



HOST TOOLKIT

**A GUIDE TO HOSTING A LANDSCAPE CAREER
DAY EVENT THAT YOUR COMMUNITY WILL DIG**

Sponsored by the National Association of Landscape
Professionals' Industry Growth Initiative

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LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY HOST TOOLKIT

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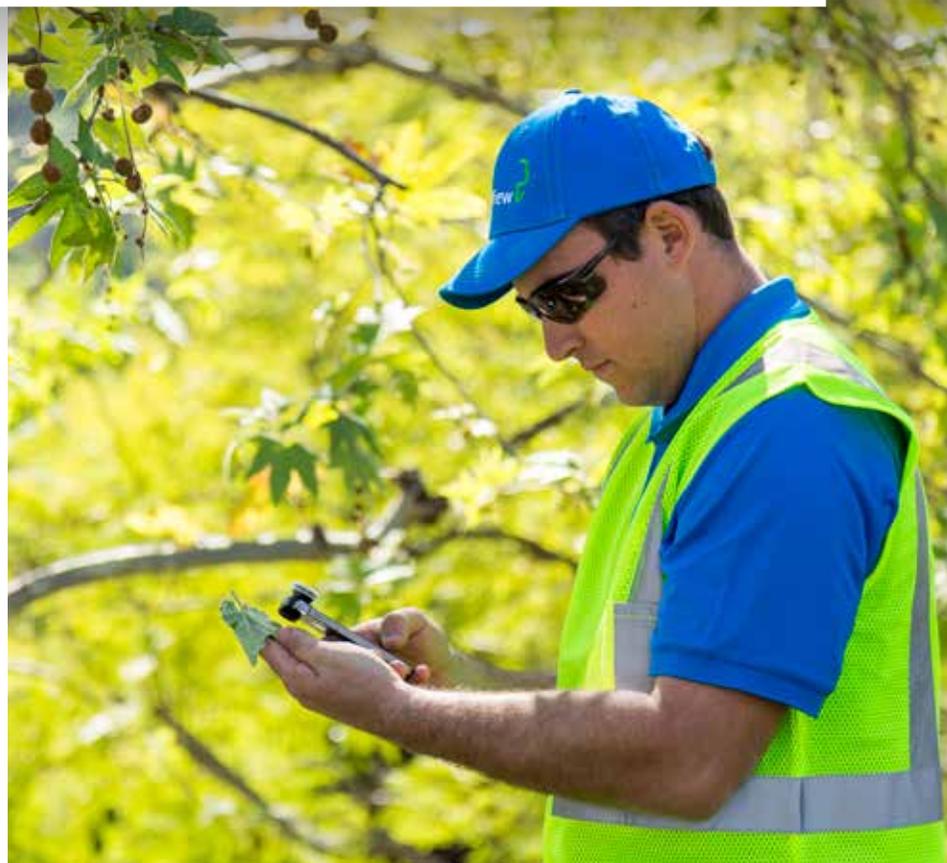
WHY HOST A LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY: GROW YOUR FUTURE EVENT?



LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY



GROW YOUR FUTURE



There has never been a better time to consider becoming a landscape professional. The \$78 billion industry is booming! It currently employs nearly one million professionals who are responsible for the health, well-being and beauty of the landscapes we enjoy. As the industry continues to grow, 300,000 job openings are made available each year to men and women looking to flourish in rewarding careers.

As lawn and landscape professionals, you know this to be true. So why are many of our industry's lawn and landscape companies struggling to fill open positions? The reality is that many people within our own communities may not be aware of the opportunities that exist and the benefits to be enjoyed by pursuing a career in the landscape industry.

It's time to tell our story and shine a light on our profession to attract the best and the brightest to the field. By hosting a Landscape Career Day event you can showcase why and how careers in the lawn and landscape profession are incredibly rewarding. You can highlight the many professional paths that exist and overview the countless opportunities to be creative, work outdoors and be a part of a team. And perhaps most importantly, it's time to illustrate that not only does the industry offer competitive salaries and attractive benefits, but the work landscape professionals do is truly important to the environment and to helping communities thrive.

