

Overcome the labor shortage: 7 tips to recruit and retain employees.



Many business owners are still feeling the effects of the labor shortage. Some are having a hard time recruiting the number of team members they need, and others are struggling to retain them. While potential candidates have their specific hopes for a job, there are additional measures you can take to grab their interest, sell your company, and build the best team.

Follow these seven tips to help overcome the labor shortage.

1. **Be creative when recruiting and evaluate your education requirements.** People look through similar job descriptions every day, so think outside the box. Take the time to create a job posting that grabs attention and sheds light on your company and its culture but is still professional. Clearly state the job description and benefits, and consider being transparent about pay/salary information in your job ads. Education is important, but so is relevant job experience and your company's willingness to train. Consider lowering education requirements to what is necessary, offsetting education requirements with relevant work experience, and offering more initial, on-the-job training. Doing one or all of these things can make your positions more attractive.
2. **Change up the way you have recruited in the past.** Desperate times call for desperate measures. Have you evaluated the effectiveness of your current recruitment efforts or explored other avenues? Beyond just ads on the typical job listing sites, consider partnering with local organizations, high schools, career centers, colleges, and recruitment agencies. If your company has social media pages or partnerships with local news media, consider paid ads for recruitment and spotlighting your current team members with testimonials about working for your company.

3. **Improve pay and benefits.** The job market is currently flooded with opportunities, and wages hold a lot of sway over potential employees. Factor in the increased cost of living and know that higher pay expectations are a growing trend. Evaluate if your business can increase pay or offer extra benefits, such as sign-on and retention bonuses, even if that means potentially raising prices or rates or getting creative with perks. Some trending benefits and perks include flexible paid time off, overtime opportunities, company outings, tuition and certification reimbursement, extended maternity and paternity paid time off, and more. Also consider an employee referral bonus to have your current workers help with your recruitment efforts. Maintaining a happy workforce within your company and drawing in strong potential employees may outweigh a slight increase in costs.
4. **Create a healthy and diverse work environment.** A great way to retain employees is making a happy and productive workspace. We tend to hire people who match our existing workforce, which limits the recruitment pool. Evaluate and aim to increase diversity amongst your team by welcoming individuals of different ages, genders, ethnicities, work backgrounds, and life experiences, all while fostering acceptance. Spending time building a supportive culture can increase employee relationships, heighten productivity, and enhance employee satisfaction. Team members are more likely to stay put if the company shows it cares.
5. **Learn to be flexible and embrace hybrid work.** When an employee comes with requests for general work or scheduling, take the time to listen. Whether you can accommodate what they are asking or not, it's important each team member feels they are being heard. If you do have to turn down a request, explain why so it doesn't create any confusion or resentment. The pandemic made workers reassess their work-life balance and has driven many potential hires to seek out remote and hybrid work options. If the job can be done remotely, consider offering this as a perk, even if it's a couple of days per week, to help expand your geographic applicant pool and to attract the talent you need.
6. **Become the most efficient.** If there are upgrades that can be made to alleviate stress and tasks from your staff, look at investing in them. If you can afford a system that automates tracking inventory or technology that can eliminate other administrative tasks, your team can focus on more purposeful work that will boost overall efficiency and morale within your business.
7. **Train your employees and offer opportunities for growth.** When hiring any new employee, no matter the position, ensure they are properly trained. Doing so at the start can improve safety, avoid issues with work output, and stop potential tension between staff. Career growth is another selling point to grab the attention of potential employees and retain your current team. Employees appreciate the chance to develop and rise in your business, so make sure there are opportunities for them to do so. Recognize achievements verbally to the team member or the whole team, and if possible, reward them with new titles or pay bumps when deserved.

The labor shortage is a serious problem for many business owners today. But you can follow these seven tips to better attract and retain top talent for the future. While you're at it, take time to evaluate your business protection. Our local, independent agents will work with you to ensure you have the exact coverage you need.