



# Tips for Hiring the Right Staff for Your Restaurant

Your staff sets the right tone for your restaurant, delivers on customers' needs and expectations, influences loyalty and enhances your overall reputation. That's a big role, and not just anyone can fill it.

Hiring applicants who are the "right fit" can be challenging but, given your staff's impact, it is essential to overall success. Hiring the right person from the start is also key to reducing turnover. Use this handy guide to streamline your interview process and build a team that reflects your brand's values and personality.

## PREFERRED CHARACTERISTICS

Before you put the word out about open positions, determine the qualities your ideal candidate possesses, both personally and professionally.

That covers a wide spectrum of possibilities, but you don't have to start from scratch:

- **Use your company culture as a jumping off point.** How do you want your customers to experience your brand? What does your company culture feel like? Align those characteristics with what you're looking for in employees – they are the best and most visible representation of your brand
- **Define core values.** Take an informal poll of current employees about what traits and/or experience they deem important in performing their jobs successfully. Your employees are in the trenches, and will provide insights you may not otherwise consider
- **Look to your "star" employees.** You likely have some standout employees. Think about what makes their contributions outstanding and use them to pattern your expectations for future employees

You'll come away from these activities with a handful of adjectives to describe your "perfect employee," like punctual, empathetic, service-oriented, assertive and outgoing. This refined list serves two important purposes:

- It clarifies what you want and need in an employee
- It provides a reference point for objective evaluation of candidates



## INTERVIEW BEST PRACTICES

As a busy owner/manager, time is always of the essence. Simplify the hiring process by creating interview templates for the various positions within your operation in order to:

- Guide the interview flow
- Objectively compare candidates based on the same defined criteria
- More quickly weed out candidates not well-suited for the position
- Make it easier for post-interview follow-up and hiring decisions

A template-driven process also helps you implement a multi-level interviewing protocol that:

- **Requires a minimum of two rounds of interviews** for candidates under consideration to help test commitment and confirm skillsets
- **Provides opportunities for at least two managers to interview candidates and give post-interview feedback** prior to hiring decisions being made to help prevent turnover and ensure fit
- **Allows for appropriate vetting of former employers and personal references**, especially if there are questions or concerns about information provided by the candidate
- **Can include skills testing**, like back of the house prep or front of the house table-waiting, to tangibly determine strengths and behaviors

## ESSENTIAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

In reviewing applications, you'll get many basic questions answered, such as work history and education. It's appropriate to verify this information, but to get a better perspective on a candidate's character and potential fit on your team, ask some open-ended questions like:

- What do you consider your greatest strength? Greatest weakness?
- What was your favorite (or least favorite) part about the job you held at [Restaurant or Venue Name(s)]?
- How would your best boss describe you? Your worst boss?
- How do you deal with conflict? Please provide a work-related example
- What type of work environment do you prefer?

- How do you feel you handle stress?
- Have you ever taken the initiative in going beyond expectations to delight a customer? Please explain.
- Why do you want to work here?
- Why do you feel you would make a good addition to the team?

You may also want to present a few scenarios and ask candidates how they would respond, like:

- An angry customer questions the bill total, or items on the bill
- You serve a table the wrong food order
- A table of “regulars” tries to pressure you into a food discount or free drinks

Even the most careful hiring practices won't guarantee long-term employees since brief tenure is common in the restaurant and foodservice industry. But, if you take the time to select employees who fit your brand, team and qualifications, you will foster an environment that attracts loyal workers who are dedicated to your restaurant and customers — and ultimately help your business and work environment to flourish.

*A staff that performs is made just that much better when serving food that performs, like versatile and delicious Alive & Kickin' Pizza Crusts and dough balls. Contact us today at **920-662-0304** or email [info@akcrust.com](mailto:info@akcrust.com) for more information.*

