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LIFESCAPE COACH
Liberate Your Legacy

How Landscape Business Owners Can Grow Successful Teams That Last



HOW LANDSCAPE BUSINESS OWNERS CAN GROW SUCCESSFUL TEAMS THAT LAST

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Once you have identified your ideal client, perfected your marketing strategy, and honed your sales skills—you're likely to encounter a new problem phase in the growth of your landscape business: Having so much work that you aren't able to attract, develop, and retain enough employees to do it all.

This is not a unique problem, especially in a trade business where there is only so much you can do alone. When insufficient attention is paid to systematically curating and nurturing your team, you will spend excessive time and energy on recruitment and training, only to find yourself trapped in the same repetitive cycle as new employees move in and out of your company. I know this cycle from experience; it's painful. But with forethought and a commitment to creating a positive and productive team culture, you can build, train, and retain self-organizing teams that support your business as it grows. I've also experienced this side of the story; it is a much more satisfying way to run a business!

WHEN IT COMES TO HIRING AND TRAINING, WHAT ARE YOU DOING WRONG?

SETTING YOUR SIGHTS TOO LOW

Many landscape business owners will set the bar at the lowest possible point for a new hire: Are they a living, breathing human being who wants a job and is capable of doing physical labor? The temptation to rush the hiring process is always there; if a potential hire checks these boxes, many owners will simply hire them and move on to the next task on their to-do list.

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BELIEVING THAT "HARD" SKILLS WILL TRANSLATE TO "SOFT" SKILLS

You may read an applicant's resume, see they have the necessary trade skills to complete the tasks you set for them, and think you're getting a great team member. But what on their resume guarantees they will show up every day ready to work? Have you gauged whether their attitude aligns with your company's mission and values? Have you assessed how well they will work with the rest of your team? More often than not, these are the areas where problems will arise, so they cannot be overlooked.

ASSUMING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYEES IS LINEAR

Many owners believe that once they've provided basic training, a uniform, and a logistical overview of the work, they've done all they need to do for a new employee to meet their expectations. But working with humans is far more complex. Human diversity and the ever-changing nature of individuals' lives constantly come into play. A team is never static. This can be very distracting when you have gardens to tend, designs to create, and clients to satisfy.

WHAT'S THE RISK OF FAILING TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL TEAM?

As an owner, putting so much time and effort into recruiting, hiring, and training with minimal gains for your business can be soul-crushing. You may feel unappreciated and ineffective and wonder why that new hire didn't work out, yet again.

There are also huge impacts on your long-term team members. A revolving-door culture hurts morale and leaves your loyal employees

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exhausted by the painful churn. Repeatedly working to build new connections and losing friends who choose to move on creates a tremendous psychological impact on the entire team. Nothing is worse than losing a model employee because you failed to provide a sustainable, positive culture where they could thrive. Developing a strategy for building and maintaining your team will not only help you make good hires, it will help you keep those good hires you've already made.

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

There are many great books out there on effective team-building. Some of our favorites include Patrick Lencioni's [**The Five Dysfunctions of a Team**](#), Whitney Johnson's [**Build an A Team**](#), and Jon Gordon's [**The Energy Bus**](#). [**John Maxwell**](#) offers several great resources on this topic as well. Exploring resources like these can be an affirming experience as you realize that the problems you face are not unique to you as a business owner.

ORGANIZATIONAL & INDUSTRY RESOURCES

State organizations like the [**Small Business Administration**](#) or [**SCORE**](#) can provide mentorship and resources for small-business owners in a variety of industries. [**The National Association of Landscape Professionals**](#) offers national and state chapters that owners can join in seeking support within those professional communities; members receive discounted access to programs and events.

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PERSONNEL RESOURCES

Some landscape business owners may choose to outsource their hiring by contracting with a **fractional human resources** company, hiring a recruiter or staffing firm, or adding a human resources professional to their staff on a full- or part-time basis.

A fractional human resources professional provides direct, part-time support to your business along with several other companies. Typically, this will require a commitment to a minimum number of hours per month for the individual to assist with recruitment, conducting interviews, and completing hiring paperwork.