The National Association of Landscape Professionals is excited to launch a new, industry-wide initiative aimed at addressing our workforce shortage.



LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY IS DESIGNED TO:

- Enhance the public’s awareness and perceptions of careers within our industry
- Educate and engage with key audiences within your communities
- Grow your workforce
- Inspire and cultivate the next generation of landscape professionals



WHO’S INVITED?

Landscape Career Day is for students, parents, educators, women’s groups and the community-at-large. Whether it’s a behind-the-scenes tour of your business, a community service event at a park, career fair or presentation at a local school, Landscape Career Day events will give participants the chance to learn about exciting career opportunities, scholarships, and training and resources available to them – all while getting hands-on experience as they see, touch and feel the profession in action.

WHAT’S IN THE TOOLKIT?

This toolkit is designed to help you plan and host your company’s own Landscape Career Day event. In the following pages, you’ll find everything you need to get started – from event suggestions and audiences to invite, to sample social media posts to get the word out.



INVITING PARTICIPANTS TO YOUR LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY EVENT

So, you're interested in hosting a Landscape Career Day event, but aren't sure where to begin? No problem, we have you covered. After deciding to host an event, the first step is to determine who to invite.

Who you invite will be dependent on your company's goals. For example, if you are interested in inspiring the next generation of landscape professionals, consider inviting:

- Elementary students
- Middle school students
- Local Scout groups, 4H clubs, Big Brothers Big Sisters, FFA Chapters, etc.
- Local school administrators
- Educators
- Parents
- School advisors

If you are looking to educate the community and fulfill current workforce demands, you might consider reaching out to:

- Community organizations
- Religious groups
- High school students
- Technical high school students
- Local women's groups
- Local gyms and YMCA members
- Veterans groups
- Local temp agencies
- Career services departments at local colleges



INVITING ELECTED OFFICIALS, EDUCATORS, AND ADVISORS TO YOUR LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY EVENT

Consider inviting elected officials, educators, advisors and family and friends of your current employees to your event to address the many benefits associated with being a landscape professional and the important work you do to support families, communities and the environment. If you are interested in expanding the reach of your event, consider connecting with local schools in your area that offer lawn and landscape industry curriculums to gauge their interest in a possible long-term partnership with your company.

While a simple hard copy or electronic invitation will do in most cases, it is best to send personal letters to elected officials and school administrators when inviting them to your Landscape Career Day event. If you are unsure of who the appropriate elected officials and educators in your area are, head to your city or county's local government website or the websites of your area's local public and private schools. There, you will be able to find contact information for department heads, city officials and school administrators.

Your invitation or letter should include:

- Who you are
- Information about the landscape industry and your company
- Total number of jobs you are seeking to fill, if applicable
- The planned events or agenda for your Landscape Career Day event
- Why the invitee should attend your event
- Suggested dates and times



Sample invitations for elected officials and educators

- [Click here](#) for a sample invitation to elected officials
- [Click here](#) for a sample invitation for educators and school administrators
- [Click here](#) for a sample letter requesting to host a Landscape Career Day event at a local school

No matter who you decide to invite, Landscape Career Day is a celebration of the landscape profession and the hundreds of thousands of professionals who thrive within the industry. Be sure to track and confirm RSVPs for your event. If you are having trouble getting in touch with invitees, don't be afraid to follow up via phone or email. Use this as an opportunity to provide more information about your Landscape Career Day event and encourage invitees to learn more.



