

HUMAN RESOURCES: LABOR AVAILABILITY-SEASONAL EMPLOYEES

HOW DO I MEET MY LABOR NEEDS?

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. What is my goal as an employer?

- What kind of employer do I want to be?
- What is my contribution through employment?
- What is my long-term objective for balancing hand labor tasks and mechanization?

2. Have I developed an employee handbook?

- Does it set forth employment policies, recruitment and hiring processes, employee orientation, and format for documentation, and career opportunities?

3. Have I developed an employment plan?

- Advance planning is key to meeting your seasonal labor needs. Successful planning and implementation of a plan will reduce your risk of not being able to hire the right people for the right job at the right time. Planning will yield an opportunity to maximize returns on labor expenses and can lead to an overall reduction in your labor requirements.

Components of a good employment plan:

- Ethics
- Cultural responsibility/sensitivity
- Communication
- Expectations
- Safe work environment
- Proactive
- Source of labor pool
- Hiring procedures
- Documentation
- Orientation
- Disciplinary action

STEPS TO TAKE IN MEETING YOUR SEASONAL LABOR NEEDS:

1. Develop, maintain, and use a recruitment and hiring plan for seasonal workers

- Develop a self-perpetuating recruitment system.
- Have a written recruitment and hiring plan and document all activities.
- Stay in contact with employees.
- Ensure that all employees have contact information for you and or the vineyard manager/foreman.
- Develop a recruitment/interviewing training program for managers and others to use in recruitment for the operation.
- Enlist current employees to recruit for the operation.
- Communicate your plan to employees so expectations are clear.
- Spread the word about hiring.
- Tell new hires, neighbors, other business owners, WorkSource and/or other community based organizations that you are/will be hiring.
- Be specific with numbers of people needed, length of employment and job skills required.



2. Know your operation

- Use schematics and timetables to visually map out your labor needs on a long term, annual and seasonal basis, including competing labor needs and complementary crops.
- Review plan if there has been or will be a change in your operation (acquisition, contraction, or diversification).
- Assess what your seasonal labor needs are (skills and number of people) and the time period that you will need to have seasonal employees employed.
- Continually review and update plan as season progresses, taking into account estimated yield, vine death, crop loss, estimated maturity/harvest dates, etc.
- Develop a back up plan.
- Continually evaluate the replacement of labor with capital (purchase and use of machinery).

Hiring fewer numbers of people for longer periods of time should always be one of your human resource goals.

3. Know your local workforce

- Who is your local seasonal workforce?
 - Local, migrant, in/out of state, gender and age demographics. Statistical information on local, migrant, in and out of state, gender, and age demographics are available at:
http://www.workforceexplorer.com/admin/uploadedPublications/1372_Ag02R.pdf
- What does the historical supply/demand graph look like for labor-intensive agriculture?
- Who am I competing with?
- Who might I partner with?
- Will my employment conditions attract a competitive work force?

4. Know the current status of local labor supply and demand

- What is the situation in the area?
 - Any news of shortages or surpluses at other vineyards, orchards or in row crops?
 - Are they factual?
 - Will they affect your ability to recruit and hire when you need to?
- Any major activities in the region that might impact your ability to get the right people at the right time?
 - Booms or busts in competing industries or nearby states?
 - Level or intensity of INS activity in the area?
 - Collective bargaining / job action at other vineyards or orchards?
- What is the current season's prevailing wage for the various jobs you will need to fill?
 - What are your neighbors paying?
 - What are competing industries paying?
 - What are employees asking for?
- What wage rates are employees receiving on a regional basis?

CHECKLIST: BUILDING YOUR LABOR AVAILABILITY TOOLBOX

- Have I articulated what kind of employer I want to be?
- Have I developed an employment plan?
- Have I developed a recruitment and hiring plan?
- Have I compiled data about my work force and evaluated my work force needs?
- Do I know the current supply and demand for local labor?



HUMAN RESOURCES: LABOR AVAILABILITY-PERMANENT EMPLOYEES

HOW DO I MEET MY LABOR NEEDS FOR PERMANENT EMPLOYEES?

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Do I have an employee management plan that includes recruitment and hiring goals, knowledge of my operation and overall objectives for my permanent employees? (Permanent employees are those paid an hourly or salary wage, but not non-exempt employees.)

