

Building a Successful Team

Being a lead grower carries many responsibilities, aside from the obvious loss reduction and quality plant production. Being a leader of any type requires understanding that the key to success is people. Just like plants require nuanced care to thrive, people do as well. Akin to growing a shade crop in a poly structure, we must set our team up for success. We do that by having the right people in the right places. We look at strengths, weaknesses and personalities of each individual when considering placement within a greenhouse.

This all begins with the interviewing process. Did I ask the right questions? Will the candidate have a good relationship with the team? How will they fit in? Do they have what it takes, and do they understand what it takes? Do they have passion? These are all questions one

must ask themselves during the interview. Is it a good thing to have new hires with similar personalities as the rest of the team? To me, this answer is no.

What makes a well-rounded team is a group of people who all share the same passion for success. I, however, believe that personalities must differ. This creates an eclectic group of people helping to grow our product and also helping our team to grow interpersonally. It is well-rounded individuals like these who drive our industry to innovate.

Admittedly, this method of hiring can possibly cause conflict within a group; however, as a lead grower it is important to manage the temperature of the team and work with them on solutions before there are problems. Nevertheless, if I believe the hire is a good fit, we begin the onboarding process, which includes areas of grower management.

PERSONALITIES AND CAMARADERIE

Here at Pleasant View Gardens, we have many different styles of greenhouses, all carrying different demands, whether it be physically demanding or technologically demanding. Our greenhouses were built to accommodate many different types of crops, some easier to grow than others. When looking at placement of a team member in a greenhouse, one must look at how the personality of the grower will interact with

the personality of the greenhouse. In a sense it becomes a partnership between the structure and the employee. The grower must work in unison with the greenhouse to understand its subtleties and navigate a course to a successful end. It is my job as lead grower to give our employees the tools they need and to remove avoidable speed bumps from the future.

From here, we look to build camaraderie within the team. Camaraderie is a sense of belonging, respect and understanding. What we do is not always fun and games, but with focus and hard work there comes a time for such activities. As a lead grower, one must understand that their staff's years of service within the industry and within the company will vary. Having this variation is beneficial to any team. For example,

having cultural data of a crop is a great tool for new hires, but having team members with years of cultural experience is a significantly better one.

I like to pair new hires with seasoned veterans, as any sports team places new recruits with an experienced player. There are many benefits to this, one of which is understanding culture.

Company culture varies across all industries. A key to the success of a new hire is understanding the culture

and how they are immersed into it. Creating a team ally and having that ally explain the culture is important to the success of the new team member. This method works both because it creates a partnership between the new hire and veteran and it creates a trust between the new hire and other components of the company.

It is our job as lead growers to nurture that growth of a team and work toward keeping the ship on the right heading. The ship will stray from time to time, but with open and honest communication and clear direction, it is usually an easy course correction. Our industry can be all the synonyms related to the word "exhausting," but for me and my team, we like to focus on the synonyms relating to the word "rewarding."

At the end of the day, we go home with a feeling of accomplishment. It is those moments we realize why we love doing what we do and why we continue to do it day after day. It is those moments that need to be acknowledged and reinforced with the team. Support passion and develop camaraderie; the results will be seen in the people and the plants. [gpn](#)

“I like to pair new hires with seasoned veterans, as any sports team places new recruits with an experienced player.”



Noah Derohanian is lead grower at Pleasant View Gardens in Loudon, New Hampshire. He's a member of GPN's 40 Under 40 Class of 2021 and can be reached at noahd@pwpvg.com.