



## HOW TO BE AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

The foodservice industry is poised to be the recipient of people's need to get out and socialize again after so many months deprived of restaurant dining. We are predicted to have full houses all summer and fall.

There are some realities we are facing in our industry, post pandemic.

Some of the employees who left aren't coming back.

The industry, already facing labour shortages in back of the house is now having some difficulties recruiting front of the house

Our industry is competing for a shrinking labour pool with industries such as high tech, construction and health care.

We can't change the realities. The BCRFA is working on long term solutions and intermediate solutions. There are some things we can do now to attract applicants and keep them longer.

To best serve the public eager to return to our restaurants and bars, we need to recruit employees. Recruiting is highly competitive these days. To attract the best people, you must position yourself as an employer of choice.

Being an employer of choice sometimes requires some adjustments to work place culture and to the employer's bottom line

### 1. Wages

Wages are not the only factor when an applicant chooses you as their employer. However, a fair living wage is important if you expect to recruit good people. While the minimum wage has been increased recently, many employers say they have paid more than minimum wage for several years. Pay as much as you can.

## 2. Social conscience

Workers these days want to be proud of where they work. Do you have a strong recycling program? Do you support charitable causes?

Do you participate in community events? These are important considerations for a lot of today's applicants. Your charities and your community participation should be on your website along with your menu and phone number.

## 3. Work/Life balance

Do you offer predictive scheduling? This means employees can expect to be scheduled the same number of hours on the same days every week. The days when employers can schedule employees to erratic shifts are long gone. Workers these days insist on regular schedules so they can maintain a work/life balance. Consider offering compressed work weeks, such as 4 ten hour shifts a week. Longer shifts can reduce labour costs. Be cognizant of employees' needs when creating schedules

## 4. Create a welcoming workplace

Is your restaurant a bullying and harassment free zone? Everyone wants to have a workplace that is welcoming and supportive to all members of the workforce. Make sure you have a strong anti bullying and harassment policy that is backed up by action when necessary. If you need help creating a policy and action plans, the BCRFA is here to help you develop these. Your web site should tell applicants about your supportive and welcoming workplace.

## 5. Benefits

Do you offer benefits? Is a medical and dental plan and long term disability benefits part of your employee package? Employees with benefits will tend to stay longer. Again, the BCRFA can put you in touch with benefit providers who can build you a benefit package that is affordable and attractive. Remember you are competing with industries that offer benefits as a matter of course

## 6. Training and Promotion

What is your training and promotion policy? For too many, food service is seen as a dead end job. It doesn't need to be. Offer your staff cross training, mentoring, skill building, on and off site training and internal promotion.

## 7. Recruiting

Be aware of where you are recruiting. Young people, particularly, have new ways of communicating. Don't be shy to ask your team where they would look if they wanted

a job. When you post a job, provide a clear job description and pay range. Using the tools already listed, sell yourself as an employer of choice. Offer your staff incentives to bring you recommendations for new employees. Be clear about where you are located and transit service. People want to work closer to home these days. The BCRFA web site has a Human Resources Manual that lists many ways a smart proactive employer can find recruits for their restaurant. Have a place on your website for interested people to apply

## 8. Recognize your employees

Word gets around in the industry. Good employers are talked about as well as the not so good. It's important to be consistent, fair, even handed, inclusive and generous with your existing employees. They will help you recruit.

- Remember your employees important events
- Create mentorship programs - teach a promising server restaurant management skills, a dishwasher, cooking or server skills
- Set skills development goals and help the employee meet them
- Creating advancement opportunities through registering and promoting the Red Seal program, cross training and internal career development
- Have a welcome package that tells employees what is expected of them and what they can expect from you.
- Make sure employees have opportunity to be creative and contribute.

### For more information:

British Columbia Restaurant and Food Services Association  
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