

Seeding for a Green Revolution

Dr Aaron Chiang
Head of Human Resources and Administration
Hong Yip Service Company Limited



Seed bed of the School

Green Property Management

Formed in 1967, Hong Yip Service Company Limited (Hong Yip) has established as one of the leading property and facilities management companies in Hong Kong, aiming at providing quality and professional service to achieve its corporate vision, "To be Hong Kong's best property and facilities management company creating ideal homes for its customers", and sustaining the "learning for growth" culture.

Hong Yip places great emphasis on "the quest for eco-friendly property management" as one of its business objectives. As horticulture has always been a neglected area in the property management industry, "Turning 'premier horticulture management' into a competitive strategy" has become its major focus. The launch of "Seeding for a Green Revolution" programme was to turn its horticultural capability into a competitive edge.

Setting up of Horticulture School

The Management rendered its full support by setting up the Horticulture School in 2006, demonstrating the long-term commitment of the Management to this initiative. For programmes designed and organized by the School, it places emphasis on the learning of horticulture knowledge and skills, design and management, and most importantly, application on-site. Training needs study was conducted to define the performance standards, assess the current performance and establish the training requirements for different levels of staff.

Launching of Horticulture Programmes

Out of the various training programmes run by the School, it is worthwhile to share the contents of one of its very successful award winning programme, "Seeding for a Green Revolution", which was launched in mid-2006. Below is a brief account of the programme.

1. Programme Design and Training Intervention

Having identified the training needs and resolved the various hurdles, the training programme was designed. In essence, the programme consisted of the following four stages:

Stage 1- Concept and design

- Established horticulture performance requirements, confirmed programme objectives and expected impacts
- Developed programme framework and contents with Hong Yip's Horticulture Guidebook published
- Developed horticulture competency model for different levels of staff
- Ran pilot classes in selected buildings/estates



Stage 2- Training intervention



Listeners listening attentively



Coaching in the field

Hong Yip's Horticulture Guidebook

- Conducted classes with 3-level of courses for 3 major categories of staff, front-line, office and supervisory
- Attracted different levels and nature of staff to participate in the programme

Stage 3- Field audit and coaching

- Carried out field audits and coaching in buildings/estates
- Submitted improvement reports after audit

Stage 4- Sustainable development initiatives

- Conducted horticulture task force meetings and refined course contents
- Formed green teams with members drawn from both staff, owners committees' members and residents
- Encouraged participation in industry award competitions
- Formulated a five-year horticulture certification programme

2. Programme Evaluation

The widely used 5-level evaluation approach was adopted to evaluate training effectiveness. The reaction level was highly satisfactory, while the learning result indicated significant improvement by the end of the programme. The horticulture audit assessment commented that participants had effectively applied the skills learnt in the workplace. Benefits derived included improved corporate image, increased resident and client satisfaction and winning of numerous awards. As an indirect result of the programme, business performance was also improved.

3. Benefits of the Programme

The "Seeding for a Green Revolution" programme was the first of its kind in the industry and because of its uniqueness. Hong Yip set the standard in horticulture management for the industry. Specifically, it:

- linked the programme to business and performance needs
- put proven learning principles and methodologies into practice
- followed through the behavioural change in the workplace
- tracked the impact of the programme on job performance and the business results
- achieved the training objectives and results set

4. Programme Recognition

In order to share its training programmes with training practitioners in the training and development industry, Hong Yip participated in the 2009 Excellence in Training Award Competition held annually by the Hong Kong Management Association with its training programme "Seeding for a Green Revolution". This time, it had not only been awarded with the Certificate of Merit, but also won the "Most Innovative Award" in the Competition. Such achievements were recognition of the success of the training programme and its innovative nature. With the very encouraging results achieved by the programme, the Company submitted the same Programme in the Workplace Training Category of the 2010 Training Award Contest organized by the Society for Human Resource Management (now the Association for Talent Development). The Programme won the award eventually, becoming the first company in the property and facilities management reaching this level of achievement.

QF Horticulture Programmes

Riding on the success of training programmes run by the Horticulture School, the Company made use of the training materials developed by the Industry Training Advisory Committee for Property Management Industry under the Qualification Framework (QF) and designed for the first time in the industry the Certificate in Horticulture Knowledge and Skills training programme (consisting of a training hours of 30), which was successfully accredited by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation and Vocational Qualification (HKCAAVQ) at QF Level One in 2012. It was so well received by the staff that the Certificate in Horticulture Beautification training programme at QF Level Two, was developed and received accreditation from HKCAAVQ in 2015, again as the first of its kind in the industry.

Details of Two QF Horticulture Programmes:

Name:	Certificate in Practical Horticulture Knowledge and Skills (QF Level 1)	Certificate in Advanced Horticulture Beautification (QF Level 2)
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enable trainees to learn practical horticultural knowledge- Enable trainees to apply horticultural knowledge and skills in daily gardening management- Provide practice training to trainees so as to strengthen their basic gardening knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enable trainees to recognize various types of plants, fertilizers, pesticides and gardening tools- Enable trainees to follow the instructions to carry out horticulture beautification- Provide practice training to trainees so as to strengthen their knowledge and application in horticulture beautification
Contents:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Various types of gardening tools- Operation, maintenance and safety equipment instructions- Plant breeding method- Common fertilizers and fertilization methods- Use of pesticides- Pruning techniques for shrubs and trees- Types and installation methods of shower facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Flowers and plants (Including: plants classification, nomenclature and morphology, growth and environmental factors and plants matching consideration)- Soils and fertilizers (Including : soils structure, plant materials, knowledge in plants nutrient)- Use of pesticides- Understanding and use of gardening tools- Horticulture beautification (Including: pruning various types of flowers and plants, caring and beautification)
Duration:	25 hours (3 credits)	36 hours (4 credits)

The Way Forward

Seeing and believing that “the quest for eco-friendly property management” will continue to be the overarching objective of the general public including our clients, the Company will stick firmly to its “Turning ‘premier horticulture management’ into a competitive strategy” and will strive to maintain its excellence in this field and uphold its leading position in this niche area.

Learning is a joyful experience for attendees

