



# Entrepreneur

## Why a career in agriculture?

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### WHY AGRICULTURE?

Why do you work in the agriculture industry? What does the agriculture industry have that sets it apart from other industries? The answer to these questions can be a powerful recruitment tool for your organization and the industry overall.

"Agriculture is an authentic industry. People are genuine and they want to work together to make a positive difference," says Erika Brandt, Marketing and Communications Manager for AgCareers.com. "Those of us that work in the industry know that, but we need to share that message with job seekers."

Brandt said this message can help build the pipeline of talent for the agriculture industry, especially if it is coming from current employers.

A 2001 study conducted at New Mexico State University by graduate student, Malissia Wildman, and Associate Professor, Robert M. Torres, showed that professionals in agriculture have a strong influence on an agriculture student's choice of major.

The study showed that professionals in agriculture fields were identified most frequently as "very influential" in selecting an agriculture major compared to extension professionals, vocational Ag teachers, high school science teachers, high school counselors, high school principals, or other high school teachers.

### CREATING A CONNECTION

Jim Welch, Speaker/Consultant on business growth and President/ Founder of The Growth Leader Inc., said agriculture professionals need to use their influence to appeal to job seekers on an emotional level.

"The agriculture industry has the opportunity to go beyond a transactional relationship with its employees and connect on an emotional level," Welch said. "That connection will make a big difference for recruitment and the general perception of careers in agriculture."

The "transactional" relationship is when an employee works for a company and the only real connection is compensation exchanged for work. Welch points out that there is no emotional connection with the employer brand and therefore no employee loyalty in this type of relationship.

He said employers should personalize their company brand and the agriculture industry to create an emotional connection with job seekers. Welch suggests using the following reasons to help establish a connection.

- \* Agriculture is a growth industry that combines technology with the need to provide food for people to live and grow.
- \* Agriculture helps provide healthy and well-balanced food choices.
- \* Agriculture feeds the world's growing population.
- \* Agriculture helps create and nurture relationships. People become closer when they eat together.

### UTILIZING THE CONNECTION

Once you have established an emotional connection, you need to link it to a higher mission. If job seekers see that the

agriculture industry has a social consciousness of world hunger, and that their work in the industry can make a difference, then they may be more likely to join agriculture instead of another industry.

While it's important to highlight what the agriculture industry is, it's also a good idea to include what it is not. Job seekers need to know that the industry is not just production positions. Yes, agriculture feeds the world, but the industry utilizes many different professions to complete that task.

Job seekers need to know that the industry employs research scientists, sales professionals, communications personnel, information technology specialists, etc. This information may be useful in attracting individuals outside of the industry who have skills that can be applied within agriculture—especially when you consider the U.S. unemployment rate increased to 9.4% in May.

"This is our time to stand out as an industry by continuing to offer quality positions to attract job seekers," says Eric Spell, President of AgCareers.com.

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