FOUR ACTIVITIES TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY EVENT

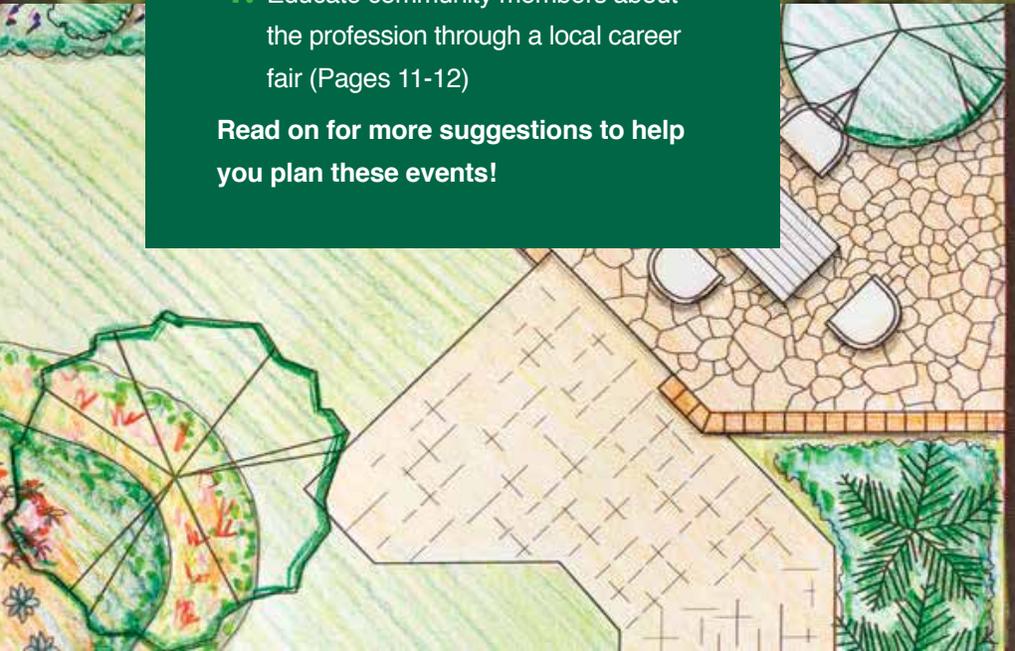
Next, you'll want to decide when it makes the most sense for your company to host a Landscape Career Day event. While most Landscape Career Day events will take place in March and April, it is important to choose an event date and format that works for your audience, your budget and your company's goals.

From there, you will need to determine which type of event you would like to host. There are countless ways to celebrate Landscape Career Day, and no set rules about when or how to host your event, or even where to host it!

HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING YOUR LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY EVENT:

1. Engage students with a hands-on exploration event (Page 8)
2. Invite community members to join you for a community service landscape project (Page 9)
3. Open your doors to community members interested in a tour of your business (Page 10)
4. Educate community members about the profession through a local career fair (Pages 11-12)

Read on for more suggestions to help you plan these events!



1. STUDENT EXPLORATION EVENT

If inspiring the future workforce is important to your business, consider hosting a landscape exploration event for students at a local elementary, middle or high school, or a vocational or technical school. Students can participate in hands-on activities, such as planting demonstrations, equipment and power tool demonstrations, personal rain barrel creations or a fun trivia game with prizes, that will get them excited about the possibility of becoming a landscape professional. The overall goal of a student exploration event should be to open the minds of children and teens to the many career paths, opportunities and benefits the landscape profession has to offer.

Fun and engaging student-focused activities to consider:

PLANTING ACTIVITY:

Work with a school to create a pollinator-friendly or edible garden. Provide the students and staff with the training they need to maintain the space or agree to return and work with students on an ongoing basis.

EQUIPMENT DEMONSTRATION:

Have some of your company's equipment on-hand for students to see in action. Some schools will even allow you to bring along larger equipment, such as riding mowers, for students to sit on and take photos. If your equipment is in use or not camera-ready, [search for local suppliers in your area here](#) to see if they can offer some loaners for students to explore.

LANDSCAPE SCAVENGER HUNT:

Work with staff to plan an outdoor landscape scavenger hunt for students. Provide students with a list of landscape parts to locate, such as acorns, evergreens, animal footprints or pine needles, and have them locate them throughout the school's landscape. Click [here](#) for a full scavenger hunt activity.

