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# Careers Promotion Initiative Ornamental Horticulture

*A report for the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and  
the Royal Horticultural Society*

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## 1. Introduction

The Ornamental Horticulture (OH) sector in the UK is a large and growing industry. It employs around 560,000 people in over 32,000 businesses and adds around £25bn per year to UK economic output. It is, however, facing a skills crisis which manifests itself in an ageing workforce, insufficient talent coming into the sector, and general difficulties for employers in finding apprentices and staff with the right skills. For these reasons, the sector needs a cutting-edge careers promotion initiative that might target school and college leavers, and career changers.

To maximise outreach and effectiveness, a careers promotion initiative will have to combine several avenues of communication and tailor its messages to the target audience, while highlighting the opportunities offered by the sector. In addition, it will need to bear in mind career motivations for young people and career-changers and the possible attractions of alternative careers.

Previous research carried out by the OH sector has revealed that perceptions of the sector and a lack of knowledge of career opportunities and progression are key barriers to attracting talent.

Pye Tait Consulting was commissioned to carry out a short study of the subject based on telephone interviews and desk research aimed to review the environment and establish case studies to serve as examples of career promotion in other sectors. The object was to use the case studies, or elements of them, as potential models for career promotion initiatives in horticulture. The case studies from other economic sectors were based on their relative similarity with the Ornamental Horticulture sector, i.e. not being based on office work and involving a degree of outdoor and/or physical work. In addition, these sectors all deploy sophisticated careers initiatives that use a mixture of engagement methods which span websites, career ambassadors, social media, printed material, careers fairs, and skills competitions. All evidence has been complemented by further background research into related career initiatives and/or websites and by Pye Tait Consulting's lengthy experience in careers work in sectors as diverse as road haulage and the motor industry to aviation and the electrotechnical sector.

Based on these case studies and desk research, a set of costed recommendations on potential approaches to career promotion in ornamental horticulture has been developed.

### Objectives

The overall aim of this early research has been to scope a number of ways in which careers promotion can be effectively delivered to potential recruits to the Ornamental Horticulture sector.

Specific objectives include undertaking a substantive piece of desk research to include academic and industry sources of information and, ten to fifteen telephone/skype depth interviews with key stakeholder organisations.

### Scope of the review

The review has been designed around the following main client-set considerations:

- Delivery models.
- Associated costs and funding models.
- An initial target of school leavers and “second career” recruits.
- Initiatives within and without the Ornamental Horticulture Roundtable Group (OHRG) consortium.
- Stakeholder attitudes towards collaborative careers promotion.
- Mechanisms to enable collaboration of partners.
- Reviewing career promotion in other UK sectors

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## 2. Methodology

This research was limited in time and resources and therefore employed a mixed methodology of desk-based research and limited telephone interviews with eight organisations from different economic sectors and industries.

This included non-industry-specific career promotion activities such as skills competitions and career change support.

### Desk research

Desk research involved background research into the careers promotion tools used by the organisations interviewed, such as websites and further examples of industries, for which it did not prove possible to arrange interviews, in particular, the hospitality sector.

In addition, non-UK industry approaches were researched to cross-reference and corroborate findings on general career promotion practice with an emphasis on establishing standard practices and if possible, best practices.

Desk work also probed the overall costs of different careers promotion techniques – e.g. paper-based promotion, videos production, web-sites, social media, careers fairs, etc.

### In-depth interviews

For the in-depth interviews, industry experts with insight knowledge into career promotion strategies and approaches were consulted. Due to data protection provisions, unfortunately the names and/or positions of these contacts cannot be disclosed. Nevertheless, some key points from the interviews have been attributed to an interview conversation in the case studies.

The interviews were carried out to gain insight information into strategic considerations and staff and financial resources committed to career promotion on an annual basis. We used a combination of approaches to obtain contact details of key stakeholders such as LinkedIn searches and telephone based inquiries.

### Analysis and Reporting

The results of the desk research and interviews were compiled into sector-specific case-studies. Based on the case studies, general trends and practices were established.

These were combined with wider careers promotion knowledge and an outline for a careers' promotion initiative was drafted together with a designed delivery model.

### Delivery model

The delivery model was based on standard practice in careers promotion, combined with information on staff and related costs. Two RHS vacancies and the 25+ minimum wage rate were used as a basis for staff costs. Additional costs were estimated based on information provided in interviews, information featured in discussions (e.g. cost for website re-modelling) with the OHRG and Pye Tait's knowledge of careers initiatives in related sectors. The costs related to a website were estimated conservatively as the websites of the AHDB and RHS are already very sophisticated and the GoLandscape website and the Arboricultural Association's website already feature relevant information such as vacancies.

More generalised estimates for travel expenses (average cost of hotel and travel) and the production of print materials (research of printing shops and leaflet designers) which are reflected in the delivery model are aimed to indicate direct costs. Indirect costs such as overheads, staff benefits and other administration are not reflected. These may be supported by the core budgets of the supporting organisations.

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## 3. Overview

### Standard practice vs best practice

Insofar as they are widely used in the UK, the research results highlighted in this report can be classified as standard practice. The label “best practice” was assessed from wider research. It was broadly defined as practice which is regarded as highly successful in attracting recruits. However, objective “practice” in the form of specific tools and approaches is not the only consideration. Budgets are critical in such highly competitive markets, not only because they determine volume but because they also lay the basis for professionally presented material which is attractive to the audiences concerned.

### Careers promotion in other sectors

With the proliferation of paper-based and electronic careers promotion across a multitude of sectors and an extended period of full-employment, the competition for a shrinking pool of potential recruits has led to a growing trend towards face-to-face and visual/observational engagement in career promotion and an increasing sophistication in website and social media communication.

The trend towards enhanced direct contact includes career ambassadors, work-experience, school/college visits, and skills competitions. A career website is still the most vital and indispensable mainstay of careers information. They are, however no longer the only way in which people acquire information and link with an industry or sector.

Pye Tait’s recent work in the careers sphere – for such sectors as construction and engineering – has revealed a key element deriving from increased audience sophistication. Recipients of careers information these days tend to be a little suspicious of “official” information, jargon, and difficult vocabulary, tending to regard it as little short of propaganda. The increasing use of social media and people’s familiarity with “comparison” websites also reinforces the desire among careers-browsers for comparative data and independent reviews.

Peer review and recommendation is, therefore, just as important as it was in the distant past and the “information” provided by websites is regarded as valuable only when it is factual, where it is interactive (allowing the visitor to drive the “conversation”, and where it can be easily compared in some way with equivalent sectors and jobs. This is a familiar problem for product and service marketers (e.g. motor vehicles, insurance, hotels, etc.) but is less well understood in the careers and recruitment domain.

Career websites have become in-depth career promotion tools but they always need to be supported by engagement strategies through such avenues as ambassadors, etc. There is a growing trend to include real-time information on job vacancies and work placement opportunities to foster direct contact between employers and candidates. Career websites may thus also function as recruitment portals and include references to ambassadors and how they can be engaged.

The most important failure in many careers websites is that of misunderstanding the audience and their reason for visiting. At its simplest this can be as fundamental as designing the site to attract



school-leavers while forgetting the college leavers and the career-changers. At its most damaging (to the sector in question) it can involve the site not providing accurate, factual information, not being up-to-date<sup>1</sup>, and not addressing the most pressing comparative issues. For example, if outdoor work is a serious concern for a specific audience, this must be handled head-on and not merely ignored in the hope that a picture of the work on a sunny day might be convincing.

### Career promotion messages

Messaging is a complex process, including visual as well as direct textual elements. Experience shows that time and resources spent in acquiring an accurate understanding of recruit motivations, likes and dislikes, and preferences for types of information and interactivity deliver dividends when the design and development process begins.

Minimum text, the use of hard-hitting titles, and very carefully selected visuals are essential attributes of a good careers website just as they are, today, in commercial equivalents. Promote an industry identity and brand must be undertaken with care and the use of slogans and catchphrases minimised in order to prevent the industry appearing condescending or even old-fashioned.

Factual content is vital but, again must be succinct. Outline projections of replacement needs and sector employment growth - suggesting job security and a vertical career path – are often better presented graphically. In addition, the messages should invoke an industry identity, based not on its economic importance but on the issues and concerns that are of greatest import for the prospective recruits. These might be value-based or focus on wider societal contribution.

The idea of being part of a special group with a high prestige status can also be invoked.

One avenue for extremely successful careers promotion is often forgotten. Public relations can be the most cost-effective tool for industry bodies as well as individual firms and the messages it can deliver are extremely powerful.

### Career changers

As a rule of thumb, career changers are currently engaged in a first career following education and training and therefore tend to be older than the main target audience of many career promotion tools aiming to attract school/college-leavers.

Dissatisfaction with an existing career or sector tends to make career-changers even more sophisticated than young people in their approach to careers. However, because they may have less time to attend “careers fairs” (and often see these as being solely for school/college leavers) they major on social media and peer recommendations supported by judicious online research.

Personal contact with the sector and the recommendations of friends and of people inside the sector are extremely important for career-changers. They may research websites and companies,

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<sup>1</sup> Even a simple thing like not updating the copyright date to the current year implies lack of currency and inattention.

but decisions are usually made on the basis of peer input, much social media discussion, and direct interaction with a company.

For this reason, a very strong and active social media presence is a key element of attracting career-changers.

### Resources

Taking comparable sectors and comparing career budgets is not easy.

Individual organisational budgets in comparable sectors appear to range from as low as £60,000 to around £400,000 per year. In many cases, career promotion is carried out in partnership with other organisations, which allows for a more cost-effective approach. In general, career activities for entire sectors are managed by staff clustered in a dedicated unit.

