



# LESS OBVIOUS CAREER PATHS, GENERATION Z, OPENING OUT TO THE DISTRICT... **A CLOSE-UP ON THE “JOBS” TRENDS THAT WILL BE EXPLORED AT PAYSALIA 2023!**

**Gardener-landscaper, landscape designer, project manager, landscape design artist, pond installer, reforester—the landscape sector has over 100,000 active workers with very diverse expertise across the whole of France. A dynamic sector buoyed by passionate people who love nature and creation, yet one that has lost much of its attractiveness. In a 2020 survey conducted on behalf of the landscape sector confederation Unep and VALHOR, 58% of landscaping companies said they were having a hard time recruiting. To catch the attention of young talents and career changers, contractors and local authorities are having to scratch their heads.**

Despite the large array of training courses from basic proficiency to engineering degree, there's a shortage of landscaping career candidates among school-leavers and onwards. *“Our sector lacks visibility. Land-related trades don't get much love from the people and institutions in charge of career orientation. That's why even today, career openings in the landscape sector are a secret to many”,* observes Laure Marty, Head of development at the Toulouse training institute CFAAH-CFPPA. The number of graduates arriving on the jobs market every year is clearly insufficient to fulfil employers' needs. *“Vacancies are two a penny in this sector”,* says Laurent Gauthier, Head of the Green Space Management Hub in the town of Villeurbanne (near Lyon). *“Even more so when talking about highly specialized jobs like tree trimmer and pruner, where candidates are rare indeed.”*

That's a surprising assessment given the growing awareness of the landscape sector's societal assets: direct link with nature, meaningful everyday activities, work possibilities in a whole range of different companies and council departments in town and country alike.





## OPENING UP TO DIFFERENT PROFILES: A MOVE THAT IS BEARING FRUIT

More and more town or district councils and contractors are banking on choosing candidates whose profiles do not feature any kind of landscape related diploma but who already have the soft skills to acquire technical competence in the field, eventually flourishing in the sector.

*“Skills can always be learnt. The main thing is to have an inner feel for working in the plant world”,* says Laure Marty.

Targeting atypical but motivated profiles can bring new skills to the table in a company or local authority. *“I hired one person who, after working in a hospital for 25 years, undertook accelerated training with us in a sandwich course”,* says Franck Serra, the 2021 Master Gardener who runs the landscaping company Serra Paysages. *“The person was looking for a job that added meaning to their life, that allowed them to reconnect with nature. Then, while working with the trainee on some fairly unusual projects, I noticed they were quite adept at handling customers. I therefore created a bespoke position between field work and customer relations in order to keep hold of them when their training ended.”*

The sector's diversification has also given rise to a growing need for quite specialized profiles, often following an educational path outside of the landscape sector. Some examples are ecologists, or water management specialists from engineering schools, or bioinformaticians with training in biology or biotechnology. These profiles often bring a new approach to the trade, and that can be a real resource in assisting team development.

## RECOGNIZING TRENDS TO ATTRACT YOUNGER PROFILES

A Toluna Harris Interactive survey conducted in 2022 among over 10,000 students and young graduates revealed that 80% of them were ready to work “very hard” providing they were assigned interesting subjects. This suggests that in order to attract new talents these days, it is essential to propose jobs whose missions and/or of fields of application are in tune with the times.





For example, the younger generations attach great importance to the environment and living conditions, which drives certain trends in the landscape sector like planted roofs and walls and planted workspaces—two areas of expertise very much in fashion in schools and colleges and spinning off into companies. If businesses or local authorities haven't yet developed skills like these, they can open their doors to new young talents on internships or sandwich courses. What's the goal? To specialize incrementally through people at the forefront of trends.

## GEN Z: A RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION PROCESS THAT NEEDS ADAPTING

Gen Z—people born from 1997 to 2010—see work from a very different angle compared with previous generations. Several simultaneous activities, no career plan, lack of interest in long-term work contracts, importance of private life, etc. “Digital natives” have a different set of priorities from their predecessors, which tends to throw many potential employers off.

