

Industry Career Survey Executive Summary

Earlier this year, the American Floral Endowment began surveying industry professionals about their background, experiences, and advice to help young professionals interested in pursuing a career in horticulture learn more about the industry. In Fall of 2021, the survey gathered data from 104 respondents from various areas of the field.

Two-thirds of respondents represent retailers, floral designers or event planners, 15% represent production growers or breeders and the remaining are wholesales, manufacturers, educators and consultants. The majority work for small companies with less than 50 employees and more than half work for companies with less than 10 members, however 20% work for larger companies ranging from 50 to 500+ in size.

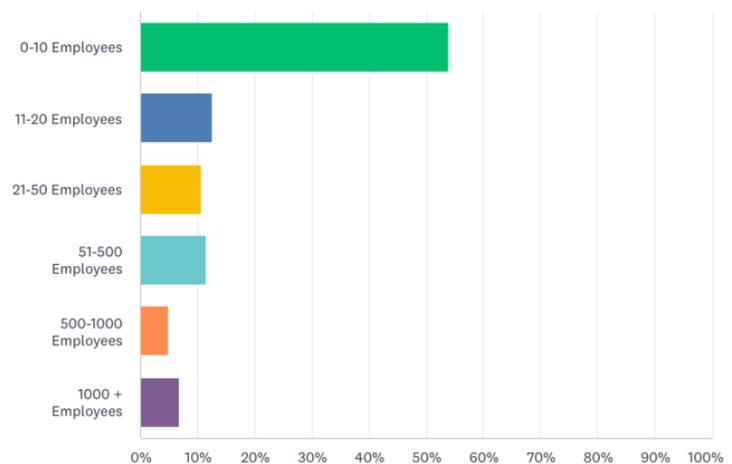
Before assuming their current roles, over two-thirds of respondents had previous experience in horticulture/floriculture; however, nearly 75%, have held their roles for more than 16 years. Annual salaries vary greatly with the lower half earning between \$20,000-60,000 while the upper half earns from \$61,000-120,000+. The top 20% of earners make over \$120,000 per year.

Degrees from higher education institutions were common among our respondents, however the highest level of education attained by them ranged widely from high school diplomas to doctorate degrees. While slightly more than half earned either associate or bachelor's degrees, nearly a quarter ended their formal education in high school. Of the respondents who pursued higher education only 50% earned degrees in horticulture or related studies. Nearly all others attained degrees related to business or marketing. Some have studied a mix of both horticulture and business by completing a concentration, minor or graduate program. The other 20% of respondents have liberal arts degrees in subjects such as art, political science, or English.

Almost half are business owners or executives and about a third focus on floral design and event management. The remaining work in sales and marketing, production and research and development.

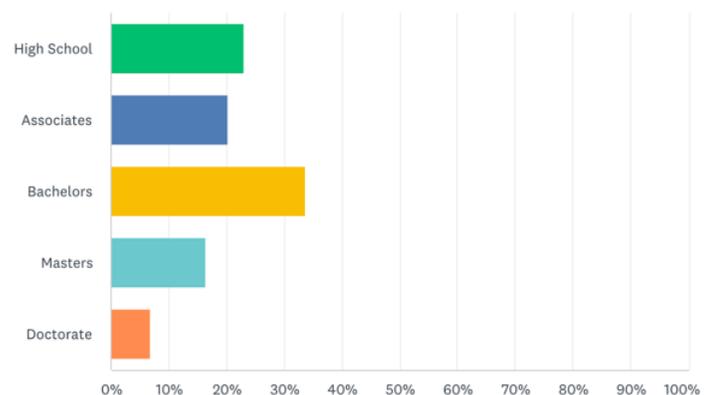
Company Size:

Answered: 104 Skipped: 0



Education (highest degree completed):

Answered: 104 Skipped: 0

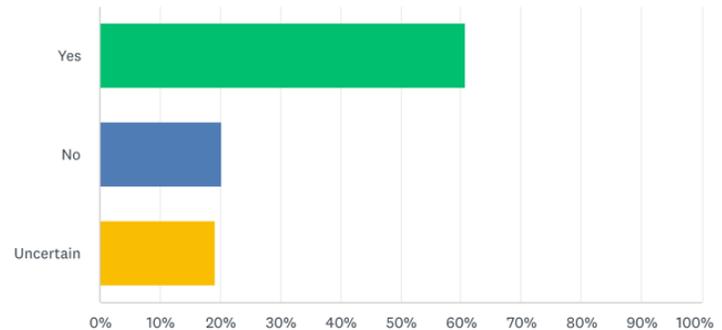


When first taking on their current positions, 25% of respondents mentioned they started or purchased their own business and another 35% reported they entered a family-owned business. Those without such connections or resources instead relied on applying to open positions or networking opportunities. Others mentioned they started in entry level positions, gained the experience necessary to work in higher level roles and were then promoted.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents expect their company to hire in the next 12-18 months. The majority are looking to fill anywhere from one to ten open positions. Most open positions are posted online, however no single platform was used by more than 50% of employers. Company websites and Indeed are used most widely, however LinkedIn and social media sites are also common for advertising open roles. Word of mouth, local media and physical signage were also noted by several respondents.

