

Tech & Attracting Young Talent



Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

Why technology plays a role in employee recruitment and retention.

While there's historically low unemployment rates and a lack of available labor in every business sector, field service organizations such as turf and landscape businesses are particularly hard hit due to an aging workforce and reluctance of younger individuals to join the business. Ironically, post pandemic, the Green Industry is booming in most aspects except having the labor (and sometimes the materials) to actually take on the amount of possible projects available.

In the past, businesses dealt with significant employee turnover and resulting shortages by maintaining a steady stream of fresh technicians and engineers. But today that strategy no longer works as there simply isn't the same labor pool. As a result, it's increasingly important to hold on to the techs you already have, while looking for better ways to [attract new talent](#). While paying employees a fair wage is a good—and necessary—place to start, providing cutting edge technology also has a role to play.



(Source: Adobe Stock)

An Aging Workforce

In recent data compiled by the Service Council, technicians in the services field were polled on whether or not they planned to make their current profession their lifetime vocation. A majority (54%) of respondents indicated they planned to keep working in the industry, but 46% either weren't sure or didn't plan to. Of that 46%, a sizable 37% was due to retirement. In total, 40% of field service engineers are expected to leave their jobs in the next three to four years. This is not only occurring now, but progressing rapidly.

Due to the post COVID-19 Great Resignation and the impending wave of older professionals retiring, field service leaders identified a lack of resources, staff engagement, and retention as the top internal concerns facing their businesses. There is a growing gap between the demand for experienced field service technicians and the supply of young Millennials and Zoomers (Gen Z) who are qualified to fill such roles. Additional Service Council research shows that in the next five to ten years, 70% of service organizations will feel the effects of an aging workforce.

Finding New Generations

So how can the landscaping industry attract and retain young employees? When compared to prior generations, Millennials and Gen Z employees have distinct expectations of their employers. Younger people are looking for jobs in industries that are forward-thinking and make use of cutting-edge technology while avoiding those that seem stuck in the past. Unfortunately, many prospects still view landscaping as nothing more than a traditional blue-

collar job that requires limited skill dexterity.

In reality, the industry is rapidly transitioning into a high-tech, high-skill occupation, replete with as many smartphones and tablets as mowers and blowers. Field service businesses will need to do more with fewer resources to maintain high standards of service for their employees and customers until expectations are aligned with reality. To ensure a more secure future, the sector needs to take concrete measures like upskilling, reskilling, and countering misleading perceptions.

Leaders in the service sector can engage and retain the next generation of talent by: encouraging communication between generations, investing in their employees' professional development, accommodating their needs for work-life balance, and actively soliciting younger employees' input during strategic planning. Technology can play a vital part in giving each employee a more interactive and empowered role.

The implementation of mobile devices and field service management software into a company's operations can boost its credibility, productivity, and profits amid the age of skill shortages.

Better Pay. Better Employees.

When young workers feel they aren't being compensated fairly, loyalty becomes an issue. The issue of hiring and retention can be mitigated in part by simply increasing salaries. Competitive pay is a major factor in determining whether or not an employee will remain with an organization. The average salary has risen over the past 18 months, and while you may believe you've reached the compensation ceiling, money will always be a key point of differentiation. Turf and land-scape professional services will need to find methods to reduce other costs if they want to remain competitive on the compensation front. So how do you do that?

Believe it or not, that money can be saved with the right kind of field and fleet service management (FSM) technology solution. For instance, if your company is still using pen and paper for its transactions, digitizing your maintenance records and invoicing processes is the first step to saving money. Additionally, maintenance schedules and vehicle data, such as miles and engine hours, can be monitored by integrated field and fleet management solutions to keep technicians on the road and improve fleet efficiency. Savings from efficiency improvements can be put towards competitive salaries and [professional development](#) benefits.

Empowered Efficiency

Businesses that provide labor-intensive field services are constantly pushing for more productivity from their employees in the field, aiming to maximize

performance by accounting for efficiency. The use of field service management software can help save time, person-power, and cost when it comes to organizing, dispatching, and managing technicians and their field assignments.

Assume you are the manager of a company that employs four teams of four people each. At midday, every group will be back at your office to hand in and pick up paperwork. Each crew spends 30 minutes per day on this journey, on average. That comes to two worker-hours every day—for each crew—wasted on administrative tasks. Through the week, around 40 hours will be spent on this one antiquated task. How many additional projects could workers complete if they weren't required to spend empty hours at the office? Technicians that use electronic work orders that sync in real-time will gain valuable time by already having all the information and tools at their fingertips. No phone calls or visits to the office will be necessary.

Technicians are also curious about their relative standing in comparison to their colleagues. Incentives, mentoring, and feedback are all tracked and made available through FSM software. To assist technicians in developing their abilities, FSM software helps identify areas where they might be having difficulty with a certain product line or a particular kind of problem.

Your company's field service techs can be more efficient, effective—and perhaps even happier—with the help of the correct technology. State-of-the-art software for jobs, data, communications, and scheduling, all in the cloud, will help streamline daily tasks and produce important cost efficiencies.



[Why Recruiting Women Is Your Next Power Move](#)

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Top service providers now integrate technology into their operations, and modern clients anticipate paperless transactions. The implementation of mobile devices and field service management software into a company's operations can boost its credibility, productivity, and profits amid the age of skill shortages.



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