1. Recruitment/Hiring

- Am I looking in the right places for permanent employees? Other vineyards? Community colleges or universities? Other horticultural industries?
- Is word of mouth sufficient or should I advertise in local or regional media newspapers or trade magazines?
- Have I asked my current employees if they know someone who would meet the requirements?
- Am I prepared to headhunt?
- Am I clear on job requirements, employment conditions and terms?
- Does my operation and employment offer appear to be attractive in comparison to other/ competing companies?

2. Know your Operation

- Assess what your current and future needs (skills and numbers) are for filling permanent and semi-permanent or non-seasonal positions.
- Develop job skill requirements, job titles and job descriptions for the positions and a timetable for when these positions will need to be filled.
- Develop a plan on how and where you will recruit for the positions.
- Have you identified specific individuals?
- With desired skills in mind, evaluate your current seasonal and permanent employees to determine if you can promote from within.
- With additional training could you build the capacity of one or more individuals within your operation?

CHECKLIST: BUILDING YOUR LABOR AVAILABILITY TOOLBOX

- Have I developed an overall labor management plan for my permanent employees that includes goals and objectives as well as specifics like recruiting and hiring?
- Have I evaluated my labor needs and identified where I will find such employees?



HUMAN RESOURCES-WORK QUALITY

HOW DO I ACHIEVE QUALITY WORK FROM MY EMPLOYEES?

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. What are your work quality standards and expectations?
2. Have standards and expectations been clearly defined?
3. Are job tasks being completed on time but done poorly, with the end results of increased unit labor costs or lowered value of product?

AREAS TO CONSIDER REGARDING WORK QUALITY:

1. Frontline Supervision

- Are field supervisors clear on expectations of the job—when and how the tasks at hand need to be carried out and completed?
- Do supervisors have the necessary skills and authority to train, evaluate and improve the processes along the way?
- Is there need for greater involvement or oversight on the part of management?
- Do your front line supervisors share your human resources vision?
- Are they empowered to carry out the duties necessary for effective employee supervision?
- Do they have the skills to carry out the duties?
- Is their management style, personality and value system conducive to supervising in this type of employment situation?
- Is there a need or opportunity for management/supervisory training?
- Do front line supervisors have comprehensive knowledge of labor laws and compliance issues and are they complying with rules and regulations?
- Is there a clear standard for addressing supervisors who are not adhering to or enforcing rules and regulations?
- Are there any indications that supervisors are misusing their authority?

2. Instructions/Training

- What is your methodology for training?
- Is it effective and compliant with follow up to assess the training and level of comprehension?
- Do they understand how to complete the task and why it needs to be done the way instructed?
- Have employees been shown how to complete a task?
- Do employees understand when the task needs to be completed and why timing is important?
- Are communication lines open to get feedback on training needs and training programs?

3. Employee Job Skills

- Is your supervisor skilled in assessing the work skills of potential seasonal employees?
- Do employees have the skills to complete tasks?
- What type of training would help ensure top performance and quality control?
- Is such training available in house?
- Do you have outside resources to draw on for employee training?
- Are employees aware of or sensitive to cultural norms related to workplace behavior?
- Have you developed a job description for each position clearly stating experience required.



4. Tools and Technology

- Are the right tools available?
- Do employees know how to use tools correctly, efficiently and safely?
- Is there a program in place to train workers how to use tools and equipment?
- Are tools well maintained and in good working order?
- Are there other tools available or methods that would ensure greater quality control or reduce labor units?
- Are there tools or methods available that would ease the physical demands and/or reduce or eliminate safety hazards?
- Are employees offered the opportunity to suggest or comment on tool or method selection?
- Is there a checklist that has been prepared to document the condition and maintenance of tools, training program completion, and such?

5. Reward System

- Is there a reward system for “a job well done and done on time?” If not, should there be?
- Is the reward system designed to get the results you want?
- Is it the right reward for the right work and expectation? Is it adequate?
 - Be prepared for continual assessment and adjustment.
- Is the reward system rewarding the wrong behavior?
- Does the reward system inhibit a safe and productive work environment?
- Are you communicating the reward system to the workers in a way that ensures full understanding?
- Have you evaluated the reward system to ensure that it doesn’t violate labor laws and regulations?