However, the “careers budget” for a sector comprises more than simply the amount of money spent by a representative organisation (or a group of such). The nature of the sector also has an impact. For example, one in which there are multiple large, and large-medium sized, businesses can have its central careers budget leveraged by quite large amounts spent by individual companies. If a sector does not benefit from corporate career spending to any great extent, then the size of the central budget takes on additional importance.

Operating a single website effectively in the modern education/careers world can, realistically, cost anything from around £30,000 to over £200,000 per year (the Army spends £48m per year on recruitment and has recently completed a website which cost £113m – more than three times its original £30m quote).

While printed literature is relatively inexpensive in small quantities it is costly to design to good standards and relatively expensive to produce in the quantities necessary to have an impact on recruitment.

Social media is a superficially inexpensive way of reaching audiences but the costs of expert staff to manage and build the relationships and the promotional costs within the social media platforms have to be taken into account.

### Governance

Governance of career promotion is handled differently in each sector. There is a growing trend towards centralisation and the clustering of regional career promotion activities into a country-wide approach. These industry-based activities are generally overseen by the relevant trade association. The steering of careers promotion may be the responsibility of a dedicated team (e.g. Engineering and Construction sectors) or an ad-hoc working group that sets out the initial parameters.

### **Cooperation**

Several industries cooperate with organisations dedicated to career promotion such as the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), MyFirstJob or STEM Learning. Other partners are local authorities and leading businesses.

Some, like construction, work hard to coordinate and expand careers promotion activities between a range of stakeholder organisations, private companies, and their websites.

### **Quality assurance and monitoring**

Many career initiatives adhere to the Gatsby Foundation's good career guidance benchmarks.

The need for careful planning, designing, and wording to meet the important needs of inclusivity, gender neutrality, drives a requirement for expert oversight.

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## 4. Summary of Tools and Approaches

Careers promotion involves a wide variety of approaches of which the following are the most important:

1. Websites/Portals
2. Face to face tools (ambassadors/careers fairs/skills competitions, etc.)
3. Printed material
4. Social media
5. Public relations

### 4.1 Websites

Arguably the core of all promotional activities, websites, are the “go-to” medium on virtually any promotional need and are a major source of information and inspiration for potential recruits. Portals provide a mechanism to centralise the entry-point while still taking advantage of the development work of other organisations on their own websites.

### 4.2 Face-to-face tools

Gaining in importance, these generally comprise direct contact by “experts” – usually called ambassadors or in the form of company visits – careers fairs, and skills competitions.

#### **Career ambassadors**

Career ambassador networks are becoming more common practice. Notable ambassador networks include Construction Ambassadors or STEM Ambassadors. Support is available from the Careers and Enterprise Company which trains Enterprise Advisors but many sectors simply operate databases of supported employers who voluntarily give their time to visit schools and colleges.

The costs related to ambassador networks are based on the desired activities, administering and engaging with the personnel/companies, and the production of career promotion and other support materials. Ambassadors generally serve in a voluntary capacity, thereby reducing the cost. However, administration and support are vital if the networks are to be effective.

#### **Skills competitions and LIVE careers fair**

Skills competitions are relatively popular with industries that involve a high amount of practical or hands-on skills such as Construction or the Electrotechnical industry. Skills competitions are seen as a great way to showcase skills and the nature of occupations and job roles in a sector. They can thus

serve as a very good supplement to other career promotion activities. Indeed, in a survey of over 1000 respondents for CITB in 2017 (respondents were a mix of users of careers products and services and adults who have recently used career products/services such as careers advisers), of all the products and services in a list including STEM Big Bang Fair, Women In Construction, STEM Ambassadors and the GoConstruct, whilst it was the website – GoConstruct – that topped the list as being the most used and recognised, the skills competitions and careers fairs were also very highly rated.

However, competitions are still relatively poorly known and understood by employers, involve a good deal of time and effort by the employers, and are often not fully leveraged in public relations terms.

WorldSkills UK organises regional, national and international competitions. The finals of the regional competitions are linked to the annual LIVE careers fair, which is attended by around 70,000 young people per year.

### Careers fairs

These are operated by many organisations from local authorities and LEPs to individual companies. The objective is to attract potential recruits to an interesting and engaging event. They can include brief talks, interactive displays, videos, computer games, “case study” individuals, and attractive paper-based resources.

### 4.3 Printed Material

In recent years, the use of printed materials has been erroneously seen as outdated. It is easily superseded by events but when used carefully and in support of more interactive online material, can be extremely effective at conveying messages in a more lasting sense.

Web and social media experiences can be ephemeral but a printed leaflet or brochure has the potential to be used time and again and is a relatively constant reminder of the interest shown by the prospective recruit.

Just as with websites however, design and content are critical.

### 4.4 Social Media

Modern generations are more used to social media than to websites. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn can be the first points of contact for people seeking a career or a change of career.

They look for the links (e.g., #Greencareers - fictitious) or for relevant groups. They may find reviews, commentary, help, photos, videos, and much more.

Pye Tait's experience in the arena is that organisations with strong social media presence attract interest and develop large followings which in turn create a cascade of potential recruits.

The crucial requirements are an expert core of staff to drive the conversations and to develop engaging and interesting content.

### 4.5 Public Relations

An oft-ignored promotional avenue, public relations can be incredibly effective at leveraging other forms of promotion.

Every industry produces scores of public-interest events and developments every day. These are not so much the large contracts signed or the new technology purchased, but the stories about individuals who have worked hard to pass exams, who have won prizes at shows, who have developed new approaches and techniques, who have raised funds for charities, and so on.

Media – especially local newspapers and radio/TV stations – are desperate for such stories and will willingly give prominent place to engaging material.

Social media can often be the first place in which these stories emerge. Planned campaigns are effective as they can be targeted at specific groups, events or activities and are easier to track or monitor interest.

## 5. Summary of Case Study Lessons

The extensive contact we have had with case study organisations has revealed a number of findings:

1. Virtually all make use of a relatively sophisticated central website or portal;
2. Many supplement the website with an ambassador network;
3. A high proportion link their websites to open vacancies and specific companies;
4. Most encourage their companies to attend careers fairs;
5. Some have created systems by which companies can sign up to do school/college visits and the latter can request visits;
6. The best websites have interactive elements allowing potential recruits to plan their own career path or to answer questions about the work;
7. The best promotional material is heavily visual with carefully worded and limited text;
8. Career-changers are usually targeted indirectly with general, descriptive elements of the web presence, and help for employers to understand how to give them trial work and placements;
9. Very few of the case study organisations use social media in an integrated fashion (i.e. linked to websites and public relations);
10. The overseas examples are very similar to UK equivalents but in some cases are less-well advanced.

## 6. A Possible OH Model

### Land-based careers

To develop a model aimed at promoting careers in Ornamental Horticulture, the more recent discussions at the political and industry level have to be taken into account. With the Technical and Further Education Act 2017, the government has clustered career paths under the central heading of the land-based sector. In practice, land-based qualifications have been put together as a collective career pathway under subheadings Agriculture, Animal Care and Environment. This means that many Ornamental Horticulture disciplines may be clustered with other horticulture sub-sectors.

An example of this clustering approach may be the National Careers Service, which lists Ornamental Horticulture professions like Arborist, Landscaper, Florist or groundsperson as well as agriculture professions, such as farmers under the land-based heading<sup>2</sup>. The 2017 report by the Bright Crop Careers initiative<sup>3</sup> -aiming to address the shortages of new talent being recruited across the agriculture and horticulture industries- advocates bringing the land-based sector together in a “digital identity/communication campaign” to avoid duplication. According to the report, the DfE career pathway approach should serve as guidance to align industry career promotion initiatives. The recommendations of the report envisage that an aligned, land-based (website) careers initiative would maximise impact and outreach to prospective new talent.

Creating a holistic approach to career promotion under the land-based label was also a key recommendation of a workshop of horticulture industry stakeholders hosted by the National Land Based College (NLBC). In terms of outputs, the workshop outcomes suggested a joint website as well as a pooling expertise on career promotion of the various stakeholders<sup>4</sup>.

While the concept of clustering and concentration is also employed in other industries such as the Engineering Construction Industry (ECI), the label “land-based” may be too broad to effectively represent careers and opportunities in Ornamental Horticulture. The label “land-based” might lead to misleading perceptions of the Ornamental Horticulture sector and the opportunities and careers it provides. The differences between Ornamental and Edible Horticulture as well as Agriculture and other land-based sectors may serve as an argument for a dedicated Ornamental Horticulture career promotion model, which is outlined overleaf and on the following pages. Developing and promoting a dedicated Ornamental Horticulture initiative would therefore be of merit to highlight the specific opportunities in the sector and channel potential recruits into the sector. This would not preclude integration into a wider land-based initiative and would rather make Ornamental Horticulture more

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<sup>2</sup> <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-categories/environment-and-land>

<sup>3</sup> Bright Crop Careers (2017), End of project report and recommendations

<sup>4</sup> NLBC (2017), Careers Collaboration - A Workshop Report



distinguishable within such an initiative based on the pooling of career resources and tools as suggested in the reports cited above.

### Towards an OH model

Given the specific requirements of a large and economically-important sector, and taking into account best practice in the careers arena we would suggest that an annual budget of around £200,000 might be used as follows.

The existing websites of big players in the sector like the RHS are sophisticated and capable but we would recommend the creation of a separate careers website – linked of course to relevant organisations and useful sites in the sector.

Above all else however we would recommend the development of a new and modern “brand” for careers in Ornamental Horticulture. The terms used in the sector – such as horticulture and arboriculture – are formal and likely to be off-putting to modern young people. They sound “official” and not a little dated.

We would recommend therefore a brief exercise to agree a name for the brand. It must be evocative of the concerns of modern young people (and of people who might wish to change careers). The environment, caring and the climate are all major issues and a name akin to “EcoGreen”, “GreenCareers”, or “EcoCareers” might hit the mark.