PAVER CHALLENGE:

For events geared toward teens, consider bringing along hardscape materials and having students participate in a paver challenge, where they can compete to create the most aesthetically appealing, small paver design. In the interest of time, have the base prepared, and allow students to lay pavers in a variety of patterns just for fun, or trying to match a plan!

PERSONAL PLANT POTS:

Gather seed packets, soil and small planting pots and allow students to plant their own flowers. Provide the students and staff with the appropriate steps to take care of the plants throughout the remainder of the school year.

LANDSCAPE TRIVIA GAME:

Develop questions based on the talking points you discussed with students throughout your Landscape Career Day event and award those who answer questions correctly with prizes, such as seed packets, erasers or pencils.

If you are looking for more hands-on activities for your student exploration event, head to [LandscapeIndustryCareers.org](https://www.LandscapeIndustryCareers.org), where you can find additional resources.





2. COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENT

Interested in sharing the perks of the landscape profession with audiences other than students? Partner with a scout group, community organization or women’s group to help beautify a local park or clean up an abandoned lot with your company. Here, participants can learn more about getting involved with the landscape profession all the while giving back to their community. Show participants the positive impact landscape professionals have on the environment, people and communities during your community service event through some of the below activities:

- Host a park clean-up
- Lead a flower or tree planting
- Design and install a landscape makeover
- Build handicapped accessible ramps
- Perform maintenance on a playground
- Give a brief industry presentation

INCREASE ATTENDANCE FOR YOUR EVENT

Not sure if your event will attract enough volunteers? Consider adding your Landscape Career Day community service event to community calendars or free mobile apps, such as **JustServe**, **GiveGab**, **Golden Volunteer Opportunities** or **Volunteer Finder**, which allow users to search for community service projects in their area to attend.

3. FACILITY OPEN HOUSE

An easy way to engage potential recruits and give community members a behind-the-scenes look at the landscape profession in action is by hosting an open house at your company's offices. Prior to hosting an open house, decide who you'd like your core audience to be – children, teens or adults. From there, simply open your doors, plan activities, put out some snacks and drinks, and welcome local organizations to your business, where they can catch a glimpse of your company and how it operates firsthand.

To help spread the word about your company's open house, consider reaching out to school administrators, local temp agencies, career services departments at local colleges and guidance counselors.

Keep in mind, teens and adults participating in an open house most likely have an existing interest in the landscape profession. Share the profession's many perks and offerings to pique their interest and help them learn more about the industry. Be sure to include engaging activities similar to those below and follow up with interested parties about open positions following your event:

- Guided facility tour
- Equipment demonstrations
- Planting challenge
- Brief company presentation
- Company trivia game

INCREASE ENGAGEMENT AT YOUR EVENT

If your open house event is geared toward adults, consider engaging participants with mock interviews or a sit-down discussion with your company's CEO, who can share more about the company, its history and current job openings. Or, consider a less formal approach and include a cook-out and casual, interactive games for participants.





4. CAREER FAIR EVENT

If your main goal is to fill current job openings, consider participating in a career fair. Career fairs are often held at local high schools, colleges or technical schools, and allow you to showcase your business, its benefits and the opportunities it has to offer to an audience of current job seekers. Alternatively, consider teaming up with other local businesses to host a career fair for your community that is focused on job openings and career opportunities in the region.

While career fairs are a great way to engage job seekers in your region, one disadvantage is that your company will likely be one of many at the fair. To stand out from the crowd and leave a lasting impression on attendees, make sure to come prepared. Consider the following materials:

- Brochures on your company, including size, history and benefits
- Descriptions of all current job openings
- Background on the owner/CEO and other senior leadership
- Employee testimonials
- Information on any apprenticeship or internship programs and job shadow opportunities
- Freebies, such as pens, magnets, tote bags or seed packs with your company logo
- Business cards with your contact information

To attract potential recruits to your booth or table, set up games, raffles or other entertainment ahead of time. Offering giveaways or prizes, such as small succulents or one-on-one time with your company's CEO, will create positive buzz for your company throughout the fair.