6. Employee Response to Real or Perceived Injustice

- Are there perceived or real injustices occurring that might be associated with slow work or poor behavior?
- Are supervisors skilled in identifying and effectively responding to concerns of employees?
- Is their response congruent with the company vision?
- Are supervisors acting in accordance with company goals?
- Is there a standard operating procedure for addressing real or perceived injustices?
- Is a plan in place to respond to internal conflicts among employees? Between employees and supervisors? Between employees or supervisors and upper management?
- Is there an avenue for employees to communicate concerns to management?

CHECKLIST: BUILDING YOUR WORK QUALITY TOOLBOX

- Are frontline supervisors well prepared through training, empowerment, and knowledge to bring out the best in my employees?
- Is my method of training effective in eliciting work quality from my employees?
- Are the right tools and technology being utilized and are they helping workers do their very best?
- Is a reward system helping achieve my employment goals?
- Have I developed a plan to deal with internal conflicts among employees and between employees and supervisors or management?
- Is there an established system to learn of and address employee concerns?



HUMAN RESOURCES-NONWAGE EXPENSES

AM I MANAGING INDIRECT LABOR EXPENSES THAT ARE ASSOCIATED WITH TURNOVER, ABSENTEEISM, OR MANDATORY BENEFITS?

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. Recruiting

- Do I have a recruitment strategy?
 - Does it reflect my predicted seasonal, permanent and future needs?
 - Are the strategies working and are they efficient?
 - Am I attracting the people I want and when I need them?
- Is my recruiting strategy highly dependent on local workforce supply and demand fluctuations?
 - In times of tight markets will I be ahead of the situation with more applicants than positions?
- Does the recruitment process meet all regulatory compliance concerns, including Equal Employment Opportunity laws?

2. Hiring

- Do I have a current list of job titles, required skills, and position descriptions?
- Are position descriptions broad enough for seasonal employees yet specific enough for permanent employees?
 - Are my written descriptions legal?
- Do I know and understand all the legal responsibilities involved in hiring seasonal and permanent employees?
- Do I have set procedures in place for hiring employees in a manner that fulfills all federal, state and local legal requirements?

3. Orientation of Employees

- Do I have an employee handbook?
 - If not, do I need to develop one?
 - Is the handbook current and comprehensive, yet understandable by all parties?
 - Is there a formal signature of agreement between employee and employer as to content?
- Do I have a well-designed and efficient orientation program in place?
 - Is it being followed?
- Does orientation include overview of company (ownership and goals), management structure, training requirements, understanding and agreement of employment terms and conditions by the employer and employee?
- Does orientation provide for linguistic compliance?
 - The employer is responsible for ensuring that all information, including job safety and training, is presented in a manner and language that is understood by non-English speaking employees.

4. Instability of Workforce

- Can I measure or assess the impact of the inherent instability of the local workforce?
- Is the instability of the workforce inordinately or seriously impacting me?
- How can I lessen the negative impacts of instability?



5. Workman's Compensation and Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Training

- Are my UI rates below, above or within the mean for industry type, region, and number of employees?
 - How often do I review my rating?
 - Do I understand why my rating and rates are what they are?
- Is there a connection between training (frequency, methods, tools etc.) and the number of accidents, injuries or illnesses on my farm?
- Are safety meetings being held and documented?
 - Are meetings well-designed and related to specific timely tasks and subjects?

Claims assessment

- Is there a standard procedure to evaluate claims? Is there a standard practice for implementing “lessons learned?”
- Do I have a plan to reduce rates?
- Are employees involved in the evaluation of claims?
- Are employees made aware of accidents and injuries?

Retro/Safety program

- Am I a member of a Retrospective Rating Plan, such as Washington Farm Bureau's Retro/Safety Program?
 - Members of retro plans pay workers' compensation premiums to the State of Washington, but may receive a refund if workers compensation claims are lower than premiums paid. If claims are higher than the premiums paid, members must fund the difference. Retro programs claim to return millions of premiums to members each year through claims management and improving farm safety through training programs.

Incentive program

- Are employees motivated to work safely?
- Is there a method to commend employees for their attention to job site safety rules and practices, such as an incentive program?
- See comments on reward system in Human Resources Riskbuster II - Work Quality Riskbuster.

6. Absenteeism/ Turnover

- Have I developed metrics or a way to measure the incidence rate of absenteeism and turnover?
- Are the numbers correlated to certain individuals, specific season, timing or anything else?
- Is there a company policy covering absenteeism?
 - If so, do employees understand the policy?
 - If not, do I need to develop and document one?
- Is my rate of turnover unreasonably high? Are rates correlated to specific positions?
- Do I conduct exit interviews when employees terminate employment?
 - Am I learning from exit interviews and implementing changes as a result of them?