Use of such a term and the minimal use of the names of representative and official bodies would go a long way towards engaging a modern audience and enthusing them with the concepts which underpin the Ornamental Horticulture sector.

The model assumes that a collaborative approach might be possible between major stakeholders in the sector based on agreeing a central staff resource but perhaps sharing responsibilities for other elements between them. RHS for example already operates a career changer programme at RHS Wisley and RHS Harlow Carr and further placements may take place from 2020 at other gardens. In this context, the RHS could act as a model for the approach to career changers by a wider range of organisations and companies. A large organisation or large company may take the lead in forming an ambassador network in the first year using the website element as a base and its own members as the first potential sign-ups.

The activities suggested in the model are based on practices confirmed in the case studies and are broadly aligned with the Gatsby Foundation’s benchmarks as they are designed for school career advice programmes. The related costs have been calculated based on evidence provided in the case studies and our own knowledge and experience. Staff costs (FTE) have been estimated on the basis of RHS vacancies.

### YEAR ONE

- Develop a core website with interactive elements, linked to related websites and information;
- Develop and agree a “brand” for careers in OH and agree a revised vocabulary for all careers communication;
- Develop and agree a short set of key messages to promote careers in the sector – focused on the core concerns of potential recruits and their job and career aspirations;
- Develop a detailed face-to-face strategy centred on recruiting ambassadors and linking them with schools and colleges;
- Build into the website a resource for employers including help with interviewing and selection, trial periods and work placements, resources for schools/college visits, doing their own public relations, use of social media, etc.
- Develop a strategy and approaches for social media and public relations;
- Design and launch a small range of printed resources to support other tools.
- Baseline visits to website careers pages, numbers of ambassadors, numbers of relevant careers fairs, activity on social media, public relations activity, etc.

### Approximate budget:

Two full-time members of staff (or equivalent) – including staff with expertise in social media promotion and public relations – approx. £50,000 (no allowance here for overheads and on-costs)

Website development – high quality, interactive (including link systems for ambassadors and schools/colleges; potential job vacancy sections; etc. - c£35,000-£45,000

External support for printed material design, text authoring, supportive research, etc. c£60,000

Printing of paper-based materials – c £30,000

**Total c£190,000**

### YEAR TWO

- Further refine the website;
- Support ambassadors and schools and colleges;
- Keep the employers' areas of the website up to date
- Develop a frequent and regular stream of material – both text and visual for social media and public relations;
- Keep printed resources up-to-date and perhaps extend the range;
- Develop a few short videos of OH work and case studies for the website.
- Update baseline measure from Year One.

### Approximate budget

Staff: c £50,000

Refinements and small additions to website: c £15,000

Design and develop five short videos – c£25,000

Printed material – c£30,000

External development support – c £50,000

Sponsorship of WorldSkills demo competition - £15,000

**Total c £185,000**

## 7. Other Recommendations

1. The most important lesson from case studies and previous experience is that proactivity is the key. Passive promotion whether through leaflets, websites, careers fairs, or anything else will not succeed in an extremely competitive careers environment.
2. Active promotion is absolutely essential – and this means actively seeking and promoting the great events that happen every day in the industry.
3. Provide advice within the website on starting own business as a potential avenue for career progression;
4. If thought appropriate, liaise with qualification providers to identify and “adopt” routes to competence which support business competence;

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## Appendix: Case Studies

### A. Construction (CITB)

The Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) uses a website-based approach and a career ambassador network to promote careers in the construction sector. This is supported by a range of other organisations including industry representative bodies, trade associations, and large companies who undertake their own careers promotion.

The CITB interview contact is involved in strategic considerations regarding careers promotion in construction and has a significant insight into the website GoConstruct.

#### **Strategy**

According to the interviewee, like many other sectors, the UK construction sector is facing a skills shortage. In addition, the construction sector is often associated with persistent myths including being a refuge for academic underachievers, involving low-paid, solely outdoor working, and consisting only of back-breaking labour.

#### **GoConstruct**

In the interview conversation, it was highlighted that to tackle the misconceptions, the GoConstruct website presents a multitude of careers, opportunities and pathways in the sector, often not requiring a construction related background. For instance, skills in project management will be of use in construction projects or a legal background will be suitable for managing contracts, etc. These messages are underpinned by related research with young people to investigate their priorities for careers. The focus of the CITB career promotion extends beyond the school leaver demographic and also involves initiatives to engage harder to reach groups such as BAME, females, the armed forces, and ex-offenders.

Career changers are part of this engagement and the CITB financially supports interventions of training in this respect. Former military personnel often obtain funding for training before leaving the service, while ex-offenders are targeted. In the latter case employer perceptions will have to be changed and more dedicated training may be needed to ease the transition.

Overall, career engagement tries to balance messages between more academically and technologically oriented people and people with a more “hands on” approach. In addition, generational priorities are changing with younger people being more willing to switch jobs and careers if not satisfied.

## **Construction Ambassadors**

The Construction Ambassador network precedes GoConstruct, as the interview contact explained. Its goal is to challenge misconceptions about the sector and to inspire potential new entrants to seek a career in construction. Registration as an ambassador is online and a dedicated section on ambassadors on the GoConstruct website gives further information on the role of the ambassador:

## What is a Construction Ambassador?



A Construction Ambassador is someone who inspires potential new entrants about the industry and is able to convey what it's actually like to work in construction.



Very often they provide the first introduction to the construction industry for many young individuals who are considering their future career choices.



By reaching out to local communities and highlighting the many fantastic opportunities available within construction they can help to inspire the next generation of new entrants.

This is complemented by testimonials by ambassadors. In addition, insurance coverage advice if an ambassador attends a meeting or event is outlined.

Ambassadors can receive dedicated training and can request career promotion materials such as brochures or leaflets. The GoConstruct website also features a “booking service”, through which ambassadors can be requested to attend an event at a school or at a career fair.

## **SkillBuild- Construction Skills Competition**

This is a construction skills competition that is conducted in cooperation with WorldSkills and EuroSkills. Competitors are tested on technical ability and soft skills, such as time-management. Competitions may include bricklaying or carpentry, painting, plastering and decorating or flooring. After a series of regional qualifiers, competitors compete nationally and will then participate in a European competition (EuroSkills) with construction professionals from the 28 EU Member States. Finally, competitors will engage in a worldwide competition (WorldSkills). Aside from the opportunity to receive prestigious awards, competitors are able to significantly improve their skill-set and share their gained knowledge with co-workers, which is also of benefit for employers. In addition, the competitions increase the prestige of these hands-on trades and serve as a

demonstration of the nature of work in construction to potential entrants of all ages. Sponsors and supporters of the competition are mainly large companies in the sector.

### Messages

Career and occupation information on the GoConstruct website feature job roles, average salaries and qualifications required.

As stated above, the challenge in promoting careers in construction is the tackling of misconception of the trade. As such, the messages of GoConstruct and the Ambassador network focus on the opportunities offered by the sector. A dedicated “Mythbuster” section on the GoConstruct website addresses with succinct paragraphs common stereotypes of construction as a male-dominated industry that is an unsafe, dead end career and involves all-weather work, while damaging the environment. This means that emphasis is given to non-traditional opportunities including project management, legal work or accounting, while highlighting transferable skills that are useful for success in the sector.

A dedicated GoConstruct section on career change combines transferable skillsets and economic sectors related to construction including manufacturing, engineering, IT, administration and even creative professions. Professional career paths such as architecture or surveying are also highlighted. “It is not all about bricklaying” is a common feature of worker testimonials and case studies on the website.

At the same time, the messages on the website are designed to appeal to an as wide as possible demographic. Message for “Millennials”, “Generation Z”, and “Snowflakes” highlight progression, variety and flexible work opportunities, either through self-employment or home office opportunities depending on the trades concerned. Also emphasised are the environmental benefits of modern construction. Modern technologies such as Building Information Modelling (BIM) and virtual reality, etc. are promoted to appeal to this demographic by being demonstrated at career fairs and showcased on the GoConstruct website via videos, etc.

What is more, GoConstruct, aside from using interactive tools such as career quizzes and a careers map, links different career paths to personality types.

### B. Engineering Construction (ECITB)

The Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB) uses a multipronged approach to promote careers in the ECI sector, which includes, oil & gas, heavy civil engineering, nuclear energy and wind power. The interviewed ECITB contact is a member of the campaigns team coordinating career promotion activities.

#### **Strategy**

The interviewee explained that the goal of the ECITB is to attract more talent from a young demographic to careers in the ECI sector while promoting gender equality and diversity in the ECI sector.

Until recently, careers promotion had a rather ad-hoc corporate and regional focus and there was not much coordination between the many different initiatives. As of 2019, the focus of career promotion is on developing a coordinated approach and one streamlined career promotion initiative. To avoid duplication with any similar initiatives, the ECITB is carrying out a matching exercise of STEM initiatives to ECITB career promotion. In this context, cooperation with these organisations and initiatives is a priority.

This includes the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC), STEM Learning, and the Science Museum. Pilot projects were started with CEC and STEM Learning that included benchmarks of effectiveness and took an external and internal marketing approach. In addition, ECITB will soon join the STEM Learning “Enthuse Partnership” for a project of two years, which will link four to six schools to companies in the ECI sector, promote engagement with teachers, students and parents as a key audience to change perceptions and give access to the STEM Ambassador programme.

As next steps, ECITB aims to publish, in 2020, case studies of BAME workers to promote diversity in the sector. It is recognised that SMEs need more support in recruitment activities, but the discussions on how to facilitate this are still ongoing.