Does your company plan to hire in the next 12-18 months?

Answered: 89 Skipped: 15



When hiring new employees 40% mentioned experience as a key attribute in candidates. A near equal amount suggested a positive attitude, high enthusiasm and passionate personality are critical. Respondents emphasized the significance of new team members with a genuine willingness to learn, reliable work ethic and strong cultural fit. **Nearly 20% also were interested in creativity and artistic talent.**

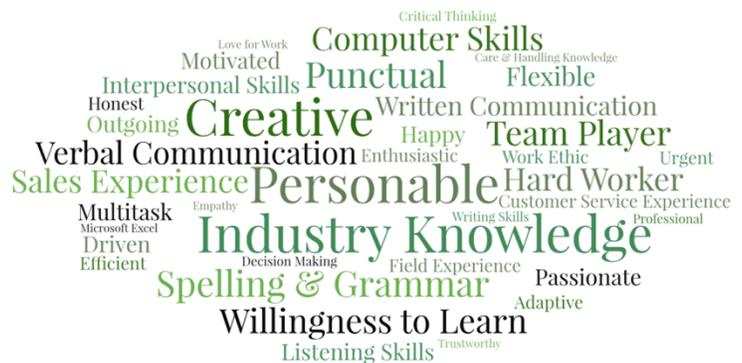
For young professionals entering the industry for the first time, many respondents stressed the importance of flexibility. Many mentioned that a willingness to tackle a diversity of responsibilities will help prepare entry level workers for higher level roles in the future. Assuming a range of responsibilities early on, will allow professionals new to the industry to better recognize their strengths and

identify where they may want to pursue a more specialized role. An outgoing personality and a penchant for learning and self-improvement are also paramount for future success. Some respondents mentioned employees should be prepared to work long hours and to employ a disciplined work ethic.

In addition to the aforementioned, **employers reviewing job applications will lean towards candidates who are highly personable and collaborate well with team members.** Candidates interested in pursuing a job as a floral designer should be prepared to prove design skill and floral knowledge if they have it.

As one respondent noted, horticulture can be a “very demanding, yet rewarding field”. While the industry may not be for everyone, it “provides a great sense of accomplishment”.

Common Must-Haves for Industry Applicants



Here is some highlighted advice quoted directly from industry professionals through the survey:

Advice for Young Professionals Entering the Industry

What advice would you give to someone preparing to find their first industry job in floriculture?



"Don't assume that floriculture means digging in the dirt all day long. There are so many career options in this industry, from technology to marketing to research."



"Make sure you interview the company just as much as they interview you. Make sure that your mission/goals, your values, and your work interests align with theirs."



"Be willing to try/do anything - you learn by doing and even the most menial task relates to all others."



"Depending on the segment, it's an industry that is underrated but the scope of options is more expansive. You may start in one segment, but find you are more interested in other parts of the industry."



"Remember it's a business that happens to be artful. Customer and business comes first over their desire to be creative."



"Be honest about your existing skillset, but more importantly, demonstrate eagerness to develop a more advanced skillset."

Advice for Young Professionals Entering Industry

In your opinion, what must-have traits, skills, or experience should an applicant show on an industry job application?



"Correct spelling, related interests outside of work experience."



"It varies per position but find a way to show you want to part of a team that brings happiness to the world."



"Experience is required for Advanced Floral Design Positions, management positions, etc. For any entry level positions we are looking more into traits: punctuality, willingness to learn, interest in further education and training, and ability to work in a team."



"Some type of field experience: an internship if in/out of college, volunteer work or time at a shop, etc. Floriculture is a unique industry; built on agriculture and the most successful people that I look up to had/have that before they started where they are."



Young Professionals Council

This survey and data were made possible through the American Floral Endowment's Young Professionals Council.

Established in 2015, the YPC offers leadership and networking opportunities for young industry professionals while getting involved in volunteer opportunities within the floral/horticultural industries.

YPC members participate in online and in-person meetings, webinars, and other networking opportunities to share ideas, collaborate with influential industry members, and help promote careers in the floral industry to support AFE's mission.

YPC Benefits:

- Professional development through career tools and webinars
- Networking opportunities with industry experts and peers including a private Facebook discussion group for members
- Growth for the floral industry through sharing connections, events, and resources

Membership is FREE! To learn more and join, visit endowment.org/ypc.