



METRO VANCOUVER RESTAURANT LABOUR SHORTAGE

≡ REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS



The Employment Program of British Columbia is funded by the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia.

OVERVIEW

The restaurant business is fast-paced. To ensure that every customer is served promptly and as ordered, every member of every team – wait staff, kitchen, front of house, back of house, etc. – must work together to pull off miracles every day.

In the Metro Vancouver area, the restaurant industry is thriving with estimated year over year growth of three per cent, but with new businesses opening, operators are struggling to keep up with recruiting needs. Of the 2.5 million British Columbians who make up the workforce today, 174,200, or 7.3%, people are directly employed in the restaurant industry. Restaurants are the third largest private sector employer.

The British Columbia labour market is shifting. Of the 640,000 workers that will leave the workforce through retirement in the next 10 years, only 438,000 young people will join the workforce to replace them. One out of every three retiring workers will not be replaced by young people entering the workforce. With market growth projected to account for an additional 277,000 positions, we have a real talent shortage on our hands. The BC Labour Market Outlook projects that a full 52% of workers over the next 10 years will be sourced from new places: international recruits 27%, Canadian recruits 9.5%, and new worker sources 15.7%. The shortage of job-ready people puts employment seekers in the driver's seat.

The strong economy in Metro Vancouver is accentuating the region's labour shortage. In January 2017, the reported unemployment rate dropped to 4.1%. Faced with a strong economy, limited rentals, and high cost of housing, recruiting is becoming an insurmountable challenge for many operators, and the poaching between companies is at an unprecedented level. Employees have options – and they are leaving to pursue better work conditions and wages easily – because they know they have other opportunities available to them.

The impact of restaurants as employers is broad - 22% of Canadians had their first job in a restaurant. One in four young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are currently employed in the restaurant industry. Restaurant jobs provide opportunity and skills that extend past the hospitality sector. Many executives today report the value of the skills they learned at their first restaurant job.

In years past, the appeal of the food service industry spoke for itself: the adrenaline rush and the camaraderie were the rewards. Meeting the tight service times, flipping tables, and making 400 meals flawlessly was a great satisfaction for the back of house – the promise of tips and a fun environment drew young people in droves to the restaurant industry. It was also an employers' market, plenty of people were looking for work and most employers had all the workers they needed and plenty of resumes in the drawer if someone didn't work out. But the work world is changing – so are the profiles and expectations of working people. 2018 marks 20 years of having Millennials in the restaurant workforce – and six years of Generation Z. With Boomer retirements accelerating, together, they now account for 50% of our workforce. The call for operators to understand and target these workers has never been more urgent.

The dilemma for many restaurant businesses that were surveyed is they are operating on wafer-thin margins – typically in the 3-5% profit range – as a result of rising food and labour costs, increasing property taxes, high rents, and an extremely competitive market. Faced with such financial pressures, operators are pushed to their limits. The operational demands make focusing on organizational change difficult to prioritize.

The survey results say that employees are looking for a different working environment - opportunity, regular feedback, predictive scheduling, more reasonable working hours, work/life balance, respectful environments and decent wages. Adapting to their employees requirements is a challenge for many restaurants. However, with the projection that for at least the next five years, there will be fewer new workers entering the British Columbia workforce, change is becoming imperative. Without competitive salaries, realistic hours, tangible opportunities for development, and a good working environment, the projection is that the current labour shortage will only get worse. Competition will not only be within the food service sector, but from industries outside the sector also struggling for the shrinking number of employees.

OVERVIEW

→ WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ADDRESS THE SHORTAGE?



Operating a restaurant is a business decision, and responding to the labour shortage must be approached that way. We have divided this report into four sections – the reasons for the shortage, the survey findings, short-term tactical changes for operators, and long-term strategies for sector changes and strategic solutions.

The most immediate solutions come from our nine tactical steps for operators. These highlight best practices that operators can apply individually or as a whole to improve hiring results, increase retention, build employee engagement, improve team building, and productivity. Where possible, in each section, links to additional reading options have been included.

The labour shortage in restaurants is complex, and there is no magic cure-all. While the chef shortage is often seen as a problem of insufficient supply meeting a growing demand, the reality is that it is a global problem. In the Metro Vancouver market, statistically too few people are entering the workplace to replace retirees. However, the labour challenge is increased by too many talented individuals who are leaving the sector well before traditional retirement.