#### **Resources**

Overall, the annual budget for ECI career promotion (from ECITB itself and excluding partner organisations, stakeholders and corporate promotion) is between £60,000 and £80,000 as indicated by the ECITB interview contact. This includes some campaigns and initiatives. Cooperation with other organisations allows for considerable leveraging of resources. For instance, the CEC resources may be used at no expense by ECITB, while the agreement with STEM Learning (Enthuse Partnership) involves an ECITB financial contribution of £20,000. The creation of the “Engineering your Future” tool was mainly undertaken by the Science Museum.



The pilot projects involved four part-time staff. Career promotion design involves one staff member full-time. The mapping exercise was carried out by one full-time member of staff. The Head of Communications and Policy oversees the work. This means a total of two full-time and four part-time staff having been recently involved in the ECITB career promotion efforts.

## Messages and promotion

Career promotion in the ECI sector is not sub-sector specific (the sector recognises seven broad sub-sectors – including oil & gas, nuclear, renewables, heavy civils, water, waste, etc. Nevertheless, in relation to offshore work as some of the most physically demanding work in the sector, career promotion activities attempt to promote the benefits of working off-shore including travel and non-desk work, as well as the use of modern technology such as Artificial Intelligence, robotics, or Virtual Reality. These are technologies in which the offshore sector takes a lead.

A cornerstone of promotion is concise brochures that highlight central features of career opportunities in the sector. These include salary levels, exciting projects, and a host of skills to be acquired. In addition, as the example below shows, the sector is expecting significant growth in the near future. Other ECITB promotion materials focus on growth in the number of jobs and training opportunities, but also highlight the demographic change in the sector, with over 125,000 engineers in the sector expected to have retired by 2026. Essentially, therefore, the ECITB message aims to give multiple reassurances that talent will be able to enjoy a long and stable career in the sector with multiple avenues and levels of progression.

**6 FACTS ABOUT CAREERS IN ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION**

- TRANSFERABLE SKILLS**  
‘Portable skills’ that will be your passport to the world of engineering
- STARTING SALARY**  
Average graduate starting salary of £23K
- APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES**  
Earn while you learn
- TRAVELLING OPPORTUNITIES**  
Work on major projects overseas as well as in the UK
- CAREER PROGRESSION**  
Opportunities to advance and develop your career
- GROWING WORKFORCE**  
33K new jobs in the next decade

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: [WWW.ECITB.ORG.UK/CAREERS](http://WWW.ECITB.ORG.UK/CAREERS)**

In addition, the online tool – *Engineering your Future* was developed jointly with the Science Museum. It targets potential candidates interested in working in the industry as well as career progression opportunities for staff already working in the sector. The interactive approach shows qualifications and experience needed, by occupation and job role, and potential future career paths. Furthermore, the tool features twenty-one case studies of workers in the ECI sector<sup>5</sup>.

The information in the tool is presented by professional group and occupation, however, work regimes such as salaried or self-employed work are not discussed or presented. Working outdoors is not highlighted specifically. Rather, earnings and stable employment in the sector as a whole are the main focus.

Other careers promotion is mainly achieved through social media with a focus on Twitter and LinkedIn. This includes a student leaflet and some paid ads. Other social media channels do not generate much uptake. In addition, related campaigns such as the DfE “Fire it up” campaign to boost apprenticeships are promoted.

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<sup>5</sup> Engineering your future - <http://careers.ecitb.org.uk/mobile/index.html>

### C. Science, Engineering and Manufacturing (SEMTA)

The Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Alliance (SEMTA) is a skills body for the non-construction engineering sectors, scientific and technical skills, and the manufacturing sector. Its sub-sectors include aerospace, automotive and electrical equipment. SEMTA sponsors a website, *Engineering Talent*. The SEMTA survey contact is a member of a careers engagement team.

#### Strategy

The Engineering Talent website has two approaches. The first is to provide information and resources to be used by training centres and FE colleges to attract potential entrants into the sector. It is designed to target young people already at college and who have decided to pursue an engineering qualification. It is thus designed to encourage prospective engineers to pursue careers in the sub-sectors. The Engineering Talent website was developed in cooperation with Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Alliance Awards Ltd. (EAL), a member of the SEMTA Group. The website has dedicated sections for individuals, employers and training providers. In terms of information sources, it contains interactive tools such as quizzes as well as videos.

The interviewee explained that as part of *Engineering Talent*, SEMTA is piloting a registration service for young people with an engineering qualification who have previously unsuccessfully applied for an apprenticeship with a major company in the sector. For instance, BAE Systems is oversubscribed with apprenticeship applicants, but unsuccessful BAE Systems candidates could find great opportunities with other companies and therefore a talent pool approach could be helpful in addressing skills shortage for employers.

The platform is designed as a matching service between candidates and vacancies by other companies. Part of this approach is the ambition to assist SMEs in recruiting much-needed talent. There is no formal impact assessment of this pilot but the results are said to be promising and a lessons-learned exercise will be carried out once the pilot has finished. As a next step, the same approach will be tried with graduates and further work experience opportunities for graduates will be explored. No career ambassador network exists and is not a priority. The focus is on offering a unique careers promotion

In addition, SEMTA is sponsoring a web portal - *STEM Exchange*, which is designed as a matching service, providing teachers and young people (aged 14 and over) with the opportunity to access face-to-face science, technology, engineering and maths experiences offered by employers. This includes assisting employers in engaging training providers and helping young people to learn more about work placements. It is thus designed to engage people who are not yet pursuing an engineering qualification. *STEM Exchange* was designed in cooperation with GetMyFirstJob, a web portal that aims to provide career information to young people.

### Resources

The interview contact confirmed that career promotion activities are financed from several budgets, but that SEMTA are reluctant to give further details on financial resources and staff committed. Running the career promotion activities includes setting up the websites and their maintenance. Cooperation with *GetMyFirstJob* made the design of the tools more cost-effective. Employers can advertise vacancies on *STEM Exchange* for an undisclosed fee.

### Messages

*Engineering Talent* presents itself as a tool to “attract, retain and train the brightest stars for the workforce and for the UK Economy”. It thus appeals to talent and the economic contribution this talent can make but does not emphasise any value-based messages. Nevertheless, the encouragement provided to employers to direct unsuccessful candidates to *Engineering Talent* emphasise the importance of retaining the applicant pool in the engineering sector.

For individuals, e.g. engineering students, the *Engineering Talent* website describes not only potential opportunities, such as popular apprenticeships, but offers a candidate an ownership of the process. Slogans like “engineer your future”, or “find the job you love” are designed to entice candidates to explore available careers while providing the tools to chart a career path.

For employers, *Engineering Talent* provides the opportunity to recruit and/or to redirect unsuccessful candidates. The section “wanting to attract applicants?” highlights making recruiting easier through customisable candidate search features as well as access to the best talent, while “inundated with candidates?” focuses on retaining talent in the industry and thus implicitly addressing skills shortages.

Educators are invited to post content and relevant resources that assist in obtaining engineering qualifications. In turn, educators may use the library of content posted on the website. Related messages highlight the growing digitalisation of learning and the accessibility and cost-effectiveness of online learning.

In addition, EAL presents benefits for each targeted group in a dedicated press release<sup>6</sup>: Benefits for the individual include a knowledge base and information source, the ability to develop a customised profile, and the ability to keep up-to-date with industry standards. Benefits for the employer include access to a pool of potential recruits, a set of bespoke parameter search tools for sourcing individuals with the exact skills required, portal space to host employer specific training materials for upskilling, and the ability to recruit from oversupply of applicants from the large brands.

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<sup>6</sup> EAL (2019), Engineering Talent - Retaining People, <https://eal.org.uk/news/blog/2741-engineering-talent-retaining-people>

### D. Electrotechnical Industry – The Electrotechnical Skills Partnership (TESP)

The TESP interview contact was a member of an internal committee designing messages for Electrical Careers.

#### Strategy

The electrotechnical industry is dominated by SMEs and self-employed contractors. The sector is facing a skills challenge and, based on external research, the sector will need an additional 15,000 electricians (including apprentices) to accommodate forecasted economic growth every year. In addition, the sector's workforce is ageing and the technical demands of the work are increasing. The sector also suffers from low expectations and myths among parents, teachers and potential recruits. Like construction it tends to be regarded as heavy, outdoor work involving much travel and relatively low wages.

In terms of career promotion, the TESP has a career website – *Electrical Careers*.

As outlined in the interview, while the career promotion activities of the industry do not involve a dedicated career ambassador network, through a partnership with the Careers and Enterprise company, the industry has access to career specialists, which engage schools and other education providers. Case studies are used to further showcase the sector. Any career information provided is in line with the Gatsby Foundation's *Good Career Guidance* criteria.

Listing vacancies or work experience on the website has not been considered, as the sector is regarded as too decentralised with recruitment tending to be local or regional.

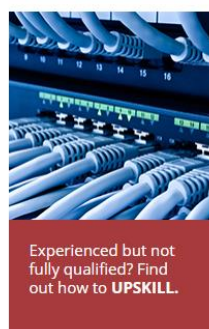
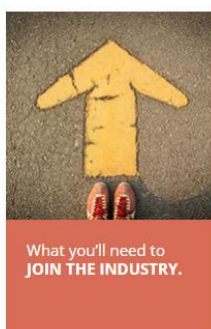
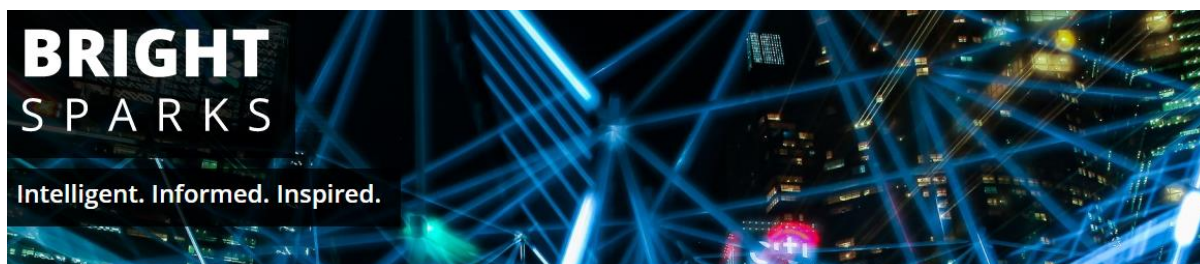
The interviewed expert confirmed that skills competitions through World Skills UK are very popular in the sector. In particular, SMEs are very engaged, as the competitions involve upskilling and giving prestige to participating businesses. For recruitment for the competitions, local networks are engaged, including employers and training providers.