To avoid the gap becoming a gulf, it is important to understand the profile of this new cohort and thus better understand their expectations. This can happen for example by improving the recruitment path. In a survey by JobTeaser and Maki People, 70% of 18–25 year-olds had already abandoned a candidacy in the middle of a recruitment process for various reasons, like taking too long (28%), lack of clarity (26%), or mismatch between the advertised vacancy and the reality of the job (21%).

To be able to recruit these young talents more serenely and durably, companies and local authorities these days must adapt their methods. *“New arrivals on the labour market need to feel their employer is interested in them and wants to help them grow. To address these expectations, I don't think we, the employers need to make any sweeping changes. We just need to adopt a more humane, more emotional approach”*, believes Master Gardener Franck Serra.

## A LIFE-LONG CAREER IN LANDSCAPING — IT CAN BE DONE!

The new generations tend to change jobs, employers, or even business sectors on a regular basis. Profiles keen on exploring multiple horizons can find all they want in the landscape sector. “A medium-size private business obviously needs landscapers, but there is also a need for in-house joiners, builders, or lighting installers to get the very best out of its creations,” explains Franck Serra. And that’s without overlooking the company’s essential off-field operating functions: after-sales, maintenance, training, etc. Town and district councils too can offer professional development: “You can join a council department as a gardener and go on to reach a managerial or superintendent position. You will of course need to undergo training and excel in the entry contests, but with internal mobility policies, council workers who so desire can constantly evolve,” adds Laurent Gauthier.



## “BEYOND THE WALLS” ACTIONS, AN EXCELLENT LEVER FOR ENGAGING WITH THE MINDS OF TALENTS

When a student is seeking an internship, a sandwich course, or a first job, or when an active worker wants a change of employer, they naturally turn to companies or local authorities they already know. Earning a local reputation is therefore an essential part of boosting one’s employer brand. A host of actions are possible toward this end: presence at trade shows or at orientation sessions, organization of open days or public workshops, participation in contests, setting-up of partnerships with training associations or centres, building of networks, and more.

*“I regularly sit on examination panels. It’s a good way of bringing my local authority to the attention of budding professionals and keeping in touch with the younger generation”,* says Laurent Gauthier.

Aggregating actions like these creates a positive feedback loop that aids recruitment. *“Right from the start, I wanted to open my business to the outside world,* recalls Franck Serra. *I’m happy now to see how the seeds I sowed have grown. My company is now a known name on the local circuit; consequently, I receive a steady flow of speculative job applications.”*

# AT THE CORE OF EXCHANGES ON JOBS AND TRAINING, THE PAYSALIA TRADE SHOW WILL BE BACK FROM 5TH TO 7TH DECEMBER AT EUREXPO LYON, FRANCE

Being scattered all over France, landscape experts don't very often get the chance to engage in collective thought on the issues of promotion and attractiveness of the sector. Every two years, the Paysalia trade show provides these professionals as well as students and career changers with an opportunity to meet up and trade thoughts between enthusiasts. On the programme at the 2023 edition:

- **JOBS & TRAINING VILLAGE:**

Many partners and companies will be in motion to advise and guide students and employed career changers. To enable interesting contacts to be made between candidates and employers, interactive workshops will be organized and there will be a large job wall where job vacancies and CVs (CV library) can be posted.

- **INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS IN THE CARRÉ DES JARDINIERS CONTEST**

Every year, this flagship competition in the landscape sector welcomes the inclusion of students, enabling them to grow their skills alongside experienced professionals. Each team among the finalists must include a student in its ranks, in addition to which several students are invited to form the Carré des Jardiniers "student judge panel", whose job is to attribute the "coup de coeur" prize for honourable mention.

- **NATIONAL PLANT RECOGNITION CONTEST:**

To showcase and promote the investment and the botanic and vegetable-world expertise of new talents in the landscape sector, every edition of Paysalia hosts the final of the National Plant Recognition Contest organized by VALHOR. It's a key event for not only students but also professionals, for they too are challenged to show their knowledge

- **CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOPS CYCLE:**

Is the perfect way to initiate dialogue on the sector's core subjects like the dynamics involved in jobs and training, and to exchange landscape-related news and innovations from France as well as from abroad.

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