In addition, the restaurant industry suffers from a poor reputation of low wages and long hours – a personality developed through TV shows that make kitchen show fun to watch, but not attractive to prospective employees. Between the yelling, the competition, and the perceived use of drugs and alcohol, parents aren't excited to send their kids to work in kitchens. While many operators are making great strides in their business, overcoming the negative stereotyping is challenging.

As a result, old ways of thinking and working do not successfully tackle the multifaceted issues driving the shortage. Particularly for careers in kitchens, attracting both chefs and cooks will only become easier if operators willingly look within their organizations and begin to change their cultures and the focus on career building, competitive recruiting practices, and emphasizing keeping talented people. Even knowing what to do is very different from being able to make real changes, especially when each operation may also bring unique challenges.

While operators will find tactics that can help throughout this report, all solutions are not within the realm of the operator: a new approach must include a sector-wide approach that includes building our industry profile for job seekers and tackling region wide transportation challenges. The industry recommendations will begin to frame necessary steps for longer-term solutions.

It's time to show that through a culture change, operators are investing in teams and that restaurants offer exciting career potential. The next generations of workers are entrepreneurial, creative, and want to feel part of something larger than themselves. Restaurants are a great fit for people who want to bring passion to work. As the BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, it is our hope that in changing the culture and marketing our industry with these strengths in mind, the food service sector will attract a new group of engaged and impassioned workers.

The team that conducted this research attempted to capture the challenges and the potential solutions through surveys, meetings and focus groups. It is never possible to gather all opinions. I personally invite everyone who reads this report to please share any feedback. BCRFA can be reached at 604.669.2239 and info@bcrfa.com.

Ian Tostenson

President & CEO

BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association

Vancouver, BC

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PART 1 UNDERSTANDING THE SHORTAGE



→ WHY DOES THE LABOUR SHORTAGE MATTER?

- Our industry employs 174,200 people across the province, or 7.3% of the workforce.
- British Columbians make 2.7 million trips to restaurants every day.
- The restaurant industry in British Columbia is the third largest private sector employer.
- According to Visa Canada, 60% of Canadians now eat out once a week.
- The restaurant industry is one of the most significant employers of young workers and first time employment – with 30% of the Tourism and Hospitality workforce aged 15-24. 80,000 young people under the age of 25 – representing one in four youth jobs in the province.
- Nationally 52% of foodservice operators are reporting a labour shortage according to Restaurants Canada.
- According to the National Restaurant Association 2017 State of the Industry report, in 1955, the restaurant industry comprised 25% of the family food dollar. In 2017, **that number has risen to 48%.**
- The same report shows that the **pent-up demand for restaurants remains high**, with 39% of adults reporting that they would like to eat out more often.
- **61% of adults** say they would rather spend money on an experience, such as a restaurant or other activity, compared to purchasing an item from a store.

“**RIGHT NOW, WORKPLACE CULTURE IS EVERYTHING. UNHAPPY OR OVERWORKED STAFF KNOW THEY CAN LITERALLY WALK OUT AND GO SOMEWHERE ELSE, ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. AS AN OPERATOR, IMPROVING THE VALUE PROPOSITION FOR OUR EMPLOYEES IS ESSENTIAL TO HAVING THEM STAY WITH US LONGER.**”

- CURRENT CHEF

PART 1 OVERVIEW

Staff are a restaurant's biggest asset and their best investment in the future. Consider these statistics from Toast's Restaurant Staffing Guide about how one bad guest experience can impact a restaurant's reputation:

- For each complaint formally recorded, there are 26 other unsatisfied customers who do not up bring the issue.
- Unhappy or angry customers will tell anywhere between nine and 20 people about their negative experience.
- Customers who leave with a positive experience will only tell between four and six people about their experience.
- It takes 12 positive experience to amend one bad customer experience.

PART 1 UNDERSTANDING THE SHORTAGE

→ THE IMPACTS ON BUSINESS REPORTED BY OPERATORS WE INTERVIEWED INCLUDE:

- Closures mid-week
- Reduced hours of operation
- Scaling back services such as closing sections of their restaurants due to insufficient front of house or kitchen staff
- Reduced capacity for creativity on menus (less staff increases the need for simplicity and repeatability)
- Limited expansion
- Turning away bookings, private parties, events, weddings



5 PILLARS

1. **DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT: MORE RETIREMENTS THAN ENTRANTS TO THE WORKFORCE**
2. **A STRONG BC ECONOMY = LOW UNEMPLOYMENT**
3. **SKILLED SHORTAGE: NOT ENOUGH TRAINED CHEFS AND COOKS**
4. **ACCESSIBILITY OF TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS PROGRAMS**
5. **KITCHEN CULTURE**

→ MORE RESTAURANTS COMPETING FOR FEWER EMPLOYEES

In a market where there are more jobs than workers to fill them, we are faced with serious competition for skilled and unskilled people.

