



DELAGET™

EBOOK

How to build and retain restaurant staff

It's no secret that hiring quality employees is one of the most important things you can do for any business. But it's particularly difficult to hire and retain the best restaurant staff. Satisfaction, trust, and reputation can make or break a team's cohesion and long-term effectiveness.

In this guide, we're going to break down a comprehensive plan to hire, train, retain, and even let go of employees.



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Hiring restaurant staff

You don't want to hire just anyone who wants a job. The key to hiring restaurant employees is making sure they're the right fit for your restaurant. Here are a few tips for hiring fast food workers.

Rethink your job descriptions

A clunky job description might not dissuade someone who's just looking for a part-time gig, but better-qualified candidates expect to find accurate, polished job descriptions for clues about a prospective job.

Use casual, approachable language that really speaks to why someone should want this position as well as the type of person who would be a good fit.

Add photos – or better yet, a video.

Get testimonials from employees who are already working in your restaurants.

Good candidates will recognize when an employer cares about finding the right person for the position. And if you're passionate about hiring, you'll get that passion back from your applicants.



Entice your workers with great benefits

If your benefits aren't up to par, you may be losing employees to competitors. There are plenty of restaurant employee benefits you can offer to attract and retain employees. These include traditional benefits like medical, dental, life, and PTO, but they can also be more creative, like stipends, generous meal allowances, or same-day pay.

A NOTE ON EARNED WAGE ACCESS

Level-up your benefits and include an earned wage access for your employees. According to Daily Pay, 96% of employers who offer earned wage access say it helps them to attract talent.

WHAT IS EARNED WAGE ACCESS?

Earned wage access allows employees to access their earned pay prior to payday to help meet unexpected expenses without having to pay late fees, overdraft fees, or resort to predatory payday loans.

Make orientation matter in the hiring process

Better restaurant employee hiring begins in the interview process. Collect as much information as you can so that you're hiring the very best candidate. Ask questions that weren't or couldn't be answered in their application – ones that will reflect not just the interviewee's qualifications, but their interest in this specific position. Try to envision what it'll be like talking to that person after they've joined your team. And don't forget to conduct reference checks!



Retaining restaurant staff

To minimize the need for regular hiring, it's crucial to give your staff a reason to stick around.

With the right training, coaching, and incentives, your employees will clearly understand the goals you've set for them and how to succeed in their roles.

Incentives for restaurant employees

There are many great incentives to encourage a fun and challenging restaurant staff environment. Consider introducing friendly competition between employees. Who can encourage the most customers to upgrade meal sizes? Who is fastest at the drive-thru lane? And don't forget to properly reward your employees in the way they want to be rewarded: college scholarships, parties, and team events are all great ways to incentivize employees while giving them a fun place to work.

Training and coaching opportunities

If you take the time to develop a comprehensive training plan, then new hires, trainers, and managers can more easily identify expectations and track progress. Knowing where your new staff is at in their training, including where the pain points are and what's most useful to them, will give you a greater chance of nurturing and retaining successful employees.





Use restaurant data to fine-tune your team

One of the coolest things restaurant management software can do is identify not just your best employees, but your best teams. For example, do you find that certain employees work exceptionally well together? Your software can run the numbers: Compare your sales data with your scheduling data to find trends of increases in sales when specific employees work together. Once you've identified which employees have the best synergy, you can schedule those teams together whenever possible.



Managing employee theft

Employee theft is an unfortunate reality in every industry. Most solutions to the problem are short-term stopgaps that don't address the root cause. An effective restaurant loss prevention program will account for and prevent losses so you can focus on making your restaurant more profitable, and, crucially, build trust with your team. Let's look at how to detect and handle theft.

Prevent theft before it happens

Theft is one of the biggest preventable losses in the industry, and protecting your company's cash starts at the register. If you limit the amount of money in the cash registers, tighten control on register functions, and reconcile receipts with the cashier, you'll reduce risk and potential losses.

Start at the POS

While the register is often the focal point of employee theft, employee theft in restaurants typically starts at the point of sale (POS) system. You should be regularly monitoring deletions, cancelled orders, discounts, over-rings, voids, and refunds. Look for outliers in the data – is one employee making a particularly high number of errors or refunds? Has there been a steady increase over time or a sudden spike? Does the cash in the register tell the same story? What other factors are at play?





Use loss prevention software to find anomalies

Let's say that receipts for manager meals were found missing from the drive-thru drawer. Without a loss prevention tool, getting to the bottom of issues like this can feel endless: investigating, interviewing employees, and combing through reports isn't the way you'd prefer to spend your working hours. With Delaget Detect, a manager can cross-reference the point of sale exceptions from the business day the receipts were missing, turning hours and days of "getting to the bottom of it" into just minutes.



