



Feeling Short-Staffed? Bring More Employees to Your Small Business With These Hacks

Description

The Great Resignation, while certainly unexpected, isn't all that surprising.

For years, economists and labour analysts have warned that an aging population, coupled with a decline in labour participation, would cause a major disruption in the Canadian economy. What they didn't predict, however, was just how quickly it would happen: one pandemic later, and Canada is facing a labour shortage that looks as if it's not going away soon.

That leaves small business owners in a tough spot. The economy is opening up, but without the HR budget of a big corporation, many small businesses are struggling to attract new employees, let alone top talent.

So, if you're a small business owner with a dry pool of job applicants, what can you do? Here are just three hacks that could help you draw some much-needed employees to your small business.

Focus on underutilized workers

As BDC noted in their study on Canada's current labour shortage, small businesses and entrepreneurs could find employees by integrating those groups that are historically marginalized from the workforce: immigrant workers, younger employees (15 to 24), and older employees (55 to 64).

According to BDC, if Canadian small businesses integrated these groups into their workforce, we would add another two million workers. That's enough to fill Canada's 870,000 vacant jobs twice, plus some.

What does that mean for you? For one, it could mean lowering the entry barrier. You might want someone who has five years of experience in your industry, with certain certificates and qualifications. But if other small business owners want the same thing, you might do well to look for candidates with less experience. I'm not saying you should hire just *anyone* — but I am saying you should give younger candidates a chance.

The same goes for immigrant workers. Though you might have been hesitant in the past to hire immigrants, due to their lack of experience in Canada, it's high time to start looking to immigrants to fill the gap. The same argument could be made for disabled workers or even Indigenous Canadians, both of which are severely underrepresented in the labour market.

Increase wages

This is the most obvious solution: if you want more job applicants, then offer higher pay.

Of course, this is easier said than done. By offering higher pay to new workers, you also have to bump up the paycheques of your current workers. That will cut into your profits, which may still be recovering from last year.

But if you want to stand out among other businesses, offering above-average wages will likely draw more applicants. Alternatively, you could offer a more comprehensive benefits package, something that might cost you money, but significantly less than raising the wages of your employees.

Be open to more flexible arrangements

Finally, you might attract more employees if you agree to flextime, remote work, or some other non-traditional work schedule.

This one can be tricky, however. Not every small business can accommodate to the distinct schedule of each employee. But at a time when many businesses, including large corporations, are rethinking the workday, you'd do well to rethink it yourself.

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