Across all segments of dining and all styles of food – chefs and cooks with experience are in high demand. With the number of restaurants growing, on average three per cent a year in British Columbia, there are more restaurants and more openings than ever before. To meet business demands and fast orientation to the workplace, restaurants require skilled workers to join them. All the restaurants interviewed, including those offering higher wages, are finding recruiting people a challenge simply because there are not enough potential employees looking for work.

The competition for people is exacerbated by growth of the restaurant industry in our region. Currently there are 6,000 operators in the Metro Vancouver area. Between 2005 and 2015, the number of restaurants is estimated to have grown 25%, comparable to growth in the US over the same period. Over the same period, restaurants in our area have started to compete with other sectors, such as education, health, retail, and even technology, who are now using for chefs and cooks in their workplaces.

01 DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFT

OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS, BC IS LOOKING AT A SKILLED LABOUR SHORTAGE OF MORE THAN 514,000 WORKERS AND AN ANNUAL GDP SHORTAGE OF \$7.9 BILLION.

(Source: Conference Board of Canada)

→ WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Having enough trained workers to meet our future needs will be challenging. Over the next 10 years, the BC Labour Market Outlook 2017 Edition reports that 640,000 workers will leave the workforce, and only 438,000 young people will join the workforce to replace them. For every three people retiring only two people are entering the workforce!

Less young workers: Currently, the sector is employing a shrinking labour pool of young people. Due to population shift - the number of 15 to 24 year olds will be reduced by 11%. That means 40,000 less 15 to 24 in the next five years. The high school graduation classes of 2018-2022 are statistically small. The class size doesn't increase again until the current grade seven cohort (Grad 2023).

PROVINCE WIDE PERSPECTIVE: [BC LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK 2017 EDITION](#)

- Between 2017 and 2027, 917,000 job openings will be created.
- 70% of all opening will come from retirements and 30% from economic growth.
- Nearly half (48%) of expected job openings will be filled by people entering the workforce for the first time.
- Immigrants are projected to fill 244,000 of the above vacancies. Workers from other provinces will fill another 80,000 positions. These groups of people together are anticipated to fill 36% of the province's job opportunities in the next 10 years.
- The balance of the unfilled positions (15% or 136,000 people) must come from people within BC being drawn into the labour force through more focused education and training programs.
- 2% (19,000) of job openings will be filled by segments of BC society who have traditionally struggled with high levels of unemployment.
- 78% of all jobs will require at least some form of post-secondary education or training.

A 2014 report by [Miner Management Consultants](#) estimates a cross-Canada skilled labour force shortage of 2,325,700 million workers by 2031. That's an entire major city's worth of workers.



02 STRONG BC ECONOMY

British Columbia, and in particular the Metro Vancouver area, is thriving. Tourism to Metro Vancouver is at an all time high with Destination British Columbia reporting \$8.455 billion in restaurant receipts between January and September 2017. [The construction boom](#) continues unabated. Close to a third of a trillion dollars worth of construction projects are on the books and about \$75 billion of those are currently underway in the province.

Housing prices from Squamish to Abbotsford are increasing annually in the double digits. Some apartments and condominiums in the [Fraser Valley](#) appreciated 50% in the past year alone.

British Columbia, led by Metro Vancouver, continues to lead the country in [job creation](#).

Unemployment figures released on Jan. 5, 2018, report that British Columbia is experiencing the lowest unemployment in 40 years at 4.6% - the lowest rate of Canadian provinces and territories. In Metro Vancouver, unemployment is even lower at 4.1%.

→ WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

In the Metro Vancouver area, very few people report that they are looking for work of any kind. Economists consider 5% unemployment “full employment.” Statistically, at 5%, a portion of unemployed workers are simply between jobs and an equal number are underemployed or not actively seeking employment.

Across the board, salaries haven't kept up with the cost of living in Metro Vancouver. Despite the jobs boom, even high-income earners are challenged by Metro Vancouver's housing market. For restaurant owners and operators, the increased cost of living in a booming area represents a huge challenge and increasing costs on many fronts.

