

SEASONAL EMPLOYEE SELECTION TRAITS UTILIZED AT
CAPPELLI'S COUNTRY GARDENS AS PRESENTED BY JUDY STERITZ, M.S.

These are traits that Cappelli's Country Gardens (not necessarily the industry at large) expect from **seasonal employees**.

1. Ability to LISTEN.
 - In order to perform daily and/or assigned duties – the employees must be Able to listen and not be afraid to ask questions.
 - Listening is also very important when helping customers. Many of my design customers are by referral. The number reason why they come to me is because they were told I would listen to their ideas, wants and needs before I drew a design. Listening is a number 1 service element that is overlooked far too often.
2. Must be DEPENDABLE.
 - Employees need to arrive at work on time.
 - Good transportation is a must.
 - From a retail point of view, customers will come back again and again if they can get good dependable service. Dependable service only happens with dependable employees.
3. Willingness to WORK.
 - We all have tasks we do not like to do. Nonetheless, these tasks have to get done.
4. Willingness to work with PEOPLE not necessarily PLANTS.
 - Plants are the product we sell to people.
 - 99.9% of your job will be helping people solve problems.
 - Sometimes people are not nice, especially customers who want a product that you do not have and cannot supply. Some of our customers are always in a constant state of grouch. Being able to smile, and help them work through a problem (with the assistance of a manager) is a big plus.
5. This is a SEASONAL job.
 - Cappelli's is a small garden center in terms of staffing. Currently, there are no full-time positions. This job is a resume builder. We are honest and upright about the seasonal positions. However, if you truly want to pursue a career in horticulture; we will aid you in your effort by offering free tutoring, assistance with job placement and other mentoring services as needed. We recognize the fact that good employees = good industry.
6. REALISTIC JOB PROFILE
 - We want our candidates to realize the day to day activities associated with working in a retail garden center. Therefore we have developed a job shadowing program for prospective employees. There is nothing wrong with deciding you do not want to work at Cappelli's. We want our employees to know what the job is realistically – we sell beauty – a lot of sweat goes into beauty!

We recognize these are not necessarily learned skills that can be taught in a classroom. However, these skills can be reinforced through homework assignments (are they turned in on time, was the task completed?), lab exercises (who does the work and who watches?), and traditional FFA activities.

If secondary horticulture students work with us – we expect them to have the basic skills related to plant identification or are willing to learn plant identification. If a postsecondary student works with us – we demand the identification knowledge. Again, we have to get back to customer service and customer service from a staff of knowledgeable, friendly, problems solvers sets us apart from the box stores.

The problem with low enrollment is not a new issue. The suggestions to join and work closely with the Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association, Ohio Florists Association, as well as other allied organizations are usually a win-win situation for all. Horticulture is advertised and promoted as a hobby. Many administrators do not, cannot, will not; take horticulture seriously as a career choice because they see it as a hobby. We have debated this issue for years on the ONLA Student Activities and Scholarship Committee. I feel one of the best things you can do is to get your administrators to the ONLA Job Fair. As we discussed, it is an excellent way to expose them to the wide career choices in horticulture in a very short time frame.

Network with the instructors who have growing programs. Network with the colleges and cooperative extension programs in your area who offer horticulture programs. Network with the industry; let us know what you are doing with the program and ways we can help.

I have been associated with agricultural education for a long time and do believe FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for leadership, personal growth and career success through education. Continue the good job.