



# THE B.C. LABOR SHORTAGE

How to Recruit New Workers in a Tight Market





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B.C.'s strong economy has been both a blessing and a curse for the province's restaurant industry.

On the one hand, record low unemployment has left residents with more money to spend on dining out. But, it has also contributed to a severe labor shortage.

While reducing staff turnover should be a top priority, you also need to have a solid recruitment plan in place.

But in B.C., hiring is not as simple as simply offering more money. The job market is hot, so even if you offer your chef a little extra to join your team, chances are that someone will beat your offer pretty soon.

So before you inflate your salaries and increase your [cost of labor](#), consider implementing these four strategies to improve your recruitment process.



## HOW TO RECRUIT NEW WORKERS IN B.C.

### 1 OFFER ENTICING PERKS

For any region, [low wages](#) and a [high cost of living](#) are a bad combination. But in B.C. these two factors have hit the restaurant industry particularly hard.

To help combat the soaring cost of living and stagnant wages, you can offer perks that

offset your employee's expenses. In a tight labor market, these kinds of perks can help your restaurant stand out to prospective employees.

These perks can include:

- Staff discounts during days off
- Mentorship programs
- Friends and family discounts
- Discounts at local businesses (ie. gyms)
- A benefits program
- Subsidized transportation
- Additional training

## 2 LOOK INTERNALLY

If you already have a great team, they could be your best bet for finding new talent. As [studies have shown](#), referred candidates are not only faster to hire and train, but they also tend to stick around longer – who wouldn't want to work with their best friend?

One of the easiest ways to gather internal recommendations is to implement an employee referral program. This can be a tiered program with one reward when a recommendation is hired and another reward if that person sticks around for a certain amount of time. This kind of program ensures your staff only refer people who are serious about the position.



### 3 THINK OLDER

As mentioned above, B.C.'s demographics are beginning to skew older. By 2031, [one in four people](#) in B.C. will be over the age of 65. The B.C. government has even created the [Older Workers 55+ program](#) to help mature employees find jobs. In terms of hiring, this means you need to start considering [older workers](#) as a new source of talent.

Though this might seem like an unlikely talent pool, older workers possess many [desirable traits](#) compared to their younger peers, including lower absenteeism, greater commitment, and greater job satisfaction. Not to mention recent retirees often have the expertise, availability, and flexibility to work with different time frames such as seasonal work.



### 4 FILL ROLES WITH TECHNOLOGY

It may seem counterintuitive, but part of your hiring strategy should also include looking at positions that don't need to be filled. Depending on the type of restaurant you run, there may be areas where technology can be used to reduce the number of employees needed per shift.

For instance, POS software can take over time-consuming processes like [inventory management](#), [staff scheduling](#), [ordering](#), and [reservations](#). If you invest in these kinds of technologies, you can reduce the number of positions you'll need to hire for in the future.