#### Messages

The *Electrical Careers* website promotes the high-tech nature and variety of the sector in various contexts. Examples include powering offices, homes, festivals, and stadiums as well as telecommunications. Potential talent is referred to as "Bright Sparks", suggesting intelligence and skills while sounding exciting.

The website features information on career options and progression routes, pathways to join the industry and case studies. It also includes a dedicated section for career changers and indicative salary bands for job roles ("How much can I earn?"). The section for career changers includes information on qualifications needed. Regarding the salary bands, the Joint Industry Board (JIB) and

the Scottish Joint Industry Board set non-binding wages in the industry. Nevertheless, these provide a good orientation on salary practice in the industry and thus serve well in informing those considering entering the industry. Progression routes are also highlighted.



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### E. Social Care (Skills for Care)

Skills for Care is a body that provides adult social care providers with practical support to recruit, develop, and lead their staff, retaining them from entry level right through to senior leadership and management roles. Its goal is a well-led, skilled, and valued adult social care workforce.

Our interview contact is involved in the internal evaluation of career initiatives.

#### Strategy

The social care sector is very large and is facing growing pressures due to increasing demand for care from an ageing population, and the need to recruit many more workers. Around 440,000 care workers are leaving their job each year and there are around 122,000 vacancies at any one time.

In the interview, the expert explained that the career promotion of Skills for Care focuses on engagement through ambassadors and values-based recruitment. Indeed, research of best practices among social care employers has revealed that, aside from pay conditions and a friendly and supportive environment, employers may ensure hiring the right people by conducting value-based interviews, offering work experience/trial shifts and pre-interview visits in addition to assessment procedures. Furthermore, engaging local pre-employment initiatives is useful. Online, social media, local press, adverts in community venues, and word of mouth as well as referrals have been identified by social care employers as the most effective ways of advertising jobs in the sector. As such, much of the advice on the website is tailored to support the recruitment activities of employers.

#### I care Ambassadors

The 'I care' project is a national network of those who work in social care and are willing to act as Ambassadors. These individuals give up a small amount of their own time to introduce the care sector to others. The aim of the initiative is to ensure others understand what a career in care can involve and enable them to make an informed decision as to whether it may be a career option for them. The project has been running for over a decade. Skills for Care's role is one of co-ordination and management of the hub and register of ambassadors. The initiative 'is run on kindness' and is entirely voluntary.

As with all recruitment initiatives in social care the primary challenge is funding – there is a current funding crisis in social care (with many providers closing down) and all the available cash is going to the front line. The 'I care' project is suffering from a reduction in the number of ambassadors as employers are finding it impossible to release staff from their duties and individuals are sometimes not able/willing to give up their own time.

The project also takes some time to administer – taking requests and co-ordinating the Ambassador (making sure they can get to the event and have the appropriate supplies with them e.g. posters/leaflets etc.). There is formal ambassador training, however many do not complete this.

The delivery of this initiative has proven to be a good fit for the people orientated social care sector.



### **Values-based recruitment and retention<sup>7</sup>**

This initiative is all about values-based recruitment. It encourages employers - particularly those struggling to recruit - to try to do things differently by examining their own organisation's values and translating these into the values they wish to see in their workforce.

Recruitment then involves looking for those with the right values rather than the right experience.

This has, apparently, been very successful and has helped employers. The initiative also offers related workshops and seminars, some of which are free but others are charged. The workshops and seminars seek to train employers on values-based recruitment and interviewing as well as techniques for staff retention (see below).

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<sup>7</sup> Skills for Care (2019), Values based recruitment and retention, <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-retention/Values-based-recruitment-and-retention/Values-based-recruitment-and-retention.aspx>



## Values-based recruitment and retention

Our values define us. They influence who we are, what we believe is important in life, the way we live and how we treat people.

In the workplace they are guiding principles linked to behaviours that help people deliver exceptional care and support.

A values-based approach to recruitment and retention involves establishing strong workplace values and ensuring that your workforce matches them.

Doing this will help to reduce time and wasted resources in recruiting the wrong people.



### Watch our new video animation below

This video highlights the benefits of using a values-based approach and includes information about how we can support you in your recruitment and retention practices.



### Come to our workshop

➡ Getting started with values-based recruitment and retention

#### Seeing potential

This initiative is about widening the network. There are over a million people with spent convictions who struggle to find any form of employment. The convictions could be as a result of less serious acts (e.g. shop lifting as a youngster etc.) and this campaign encourages employers to see past this barrier<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Skills for Care (2019), Seeing potential: widen your talent pool, <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Recruitment-retention/Seeing-potential-widen-your-talent-pool/Seeing-potential-widen-your-talent-pool.aspx>

### F. Hospitality

According to its website, *Springboard* is a charity that aims to “*promote careers in the hospitality, leisure and tourism industry showcasing it as a vibrant, dynamic and great place to work and so improve its image as an employer of choice*”.

The *Careerscope* website<sup>9</sup>, like those in several of the other case studies, serves as a one stop-shop combining career information with vacancies and work placements, opportunities to contact/book an ambassador, and case studies. In addition, the website provides information on how to write CVs and prepare for interviews. Structurally, the website follows four steps an interested candidate would take to enter the industry.



While steps 1, 2 and 3 are quite descriptive, step 4 focuses on the engagement of employers. This includes links to posted vacancies. In addition, the section “meet the employers” presents the profiles of large employers by sub-sector (e.g. catering or restaurants) and potential opportunities with them and may, in some cases, include a promotional video. Interestingly, step 4 also provides information related to starting a business with references to UK government support facilities and a hotline operated by *Springboard* that gives advice on options. Furthermore, the *Kickstart* programme is a scheme that involves one week of training and two-weeks of work experience. The website is rounded off by the scheme “Taster Days”, during which potential candidates are given a tour of an employer.

Furthermore, the *Careerscope* website refers to skills competitions in hospitality and related sectors. *Springboard* was a partner of the World Skills Live careers fair in 2016<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://careerscope.uk.net/>

<sup>10</sup> At the present time, it cannot be verified if this partnership was discontinued, and if so for what reason.

### G. Overseas

#### US Horticulture sector – Seed your Future

Seed your Future<sup>11</sup> is an initiative by the US horticulture sector that has the goal of attracting more people into (Ornamental) Horticulture careers and to raise awareness of the importance of plants and horticulture for society and economy.

#### Strategy

The Seed your Future Strategic Plan 2018-2021 sets the mission of Seed your Future, to promote careers in (Ornamental) horticulture and related public understanding of the horticulture sector and plants. To this end, the strategic plan sets five goals<sup>12</sup>:

1. Awareness - aiming to improve the perception of the value of (Ornamental) Horticulture, primarily through Bloom (see below);
2. Education - Engage and educate youth to inspire them through fostering partnerships with schools, providing related materials and resources and supporting extra-curricular youth activities;
3. Workforce development – Develop talent pipeline and increased numbers of workers, investigate number of workers in sector and enrolled students at college and university, engage students at events and cooperate with other youth horticulture organisations;
4. Partnerships - Collaboration to promote mission of Seed your Future, engage relevant stakeholders and media influencers as well as mobilise volunteer ambassadors such as master gardeners. In addition, develop a public policy agenda.
5. Resource development – Increase number of financial supporters to ensure viability and sustainability of Seed your future. Increase fundraising efforts by \$9m and submit at least three grant applications per year.

#### Seed your future website and Bloom toolkit

The website provides information on the US Horticulture sector and resources for students, parents and families, educators and employers.

In many ways, the resources provided to these groups tie into each other. For instance, students are provided with information on career pathways, while educators are pointed to youth engagement

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.seedyourfuture.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Seed your future (2018), Seed your Future Strategic Plan (2018-2021)

programmes such as summer camps or learning through gardening. One partner garden, Longwood Gardens, also offers education in maths, science and careers in addition to Scout groups. Similarly, parents and families are informed about summer camps and 100 careers in the sector. These resources are rounded off by case study videos of workers in the sector and by a YouTube channel. The careers information listed provides insight into different jobs as well as salary levels, needed qualifications and information on education providers.

In addition, employers have access to the online Bloom! Toolkit, which includes marketing materials such as promotional images, infographics, information leaflets, blog, article and presentation templates as well as promotional videos. These materials include some key messages aimed at furthering the objectives of the Strategic plan.

Seed your future and Bloom! are thus primarily web-based and are supported by related initiatives. The website gives information on internship and scholarship opportunities, but does not have a job-posting or recruitment portal function. Nevertheless, the website includes links to relevant trade associations. Of these, two – the American Society for Horticultural Science and the Society of American Forester post jobs on their respective websites and allow jobseekers to post their CV.