MAKE A LASTING IMPRESSION AT YOUR LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY EVENT

As we all know, the landscape profession offers many rewarding benefits. Not only do we get to work every day in the great outdoors to enhance the environment and our communities, but we also use our creativity day in and day out!

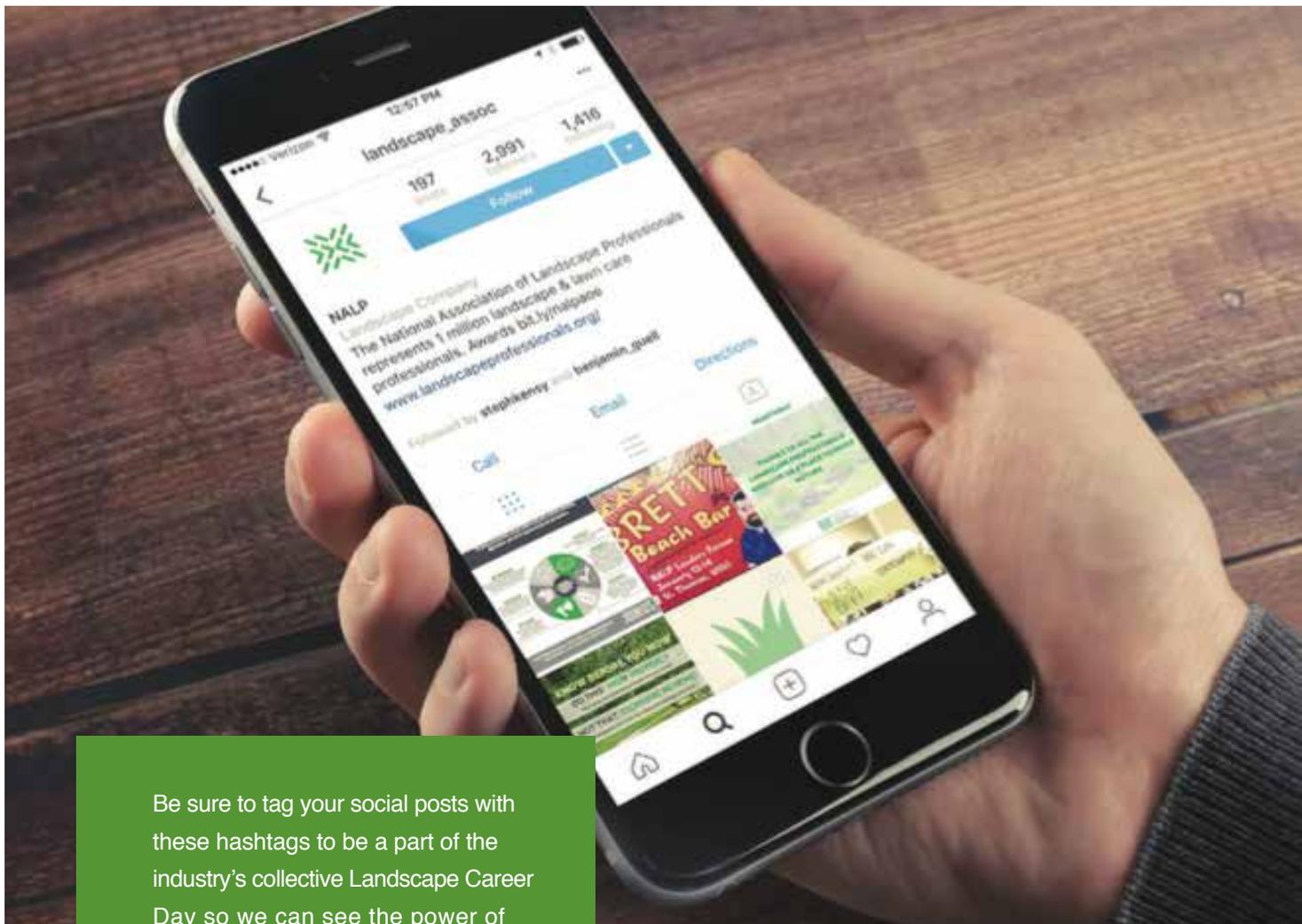
Some students and community members may have existing perceptions about the landscape profession. Use this opportunity to dispel common misperceptions, such as low pay, lack of growth opportunity, career diversity and advancements for those without a college degree.

