



Seasonal Staffing Made Simple

6 Steps to Successful Staffing for the Ultimate Peak
of the Year – Holiday



Retailers are getting ready to welcome holiday shoppers as early as October. The Holiday season is crucial for most retailers to boost their yearly sales. According to the National Retail Federation, retailers can make as much as **30% of their yearly earnings during this season**. The importance of retail's performance in the coming months can determine your trajectory for the year.

Many factors can impact a retailer's success during the Holiday season, but as per Accenture's 16th Annual Holiday Survey, workforce labor is top of mind for retailers. The 2022 holiday season is expected to be full of challenges from continued issues with growing staffing pressures. In order to leverage the ultimate peak of the year and maintain the correct balance of customer satisfaction, employee morale, and profitability, retailers must try to develop a well-rounded staffing strategy for this Holiday season.

A comprehensive staffing strategy includes everything, starting with hiring the right number of people, scheduling them based on traffic and performance trends, training them to deliver the right brand experience, setting up ideal targets, keeping them engaged and motivated to perform their best, driving and navigating their efforts in real-time towards profitability, and of course, doing all this while staying compliant with local labor laws. It may seem overwhelming but do not fear! StoreForce has pulled together a full Holiday staffing guide to help retailers navigate their business during the busiest time of year. This guide includes 6 steps that can help retailers optimize their Holidays results.



1. Hire the right number of people with the right availability

Holiday season comes with a flood of sales opportunities! Your present workforce and shift rotations might not be enough to handle the extra load without missing out on numerous sales opportunities. Referring to the same Accenture survey, the issue of labor shortages definitely impacts the overall customer experience due to longer waiting times. Nearly 28 percent of customers said they had encountered less helpful or less knowledgeable employees.


Unsurprisingly, these experiences have the potential for negative consequences for retailers.

82 percent of consumers said that attentive and friendly staff would win their business away from another retailer. Here's where hiring right number of seasonal temporary workers or short-term contract workers comes into play.

The challenge is arriving at the optimum number of seasonal workers and aligning their availability to the business needs. Most retailers shoot in the dark for this number and then struggle with managing their availability and business needs.

Here is your checklist to ensure the right hiring:

- ❑ Consider the number of people you currently have for each store;
- ❑ Evaluate their roles, their availabilities, and their current skill sets;
- ❑ Identify any opportunities to increase the weekly hours for part time or casual staff;
- ❑ Think about your omnichannel customer base and your order fulfilment requirement;
- ❑ Identify the peak hours of your store from historical data;
- ❑ Determine the workload, expertise, and experience shortages in your current team and identify the exact positions that need to be filled;
- ❑ Using this data, you can figure out how many additional employees you need for each qualification, and the availability



2. Train your Seasonal Staff quickly and effectively

Retailers hire temporary employees to handle the surge of demand during the Holiday shopping season. Now, the big question is, how does one ensure the seasonal staff is ready to offer a unique and memorable shopping experience to customers?

Accenture's 16th Annual Holiday Survey indicated that **86 percent of consumers would shop with one retailer over another if the staff were more knowledgeable and provided help or advice.**

To ensure that your employees feel comfortable performing their jobs, set aside 1 to 2 'shadow' shifts for orientation and training. Additionally, create a collaborative environment to make it more comfortable for seasonal employees to ask questions and get assistance. They may impact the business negatively if they aren't prepared to interact with customers and feel discouraged at the support they receive.

You can follow this checklist to have them be prepared to help you drive sales and customer service:

- Focus on two types of training
 - basic brand SOP training and real-time Sales training;
- Prepare quick sheets for SOP training, combined with shop floor task lists;
- Share these resources with all your staff on a common platform and ensure that your employees are following these quick sheets and task lists;
- Coach them in real-time to drive retail KPIs, and use role-playing to correct any observed off-brand behavior;
- Keep them actively engaged in companywide group chats by sharing tips and tricks and resolving their doubts in real-time;
- For better and smoother onboarding, align the seasonal staff with one permanent staff as a 'buddy', who can assist them with any doubts and issues.

3. Schedule staff optimally and flexibly

Scheduling plays the most important role when it comes to delivering the right customer experience during holidays. The less time customers have to wait, the more they are likely to enjoy the shopping experience.

Retailers need to generate the necessary shifts to create an engaging customer experience and schedule employees effectively to cover their peak hours. Additionally, abiding by local labor laws remains as important as ever.