## Messages

The messages employed by Seed your future use a mix of the methods of other case studies in this report. Seed your future combines a value-based approach with highlighting job opportunities and pathways as well as modern technology used in the sector. The values-based content concentrates on the contributions of Ornamental Horticulture and other Horticulture disciplines to well-being and health as well as environmental protection. Furthermore, references to a high rate of unfilled vacancies and showcasing the strong economic value of the sector suggest a high quantity of job opportunities and careers. In addition, the plant career exploration handout for employers matches job profiles in the sector with different interests and personality types:



### If you are interested in filling our tables with food that is safe and nutritious:

- Aeroculture Specialist
- Aquaculture Specialist
- Chef
- Enologist
- Farmer
- Food Scientist
- Grower
- Hydroponics Specialist
- Integrated Pest Management Specialist
- Irrigation Specialist
- Olericulturist
- Plant Diagnostician
- Plant Inspector
- Plant Propagator
- Produce Marketer
- Soil Specialist
- Urban Farmer
- Viticulturist

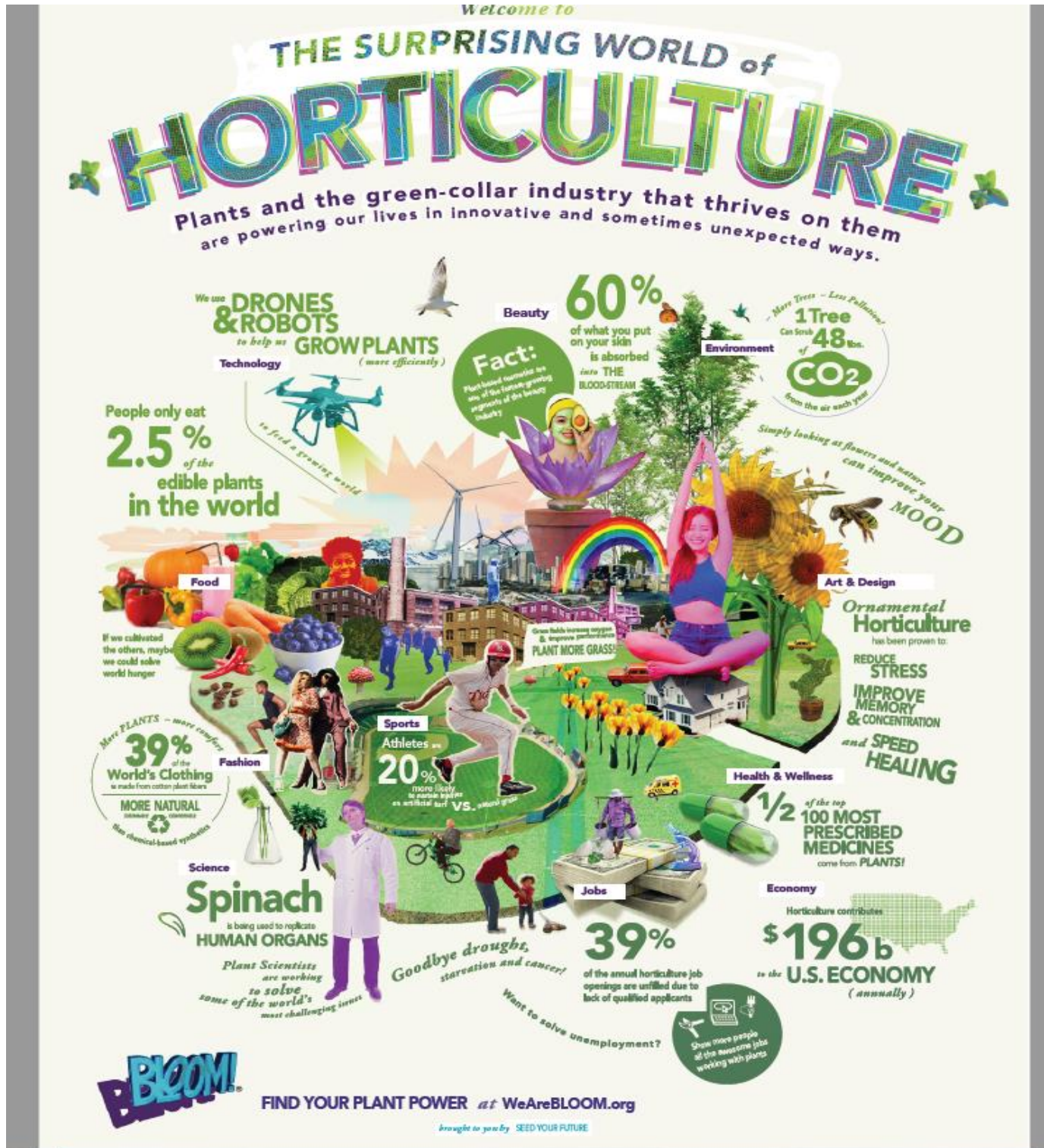


### If you are interested in experimenting and the wonder of knowing our world:

- Agricultural Engineer
- Aquatic Botanist
- Chemist
- Educator
- Entomologist
- Floriculturist
- Food Scientist
- Geneticist
- Olericulturist
- Plant Breeder
- Plant Cytologist
- Plant Ecologist
- Plant Morphologist
- Plant Pathologist
- Plant Physiologist
- Plant Taxonomist
- Pomologist
- Researcher
- Technician



Furthermore, Seed your Future invokes a distinctive identity with the term “green collar” workers, implicitly distinguishing them from the traditional white and blue collar image. The following infographic from the bloom toolkit illustrates this:

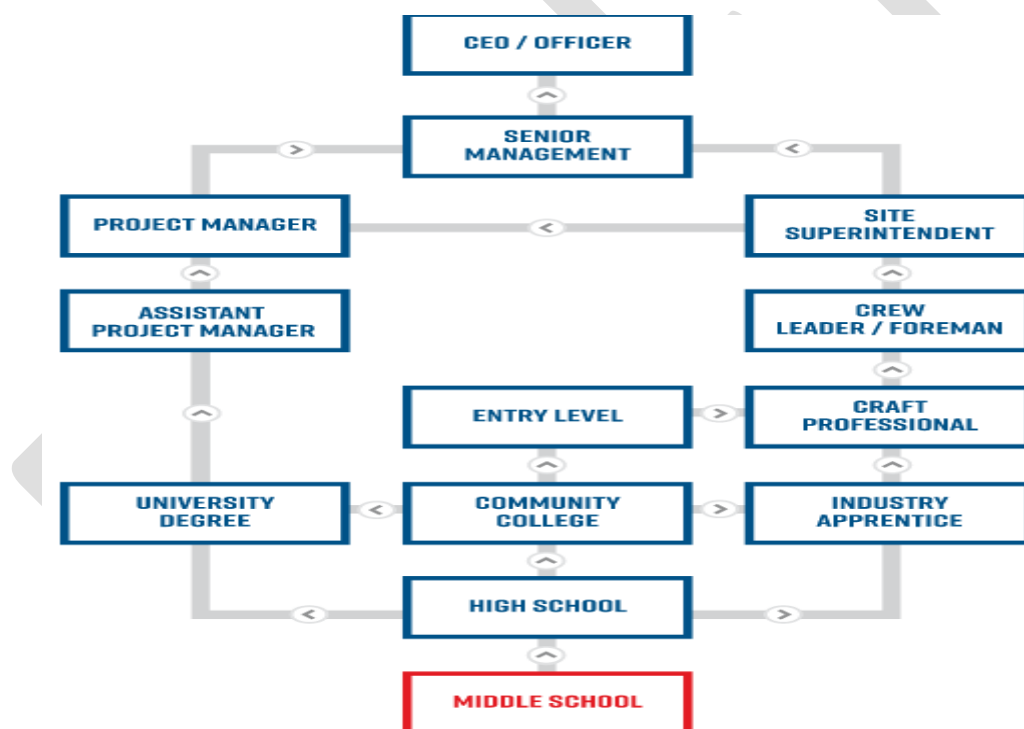


## US Construction Sector – Build your Future

*Build Your Future (BYF)*<sup>13</sup> aims to be the catalyst for recruiting the next generation of craft professionals. BYF was established by the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) in 1996 as an industry image enhancement and recruitment initiative. They provide a collaborative grassroots approach to construction workforce forecasting and development that includes recruitment, training, placement, retention and image enhancement strategies.

As such, BYF offers a comprehensive partnership package to assist with recruitment needs. An annual fee applies, but varies depending on required elements. All partnership proceeds are used to expand BYF’s recruitment effort and develop resources. The site provides resources which may be downloaded, printed and distributed to spread the message.

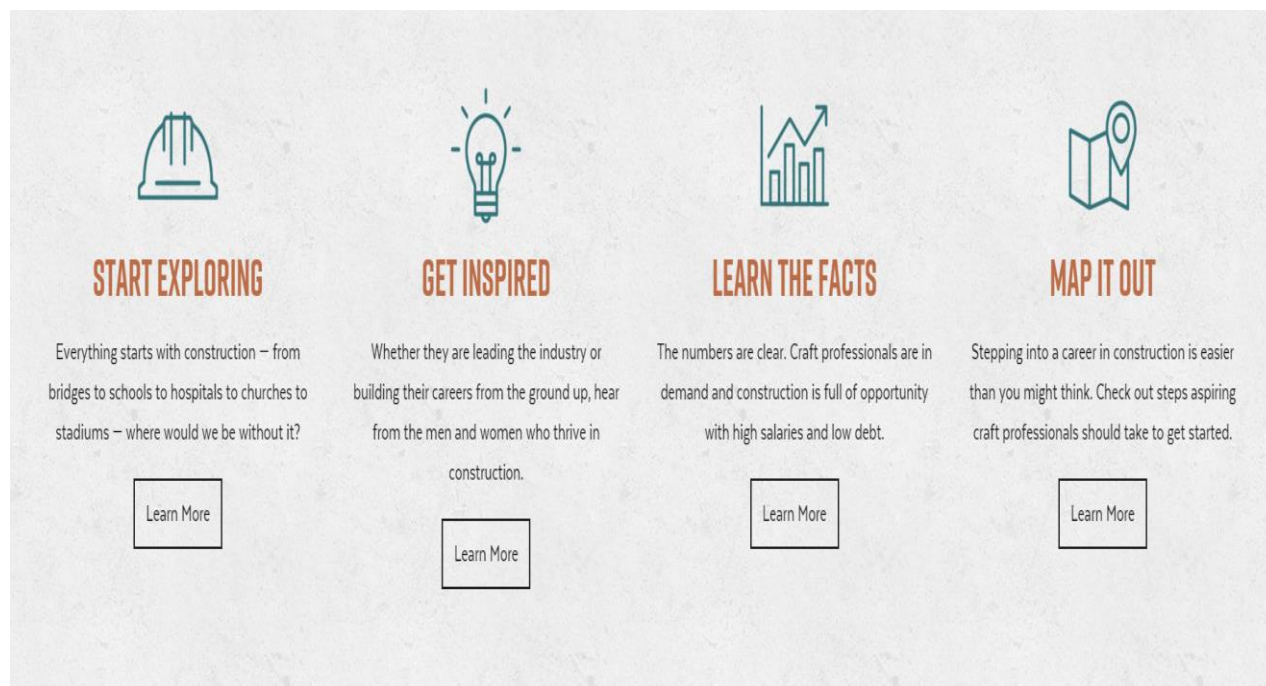
The BYF website shows a career path diagram that is based on different qualification routes, tailored to the US education system and job market.