Give attendees the chance to experience the best that the landscape industry has to offer, and get them excited about the many career opportunities within the industry through guided activities during your event. To help raise awareness for your company and its current job openings, encourage participants to share their positive Landscape Career Day experiences on social media. Consider having company collateral on-hand, such as branded signs, a fun backdrop or props for participants to include in their photos when documenting their experience on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Snapchat.



TIPS ON PROMOTING LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

No matter the audience for your Landscape Career Day event, social media is a great way to attract attendees. By motivating people to attend your event, speaking to the importance and impact of Landscape Career Day, sharing post-event photos and highlights from your Landscape Career Day and shedding light on the landscape profession's many perks and benefits on social media, you will ensure potential recruits, as well as current staff, are kept up-to-date on your company, culture and the industry's career opportunities.



Be sure to tag your social posts with these hashtags to be a part of the industry's collective Landscape Career Day so we can see the power of industry collaboration in action!

#LandscapeCareerDay2018

#WhyWeLandscape

#GrowYourCareer

#LandscapeCareers



PROMOTING YOUR EVENT ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER, LINKEDIN AND INSTAGRAM

To increase your social post engagement and drive more impressions to your page, consider implementing these best practices:

- Add relevant photos to your social posts, such as images of your current employees on the job or at a company event, to help your posts stand out.
- Consider putting some advertising dollars behind your Landscape Career Day social posts. Even a small spend on social media channels can be powerful in helping you target sponsored posts to your key audiences.
- Encourage your social media followers to learn more about your company's event, and Landscape Career Day as a whole, by including a link to your website and [LandscapeIndustryCareers.org](https://www.LandscapeIndustryCareers.org).



Get started on promoting your event with these sample social posts:

- Wondering if a career in the **#landscape** industry might be for you? Come learn more about the many opportunities we have to offer at our career event **#LandscapeCareerDay2018 #GrowYourCareer**
- We are proud to be participating in **#LandscapeCareerDay2018** on [Date of Your Event]. Contact us if you are interested in attending or learning more about **#WhyWeLandscape #GrowYourCareer**
- Only a few days left until we host our first-ever Landscape Career Day: Grow Your Future event! We can't wait to show [Participants] what the landscape profession is all about! **#LandscapeCareerDay2018 #LandscapeCareers**
- Getting excited to host our first [Event Type] Landscape Career Day: Grow Your Future event. Can't wait to inspire the next generation of landscape professionals on [Date of Your Event]. **#LandscapeCareerDay2018**
- Why is Landscape Career Day important? Because we are able to inspire the next generation of great landscape professionals!
#LandscapeCareerDay2018 #GrowYourCareer
- Proud to be participating in **#LandscapeCareerDay2018** on [Date of Your Event]. Join us to learn more!
- Need a place to celebrate Landscape Career Day? We are hosting [Event Type] on [Event Date]. **#LandscapeCareerDay2018 #LandscapeCareers**
- Check out some of the highlights from this year's Landscape Career Day: Grow Your Future, where we welcomed [Participants] for [Event Type]. Let the planning begin for next year's festivities!
#LandscapeCareerDay2018 #WhyWeLandscape





TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUR AUDIENCE

Don't assume your audience is aware of all that the landscape profession has to offer. By hosting a Landscape Career Day event, it is your job to educate participants about the landscape industry and its great opportunities, including the diverse career paths offered. An easy way to do this is to share your personal story about how you got started in the industry and became a landscape professional. Be sure to share information about how your company was founded, what your company does and why it is important.

