |
| Are you legally eligible to work in Canada? | [ ] Yes  [ ] No |
| Are you 18 years of age or older? | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |
| Have you been convicted of a criminal offence for which a pardon has not been granted? | [ ]  Yes [ ]  No |

## EDUCATION

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Type of School | **Name of Program** | **Length of Program** | **Did you graduate?** | **Degree, Diploma or Licence obtained** |
| High School:  |  |  | [ ] Yes [ ]  No |  |
| Community College:  |  |  | [ ] Yes [ ]  No |  |
| Trade/Business School:  |  |  | [ ] Yes [ ]  No |  |
| University:  |  |  | [ ] Yes [ ]  No |  |
| Other:  |  |  | [ ] Yes [ ]  No |  |
| Relevant Courses, Workshops, Seminars and Certificates: |
| Verification of Education: the applicant produced the original copy of:Diploma or Degree: [ ] Yes [ ]  No Certificates: [ ] Yes [ ]  No Name of Certificate (s): |

Employment Application Form Continued…

WORK EXPERIENCE (list starting with most recent first)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Dates EmployedFrom: To: | [ ] Full time [ ]  Part-timeIf part-time, # hrs./wk.: [ ]  | Title:  |
| Starting Salary:  | Organization Name:  |
| Final Salary:  |  |
| Supervisor’s Name, Title and Phone #:  |
| Main Responsibilities: | Reason for Leaving: |
| Dates EmployedFrom: To: | [ ] Full time [ ]  Part-timeIf part-time, # hrs./wk: [ ]  | Title:  |
| Starting Salary:  | Organization Name:  |
| Final Salary:  |  |
| Supervisor’s Name, Title and Phone #:  |
| Main Responsibilities: | Reason for Leaving: |

Employment Application Form Continued…

**REFERENCES**

|  |
| --- |
| **For employment references, may we approach:**Your current present/last employer? [ ] Yes [ ]  NoYour former employer? [ ] Yes [ ]  No |
| Other References: |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name: | Position: | Company | Phone: | E-mail: |
| Name: | Position: | Company | Phone: | E-mail: |
| Name: | Position: | Company | Phone: | E-mail: |
| **I give permission for the above references to be contacted.****\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Signature Date** |
| **Please Read the Following:**I hereby declare that the foregoing information is true and complete to my knowledge. I understand that a false statement may disqualify me from employment, or cause my dismissal. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**Signature Date** |

 **APPENDIX III TEMPLATE: JOB DESCRIPTION FORM**

|  |
| --- |
| **Company Name:** |
| **Date:**  |
| **Position Title:** |
| **Name of Employee:** |
| **Job Summary:** *(A job summary gives a description of the overall purpose of the job – the reason why this job exists)* |
| **Reports To:** |
| **Major Accountabilities:**  |
| **Education:** |
| **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:** |
| **Personal Attributes:** |

**APPENDIX IV SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: LANDSCAPE DESIGNER**

|  |
| --- |
| **{Company Name}** |
|  **Date:** October 31, 2014  |
| **Position Title: Landscape Designer** |
| **Job Summary:** Create an integrated master plan which includes drawings with specifications and detailed descriptions for landscaped environments including installation of plants, flowers, trees, shrubs; and construction of structural installations. |
| **Reports To:** Landscape/Horticulture Manager |
| **Major Accountabilities:** * Site assessment
* Plan and coordinate the growth and use of plants for landscaping, ornamental use and other purposes;
* Create project estimates and maintain budgets;
* Builds models for client/project team review;
* Compile data and perform design computations;
* Survey and assess sites, prepare drawings, sketches and reports; and perform other duties in designing landscaped environments;
* Meet with clients to discuss concepts and plans, present proposals and negotiate final pricing;
* Make site visits to track progress and to ensure customer satisfaction during the span of the project;
* Schedule residential construction crews and track costs;
* Generate new business opportunities.
* Comply with required Health & Safety regulations and standards
 |
| **Education:*** Landscape Design Diploma or Landscape Architecture Degree
* Expert level skills in Auto Cad and other landscape design software
* Proficient in Microsoft Office
 |
| **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:*** Proficient in design and graphic communication skills
* Competent in the technical skills of landscape design
* Complex problem solving
* Critical thinking
* Analyze needs and product requirements to create a design
* Decision making - consider the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one
* Management of financial and material resources
* Time management
* Negotiation/persuasion
* Manage multiple projects and effectively meet deadlines
 |
| **Personal Attributes:*** Creative
* Diplomatic
* Attention to detail
* Self-responsibility
* Ability to work independently