When the low employment rate combines with additional market factors, employers are faced with increased hiring challenges.

- **Transportation:** Travel time to get to and from work, the cost of parking, and the hours of service for public transportation all reduce who can fill jobs in the Metro Vancouver market. Those businesses close to public transportation – particularly those close to public transit – report better recruiting success than those with less access.
- **High Cost of Living:** When the cost of living, particularly housing, accounts for a high percentage of each pay cheque, the recruiting challenge is amplified. Although chefs and cooks are being recruited from out of area, the cost of living is limiting who is accepting positions.
- **Rental Housing:** Accessibility of affordable rentals limits the ability to recruit from outside the area.

03 NOT ENOUGH CHEFS

The Net Promoter Score is an index ranging for -100 to 100 that measures the willingness of customers to recommend a company's or services to others. For the chef/cook profession, a 2016 report by **go2HR** reports an average Net Promoter Score of -58. Chefs and cooks are not recommending the profession to their peers, friends or family. As a result, less potential chefs/cooks are entering

culinary school and fewer people are being encouraged to join the industry. This is putting a heavy stress on restaurants looking for line cooks, prep cooks, quick-service chefs, and casual and fine dining chefs. The shortage is aggravating the situation because kitchens already running short on staff are losing more staff due to the core staff team working extended hours.

→ WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

- Retention Challenges: The majority of cooks and chefs report challenges in their positions due to work/life balance. Simply put, the long hours are causing too much strain on personal lives.
- The kitchen environment (the heat, the stress, the long hours) coupled with the culture of drugs and drinking are limiting how long people stay in kitchen careers.
- Women tend to exit the industry at a higher rate than men (one recent study reported that nearly 40% of cooks are female, but women represent less than 25% of working chefs).
- Demographics heavily impact the cook and chef occupations, as both rely heavily on segments of the population that are in decline. The go2HR's Cook Labour Market Analysis reports that the majority of cooks (52%) are under 35 years old and most chefs (63%) are under 45 years old. There are very few cooks (14%) or chefs (12%) over the age of 55.
- The same report found that western cooks and chefs tend to exit their occupations at an early age – 40% report leaving between the ages of 35 and 44.
- In Asian restaurants, our research found that the opposite is true. The vast majority of Chinese kitchens are staffed with chefs and cooks that are 45 years old and older. The lack of training within British Columbia for Asian specialties means that there are very few young chefs entering the profession.
- Many Chinese operators are encouraging chefs to stay on into their 60s and 70s, and paying premium wages, as there are no trained chefs to take over for retirements.
- The perception that the starting wages for cooks is low is discouraging new recruits from staying in the profession.
- With other Red Seal and construction trades paying starting wages at twice the rate, people are considering alternate trades more seriously.

04 CHANGES TO TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAMS

The temporary foreign worker program is a much-needed source of employees for restaurant operators. Changes to the Foreign Worker Program in 2013 increased the barriers to entry to the program for all employers. The new program commits potential employers to a more rigorous application process and increased costs. Operators must post

the position for a minimum period and ensure that no Canadian is available to fill the position through the job posting and through completing a Labour Market Impact Assessment. In 2016, in BC there were only 20,000 working under Temporary Foreign Worker Programs – of those 3,600 are working in the restaurant industry.

→ WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

The length of the commitment the employees made a substantial difference to the sponsoring business, but the new costs related to the application process add up and the time delays between application and acceptance are prohibitive. Many operators surveyed reported incurring \$7,000 - \$10,000 per employee and seven or more months delay.

However, with less than 2% of the entire provincial workforce under the Temporary Foreign Worker program, it offers only a limited potential to relieve the shortage of employees.



05 KITCHEN CULTURE

Restaurant team-building is complex. Managers and/or operators must bring together two different groups (front of house and back of house) with two sets of interests working collaboratively to provide a fabulous guest experience and great food. Understanding the differences between front of house and back of house functions is an investment that operators must make to create an effortless workflow and increased efficiency.

