



5 Ways To Get The Most From Your Short-Staffed Team

Hospitality businesses are short-staffed. But that doesn't mean they can't meet demand.



The disastrous joint impact of COVID-19 and Brexit has left the hospitality industry reeling. Dubbed the 'Staffing Crunch', businesses across the country are struggling to fill roles; they are left with teams which are small and heavily overworked. This is not only limiting their ability to meet consumer demand - it is creating a sub-optimal for both staff and customers.

The figures currently paint a bleak picture for the hospitality industry:

Restaurants are on average

10% to 25%

short of staff¹

Job adverts in hospitality
have risen by

46%

since the sector

72%

of businesses in the sector expect
to close next year without further
support from the government.²

But leaders shouldn't be disheartened. With UK household savings the second highest they have been since 1963,³ there is huge demand for hospitality businesses. PwC, for example, reports a 32% increase in the UK's desire to spend on eating out.⁴ The challenge is simply to get the most out of the employees you do have - and meet that explosive demand head-on.

In this eBook, we explore five vital ways to engage your staff and produce exceptional results from short-staffed teams.

¹<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/may/01/uk-restaurants-pubs-brexit-staff-covid>

²<https://www.bighospitality.co.uk/Article/2020/11/19/72-of-hospitality-and-pub-businesses-face-closure-in-2021-restaurants-Coronavirus-lockdown>

³<https://www.ft.com/content/1660c16d-a334-4334-8285-18c8d5842910>

⁴<https://www.pwc.co.uk/industries/retail-consumer/insights/consumer-sentiment-survey.html>

1

Unite Employees Behind a Purpose



Employee engagement sees a 20-30 point improvement when employees feel they have a clear mission - **McKinsey**⁵

Staff have always craved a sense of meaning in their work, but the pandemic has led many to feel far more strongly about the matter. Hospitality businesses are often seen by their staff as purely transactional - hence the term 'service'. But leaders that want to make the most of their limited staff need to connect the dots so that their teams see what they do as vital and impactful.

This doesn't have to be about creating a false sense of social engagement: it can be as simple as reminding them that the experiences they give their customers will cascade into the rest of their lives. Happy customers go back out into the world in a better mood, and will likely pass that good feeling on themselves.

How to create a sense of purpose:

Lead with purpose

Management and leaders need to lead the way, instilling a sense of purpose both through their words and actions.

Communicate transparency

Too often, staff don't feel connected to the business because they are kept in the dark. Being open about what is happening with the business will encourage a sense of ownership and investment in workers.

Be authentic

The purpose of your business must be honest and real. If you are a local business, focus on community; if you are not, focus on creating positive experiences for every customer.





2

Embrace Agility and Flexibility



Nearly half of employees regularly feel undue pressure to conform in their organisation
- **Harvard Business Review**⁶

The word agility is thrown around a lot - mostly by consultants charging exorbitant fees. But the principle is far simpler - and more effective - than it often seems. Agility means removing rigid structures and enabling your business to respond in real-time to changing needs.

This is particularly relevant to hospitality businesses. By enabling employees to move more fluidly between roles, you create more variety in individuals' roles and avoid wasted time. A carefully managed division of labour might help a bar or restaurant run fluidly when it is heavily staffed, but when numbers are limited you need to embrace an 'all hands on deck' approach.

The keys to flexibility and agility:

Create a dialogue

Leaders should tell staff directly that the normal rigid working structures are going to be loosened.

Help staff see the big picture

Just as workers want a purpose to unite behind, they will have an easier time embracing flexibility and adapting to changing demands if they can understand the reasons for doing so.

Locate central nodes

Some workers are particularly adept across numerous areas of a business, and leaders should focus on putting them in the most flexible positions possible.

⁶<https://hbr.org/2016/10/let-your-workers-rebel>

3

Reward and Recognise Staff



Employers could see a 55% increase in employee engagement by addressing employees' need for recognition - **McKinsey**⁷

One of the most common problems cited by hospitality staff is the perceived low-status and lack of recognition they experience in their jobs. From customer disputes to long, punishing hours, service-based roles are notoriously tough. And many hospitality workers have permanently turned their backs on the industry following the pandemic - largely because they didn't feel adequately valued in their roles.

Some businesses have tried to redress this, offering new hires handsome signing-on bonuses - for roles which have historically never provided such benefits. But leaders looking to get more from their short-staffed teams should consider how they reward and recognise the efforts of their entire workforce. And don't be afraid to ask your employees directly what kind of rewards they want - it will help them feel included in the decision making process and therefore valued.

How leaders can reward and recognise their teams:

Wage increases

Even a relatively small boost to wages has been found to actively increase engagement and loyalty.

Personalised recognition

From handwritten notes to public social media 'shout outs', leaders have numerous means of recognising their staff available to them.

Opportunities for growth

Provide workers with the capacity to learn new skills and improve their prospects, especially skills which are directly related to their performance at work.



⁷<https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/covid-19-and-the-employee-experience-how-leaders-can-seize-the-moment#:~:text=For%20example%2C%20while%20organizations%20may,work%20recognition%20through%20nonfinancial%20means.>

4

Empower Teams and Individuals



52% of all employees feel they lack autonomy in their roles - **Effectory**⁸

When you are short-staffed, each individual employee constitutes a larger part of your overall workforce. Successful businesses will understand this and respond by increasing the amount of freedom and personal autonomy their employees feel. In part, this encourages individuals to feel truly part of the business - enabling them to make more decisions and exert more influence. But it also ensures there are fewer obstacles to flexibility.

For hospitality businesses, this will also improve the customer experience. Rather than constantly having to defer to an authority, individuals will be given the power to respond to queries, fix problems and generally engage with their customers organically and directly. It also means management doesn't waste time micromanaging their workers.

The keys to employee empowerment:

Make it explicit

Most workers are not used to autonomy, and that means they need to be explicitly told that they are being given more room to make decisions.

Ask employees what they need

Building trust is difficult, but inclusion goes a long way. Involve your employees in the process of giving them more power; responding to their specific frustrations may help you locate important factors you had previously overlooked.

Commit

Employee empowerment may not produce extraordinary results overnight, but the worst thing you can do is suddenly backpedal on efforts.



⁸<https://www.cornerstoneondemand.com/rework/art-science-and-impact-implementing-data-driven-hr-2017>



5

Introduce Technology



Just 14% of businesses are fully 'digital mature' - **Accenture**⁹

Technology has played an enormous role in most employees' lives over the last 18 months. It is time for businesses to properly acknowledge this and introduce more technology into their operational model. While hospitality businesses typically use a number of technologies - from payment solutions to rota-sharing apps - it has usually been introduced in a haphazard way across an extended period of time.

Embracing technology full-tilt now is a great way to increase flexibility and ensure your staff are happy. There are also huge gains to be made on a purely business level: The average cost saving achieved by implementing a Supplier Management solution is 12%.¹⁰

How hospitality businesses should approach technology:

Remove boundaries

Where possible, every employee should have access to business technology. This is key to both employee empowerment and operational flexibility.

Focus on clear goals

Hospitality businesses are currently facing staffing challenges, so HR technology which will help them manage this should be prioritised.

Consider customer experience

Technology should never compromise the intimacy your business offers. Avoid technology which creates friction or distance between staff and customers.

⁹<https://www.accenture.com/us-en/blogs/business-functions-blog/empower-people-improve-the-bottom-line-digitally>

¹⁰<https://www.hicx.com/blog/fact-42-7-of-all-statistics-are-made-on-the-spot/>



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