**Personal Attributes (Cont’d):*** Adaptable/flexible
* Proactive
* Demonstrates initiative
* Accountability
* Goal oriented
* Ability to work effectively in a team

  |

**APPENDIX V SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: LANDSCAPE & HORTICULTURE**

 **TECHNICIAN**

|  |
| --- |
| **{Company Name}** |
|  **Date:** October 31, 2014  |
| **Position Title: Landscape and Horticulture Technician** Alternate Titles: Hydroponic Technician, Landscape Gardener, Landscaper, Irrigation Technician, Irrigation/Maintenance Specialist, Lawncare Technician, Pesticide Technician, Construct/Build |
| **Job Summary:** Reads plans and interprets landscape designs to install and maintain landscape environments and construction. Can also be certified/licenced to perform specialist functions to construct and maintain landscape environments. Also plans and interprets landscape designs to install and maintain landscape environments and construction. Duties also include maintaining landscape environments. |
| **Reports To:** Landscape Designer or Landscape/Horticulture Manager |
| **Major Accountabilities:** * Plant bushes, shrubs, trees, flowers and plants in a strategic pattern designed by a landscape architect or designer;
* Spray and dust trees, shrubs, lawns and gardens, as directed, to control insects and disease- Must be PIC or licenced;
* Plan and schedule planting that will thrive in different weather conditions;
* Construct walkways, patios, decks, fences and landscape features;
* Maintain landscape environments by pruning, mowing, edging, trimming, fertilizing and watering;
* Interact with clients and propose new ideas or options for dealing with plant, lawn or tree disease or deterioration;
* Assist in planning and organizing the job, ensuring that sufficient resources and material are available and that the job is completed in the most time efficient manner;
* Follow all health & safety regulations including wearing appropriate protective equipment and following Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for safe handling of fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and other dangerous chemicals
* May perform specialist functions based on certification or licence to ensure the health of lawns, trees, shrubs, bushes, flowers and plants.
 |
| **Tools & Equipment:*** Small tractors, bobcats, tillers, rollers, mulch spreaders, lawn mowers, etc.
* Power equipment such as shears, saws, picking knives, sod cutters, line trimmers and edgers, aerators, plant augers, drills, etc.
* Hand tools such as pruning shears, handheld and hose-end sprayers, pesticide sprayers, saws, soil cultivators, irrigation heads, etc.
 |
| **Education:*** Secondary School Education
* Preferably Landscape Technician Diploma/Landscape Industry Certification Technician /Landscape Horticulturist ( C of Q/Journeyperson status)
* A provincial licence to apply chemical fertilizers, fungicides, herbicides and pesticides may be required
* Possess a valid Class - G Driver's license
* DZ license an asset
 |
| **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:*** Ability to read blue prints and drawings and work orders
* Knowledge of landscape and construction techniques and practices
* Knowledge of landscape and construction terminology
* Ability to understand and execute oral and written instruction
* Ability to interpret plans and specifications related to the work assigned
* Trade calculations and numeracy
* Ability to read instructions, warning labels; instructions to store fungicides and pesticides; job instructions and procedures may be required
* Ability to plan multiple job tasks to meet various project deadlines
* Knowledge of handling chemical fertilizers, fungicides, herbicides and pesticides
* Problem solving
* Computer skills
* Ability to lift and work in diverse weather conditions i.e. wet and/or humid conditions; hot or cold weather
 |
| **Personal Attributes:*** Dependability
* Integrity
* Cooperative
* Attention to detail
* Self-responsibility
* Ability to work independently
* Adaptable/flexible
* Proactive
* Demonstrates initiative
* Accountability
* Goal oriented
* Ability to work effectively in a team

