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# With purpose comes passion

## Fall has arrived and is running its course.



Josh Robinson

The deciduous trees have progressed through their show of fall color and have dropped their leaves. In the plant grower's world, this turns the page to harvest season.

At the mention of the words "harvest season," a litany of tasks runs through my mind — all associated with preparation for the hard work of digging heavy plant material. Logistics, equipment, and personnel are a few of the things that stand out.

For many of us who have the pleasure of being in this industry for an extended period, we know when items are ready through simple observation. We also have equipment that lessens the strain associated with most of the difficult work.

However, when it comes to personnel, things become much more complex. Do we have the appropriate level of trained staff to accomplish the job in the short window Mother Nature provides us? I think for most of us, the answer to that would be: We could use more people.

To say there is a labor shortage for our industry is an understatement. We have been dealing with many factors that contribute to our current situation. For me, personally, the most overlooked is conveying the importance of our products to our employees.

If you were to ask a team member working through the rain, wind, and mud why they are doing this, what would they say? I would venture a guess that some say they are doing it for a paycheck. I am sure they are also there because they like working for a great organization with a good culture — where they feel appreciated.

This is good stuff, but it isn't enough.

We need a shift in how the boots on the ground view nursery work. If we want to get to a place where we can retain and attract people — world-class people — we need to instill a better sense of purpose in what we do. I believe that with purpose comes passion. And, with passion, people will enjoy doing hard jobs.

Changing the world is tough work, but that is the very thing we are doing in our industry. What other jobs let someone say they are making the world a happier, healthier, and wealthier place to live?

We need leaders in our industry to passionately convey that we are world changers, not manual laborers. The benefits of plants are abundant. They sequester carbon, providing the world its best tool to fight climate change. They help people heal faster — patients in a hospital with a view of a greenspace are proven to heal faster and with fewer complications.

Plants fight mental fatigue — studies show that people learn and retain 20% more information with views of nature. Plants bring happiness — the greener the neighborhood the happier people are, regardless of socio-economic factors. Plants reduce crime rates — a study from the city of Baltimore found that when you increase a green space by 10%, the crime rate drops by 12%. This study accounted for all areas in the city regardless of income.

Plants save water and help prevent water pollution. They save families money on heating and cooling — and we all know what flowers can do for a relationship.

The list could go on and on, but these are just a few of the benefits of plants. I have no doubt that at least one of these benefits could resonate enough to persuade someone that growing plants is purposeful work.

We should always ask if we are doing enough to educate ourselves and our people on the benefits of our products? We must find the time, or create an occasion, to convey the positive impacts our work can have on the world. I wish you all a great harvest season! ©