Recruiters and staffing agencies can also assist with these tasks. In these scenarios, you avoid the overhead costs of bringing on a human resources employee. Still, you may be sacrificing a complete understanding of and commitment to your priorities on the part of the person doing your hiring. With both staffing agencies and fractional HR professionals, you will want to be sure they bring at least some understanding of the unique challenges facing landscape businesses. Otherwise, you may end up spending some of the time you hoped to save teaching them the nuances of your industry.

The benefits of hiring an in-house staff member include ongoing human resources support not only for recruitment and hiring but also for answering employees' benefits questions or handling interpersonal matters. Adding an HR professional to your staff may be a workable solution, provided you already have a strong sense of how you want them to develop your workforce. However, this in and of itself is a critical hire, so you must have clarity on the role's responsibilities and be able to invest in their salary and benefits.

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HOW COACHING CAN HELP

As landscape business coaches, there are several questions we work with our clients to answer as they strive to attract, curate, and nurture the right team for their business:

What does/should the organizational framework for my business look like?

It's essential to create an organizational chart for your company so you can segment responsibilities by role, relationship, and communication strategy. We begin by helping you identify and define each position, then review whether the individuals in those positions are actually good fits for their roles.

How should I manage employee compensation in a rapidly changing economy?

It can be difficult in today's economy to hire new staff at the rates you are paying your current staff. Fortunately, reasonable compensation isn't only about wages. Consider all the other options for compensating your staff. Benefits, bonuses, perks, training, certifications, and flexibility can all help employees enjoy real job satisfaction.

What benefits and perks can/should I be offering?

A strong benefits package will keep you competitive in attracting and retaining staff. It also creates a sense of safety and support for your employees. In return, you gain their trust and promote loyalty.

Not everyone needs the same level of support, but everyone needs to know that the company they work for believes in creating a secure environment for their staff. Benefits are an essential ingredient, but if the company culture is toxic or the staff feels marginalized, benefits alone



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can't solve those issues. We often assist business owners with developing programs that give staff a voice, another extremely valuable tool in strengthening employee loyalty.

How much should I invest (in time and money) in employee training?

Training your staff is an evergreen business activity. In addition to teaching the employees who need to build basic skills, you should also be "upskilling" your employees who have shown they're ready for new challenges. Sometimes, you must invest in "unlearning" techniques to help break through entrenchment in your staff and keep up with the latest industry innovations.

Coaching can help owners identify the connection between their company's market differentiation and the best training approach to achieve the desired outcome.

Should I be spending time on employee reviews?

We cannot stress enough the importance of employee reviews. Without them, your employees won't have targets to strive for, and their productivity will be reduced.

Employees who feel seen, heard, and valued will always stay with you longer and contribute more to your business. Even when you may need to have a difficult conversation to redirect an employee, you stand a better chance of retaining that employee than if you were to ignore them and their work.

What does a career ladder look like for landscape business employees?

We often assist owners in creating a visible development path for employees. Seeing such a path enables employees to set goals and

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work toward them, or it may help them realize that they prefer to stay where they are and become experts in their particular domain. In creating a path, owners encourage personal choice as an option for their employees, increasing their sense of autonomy and control over their professional development and satisfaction.

How do I build and implement key performance indicators for my team?

Key performance indicators (KPIs) are only helpful if owners first set goals and identify ways of measuring progress toward those goals. A good coach can help owners start with the end in mind and imagine what an exemplary performance would look like, then create metrics for employees to get there.

Remember that KPIs should not and will not be the same for all your employees, even those in the same position. To be genuinely effective tools, KPIs should be reviewed and adjusted annually.

How do I think about creating the right culture within my company?

We encourage owners to think about the employment experience they wish they'd had when they started out or the one they'd wish for their kids to have. What would the key ingredients be, and what is the owner's role in putting them together?

Company culture starts at the top but is reinforced (or not) at all levels within the business. The company culture you strive for should inform your answers to all of the above questions. A coach can help keep you accountable to your company culture goals as you work to attract and nurture your ideal staff.

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WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER WHEN HIRING A COACH FOR MY BUSINESS?

WHAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO OUR INDUSTRY?

Be sure the coach you're hiring is industry-savvy and understands where exactly their expertise comes from. Is it that they've worked with landscape business clients before, or that they themselves have worked for landscape companies?

WHAT IS THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO COACHING?

It's important to ask a prospective coach if they themselves work with coaches. If not, how are they continuing to refine their craft?