  |

**APPENDIX VI SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: LANDSCAPING & GROUNDS**

 **MAINTENANCE LABOURER**

|  |
| --- |
| **{Company Name}** |
|  **Date:** October 31, 2014  |
| **Position Title: Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Labourer**Alternate Titles: Crew Member, Landscape Labourer, Landscape Garden Assistant, Grounds Maintenance Worker, Sod Layer, Transplanter, Apprentice |
| **Job Summary:** Performs manual duties to maintain well cared for and attractive landscaped areas for residential and commercial properties.  |
| **Reports To:** Site Supervisor/Manager |
| **Major Accountabilities:** * Spread top soil; lay sod; plant flowers, grass, shrubs and trees; and perform other duties to assist in the maintenance and construction of landscapes;
* Cut grass, rake, fertilize and water lawns; fall and spring clean-up weed gardens, prune shrubs and trees; and perform other maintenance duties as directed by supervisor/manager;
* Follow all health & safety regulations including wearing appropriate protective equipment and following Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for safe handling of fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and other dangerous chemicals;
* Clean working areas and maintain tools and equipment.
 |
| **Tools & Equipment:*** Packers, chain saws, hedge shears, sod cutters, pruning saws, cut-off saws, chainsaws, mowing equipment, string & bush trimmers, power blowers, turf rollers, rototillers, etc.
* Hand tools such as shovels, rakes, hammers, wheelbarrows, picks, pruning shears, handheld and hose-end sprayers, saws, soil cultivators, water sprinklers, etc.
 |
| **Education:*** Secondary School Education is preferable
 |
| **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:*** Reading: WHMIS labels, equipment manuals, complete logs and incident reports, job instructions and procedures
* Ability to take instruction
* Able to work in a team
* Willingness to learn
* Problem solving
* Customer service
* Ability to lift and work in diverse weather conditions i.e. wet and/or humid conditions; hot or cold weather
 |
| **Personal Attributes:*** Punctual
* Reliable
* Cooperative
* Attention to detail
* Self-responsibility
* Ability to work independently
* Adaptable/flexible
 |

**APPENDIX VII SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTION: NURSERY & GREENHOUSE**

 **WORKER**

|  |
| --- |
| **{Company Name}** |
|  **Date:** October 31, 2014  |
| **Position Title: Nursery and Greenhouse Worker**Alternate Titles: Horticulture Worker, Hothouse Worker, Hydroponics Worker, Garden Centre (supports customer service ) |
| **Job Summary:** Major responsibilities are plant, cultivate and harvest trees, shrubs, flowers and plants; pest control; and detecting plant disease. Interact with nursery and greenhouse customers by answering inquiries and giving advice and recommendations.  |
| **Reports To:** Nursery/Greenhouse Supervisor or Manager |
| **Major Accountabilities:** * Prepare soil; plant bulbs, seeds and cuttings; graft and bud plants; and transplant seedlings and rooted cuttings;
* Spray trees, shrubs, flowers and plants to prevent disease and pests;
* Continually assess and regulate greenhouse and outdoor irrigation systems to ensure proper watering of plants and fields;
* Provide information to customers on gardening and the care of trees, shrubs, flowers, plants and lawns;
* Explain how to use various garden tools and products and give tips about soil and sunlight;
* Dig, cut and prepare trees, shrubs, flowers and plants for sale;
* Maintain inventory and order materials as required;
* Follow all health & safety regulations including wearing appropriate protective equipment and following Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for safe handling of fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides and other dangerous chemicals;
* Clean working areas.
 |
| **Tools & Equipment:*** Small tractors, forklifts, bed rollers, mulch spreaders and cargo trucks, lawn mowers
* Power equipment such as secateurs, shears, saws, picking knives
* Hand tools such as pruning shears, handheld and hose-end sprayers, pesticide sprayers, saws, soil cultivators
* Point-of-sale equipment: scanners, scales, touch-screens and cash registers
 |
| **Education:*** Secondary School Education
* Completion of college course in horticulture or a related field may be required
 |
| **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:*** Irrigation knowledge
* Knowledge of handling chemical fertilizers, fungicides, herbicides and pesticides
* Numeracy: calculate material requirements; measuring and weighing products and goods
* Oral communication: customer service, giving instructions
* Problem solving
* Computer skill
* Ability to lift and work in diverse weather conditions i.e. wet and/or humid conditions; hot or cold weather
 |
| **Personal Attributes:*** Dependability
* Integrity
* Cooperation
* Attention to detail
* Self-responsibility
* Ability to work independently
* Adaptable/flexible
* Persistence
* Goal oriented
* Personable
 |

**APPENDIX VIII SAMPLE JOB POSTING: LANDSCAPE TECHNICIAN**

**{Company Logo} LANDSCAPE TECHNICIAN**

ABC Landscaping is a leading landscape maintenance company recognized for taking care of its employees, customers, and landscapes. Our area of expertise is maintaining healthy and appealing landscapes for residential and commercial properties. We take pride in our dedicated staff whose goal is to maintain beautiful lawns, trees, and shrubs. ABC Landscaping is a growing company and looking for individuals who are passionate about positively sustaining the environment and providing our customers with exceptional landscapes. We believe it’s our people that make the difference and provide a competitive compensation and benefit package and training opportunities.

