

# TOP FIVE TIPS for retaining staff



Tourism HR Canada forecasts that the country's tourism sector will need 2.29 million jobs by 2035. Saskatchewan alone will be facing a demand for more than 60,000 year-round jobs. Nearly 90 per cent of those job openings will be tied to turnover. With that kind of demand on the horizon, it is more

important than ever to keep valuable employees. By some estimates, hiring a new worker costs as much as \$15,000 in training, productivity and hidden costs during the first six months of employment. Here are five proven techniques to help you retain staff and get the best performance.

## 1. ENHANCE THE IMAGE AND APPEAL OF TOURISM JOBS

Tourism is a viable career option. Make sure that your staff know that their jobs are important, and show them how their work makes a difference. Encourage them to be ambassadors for their community and knowledgeable about local attractions and experiences. Create reward programs (e.g. employee of month, employee awards, service awards) and share the success of your employees with customers.

## 2. VALUE YOUNGER WORKERS AND CONSIDER THEIR SCHEDULES, INTERESTS AND TALENTS

Younger workers respond well to innovative approaches that go beyond wage incentives. Adopting a management style that recognizes the value of flexibility and non-traditional benefits will pay dividends. Create a work environment that is respectful and recognizes the value of young workers. Ask them for input into decisions that affect their role. Consider providing bonuses for exemplary attendance or offering longer, but fewer, workdays per week.

## 3. CREATE PARTNERSHIPS TO SHARE WORKERS

Partnering with other businesses can be an effective method for retaining staff. Seasonal operations are well-positioned to benefit from partnerships that can result in year-round employment for workers. For example, an agreement between a ski resort and a golf course could result in full-time, year-round jobs. This strategy also works for businesses sharing part-time workers to create full-time opportunities.

## 4. LOOK FOR INNOVATIVE WAYS TO PROVIDE BENEFITS AND PERKS

Offering an employee benefits package is one of the most powerful ways for an employer to attract good staff, reduce turnover and stay competitive with large corporations. For smaller businesses, especially seasonal ones, participating in a co-operative with other operators is an option that enables them to offer employee health care programs and other benefits. Consider other incentives that help employees perform better, such as equipping them with smartphones, tablets or other devices, or offering familiarization trips. Rewards, such as employee discounts, tickets to events or access to on-site amenities, make staff feel appreciated and more engaged in the company.

## 5. DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL WORK EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Work with other employers in your industry, as well as with business and tourism associations, to take advantage of international work exchange programs as a way to reward employees or provide year-round opportunities for seasonal employees. In Canada, employers could consider enrolling employees in SWAP Working Holidays ([swap.ca](http://swap.ca)), France-Canada Youth Mobility Agreement ([ambafrance-ca.org](http://ambafrance-ca.org)) or the Canada-Sweden Youth Exchange Program ([swedenabroad.com](http://swedenabroad.com)). Other opportunities can be found at International Experience Canada ([cic.gc.ca/english/residents/iec/](http://cic.gc.ca/english/residents/iec/)).