At The Lifescape Coach, we believe that coaches are duty-bound to work with paid coaches themselves to hone their skills further, continue to add value for clients, and avoid the entrenchment we so often caution owners against.

HOW IS THIS COACH SHOWING UP IN THE WORLD?

Spend time exploring what materials a prospective coach has shared with others. Education for business owners, while not entirely free, should be approached with an emphasis on generosity and accessibility. At The Lifescape Coach, we have published a book sharing our methodology as well as guesting on dozens of podcasts to share the high points of our coaching strategy and tips for success.

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR COACHING?

Is your primary goal as an owner simply to achieve growth in revenue and profit? Or, are you interested in attaining a deeper satisfaction in your business activity and a more significant impact in your industry? Clarity

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around this central question will help you find the coach that's right for you. As people who believe firmly in the triple bottom line of planet, people, and profit, we are positioned to support fellow business owners with the same priorities.

WHY USE THE LIFESCAPE COACH?

As someone who's been in the landscape business for almost 40 years, our founder, Monique Allen, has made many mistakes while learning how to develop staff in the way her landscape company needed. To get it right, she dove into skill building, specifically focused on organizational structures, team development, and relationship dynamics. She now shares fast-track tips so you can avoid the same pitfalls. A business owner who chooses to work with us can have the utmost confidence that we know what works and what doesn't and can help design a tailored solution for their landscape business.

This does not mean we create a blueprint; we don't believe in these rigid plans because they assume all organizations and owners are the same. Instead, we provide the tools necessary to develop customized systems that can be tweaked as your business grows. Consider the difference between custom-made clothing and off-the-rack; nothing fits as well as something custom-made for you.

Taking the time to custom-design your team-building strategy will provide a terrific springboard for the evolution of your company. Because in using this approach, your strategy will inevitably be a distillation of your values, brand, and differentiated services—empowering you as a business owner to sustain your vision and maintain a competitive advantage in hiring.

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IS THIS INVESTMENT OF MY TIME REALLY WORTH IT?

These days, we're all programmed to seek out the quickest, shiniest solution to our problems. We all wish for the easy-to-download app to fix the issue. It's the sophisticated business owner who can take a step back and recognize that as much time as you've invested in learning your craft as a landscaper, you must invest an equal amount of time in understanding your business. Because as an owner, your business now also becomes your craft. The Lifescape Coach offers several solutions for owners to help develop that critical entrepreneurial craft.

PRIVATE LIBERATION BUSINESS COACHING

Private Liberation Business Coaching is aimed at owners looking for an accountability partner to work in lockstep with over an extended period. Clients have the option to set up a weekly or bi-weekly schedule to begin and can eventually move to monthly meetings. In between sessions, you have access to your coach as a lifeline to tease out pressing issues.

RAPID RELIEF PROJECT COACHING

Rapid Relief Project Coaching is an intensive, time-limited coaching program for clients with an immediate, critical problem to solve. This model of coaching involves five meetings over a period of five to seven weeks. In between sessions, clients must be willing to engage in assigned "homework" and spend five or more hours each week working on the issue at hand. Rapid Relief Coaching requires a solid commitment to the process and implementation but represents less of a financial commitment than ongoing private coaching.

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REGENERATIVE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Our Regenerative Business Community is an invitation-only group coaching program designed to give clients access to a dynamic group of specialists to demystify elements of business ownership and share business-building experiences.

Group sessions may include guest speakers or masterminding sessions where a participant can present a problem, and other members can cross-pollinate ideas to solve it. A confidentiality agreement is required to ensure that participants do not share information revealed during group sessions. The Lifescape Coach typically opens a Regenerative Business Community group cohort twice yearly.

ONLINE LEARNING FOR LANDSCAPE BUSINESS OWNERS

The Lifescape Coach has developed [online learning resources](#) for immediate access: The Landscaper's Freedom Formula and The Landscape Business Owner's Survival Guide. These resources are offered at an accessible price point, giving owners access to tools to help them master the basics of building and growing landscape businesses, including team building.

TO LEARN MORE

Download our e-book, [25 Signs Your Landscape Business Needs Developmental Coaching](#)

Request a [Business Discovery Session](#) by clicking the Get Started button on our website.

Online classes are available in our [online store](#).

I'm ready to break my
isolation and work with
a landscape business
coach!



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