**Key Responsibilities:**

* Plant and maintain lawns, shrubs, and trees on both residential and commercial sites
* Plan a schedule of new growth planting that will thrive in different weather conditions and remove older growth
* Operate and maintain a variety of equipment including bobcats, tillers, rollers, mulch spreaders, lawn mowers, shears, saws, sod cutters, etc.
* Interact with customers to troubleshoot and solve landscape problems
* Assist the Landscape Designer in planning and organizing jobs and ensuring required materials are onsite

**Skills & Abilities:**

* Thorough knowledge of different plant, shrub and tree varieties and standard horticultural practices i.e. planting, pruning, fertilizing, etc.
* Excellent oral and written communication
* Problem solving
* Ability to manage multiple priorities and jobs
* Ability to make decisions and work independently

**Working Conditions:**

* Love of working outdoors is essential and the willingness to work in bad weather conditions i.e. rain, high humidity and heat and cold weather
* Can lift a minimum of 36 kilograms
* During the peak season is willing to work a six day work week with extended hours

**Qualifications:**

* Two year community college diploma in a Landscape Technician program is highly preferred or a High School Secondary Diploma with a minimum of three years’ experience as a Landscape Technician
* ‘G’ class Ontario driver’s licence
* St. John’s First aid Certificate

***If you are interested in this opportunity, please email your cover letter and resume to:*** hr@abclandsaping.com. We thank all applicants for applying for this position; however, only those applicants selected for an interview will be contacted.

**APPENDIX IX: SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: LANDSCAPE TECHNICIAN**

**Job Knowledge**

1. Please describe your background and experience that would make you a strong candidate for this job?
2. What technique do you follow to choose shrubs, plants and flowers by inspecting the type of soil?
3. What are your strengths in landscape design?
4. What areas would you like to gain more experience or knowledge?
5. If I did a reference check with your former manager, what contributions would he/she say you made to your previous company?
6. In your opinion what weather conditions are best for plants to thrive throughout the year?
7. What technique do you use to clean older plants from the garden?
8. What are the key responsibilities of a landscape technician?
9. What are your views in organic growth of plants?
10. What have you liked the most about your last job? The least?

**Behavioural**

1. Let’s say you put a plant in the wrong place and the symmetry of your design will be slightly off. Your supervisor urgently needs you to move on to the next job, what would you do?
2. What was the toughest situation you have had designing a project?
3. Describe a time when you had a design that did not turn out to your original plan and what steps you took to resolve the situation.
4. What was your most successful design project and describe why you believe it was successful?
5. How do you decide what should be priority work when you look at your daily schedule?
6. Describe a situation you faced in your last position which illustrates your problem solving skills. What steps did you take to solve the problem?
7. What is the most creative work project you took on and where did your satisfaction come from when you completed it?
8. Describe a situation when others you worked with on a job disagreed with your ideas on how to handle the problem. What did you do?
9. Give an example of a time you had to do something beyond the call of duty to get the job done?
10. Describe how you would handle a situation where you were required to finish multiple tasks by the end of the day and there was no conceivable way that you could finish them.

**Situational**

1. You are working with a crew and productivity for your group is assessed on how the whole crew performs. One of your crew members is not doing his job. What would you do?
2. You are working on three job sites at a time rotating your time on each of the sites. You haven’t been at one of the sites for a week and when you checked you had not heard any issues from the team working on that site. You make a routine visit on that site and the customer tells you she does not want you to continue the work and for your team to leave. What steps would you take to deal with this situation?
3. You disagree with your supervisor on how to handle a worksite situation and you are concerned that the way he wants to handle it could cause a safety issue. The supervisor is not willing to listen to you. What would your next steps be?
4. You have just been asked to give some advice on lawn issues to a very important customer. It’s an issue that you have never dealt with before. Your manager is not around to help. There is no established precedent or process for dealing with this issue. What do you do?
5. Your team has been working 12 hour days 6 days a week for the past several weeks. You can tell their morale is quickly going downhill. As a team member you feel exhausted as well but the job still needs to be finished to the customer’s satisfaction. What would you do to try and build up the morale with your team members?