The website also provides links to training providers, but does not have a vacancy section.

In terms of messages, the website attempts to show the importance of the industry and gives information on job roles and job demand.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.byf.org/>



**START EXPLORING**  
Everything starts with construction – from bridges to schools to hospitals to churches to stadiums – where would we be without it?  
[Learn More](#)

**GET INSPIRED**  
Whether they are leading the industry or building their careers from the ground up, hear from the men and women who thrive in construction.  
[Learn More](#)

**LEARN THE FACTS**  
The numbers are clear. Craft professionals are in demand and construction is full of opportunity with high salaries and low debt.  
[Learn More](#)

**MAP IT OUT**  
Stepping into a career in construction is easier than you might think. Check out steps aspiring craft professionals should take to get started.  
[Learn More](#)

## Horticulture Australia

### Rural Careers website<sup>14</sup>

The non-profit organisation *Rural Skills Australia* cooperates with industry bodies in agriculture and horticulture to enhance the skills and capabilities of new entrants, existing workers and primary producers alike. As part of this, *Rural Skills Australia* hosts the *Rural Careers* website, which gives information on careers in agriculture and horticulture. It is designed as an information source. There are thus no direct references to employers or job vacancies. Nevertheless, there are links to job websites, sections on career path information, and skills required as well as several case studies in the form of 5-minute videos. For instance, for Arboriculture, the following information is presented:

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.ruralcareers.net.au/about/>





### Landscape Gardening Germany

While much may be lost in translation, a dedicated career website<sup>15</sup> for Landscape Gardeners in Germany follows a similar approach to some of the other case studies, including matching career paths to different types of personality or lifestyle.

Aside from general career information, a spirit of excitement and professional identity is invoked. The website opens with the headline “*The green temptation*” and features the question “Are you ready to embark on the adventure or test your occupation through an internship?”.

In addition, professional groups are described with nicknames. A Master Gardener is described as the “Classic”, while a Garden Technician is presented as the “Supervisor”. Each professional group is briefly described and a link is provided to training providers.

Further information is provided by case studies and a video. A further video has been produced for a dedicated social media campaign.

Emphasis is also given to the diversity of the sector with the slogans “Green light for your profession”, “One profession, seven sub-sectors” and “Spoilt for choice”. A variety of the “earn as you learn” slogan is also listed. The economic importance of the sector, career progression and life-long learning are also emphasised. On the other hand, there is no information on salaries and no vacancies are listed.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.gartenbaunrw.de/index.php/beruf-gaertner/karriere>



The brief classification of job-levels is as follows:

### **Meister - der Klassiker – the classic**

Does not only sound good, it is! Master Gardeners are important senior managers and often run their own businesses. They are also allowed to train apprentices.

### **Techniker - der Leiter – the leader**

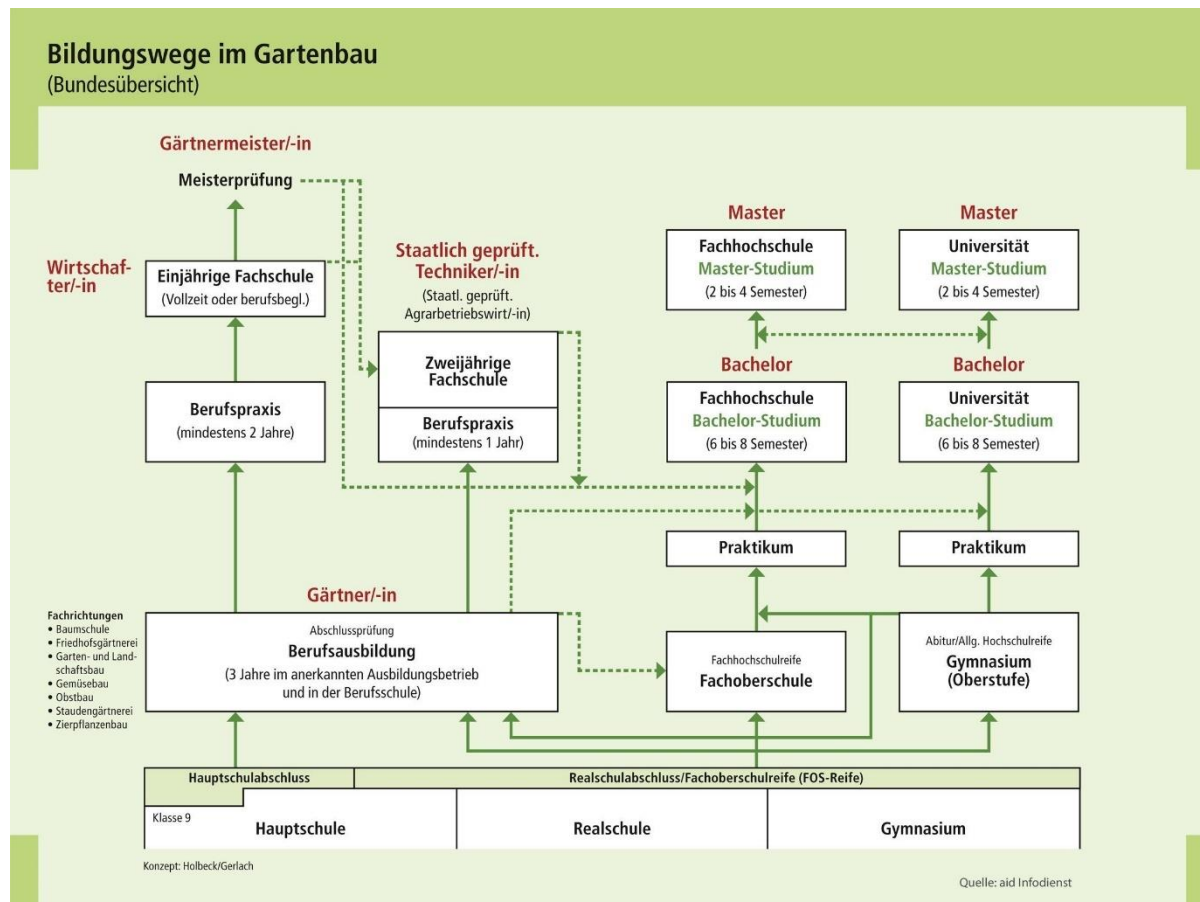
Mix one year of professional experience with two years of training at a gardening college and you get an oven-fresh and certified Garden Technician. This continuing education programme is more focused on theory than the Master Gardener qualification and takes longer. Technicians are permitted to take on apprentices and often manage businesses and construction sites.

### **Fachagrarwirt - der Spezialist, the specialist**

Tree surgeon, tree consultant or Green-keeper: If you are interested in these fields, take a course of several months' duration and qualify. Specialist knowledge is always in high demand!

### **Studium - der Forscher, the researcher**

With a completed apprenticeship, you have excellent basis for an undergraduate degree in Gardening and Landscape Architecture. With a duration of 6-8 semesters, what more could you ask for? Add a master's degree if you want, meaning 2-4 additional semesters. After that, you could even do a PhD.



### H. Organisations specialising in career promotion/advice

#### H.1 Gatsby Foundation

The Gatsby Foundation is a charitable foundation, that, amongst other activities, promotes Good Career Guidance. In this context, the Gatsby Foundation focuses on technical education at Levels 3, 4 and 5.

According to the expert interviewed for this case study, the career guidance is based on providing the right kind of information but not on particular jobs or industries. In addition, the Gatsby Foundation has developed a set of eight good career guidance benchmarks, which are, for instance, used by the electrotechnical industry. Other organisations follow some of these benchmarks at least in spirit, such using labour market information and providing work placements.

The interview contact is part of communications team promoting the Gatsby career activities.

#### **Good Career Guidance**

The benchmarks of Good Career Guidance act as a framework to improve careers provision within secondary education establishments in England. In addition, the career guidance benchmarks were taken up in the UK government's career strategy. The Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) has created a tool (COMPASS<sup>16</sup>) that allows schools to assess their career guidance and advice performance against the benchmarks.

The eight benchmarks are:

1. A stable careers programme
2. Learning from career and labour market information
3. Addressing the needs of each pupil
4. Linking curriculum learning to careers
5. Encounters with employers and employees
6. Experiences of workplaces
7. Encounters with further and higher education
8. Personal guidance

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<sup>16</sup> <https://tools.careersandenterprise.co.uk/login>

### Technicians make it happen

This is a campaign<sup>17</sup> that targets parents, students and teachers and career advisers. It has been running for over three years and aims to promote technician roles by giving general career information, but not dedicated personal careers advice.