Give your employees control over their own schedules by offering them some self-scheduling options. By doing this, you'll improve their brand loyalty and provide them some of the work-life balance they want around the holidays.

The steps listed below can help you generate optimized schedules:

- Review your last holiday season's shopping patterns and identify peak hours;
- Schedule employees as per their availability, your business needs, and local labor laws;
- Communicate unassigned shifts with staff to allow employees to pick up additional shifts;
- Allow employees to exchange shifts with each other;
- Pool labor to allow employees to work in multiple locations;
- Communicate any time-off 'black-outs' early, and simplify time off requests and the approval process outside of black-out.



4. Set up the ideal targets

Holiday sales are expected to grow 7% – 9% this year, creating increased demand across all sectors of retail. Achieving the right balance targets between stretch goals and achievability is essential if your staff are going to believe in the goals you set.

Target across metrics also have to be in balance, or your store staff will not buy in to the goals you set – having an average basket goal of \$100 and a UPT goal of 20 with an average retail price of \$30 is a non-starter.

Follow these listed steps to set challenging but achievable goals that your teams will buy into:

- Determine the ‘lever’ KPIs that you want to focus your staff on, and only set targets for those levers – let the other metrics be calculated based on the focus lever metrics. ‘Lever’ KPIs are metrics that stores either Own or Influence;
- Analyze historical trend information for ratio KPIs (UPT, AT, etc.) and apply either a percentage change or an absolute change over that data to create new targets;
- Make sure your targets balance! If you’ve set stretch goals for selected ratio metrics, make sure that when you do the retail math, the complimentary metrics are calculated and not set independently – because if you don’t do the math, your Store Associates will!



5. Drive and navigate their efforts in real-time

Retail is dynamic and so are its challenges. Staying on top of opportunities and **providing the direction and guidance to your staff in real time is essential** to maximize labor efficiency and sales opportunities.

- Design a method to compile performance statistics on a per-store and per-employee basis (if commissioned) into a single report;
- Compare the achieved KPI results with your targets every half-hour, and focus your coaching messages on metrics that the stores own (e.g. conversion);
- Assess the impact of your coaching by analyzing the trends in your KPIs;
- Do this relentlessly throughout the day, and at the end of every shift throughout the Holiday period.



6. Keep them motivated

It's important not to take seasonal workers lightly. If they don't feel engaged and motivated, you run the risk of lowering staff morale, which has an impact on how your brand is delivered in store to your customers. **It is important to put as much effort into motivating seasonal workers as you do for regular workers.** One of the easiest ways to do this is to show them the direct positive impact they are having on the business. There are a few successful practices which retailers can adopt to keep their seasonal staff's energy and performance high.

- **Gamified leaderboards** – Retail employees are competitive, and that does not change during the Holiday season! Encourage healthy competition between stores by providing visibility into where stores or employees rank compared to others. Having a Holiday Contest? Use leaderboards so each store has visibility into their progress. After all, who wants to deal with yet another report? Gamified leaderboards can reduce the number of reports sent out during the Holiday season;
- **Appreciate and Reward** – It just takes a bit of appreciation or recognition to boost morale and push your staff to do even better. Develop a company-wide system where store staff can communicate with each other, share and celebrate their success, share best practices, and keep appreciating each other's efforts. Incentivize good results, and keep the team motivated throughout the busy season.





How StoreForce can help

The StoreForce application helps retailers identify the optimum number of hiring needed by taking into account historical customer patterns, projected targets, and the status, qualifications and availability of your current staff contingent.

StoreForce's machine learning helps retailers build performance-optimized schedules based on projected traffic trends and continuous assessment of store and employee performance in minutes! The StoreForce Employee Self-Service app also provides your staff with more control over their own schedule to exchange shifts, work in multiple stores, pick up additional shifts, submit time-off requests, and view schedules and timecards directly on their phone.

StoreForce's Dashboard enables retailers to see their KPI performance in real-time on a single pane of glass every half-hour and helps them maximize their results with in-the-moment coaching, motivation, and problem-solving. Target Management uses advanced methodologies to create actionable targets across all metrics and all time periods.

StoreForce's gamified leaderboards allow employees to engage in healthy competition and provides visibility to progress towards your goals. Employees can also use company-wide discussion boards to communicate, collaborate, celebrate successes and share best practices across the entire organization. With our All-In-One WFM solution, you can simplify forecasting, hiring, scheduling, training, target setting and increase the productivity of your Holiday workforce.

Happy Holidays!

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