7. Environmental/Work Place Accidents

- Is there proper notification of various agencies (OSHA, WISHA, EPA, WSDA, etc.) when accidents happen?
- Is there proper documentation of the accident?
- Is the accident thoroughly investigated?
- Are new training techniques or subjects developed in response to accidents?



8. Tampering or Sabotage of Machinery, Unexplained Loss of Tools or Chemicals, Wasted Inputs

- Is there excessive damage or wear and tear of equipment?
- Have small tools or chemicals been lost, misplaced or otherwise determined missing without explanation?
- Are inputs such as gasoline, water, agri-chemicals, personal protective equipment consumed at a rate that is accounted for or raises questions?
- Are there any trends that can be correlated to specific employees or specific times/periods?
- Are lines of communication clear and non-threatening for employees to bring grievances to the attention of management?
- Is there a procedure on how to address the issue if suspicions are raised?
- Is there a written policy that allows management to legally address this issue and/or employees?
- Are employees trained in how to react to acts of tampering and sabotage?

CHECKLIST: BUILDING YOUR NON-WAGE EXPENSES TOOLBOX

- Have I developed a plan for recruiting, hiring, orientating and retaining employees?
- Have I developed an employee handbook, clarifying all policies and procedures? Are the contents understood and agreed upon by employees?
- Does my plan include ways to reduce instability and turnover in my workforce?
- Do I have a plan to help manage and reduce my UI rates?
- Do I have a plan to address the issue of sabotage by workers to farm equipment or property?



HUMAN RESOURCES-INTERNAL CONFLICT

IS INTERNAL CONFLICT WITH EMPLOYEES A FUNCTION OF NON-WAGE EXPENSES, WORK QUALITY OR LABOR AVAILABILITY?

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. Clear Communication Channels

- Are procedures in place to ensure a forum for confidentiality when employees want to bring forth issues?
 - Employees who step forward, however, must understand that in some situations where further investigation is necessary, although all efforts will be made to protect confidentiality, they may be named in the investigation.
- Are lines of communication known and understood throughout your organization?
- Is the communication process non-threatening throughout the organization?
- Are the lines of communication between management and front line supervision efficient and effective?
- Is there a healthy level of conversation/dialogue between and among all levels in the organization?

2. Attention to Employees' Need for Basic Information

- Are employees well informed on how to complete a job?
- Are employees informed as to why a job must be completed a certain way?
- Are employees informed as to when a job is to be completed and why?
- Have employees been informed as to specific safety precautions they need to employ and why?
- Have employees been told that their role in getting the job done correctly and on time is important and valued?

3. Job Expectations

- Are job expectations clear and understood?
- Are job expectations realistic?
- Are job performance goals clear and understood?
- Are the employment conditions and terms clear and understood?
- Are expectations in written format?
- Should they be published in an employee manual?

4. Front Line Supervision

- Do your front line supervisors share your vision and are they clear on the job expectations?
- Are they empowered to carry out the duties necessary for effective employee supervision?
- Do they have the skills to carry out the duties?
- Is the management style, personality, and value system of your supervisors conducive to managing employees in this type of employment situation?
- Is there a need or opportunity for management/supervisory training?
- Do front line supervisors have comprehensive knowledge of labor laws and compliance issues? Are they complying with rules and regulations?
- Is there a clear standard for addressing supervisors who are not adhering to or enforcing rules and regulations?
- Any indications that supervisors are misusing their authority?



5. Legal Mandates and Prohibitions

- Are you and your employees well versed on the rules and regulations governing their employment?
- Is your operation in compliance with federal and state labor laws specific to type of employment?
- Is there an identified individual who is charged with staying current on rules and regulations?
- Are networks and resources developed for this individual to stay current?
- Are employees offered the opportunity to participate in implementation of new rules and regulations?

6. Documentation

- Is proper documentation done throughout the employment process, from hiring to disciplinary action to firing?
- Are supervisors aware of what you want documented, when you want it documented and how you want it documented?
- Is documentation done in a timely, consistent manner, and in a comprehensive format that will stand up in court?
- Is documentation kept free of personal opinion?