Tracking employee productivity

You can teach and train employees to be productive, but measuring the result can be a challenge. Here are some of the most important metrics to measure restaurant employee productivity.



Sales per labor hour

More sales means more labor, and more labor means busier employees. It also means the employees must be more productive. More productive employees will reduce labor costs. Know how taking orders, prepping food, and cleaning up all contribute to overall productivity.

Food cost

This can help you track your bottom line, but also understand if your employees are handling inventory correctly. High levels of food waste might mean employees need more training or coaching to hit peak productivity.

Speed of service

Look at how quickly customers move through your drive-thru and how long it takes to complete an order instore. In our 2019 QSR Operational Index, we found that improving speed of service by 30 seconds leads to a 1.5% increase in customer satisfaction. If you have high sales but a low speed of service, then there might be an opportunity to increase productivity through speed training. Read our speed of service playbook for more information.



Scheduling employees

If you're spending too much time wrestling with your staff schedule, you're not alone. Scheduling restaurant employees is an ongoing struggle across the restaurant industry. That's because much of sticking to a schedule comes down to a mix of personal accountability and management visibility. Here are a few tips for avoiding scheduling headaches.

Make the schedule as far in advance as you can

Complete your schedules and get them to your crews in advance so employees can request changes while there's plenty of time to edit the schedule. While last-minute changes are a reality at any restaurant, having a regular pattern with some variation is much less stressful than having to change the schedule several times in a matter of days.

Give your top revenue generators some priority

Everyone needs to know that the employees who can pump up the revenue stream will have some extra pull when the schedule is put together. Yes, this has to be balanced in a spirit of fairness (after all, you don't want to increase turnover among the rest of the team), but make it clear that top earners can be scheduling tie-breakers.





Aim to provide two days off in a row

You may find employees who express eagerness to work as much as possible all the time, either for earning potential or a real passion for their position. Don't abuse that drive – be alert to both worker burnout and legal restrictions when scheduling these gogetters. Even your most motivated workers have their limits, and consecutive working days may mandate overtime pay, depending on state law.



Building a culture that retains

A good culture will not only attract employees, it will help you retain them. Even if the spot down the street is offering a bit more per hour, the right employees will stay with you for outstanding culture.

Try the Human-Business-Human (HBH) method

Whether it's you, your area coaches, or your RGMs—Train your leaders to check-in daily at the start of every shift. We've found the HBH method to be very effective:

01 - HUMAN

The 90-second “Hey how are ya?”. You'd be so surprised to see QSR managers or area coaches entering a store and starting their day without checking in on their people; We get it, you're so busy! Greet them with enthusiasm and positivity to start their shift off right.

02 - BUSINESS

After greeting your people, check-in with employees on the KPIs and priorities and duties for that shift. As you check-in, tell your employee what your “top 3” priorities or goals are for the day. Examples: give 100 smiles, all orders come out on time, etc. Get your employees in the habit of thinking “what's my top 3 for the shift?” or what their top 3 priorities are going into each hour.

03 - BACK TO HUMAN

End the day or the shift by thanking your employees for their hard work and updating them on the metrics or day's goals. Let them know if they met their personal goals or share something they did well today. While it might seem like a no-brainer, taking time to express your gratitude towards your team is a must and an absolute game-changer for those who have been in the weeds lately. Now is the perfect time to pull up and bring it for your team! Every time a leader does this, it speaks to the culture that they are building – one that's built on trust, connection, and integrity. And one that, even when times are tough, the focus never shifts from the team.





Focus on long-term goals and give your employees a professional development plan

You're working with a new generation—One that thrives on feedback and eagerly seeks challenges and guidance. They possess a strong desire for empowerment and autonomy, which is pivotal in cultivating a successful, forward-thinking culture. Your employees are your most valuable asset, especially during these days of labor shortages!

TRY THIS ACTIVITY

Engage your employees by inquiring about their long-term aspirations – they will genuinely appreciate it! This initiative will encourage them to think big and contemplate their future ambitions. Are they interested in pursuing a managerial role or becoming keyholders? Would they like to explore further education or embark on a different career path in the future? By delving into your performance metrics, you can identify areas where your employees can improve and provide coaching. Furthermore, connect your feedback to their long-term goals. Supporting their aspirations and aiding in their growth while they work in your restaurant is vital for fostering a strong managerial relationship. Additionally, it will contribute to achieving your key performance metrics.





Follow through on a strong vision to bring your dream restaurant team to life

The best teams are made up of people who understand and enjoy the culture you've created.

The only way to get them there is by sticking to proper hiring, training, and managing tactics from day one.

Using these tips will help you improve your service, save money, increase morale, and reduce trips to HR.



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