For instance, the “Parent” section highlights earnings and career prospects, underpinned by high demand of workers.



#### High demand

Technicians are in huge demand across industries. Time and again, it is technicians that business leaders are crying out for. With a career as a technician, your child can develop skills key to thrive in some of the most cutting-edge industries.



#### Earning potential

Take a look at some of our real-life technicians and you will see that many earn well above the average salary. Technical paths like apprenticeships are often the best route to becoming a technician – meaning that your child could earn while they learn.



#### Career progression

Technician careers are often exciting and come with endless possibilities to upskill. Many of the key skills that make a great technician are transferable across industries and businesses, so being a technician could really open up a world of opportunities for your child.



#### Future Focused

Technicians are not only solving the problems of today but are key to overcoming the challenges of tomorrow – from updating our transport infrastructure, to researching ways to tackle climate change. Your child can have their passion ignited with a career as a technician.

For students, the messages are split for young people who have completed their GCSEs and those that have not. The messages in this section highlight the skills required to be a technician. Career opportunities are presented in the form of case studies.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.technicians.org.uk/>

The teacher and career adviser section provides resources to engage pupils and students with career information in an interactive way. This includes games, news and case studies.

### INTERACTIVE GAME

We've developed a new interactive way for young people to explore the full range of technician careers.

### CASE STUDIES

Inspire students with real-life technician stories. Downloadable versions are available for use in class or in career sessions.

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

We regularly post articles, stories, and employer profiles to provide you with even further inspiration and materials.

### GOT A QUESTION?

We've tried to answer as many FAQs from teachers and careers advisors as possible. Visit regularly for new and updated answers!

The campaign is case study focused and works with employers to create these, of which there seventy thus far. To recruit for the case studies, staff go to events including the Big Bang career fair and other regional fairs, as well as World Skills (UK LIVE) to engage people. It usually takes between one and six months to complete a case study. At these fairs, young people are also engaged individually. On average 30,000 people are engaged at events (3-4 days) per year.

Information materials are produced by professional marketing firms to be used by employers. The Gatsby Foundation pays for these and distributes them. In addition, an external media agency engages youth aged 14-24. This includes surveys of young people on social media on engagement at events such as career fairs, which generally receive positive feedback.

The experts explained that the engagement, including attendance costs around **£100,000** per year, including staff costs. Combined with the use of external agencies for material and case study production, the total budget of *Technicians make it happen* is around **£250,000-£300,000** per year. The campaign is supported by three part-time staff or the equivalent of one and a half FTE to run the campaign

### H.2 World Skills UK (WSUK)

World Skills UK is a non-profit organisation that facilitates skills competitions across a variety of economic sectors and industries. In the competitions, young people are able to show off their talent and compete with their peers.

Our interview contacts are involved in the facilitation of WSUK competitions. The two experts interviewed for this case study outlined the following points.

#### Competitions

The process for the skills competitions is this:

- In February/March of each year, candidates register their interest
- UK competitions are then held regionally which then culminate in the national finals take place at LIVE, a dedicated fair that also showcases careers
- The squads are selected from those who compete at LIVE (2 teams)
- A training manager is allocated
- Training is ongoing
- One of the two teams is selected to go forward to the World event.

#### Landscape Gardening competition<sup>18</sup>

The Landscape Gardening competition, which has only tangential relationships with Ornamental Horticulture, has been a longstanding one and is sponsored by the *Association of Landscape Professionals*. The competition has been designed to reflect the standards and skills required to be a skilled/semi-skilled landscaper in today's landscape industry. Throughout the competition, competitors have to demonstrate skills in:

- Timber Framing and Decking
- Block Paving
- Plant Ident
- Planting Planning
- Paving
- Fencing
- Turfing
- Lighting
- Health and Safety
- Measured Planting

For the final of the competition, the finalists are required to build a garden plot from scratch in sixteen and a half hours.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.worldskillsuk.org/champions/national-skills-competitions/find-a-competition/construction-and-infrastructure/landscape-gardening>

### Establishing a new competition

In order to develop a skills competition three partners are required:

- WSUK
- An organising partner – often a government body or an industry organisation
- Financial sponsor – (can be the same as the organising partner)

A £15,000 investment is required from the financial sponsor in the first year. From that £5,000 is given as a grant to the organising partner to fund the organisation of a one-off ‘demo competition’ at LIVE which runs over three days (needs to include any required equipment etc.). The remaining £10,000 is retained by WSUK to fund the exhibition space required by that competition at LIVE.

If the ‘demo competition’ is successful, in the second year the amount required from the financial sponsor increases to £25,000. From that, £15,000 is provided as a grant to the organising partner to take forward the competition to regional competitions and then the national finals at WSUK LIVE. WSUK are not making a profit from the facilitation of skills competitions.

As the experts confirmed, to set up a new competition, the organisation would firstly need to speak with a WSUK contact. They would also need to carry out initial research and put forward a business case to WSUK. That would include such things as the number of apprentices in this area, the extent of any skills shortages (now and predicted), and how this aligns with The National Industrial Strategy. Consideration would then be given to how to get a funder/financial sponsor on board.

As the previous industry sector case studies show, skills competitions are a way to showcase the skills needed in a sector, to visually engage potential talent that may be interested in entering the industry and to point them to further information sources and contacts.

### **WSUK LIVE**

World Skills UK (WSUK) advertises LIVE as the “largest skills, apprenticeships and careers event”. The fair is hosted annually (November) and features four industry sectors.

- Construction & Infrastructure
- Health, Hospitality & Lifestyle
- Digital, Business & Creative
- Engineering & Technology

Attendance is around 70,000 each year.

### H.3 Career changers - CareerShifters

Our interview contact is a careers advisor with CareerShifters.

#### Key factors in the career change process

The career-changing process is still only imperfectly understood. Motivations are complex and the process by which a person selects a different career can be based on a wide variety of sources of information and advice. Career changers are advised by professionals to limit their internet search and to engage the industries in which they are interested in mainly face to face meetings.

Our case study *CareerShifters*, is a prominent company in this field. It explained that a large volume of information may be confusing and daunting for potential career changers. Career changers perceive themselves as taking a risk in attempting to transition to a new career and therefore generally approach the issue with caution.

Therefore, according to the interviewee, career changers are not pushed towards a particular sector, but are encouraged to explore their priorities and interests. Although this is professional advice it would also seem to be a logical and common-sense approach. Research by Pye Tait in the construction sector tends to show that people who change careers usually have two or three priority careers in mind and that these are prompted either by direct contact (e.g. a business/occupational relationship with a new sector) or by recommendation/peer advice.

While careers information and promotion may shape a young person's career decision, the same information can only underpin or reinforce the more mature and informed ambitions of a person changing careers. The approach, therefore, has to be supportive and informative rather than promotional.

The interview contact confirmed that there are no direct partnerships with career change specialists and industry sectors.

If they turn to professional advisers, career-changers can be helped by dedicated workshops which help to structure and articulate their aspirations and visions. The internet (e.g. company websites or LinkedIn) is used to find contacts that can be met for a conversation on career opportunities in a chosen sector and information as to which qualifications would be needed.

Career changing majors on a networking and personal approach.

Due to the potential risks career changers are advised by professionals that they should not take a leap of faith and quit their current job outright. Rather, they should try to reduce their hours first and use the spare time to engage potential employers. Work experience programmes and trial, short-term work-placements can be of great help in this regard.



### Example of career shift to horticulture

Our *CareerShifters* contact had, herself, transitioned to horticulture and had followed the steps outlined above. In terms of work experience, she had enrolled in the “*Work and Retrain as a Gardener*” scheme overseen by the WFGA.

As part of the scheme, which was established in 1993, a trainee works 14 hours a week for an entire year. Similarly, volunteering is encouraged. There are case studies on the *Careershifters* website that support this, e.g. *From Barrister to Garden Designer*<sup>19</sup> and *From Marketing to Horticulture*<sup>20</sup>.

Reasons for changing include a wish to leave work in an office environment, or a desire to increase flexibility or reduce hours of work. The barrister in the example enrolled at the KLC School of Design and now works as a self-employed Garden Designer. She felt that gaining more work experience in horticulture before enrolling would have been very beneficial.

The other case study now works as a botanical horticulturalist and focused on getting work experience by first volunteering and then completing two traineeships. She confirmed that the misconceptions about horticulture as not being “a proper career” have to change.

In addition, the steps that should be taken to start a career change and the mistakes to avoid are outlined on the website, using horticulture as example.<sup>21</sup> Other sources such as web-posts and news articles confirm horticulture as an exciting career choice and emphasise the importance of volunteering to gain initial experience, followed by formal training.<sup>22</sup>

### Engaging career changers

While each career changer’s story is different, the case studies show that many career changers shift from corporate, office-based careers. Other examples of success stories show a transition to work in the third sector. Good practice is to personally engage the preferred industry and take advantage of any offers for work experience and advice as well as gradually reducing work hours in the current job. Combined, these factors may serve as a blueprint for attracting more career changers to the Ornamental Horticulture sector. Aside from offering direct contact with professionals in the sector or a dedicated contact, such as an ambassador or staff member dedicated to this purpose, the non-economic contribution of the Ornamental Horticulture sector could be highlighted – e.g. environmental protection or the mental health benefits of gardening, etc.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-barrister-to-garden-designer>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.careershifters.org/success-stories/from-marketing-to-horticulture>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.careershifters.org/expert-advice/how-to-avoid-shifting-into-another-career-you-hate>

<sup>22</sup> [https://www.themiddlesizedgarden.co.uk/change-life-gardening-career/;](https://www.themiddlesizedgarden.co.uk/change-life-gardening-career/)

<https://www.theguardian.com/careers/couture-to-compost-blossoming-career-horticulture>