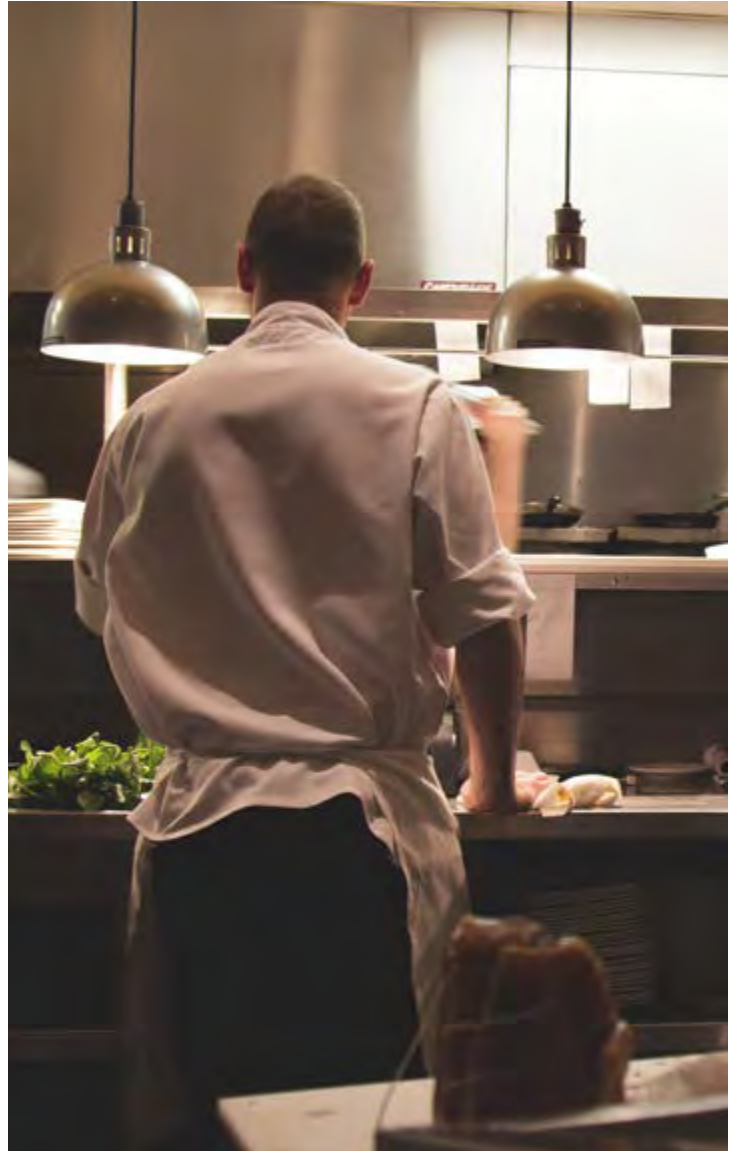
The liaison between guests and kitchen, front of house employees aim to provide a customer with a great experience and a reason to come back. In the back of house, kitchens are known for their strict hierarchy in which each person has a specific job to fill and chain of command to follow. Despite this, the majority of cooks and chefs were attracted to the career by their passion, creativity, and a fast-paced environment. Bridging the gap between the kitchen and the front of house is not an easy proposition. The cultures are very different and that culture is often at the crux of the restaurant workplace recruiting challenges.

While the front of house has some challenges, participating in a tip structure often offers a great draw for front of house. However, many of our kitchens don't feel welcoming for new employees. The pace of the work and the extreme pressure of tight deadlines and budgets has created a culture that is often fueled by adrenaline and strong personalities. Tight spaces and hot conditions combined with hot tempers and egos create a "heat of the moment" environment that is often considered explosive and sometimes sexist.

→ WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

Workers today report that they want to align their values with the companies for which they work. In the case where kitchen culture can be perceived as bullying or over-heated, employees are willing to leave rather than put up with a poor working climate.

While this top down kitchen culture of aggression and control was considered the norm in years past, it is now consistently listed as one of the key reasons chefs leave a business. The



go2HR Cook Labour Market Analysis found that cooks and chefs tend to be passionate about their careers but feel undervalued and overworked. The overheated culture is discouraging young talent from staying in careers in kitchens and appears to be discouraging women from staying in kitchen positions. With more women graduating from culinary school, it's challenging for recruitment that professional kitchens remain dominated by men and that few women rise through the ranks.

PART 2 METHODOLOGY & RESEARCH

PART 2 OVERVIEW

The BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association (BCRFA) received funding from the Employment Program of BC and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to analyze the employment and skills gap that is impacting employment levels in Metro Vancouver restaurants. Our research is consultative and our findings are the result of outreach to industry professionals over a range of platforms.

The goal is to review and identify the imbalance between the lack of labour pools and the demand for workers in the Metro Vancouver restaurant industry.

