

WHAT IS ROLO?

Jodie Read explains – ROLO (Register of Landbased Operatives) is a one day health, safety and environmental awareness course aimed specifically at people in landbased industries including:

- Landscape Construction
- Horticultural Landscape Maintenance
- Arboriculture
- Pesticides
- Environmental Management
- Ecological Management
- Amenity

Because ROLO is written with landbased industries in mind the materials have been tailored to suit industry requirements.



Without undertaking the necessary ROLO training and subsequently holding a valid LISS/CSCS card, operatives will not be permitted to work on the highways infrastructure.



Register of Landbased Operatives

WHY DO I NEED TO HAVE ROLO?

NHSS18

As well as providing evidence of industry specific awareness training ROLO is also a mandatory prerequisite for LISS/CSCS and the National Highways Sector Scheme 18 for the Environment and Landscape including ecology (NHSS18).

Basically, this means that without undertaking the necessary ROLO training and subsequently holding a valid LISS/CSCS card, operatives will not be permitted to work on the highways infrastructure, which could cost companies the opportunity to work on some lucrative schemes.

CONSTRUCTION SITES

Even for those companies that don't work along the hazardous highways network, most landscapers are being asked to hold CSCS cards and having to comply with various construction health and safety schemes such as CHAS, Constructionline etc.

Landscapers choosing to hold industry specific CSCS cards demonstrate a greater knowledge of how site based health and safety requirements apply to their specific industry requirements, and reflects how seriously an organisation values the health, safety and wellbeing of employees.

Landscape Construction and Landscape Maintenance Occupational Skills

	Landscaper	Landscape Supervisor	Landscape Manager
Cards available	Blue Card	Gold Card	Black Card
ROLO Health, Safety & Environmental Awareness	ROLO Health, Safety & Environmental Awareness	ROLO Health, Safety & Environmental Awareness	ROLO Health, Safety & Environmental Awareness
Prerequisite	CSCS Touch-screen Test	Sup + CSCS Touch-screen Test	MAP + CSCS Touch-screen Test
Industry accreditation (now)	Industry accreditation	Industry accreditation	Industry accreditation
<p><i>This route of entry is open temporarily (until 31/05/13). It enables current or past employers to declare the competency of experienced workers without formal qualifications (provided the employee also satisfactorily completes the ROLO course and the relevant CSCS touch-screen test)</i></p>			
Route after 31/05/13	Level 2 NVQ Level 2 Amenity Horticulture (Landscaping) or Diploma Level 2 in Work-based Horticulture (Landscaping)	Level 3 NVQ Level 3 Amenity Horticulture (Landscaping) or Diploma Level 3 in Work-based Horticulture (Landscaping)	Level 4 NVQ Level 4 Amenity Horticulture Management – Landscaping / Grounds Maintenance

WHERE CAN I GET ROLO TRAINING?

The British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) administer ROLO training. Please go to www.bali.org.uk/quality_assurance/rolo for a list of approved training providers.

WHAT IS LISS/CSCS? LISS

The Landbased Industry Skills Scheme/Construction Skills Certification Scheme (LISS/CSCS) card was introduced in June 2011 as a means of demonstrating the health and safety competency of people working on construction sites, including those in a highways environment (as required by NHSS18).

ROUTES TO LISS/CSCS

If your company needs to obtain LISS/CSCS cards, there is a financially compelling case to do so before the 31/05/13.

The diagram below illustrates what qualifications are required for landscapers, supervisors and managers to achieve LISS/CSCS. All those persons aiming to obtain a LISS/CSCS card will be required to have satisfactorily completed the ROLO Health, Safety and Environmental Awareness course as well as a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) touch-screen test at the appropriate level.

By seeking to obtain LISS/CSCS cards now,

landscapers can use the Industry Accreditation route to obtain approval via 'Grandfather Rights'. This is of particular value for experienced employees who may not have formal qualifications. It allows employers to confirm that staff are competent. However, the ability to make use of this Industry Accreditation route ends after 31st May 2013. After that time, anybody seeking to obtain a LISS/CSCS card will need to have undertaken a relevant NVQ or Diploma. Given that the average cost of such a course is estimated to be approximately £2000 - £2500 per employee, there is a significant saving to be had by getting ahead of the game!

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ABOUT JODIE READ



Jodie Read achieved a BSc in Biology and an MSc in Global Biodiversity; Monitoring and Conservation in the University of Hull. After leaving university she worked as a research worker for the Forestry Commission.

In 2006 Jodie became Managing Director of what is now Penarth Management Limited and assists organisations to implement and maintain management systems to recognised standards such as ISO9001 (Quality), ISO14001 (Environmental) and OHSAS18001 (Health and Safety).

The team have assisted numerous landscaping organisations to successfully implement management systems to recognised standards and the company are affiliate members of the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI). She is also one of only a few approved ROLO health and safety trainers in the country.