Here are a few key tips for engaging your audience:

- Prepare materials and talking points about your company ahead of time
- Include fun stories and anecdotes about your company or the industry
- Ask questions of participants to encourage engagement
- Prepare facts about the industry or your company
- Encourage your audience to participate in planned activities
- Avoid landscape industry jargon that might be unfamiliar or intimidating
- Explain and demonstrate the jobs your company handles
- Bring your stories to life with photos and video, when possible
- Encourage participants to follow up with the company if they are interested in learning more about career opportunities
- Provide information, advice and unbiased opinions about career paths the profession offers

LANDSCAPE INDUSTRY CAREER PATHS



Account Manager
Keep clients coming back for more



Administration and Accounting Specialists
Provide essential office support



Arborist
Get a view from the top tending to trees



Business Development
Cultivate the business



Business Executive
Run the business behind the beauty



Business Owner
Call the shots



Industry Supplier
Bring the goods that get the job done



Interiorscaper
Bring the great outdoors inside



Irrigation Specialist
Protect precious H2O



Landscape Designer
Create the master plan



Landscape Estimator
Crunch the numbers



Landscape Supervisor
Keep the crew on point



Lawn Care Technician
Roll out the green carpet

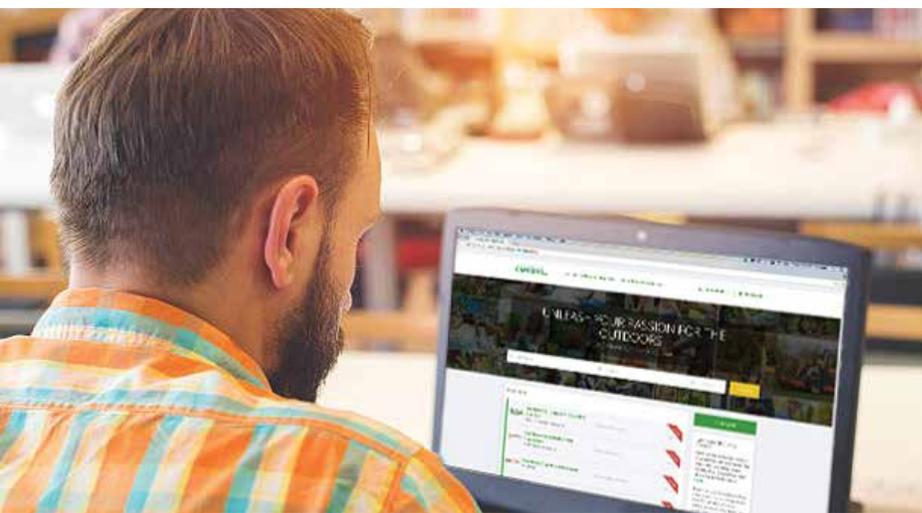


Nursery/Greenhouse Professional
Nurture nature



Project Manager
Put the pieces into place

For more information on the many landscape industry career paths, visit LandscapeIndustryCareers.org/Career-Paths.



FOLLOWING UP WITH FUTURE LANDSCAPE PROFESSIONALS

After you have successfully wrapped your first Landscape Career Day event, don't forget to follow up with those who have participated! Whether you hosted students, dignitaries, educators or employees' family and friends, it is important to thank participants for the time they took to learn more about your company and the landscape profession as a whole.

When thanking teachers, administrators, parents, advisors, Scout leaders, elected officials and your own employees, consider writing a thoughtful thank you letter that expresses your gratitude for their participation. Following your event, request participants to fill out a short survey on their Landscape Career Day experience, which will help inform your plans and activities for future events.