THE DELIVERABLES ARE:

- Summarize labour market gaps
- Identify new employee sourcing strategies
- Relate issues of recruiting and retention to possible changes to human resources policies, education, and training
- Provide strategies and recommendations regarding specific issues within the restaurant industry
- Determine the role of language and training barriers for international cuisine and restaurants operating with English as a second language.

OUR RESEARCH STEPS AND CONSULTATIONS INCLUDED:

- An online survey, completed by 175 BCRFA member restaurateurs
- 75 one-on-one interviews with employers across Metro Vancouver
- 4 student focus groups with hospitality students at BCIT, Douglas College, and Capilano University
- 2 chef focus groups
- 2 industry presentations that provided opportunities for industry to offer feedback and suggestions on preliminary findings
- Advisory committee meetings to review and advise on next steps
- The research process was designed to be immersive and to solicit straight-forward feedback about the nature and impact of the labour shortage on Vancouver area operators. Through our in-person interviews, we focused on strategic questioning to engage in a dialogue with each operator personally as well as to drive meaningful value for the operator as a result of the conversation. When necessary, we dialed into specifics that were best practices or opportunities for further learning by our team. We thank all the operators who took the time to respond to a survey, attend a meeting or invite us into their business for their contribution to this report.

[LINKS TO ADDENDUMS FOR METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH](#)

During our research and meetings, a consistent message was given to our team. Workers in restaurants want respect, structure, fair treatment, schedules that respect their needs and opportunity to learn and advance.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

PART 3 OVERVIEW

IT SOUNDS SIMPLE, BUT THE KEY IS STARTING WITH KEEPING GREAT PEOPLE.

Keeping employees engaged matters because the loyal customers they create drive business profitability. Gallup's research found that fully engaged customers make 56% more visits per month at fast casual restaurants than actively disengaged customers do. At fast food restaurants, fully engaged customers make 28% more visits each month. Team members who are happy and enjoy their work create engaged customers more consistently than team members who are unhappy. They produce more consistent results and recommend their workplace to friends and colleagues.

Operators we spoke with indicated that turnover in the front of house was impacting guest experience – from neighbourhood restaurants to fine dining – because return customers like to know the people that are serving them. For operators facing back of house turn over, the impact on the quality and consistency of the food arriving on diners' plates was significant. Not only are the presentations changing – the same salad could be diced one day and chopped the next – but the menu items themselves are changing because of the level of skill and the time it takes to prepare the dishes.

The staple of any successful restaurant is consistently delivering great meals. Many of the operators we spoke to expressed great concern about trying to retain their standards and how to do that in a labour shortage situation.



It starts with the people. Nurturing an environment where employees are engaged and feel recognized has the strongest potential for real change within any organization. Boosting retention and reducing turnover is simplest solution to reducing the impact of the labour shortage on individual businesses – this is particularly true in the Metro Vancouver area because the area is acutely impacted by demographic shift. According to **go2HR's Cook Labour Market Analysis**, keeping Chefs and cooks currently working in the industry employed in kitchens for an additional five years will reduce the impact of smaller graduating classes.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

“ONE OF THESE DAYS WE’RE GOING TO HAVE TO ADMIT THAT EVEN WITH WAGE HIKES, TERRIFIC EMPLOYERS, AND FOCUSED RECRUITING, MOST CANADIANS REMAIN UNLIKELY TO CONSIDER WORKING IN RESTAURANTS OR KITCHENS UNLESS WE CONSIDER TAKING THESE JOBS OR ENCOURAGING OUR KIDS TO CONSIDER THESE JOBS. THAT MEANS CHANGING THE REPUTATION OF KITCHENS AND RESTAURANTS FOR THE BETTER.”

- DAN KELLY, PRESIDENT & CEO CANADIAN FEDERATION OF INDEPENDENT BUSINESS



→ THINK CAREERS

Restaurant operators need to begin the shift to thinking about restaurants as careers to increase retention and reduce turnover. People today are expected to have many careers in a lifetime, but they think of every job as an opportunity to build skills and create an opportunity for advancement for themselves over time. To be employers of choice, restaurateurs must offer an employment package that includes:

- A competitive salary;
- Realistic and regular hours;
- Professional development;
- A culture of recognition, and;
- A good physical working environment.