RATE YOUR COMPANY

Creating a competitive advantage in contracting

In my experience the owners, directors and managers of contracting businesses have achieved their position by virtue of the fact that they are excellent practitioners and technicians and in an environment where there is regularly enough work to go around, their lack of experience in the business of the business goes largely unnoticed until something happens like an accident or the opportunity to tender for a prestigious contract. Paul Elcoat reports.

Learning from experience will of course enable gradual improvement but in the mean time there are companies out there that are quietly reaping the rewards of a professional approach to sustainable competitive advantage.

SO WHAT DO I MEAN BY 'SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE'?

Imagine that you have asked all of your customers and potential customers to complete a questionnaire with a 1 to 10 rating for every single aspect of your business that they were ever able to experience. If you added up all of the scores for each category on every sheet and then took an average over the whole survey; that would be a figure describing how well you meet your customers expectations.

Now suppose that you were able to send the same questionnaire to all of the customers of each of your competitors and calculate the average in the same way. The score generated by each of your competitors would allow you to rate your company in the local industry environment. If you achieved a higher score than them, the gap between you and the next would be your competitive advantage.

Think about it like this, to be better than the rest, it is not enough to be 1000% better in one particular aspect. To achieve a competitive

advantage your business must be 1% better in 1000 things.

As an observation, most landscape contracting companies try to differentiate themselves in the market by portraying an image of doing better work, or in other words, trying to be 1000% better in one particular aspect. In reality, being able to demonstrate a strategic approach to health and safety, environment, employment, equal opportunities, marketing and sales will allow any company to quickly leap ahead of the rest.

Most contractors of the level that would read this article are probably great at landscape design and build, and landscape maintenance but may not be quite as good at managing the competitive advantage factors.

The score generated by each of your competitors would allow you to rate your company in the local industry environment. If you achieved a higher score than them, the gap between you and the next would be your competitive advantage.

Your Ability		Competitive Position/Likely Outcome
1	You are wondering where other people find contract opportunities	You are way behind
2	You can find them but don't get around to expressing an interest because it all seems too complicated	You probably have a feeling of resentment and recall the good old days where your reputation for excellent work ensured your success
3	You express an interest but are intimidated by the questions on the pre-qualification questionnaire	You have been left behind by the competition due to your inability to detect and respond to the constant micro changes in the contracting environment
4	You attempt to complete the questionnaire but struggle or miss out questions due to known gaps	At least you are making an attempt but unfortunately the above comments apply
5	Your response is based upon documents and answers that you have found on the internet	If you get through to the invitation to tender stage, your documentation and records will probably be found wanting; your application will be sifted out
6	Your response is based upon documents data and records that are well managed and available in your organisation	You will be invited to submit a tender and now it all comes down to price

If you market your achievement properly, it will seriously improve your chances of achieving higher value, longer term contracts with better clients that strictly vet their contractors.

An acid test indicator of whether you are trailing behind is your performance during a pre-qualification process. I have put together the success scale in the table above.

As per position 6 on the table – 'now it all comes down to price' – what this means is that the few companies meeting the contract requirements in respect of those factors I listed earlier; will be asked to submit a price for the contract or complete a schedule of rates. The cheapest doesn't always get it but it does pay to be competitive.

There is a cost to run systems but I can tell you

that the organisations that are doing well have all of the management systems taken care of and have probably had them assessed and certified to CHAS and to ISO quality and environmental standards.

From my observation of many companies moving from point 1 to point 6, they break less, they waste less, they deploy more efficiently, people don't get hurt, in short, the cost savings far outweigh the initial and ongoing investment in getting everything in place.

If you then market your achievement properly, it will seriously improve your chances of achieving higher value, longer term contracts with better clients that strictly vet their contractors.

IT JUST TAKES EFFORT AND SOME GUIDANCE

The route to sustainable competitive advantage and sales success is quite straight forward; it just takes effort and some guidance.

I am going to focus on the key ingredients in each edition of ProLandscape and shall endeavour to justify the value of appropriate management in terms of competitive advantage, increased sales and profitability rather than the usual perspective of legal compliance and threat of enforcement. ♦

ABOUT PAUL ELCOAT



Paul Elcoat is the founder of Elcoat Limited based in South Northamptonshire and works as an advisor to many companies in the landscape and

tree industries. Since 2005 he has specialised in helping small contractors to get everything in place to increase sales and win contracts. He started his career in amenity horticulture and developed an interest in trees. He has been a climbing arborist, NPTC Assessor and Verifier and up until the establishment of his own company he was a director for a large vegetation management contractor serving the domestic, highway and railway sectors. With an MBA, qualifications in health and safety and as a Chartered Environmentalist, he has the rare ability to turn corporate responsibility into increased revenue.

Paul would be happy to take questions or comments from readers by email :

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