CHECKLIST: BUILDING YOUR INTERNAL CONFLICT TOOLBOX

- Am I paying attention to the information needs of my employees?
- Do employees understand job expectations and job performance goals?
- Have I worked to establish clear lines of communication throughout all levels of employment, from supervisor to seasonal workers?
- Have I worked closely with front line supervisors to ensure they have the skills, training, vision, and knowledge of labor laws?
- Are my employees following labor laws and do I have someone who stays current with new regulations?



HUMAN RESOURCES-LEGAL INFRACTION

AM I ADEQUATELY MANAGING COMPLIANCE ISSUES?

CHECKLIST OF QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

1. Relationship with Employees

- Is my operation in compliance with federal and state labor laws specific to type of employment?
- Is there an identified individual who is charged with keeping current on rules and regulations?
- Are networks and resources developed for this individual to stay current?
- Are employees informed of new rule adoptions or changes and how and when regulations will be implemented?
- Are employees asked to suggest how a new rule or regulation might be implemented on the farm?
- Are established, non-threatening lines of communication known to employees?

2. Documentation

- Is required documentation being done and in a timely manner?
- Is documentation stored properly and readily accessible?
- Do I understand the depth, breath and spirit of laws?
- Do I have a standard operating procedure to respond to compliance investigations?

3. Relationship with Government Agencies

- Is my operation receiving an inordinate amount of attention or oversight from a specific agency?
- Do I need to reestablish/improve relationship with specific agencies or agency individuals?
- Have I utilized educational services provided by government agencies or trade associations?
- What is my resource network for staying current with compliance issues (Farm Bureau, Washington Growers League, labor law attorney, etc.)?
- Am I participating in legislative focused discussions between industry and government?
- Am I participating in stakeholder committees?
- Am I providing comments when public comment opportunities arise?

CHECKLIST: BUILDING YOUR LEGAL INFRACTION MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX

- Am I in compliance with state and federal labor laws and staying current with changes and new laws?
- Have I established a standard operating procedure for dealing with compliance issues and investigations?
- Do I have an effective way in communicating new laws to my employees?
- Am I following documentation requirements and am I documenting appropriate matters in a thorough, timely, and consistent way?



HUMAN RESOURCES-RESOURCES

Local Agricultural Workforce Statistics

Washington State Labor Market and Economic Analysis Home Page
<http://www.workforceexplorer.com>

Agricultural Workforce in Washington State. 2002 (updated annually).
http://www.workforceexplorer.com/admin/uploadedPublications/1372_Ag02R.pdf

Washington State Labor Market and Economic Analysis – County Profiles
<http://www.wa.gov/esd/lmea>

National Agricultural Statistics Service
<http://www.usda.gov/nass/nasshome.htm>

Washington State Agricultural Statistics Service
<http://www.usda.gov/nass/wa>

USDA Agriculture Labor Affairs
<http://www.usda.gov/agency/oce/oce/labor-affairs/affairs.htm>

Agricultural Labor Management

Rosenberg, H., Carkner, R., Hewlett, J., et. al. 2002. Ag Help Wanted: Guidelines for Managing Agricultural Labor. Available in print as a 242-page soft-cover book and on CD-ROM.
www.aghelpwanted.org

Billikopf, G. 2003. Labor Management in Agriculture (English and Spanish Editions). University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources Publication #3417.
<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/ucce50/ag-labor>

University of California Web site devoted to agricultural labor management
<http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/ucce50/ag-labor>
<http://are.berkeley.edu/APMP>

USDA Agriculture Labor Affairs Website (source for other Web page links)
<http://www.usda.gov/agency/oce/oce/labor-affairs/laborres.htm>

Training

Safety Information and on-farm safety training materials
http://www.gemplers.com/a/pages/_alert.asp

National Ag Safety Database, safety information, and on-farm safety training materials
<http://www.cdc.gov/nasd/>



U.S. Labor Code
<http://www.dol.gov/>

Immigration and Naturalization Service
<http://uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm>

USDA Agriculture Labor Affairs
<http://www.usda.gov/agency/oce/oce/labor-affairs/affairs.htm>

Summary of Federal Laws and Regulations Affecting Agricultural Employers
<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ah719>

Agricultural Law Resources, Agricultural Law Newsletter, and updates and agricultural labor law web sites
<http://www.agriculturelaw.com/>

Access portal to all Washington State Government Agencies
<http://access.wa.gov/>

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