



SNOW BUSINESS

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It's a GIRL THING

Leaders break gender barriers to show snow as a viable opportunity for women



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Ingram Enterprises' Laura Ingram, CSP, (left) and Jaxtimer Landscaping's Angela Cenzalli, CSP

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**SPECIAL INSERT
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Hiring for winter

It's never too soon to start recruiting next season's team of workers



By KAREN KIER

It's summertime! The sun is shining, barbecue plans are in the works and the weekend's almost here. Account managers and production crews, delighted to be outdoors, are creating beautiful landscapes under sunny skies. Everyone is energized by the warmth of summer.

But there's always that one in the crowd who has to spoil all the fun. This time, that person is yours truly. I'm calling a meeting, and at the top of my agenda is a winter planning discussion. I anticipate the groans and not-so-quiet whispers ... "Can she be serious?" After all, we just exited a winter of 153 inches of snow, with the last storm in late April. My response: "It's never too soon to start thinking about winter."

Everywhere I go I hear about the challenges with hiring good labor. I hear companies say there aren't enough people interested in this kind of work or there aren't enough qualified people available. I've even heard companies say they think they should downsize due to the labor shortage.

Jump start the process

Hiring for winter work is never easy, which is why you must take a hard look at it before you need it.

1 How'd we do? Take stock of the people who worked for you last winter. Find out through personal phone calls and a prepared survey whether they were happy with the work they did for you. Ask what did and didn't work from their perspective. Whether they work for you year-round or just in the winter, people like to be asked their opinion.



They also like to share ideas and solutions. Seeking input is a way to show you care. If people feel you care, they'll stay with you winter after winter, year after year.

2 Stay in touch. Once you reach out to your winter team, stick with them throughout the summer. Send a newsletter to inform them about any company or winter-specific changes you might be making, especially if it is due to feedback they provided. When fall arrives, reach out again to tell them about any upcoming training or to just remind them that you have a spot for them. Never let them forget you, or they might go with someone else.

3 Expand your horizons. Find new people. Reach out now to other seasonal businesses that lay off workers in the fall, such as construction workers, roofers, pavers and heavy equipment operators. Get your business card in their hand and post it on bulletin boards everywhere in town. Let them know you can use their skills and they can make a great paycheck working with you.

4 Post flyers. People who see them might not call you right away, but every time they go by that flyer they'll see your name and remember it.

Try adding pictures of your winter equipment in use. Photos catch attention, and when people see you have good tools to work with they'll know you will take good care of them. Be sure any advertising you do for summer positions makes note of winter employment possibilities. Many people don't want to work in this industry because they don't realize they can work year-round. Be sure to reflect what you can offer beyond the competition such as any specialized training, innovative equipment or hours to fit their schedule.

5 Use social media. When posting pictures of your summer projects, occasionally add some that let people know you're thinking about winter and have positions that you want to fill. On the hottest of days people enjoy seeing a short video of someone blowing snow off a sidewalk. There's nothing wrong with letting people know about all the fun you can have doing winter work.

Get your team on board with thinking about winter during the summer. The preparation you do now will pay off when this beautiful weather starts to turn, and the cold winds blow. **SB**

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