

Customer Stories

How Kaw Valley Greenhouses Grows Its Staff During Peak Season

INDUSTRY: RETAIL



The Client

Family owned and locally grown, Kaw Valley Greenhouses operates half a million square feet of greenhouse space. The company has been selling annuals, perennials, succulents and vegetables for over half a century. It sells over 12 million plants from April through June each year at more than 40 spring garden centers throughout Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri.

The Challenge

Kaw Valley Greenhouses employs 24 full-time, year-round team members. However, to prepare for its busy season, they hire 550-630 seasonal employees across three U.S. states in the spring. With only one dedicated HR professional aided by two-three seasonal supervisors and office assistants, hiring so many people in such a short period of time is challenging.

Moreover, since it is seasonal work, candidates aren't exactly bending over backwards for the open positions. "I'm competing with every other retailer out there to get these part-time employees," explains Adrienne Simmons, Human Resources Manager at Kaw Valley Greenhouses. "I need the hiring process to be as simple and quick as possible or else I'm going to lose the good people to others."

Kaw Valley Greenhouses needed a way to modernize its job application and preliminary interview process, creating more hiring efficiencies.

The Solution

Kaw Valley Greenhouses began using VidCruiter, and "it worked like a dream" says Simmons. In a month of hiring, they saved \$1,300-\$2,200.

Their main goals with the VidCruiter hiring platform were two-fold: 1.) minimize unfit candidates by providing a realistic preview of the work required from employees, and 2.) reduce unnecessary travel time and costs.

VidCruiter helped Kaw Valley Greenhouses better illustrate what candidates could expect when working at a greenhouse by debunking common misconceptions from job seekers. "A lot of applicants think 'Oh...a garden center. I'll be able to play with plants, help people with their gardens, chitchat about flowers. That will be fun.' But it's actually very physically demanding work. Many people quit after one or two days when they realize the work isn't what they expected."

As part of their revamped hiring process, VidCruiter now embeds photos and videos within Kaw Valley Greenhouses' job application. Employees are shown working in all kinds of weather (standing beside huge piles of snow and setting up displays in 90-degree heat with no air conditioning). By demonstrating realistic working conditions, they can give applicants a much better understanding of the job. Only the serious candidates continue to the next stage of the hiring process.

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"It worked like a dream."



INTERVIEW WITH:
ADRIENNE SIMMONS

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
KAW VALLEY GREENHOUSES

VidCruiter is also helping Kaw Valley Greenhouses determine whether or not candidates are worth meeting for an in-person interview, which often involves travel. “Once I drove to Lincoln Nebraska, booked a \$175 meeting room, and literally every single applicant no-showed that day,” laments Simmons. “I sat in a room from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and interviewed nobody.” VidCruiter’s live video interviews eliminate this completely. “Now, if a candidate no shows on the video interview, we close the browser and get back to work. We’re not miles away wasting time and money,” says Simmons.

An added bonus of using VidCruiter for Kaw Valley Greenhouses’ hiring is VidCruiter’s onboarding modules. It costs half of what Simmons was paying for the company’s previous online training platform, and it is helping her regain time by not having to play tech support.

“People were texting me at 10:00 p.m. or on the weekends because they were unable to access [our previous] online training. VidCruiter is user-friendly, so there are fewer questions, but there’s also 24-hour customer service. Anyone who gets stuck has immediate support,” says Simmons.

The Results

VidCruiter is helping Kaw Valley Greenhouses hire enough motivated people for its busy season. The [VidCruiter platform](#) has accelerated their average application-to-hire time from 1-3 weeks to 1-3 days for the right candidate, so the company is at less risk of losing well-qualified applicants.

Simmons and Kaw Valley Greenhouses’ operational manager are saving time and money on unnecessary travel for interviews thanks to VidCruiter, too. During peak hiring season, they are saving 40-50 hours of driving time a month—over a week each month that they can use for other important work! Their time savings have been so significant, they anticipate dropping 60 hours of office assistant labor a week.

Compared to other online hiring platforms with rigid, one-size-fits-all contracts, VidCruiter was flexible enough to meet the unique needs of Kaw Valley Greenhouses’ seasonal business model. A monthly payment plan didn’t make sense as they only need the tool part of the year, so Kaw Valley Greenhouses pays for VidCruiter on a per hire model.

Switching to video interviewing allowed Simmons to share some of her workload with the operation manager, so she could focus on marketing job positions, processing applications as they came in, as well as other non-recruiting tasks.

Perhaps more importantly, VidCruiter gave Kaw Valley Greenhouses’ team much better work/life balance. “It really cut down our stress and increased our work/life balance, which has been fantastic,” says Simmons. “And since workload parallels salary, it was like getting a raise in that way.”

VidCruiter is helping Kaw Valley Greenhouses build an even more comprehensive application process for its next hiring sprint. Last year, Kaw Valley Greenhouses conducted about 500 phone interviews and 250 pre-interviews. Questions previously asked in preliminary interviews will now be incorporated into VidCruiter’s custom-built application form, eliminating phone interviews nearly entirely and further accelerating Kaw Valley Greenhouses’ hiring process.

50 HOURS

LESS DRIVING TIME
PER MONTH

1-3 DAYS

AVERAGE APPLICATION-
TO-HIRE TIME

60 HOURS

LESS OFFICE ASSISTANT
LABOR A WEEK