\*Resource for technical related questions:

<http://www.interviewquestions.in/landscape-technician-interview-questions.html>

<http://www.interviewquestions.in/gardener-interview-questions.html>

**APPENDIX X TEMPLATE: INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM**

**{Company Logo} {COMPANY NAME} INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM**

**Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Position: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Rating Scale: 1 2 3 4**

 **Excellent Good Adequate Unacceptable**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Qualifications** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Education & Training**: matching the requirements within the job description |  |  |  |  |
| **Work experience**: relevant work experience in the landscape/horticultural industry |  |  |  |  |
| **Technical Requirements**: possesses the knowledge and technical expertise to perform the job functions |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skills & Abilities** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Oral Communication:** demonstrates the ability to effectively communicate information  |  |  |  |  |
| **Problem Solving/Analytical Abilities:** demonstrates ability to organize and articulate thoughts, information and ideas during the interview; demonstrates problem solving abilities  |  |  |  |  |
| **Interpersonal:** demonstrates ability to work effectively with others, resolve conflict issues, maintain a good working relationship with peers and managers |  |  |  |  |
| **Motivation/Achievement Oriented:** articulates future goals, aspiration for success, drive and energy |  |  |  |  |
| **Ability to Learn:** demonstrates interest in learning new technical information and developing new skills; willingness to take ownership for personal development |  |  |  |  |
| **Manage Multiple Priorities:** demonstrates an ability to work under pressure; deal with stress; achieve deadlines; produce results |  |  |  |  |
| **Hardworking:** demonstrates the ability to go above and beyond the call of duty; willingness to take on extra responsibility; deal with difficult weather conditions |  |  |  |  |
| **Team oriented:** effective team player; able to work with others to achieve a common goal |  |  |  |  |

**INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM (CONT’D)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Research** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Knowledge of company:** able to articulate mission of company, services provided and customer related goals |  |  |  |  |
| **Knowledge of industry:** solid understanding of the Landscape Horticultural Industry |  |  |  |  |
| **Commitment:** demonstrates commitment to contributing to sustainable environmental practices  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Overall** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| **Overall evaluation:** considering all the criteria how suitable is the applicant in fulfilling the responsibilities of the job and fitting the organizational culture |  |  |  |  |

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:**

**APPENDIX XI TEMPLATE: REFERENCE CHECK FORM**

**{Company Logo} {COMPANY NAME} REFERENCE FORM**

**DATE:**

**APPLICANT’S NAME:**

**COMPANY CONTACTED: NAME OF CONTACT:**

**TELEPHONE: EMAIL:**

**Script:**  I have received written permission from {applicant’s name} to contact you and conduct a reference check. The information you will share will be held in the strictest of confidence. All the questions are related to {applicant’s name} qualifications to perform the job he or she has applied for with our company.

1. Did {applicant‘s name} directly report to you and if so what was the time frame and length of time she or he reported to you (or) how do you know {applicant name}?
2. What were {applicant’s name} main responsibilities?
3. The position the {applicant’s name} is being considered for is {position name}. The main responsibilities of the position are {give an overview of key responsibilities}. Why do you believe {applicant name} would be successful in this role?
4. How did {applicant’s name} performance compare to other employees with similar job duties?
5. What would you consider to be her or his key skills and personality strengths?
6. Can you give a couple of examples of how {applicant’s name} manages crisis, pressure or stress?
7. In your opinion what motivates her or him?
8. What three words would you use to describe {applicant’s name}?
9. What do you consider {applicant’s name} greatest contribution to your company while she or he was there?
10. What one or two areas of improvement could {applicant’s name} work on as part of her or his development plan?
11. Could you please rate the following with 1 being excellent, 2 being good, 3 being fair, 4 being poor and 5 being unacceptable:
	* Attendance -
	* Dependability -
	* Ability to assume responsibility -
	* Overall attitude -
12. Would you rehire {applicant’s name}?

**APPENDIX XII SAMPLE: LETTER OF OFFER[[10]](#footnote-10)**

**{Company Logo}**

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_;

On behalf of company \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is with great pleasure that we offer you the position of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_in (location), reporting to (fill in position title).

The terms of your employment will be as follows:

1. **Start Date and Hours of Work**

Your start date will be Monday (Month, day) at 7:00 a.m. Your hours of work during the peak season will be {stipulate the days within the week that will be worked and the number of hours each day}. You will receive the {time allotted for breaks and lunch} for breaks and lunch each day. In the slow season {stipulate whether the individual will be on leave of absence or on call for snow removal}.