Collect email addresses and contact information from high school students and adult participants so you are able to keep in contact and provide them with regular company updates, especially if you are looking to build your workforce in the near future. Consider providing participants with materials such as flyers, brochures about your company, business cards, a list of current job openings and their full job descriptions. Be sure to extend personal invitations to candidates you wish to interview. Similar to providing advisors and officials with a post-event survey, consider distributing a survey to high school students and adult participants to receive feedback and learn what intrigues them the most about a career within the landscape industry.

If your event is elementary and middle school student-focused, consider sending students home with fun activity sheets that include information about the profession that they can share with their family and friends. The National Association of Landscape Professional has handouts for children and a coloring book, which can be found on **LandscapeIndustryCareers.org**, that can be used at your student events.

You might also consider handing out small trinkets that will remind students of the landscape profession, such as stickers, pencils, erasers or seed packets. Encourage them to learn more about becoming a landscape professional by heading to **LandscapeIndustryCareers.org**. Don't forget to collect contact information from educators and school administrators to keep conversations going about next year's Landscape Career Day event!





LANDSCAPE CAREER DAY CHECKLIST

You have made the decision to host a Landscape Career Day event, now it's time to prepare!

1. Getting Started:

- Determine the type of event you want to host (student-focused, community service, facility tour or career fair)
- Determine the date and desired length of your event (most Landscape Career Day events will take place in March and April)
- Identify potential event partners (suppliers, colleagues, local colleges or schools in your area that offer lawn and landscape industry curriculums, civic groups, etc.)
- Register your event with the National Association of Landscape Professionals [here](#).
- Invite participants (students, local schools, community groups, lawmakers, etc.)
- Request and confirm employee participation
- Send invitations, track and confirm RSVPs

2. Organizing Your Event:

- Download Landscape Career Day resources at [Landscapemagazine.com/resources/industry-careers](https://www.landscapemagazine.com/resources/industry-careers)
- Designate an internal planning team or group for the event
- Create name badges for staff
- Hire a professional photographer or have an employee on-hand to capture the event
- Determine required safety precautions
- Identify what materials you will need to orchestrate the event (equipment, plants, supplies, etc.)





3. Preparing Materials:

- Prepare company literature and background materials
- Develop talking points about your company, its history and the benefits of becoming a landscape professional
- Prepare questions and activities for event participants
- Create an event display with Landscape Career Day collateral using downloaded, customizable materials from **LandscapeIndustryCareers.org**
- Download and customize a press release from **LandscapeIndustryCareers.org** announcing your company's involvement in Landscape Career Day. Once finalized, upload the press release to your website to help spread awareness for your company's event. If you are interested in having media attend your community service or adult-focused event, consider distributing your press release via email to local news stations and newspapers.
- Promote your Landscape Career Day event on social media using the hashtag **#LandscapeCareerDay2018**

4. Hosting an Event:

- Welcome guests on arrival
- Mention prepared talking points throughout the event
- Allow visitors and students to be active participants
- Share your excitement and love for the landscape profession
- Offer participants the opportunity to take part in hands-on activities

5. Following Up:

- Offer participants take-home materials about the profession and your company
- Gather contact information and send thank you notes to participants
- Thank your staff for their support and participation
- Share photos and updates from your Landscape Career Day event on social media using the hashtag **#LandscapeCareerDay2018**
- Continue conversations with high school students and community members who expressed interest in the industry and your company
- Request participants to fill out a short survey on their Landscape Career Day experience



READY TO GET STARTED?

Register your event here by uploading a brief description about your company and planned Landscape Career Day event. Additional information about hosting your own Landscape Career Day event as well as resources and marketing materials are available at **LandscapingIndustryCareers.org**.

Here, you will have access to:

- Helpful tips on hosting a Landscape Career Day event
- Template advertisements
- A sample press release
- Sample invitations to lawmakers and educators
- Posters and flyers
- **Videos**
- Print materials about the landscape industry for both students and adults
- Program evaluations

