

Are Your Billable Hours On The Rise?



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The [American Society of Landscape Architects conducted a survey recently](#) and found there has been an increase in billable hours for this year's second quarter but a slight dip in work inquiries.

About 85 percent of landscape architecture firms reported stable to significantly higher billable hours, which was a substantial increase from the previous quarter this year. Compared to the second quarter last year, survey results showed about 80 percent of firms reported stable to significantly higher billable hours.

The ALSA survey also asked firms about new work inquiries. About 83 percent answered that inquiries for new work were stable to significantly higher during the second quarter of 2017, which was slightly lower than reports from the previous quarter.

Having higher billable hours can be a great thing for your crews *and* your bottom line. But the survey also showed a slight decline in requests for new work, so the question asked is why there are more billable hours? Are your company crews working as efficiently as possible?

Keeping the blades spinning for mowing crews and reducing downtime keeps crews busy, and maximizes billable hours, says Jim Huston of Colorado-based J.R. Huston Consulting.

[Huston says that it is important to measure everything](#), including billable hours to maximize the efficiency of your crews. "You can't manage what you don't measure, so measure everything," he stresses.

Two companies could have the same number of employees but different work, therefore crew size and equipment will need to be different. Keep this in mind when [working on the initial bids and proposals](#) for the work inquiries you receive.

The survey also found that plans to hire remained steady. Most of the firms with two or more employees say they plan to hire during the third quarter of 2017. Nearly 60 percent of firms with more than 100 employees also say they will hire either an experienced landscape architect or an entry-level landscape architect.

This ASLA survey was conducted over a two-week period in July with 164 firms responding.

Read more: [Should I Pay Travel Time?](#)