1. **Salary**

Your annual salary will be {state amount} less applicable statutory and other required government deductions. Payments will be made to your bank account on a bi-weekly basis (every second Friday) pursuant to our direct payroll deposit plan.

1. **Group Benefits**

You will be eligible once you have successfully completed your three month probationary period for {company name} benefit plan, which is offered to all {company name} employees. Under the benefit plan you will be provided with {state benefits}. We have enclosed a benefit information booklet for your reference. {Company name} reserves the right to amend or discontinue any of the above-noted benefits at its sole discretion, at any time, and without noticed. Should you require further information, please contact {benefit contact name}.

1. **Probationary Period**

Your first three months of employee with {company name} will be considered probationary, during which time your employment may be terminated at {company name} sole discretion with {number of days or weeks’ notice} or pay in lieu of notice.

1. **Vacation**

You are entitled to {number of days} of paid vacation per calendar year, to be taken once you have approved your vacation leave through your supervisor. Vacation requests are dealt with at a first come first serve basis therefore {company name} cannot guarantee that you will receive your vacation per your request.

1. **Termination of Employment**

You may resign your employment by giving two weeks’ written notice to {company name}. Upon your last day of employment you will not be entitled to any compensation or payments other than those accrued up to the effective date of you leaving the company.

1. **Confidentiality/Non-Disclosure**

As per our company policies within the Employee Handbook, which you will sign, you are to adhere to the Policy on ‘Confidential Information and Intellectual Property’. Failure to comply with the policy’s procedures may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1. **Code of Conduct**

{Company name} expects every employee to act in a manner that will enhance the company’s reputation for honesty, integrity and responsibly fulfilling our customers’ contracts. To reinforce its continuing drive for the highest standard of integrity, {company name} has developed a Code of Conduct, which is part of the Employee Handbook, to which all company employees are bound. As a condition of employment you are required to agree to fulfill the Code of Conduct by signing the Employee Handbook. Failure to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1. **Orientation**

{Include information regarding the orientation process}

We are very confident that you will be an exceptional addition to our company, and believe that you will find being a part of our winning team both an exciting and rewarding experience.

Yours truly,

{Name}

{Position}

**ACCEPTANCE**

I have read and understand the contents of the letter of offer. I hereby agree to and accept employment with {company name} on the terms and conditions contained in this letter of offer (including the signing of the Employee Handbook).

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Signature Date**

1. Herbert G. Heneman III, Timothy A. Judge, Vicky Smith, Russel Summers, ‘Staffing Organizations: Recruitment and Selection in Canada’. McGraw-Hill Ryerson: 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Adapted from: Canadian Human rights Code: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/h-6/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. OHRC: ‘Policy on Removing the “Canadian experience” barrier: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-removing-%E2%80%9Ccanadian-experience%E2%80%9D-barrier> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. OHRC: ‘Policy on Removing the “Canadian experience” barrier: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-removing-%E2%80%9Ccanadian-experience%E2%80%9D-barrier> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Human Resources and Social Development Canada. ‘ Job Descriptions: An Employers’ Handbook’ <http://www5.hrsdc.gc.ca/noc/english/noc/2011/EmployersHandbook.aspx>: [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Herbert G. Heneman III, Timothy A. Judge, Vicky Smith, Russel Summers, ‘Staffing Organizations: Recruitment and Selection in Canada’. McGraw-Hill Ryerson: 2007 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Adapted from the book [*Finding Keepers: The Monster Guide to Hiring and Holding the World’s Best Employees*](http://www.amazon.com/Finding-Keepers-Monster-Holding-Employees/dp/0071499083/ref%3Dpd_bbs_sr_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1195586061&sr=8-1) by Steve Pogorzelski, Jesse Harriott, Ph.D., and Doug Hardy. Published January 2008 by McGraw-Hill. ‘The Employer Brand Experience: <http://hiring.monster.com/hr/hr-best-practices/recruiting-hiring-advice/attracting-job-candidates/employer-brand-experience.aspx> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Landscape Ontario, ‘Defining Landscape Gardener’. <http://www.horttrades.com/defining-landscape-gardener>

 Employment Standards Act: [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\_regs\_010285\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_010285_e.htm) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Adapted from: Ontario Human Rights Commission: Employment: Code Grounds: <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/basic-rights-and-responsibilities/grounds-discrimination> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Adapted from BioTalent Canada HR Toolkit. Module 3: Recruitment, Selection and Hiring: Appendix 3-F: Job Offer Letter Sample: <http://www.biotalent.ca/hrtoolkit> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)