→ BUILD THE VALUE PROPOSITION

Leaders today must work to create a culture where values - how people treat each other - are as important as results. What a business values and how they express those values is part of the employment proposition. With this, employers must also start to build a new public face for restaurants that values employees, fosters professional growth, and values balance to overcome the toxic adrenaline culture. If the Canadian House of Commons is considering a Code of Conduct, restaurant businesses need to assess whether they too can lead the charge on responsibility and transparency in the workplace.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS



→ ACKNOWLEDGE THAT PAY MATTERS

Hours and pay go hand-in-hand, but there is a clear need for a discussion on pay in a region with costs as high as those in Metro Vancouver. Increasing costs eat into tight margins for operators, but availability of housing and cost of transportation are adding pressures to an already difficult market for recruiting. In our market, employees are consistently leaving for a dollar more an hour because paying the bills wins every time. The dilemma businesses face is that not increasing pay comes with its own financial cost as it increases labour turnover. Wages are budgeted to the dollar when labour (salaries and wages) accounts for upwards of one third of a restaurant's operating costs.

Tracking the cost of recruiting, reducing turnover, and cross-training have helped operators identify sources for increasing pay of valued team members. Alternative schedules, predictive scheduling, and averaging agreements have a part to play as do looking at productivity, efficiency, prepping, and plating processes.

With many businesses operating with margins so slim (3-5% industry wide) that they may be unable to alter the pay, creatively tackling the other components becomes more important. If, as employers, we start to think about what potential we see in employees rather than what skills they already have we can begin to build employment packages that attract and build great talent.

→ START APPLYING BEST PRACTICES

Our research has identified best practices in industry that, when applied, have the potential of making real changes for operators in the short term. Our nine tactics are designed to help build the restaurant career value proposition and to help keep the great people already working in the sector.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ SUMMARY OF 9 TACTICS – AND WHY THEY MATTER:

1. BE STRATEGIC ABOUT RECRUITMENT

- *It's worth the time to be strategic.*
- Strategic recruitment is about tackling the needs of the business and the needs of the potential employee. It is an investment in time and people. Instead of picking the people that are available, it's about finding the best people and creating opportunities for them to see themselves in a business long term and to develop their careers with that business in mind.
- Many businesses are reviewing their methods of recruitment to ensure that they are as effective as possible. They are creating faster application processes and speeding up the time between an initial enquiry and an interview. They are professionalizing the hiring process: making the job offer more comprehensive, offering professional development, realistic and regular hours, and opportunities for growth.
- One simple tweak that operators have found success with is to build employment offers on the potential that an employee has to grow into a position rather than setting the position up as a lateral move with the expectation that they will excel in a job they have already done.

2. TARGET IMPROVING YOUR RETENTION THROUGH TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- *Management is about how we treat people and how we show people that we believe in them and want to empower them. When combined with recognition and opportunity for advancement, these are precursors for retention.*
- Our research found that most people entering into restaurant jobs did not see a path for advancement or personal development in their role. Making the switch from jobs to careers begins with the shift to investing in people.
- Operators report that a solid learning and development program with regular check ins acts as a strong incentive to aid retention. One owner who offered business coaching to the senior chef team built longevity and loyalty among their staff – because the business coaching is a complementary skill that is generally not taught in culinary school.
- In the kitchen, one result of the shortage is that many chefs are being put into human resources and management roles that they don't have the training or the time for. Executive Chefs are becoming the coach, the mentor, relationship brokers, and the problem solver. At the entry level, many new cooks are in positions where they do not possess the required level of skills. Building in-house programs that emphasize learning and development of culinary skills at all levels, the sharing of knowledge of existing chefs and cooks, and developing softer skills and management skills are all invaluable to team building and retention.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

3. SCHEDULE EFFICIENTLY AND THOUGHTFULLY

- *In a culture of urgency, distraction and managing multiple pressures, allocating time is something employers and employees alike are struggling to manage.*
- Addressing the issue of long hours and when scheduling employees is a key piece of the retention puzzle. It's about thinking differently about shifts, including what skills are needed and when.
- Averaging Agreements are legal options in BC that offer real opportunities for operators to recognize the need for long hours, but also offer employees time off to manage their lives, schooling, and family priorities. These also allow operators to control costs – and potentially increase wages – thereby increasing retention.
- Scheduling according to availability and asking for extra help in the form of overtime, instead of expecting it, instills professional courtesy, and respect among team members. It also helps with retention and attendance.



4. KNOW YOUR STAFF

- *To be successful in the workplace, individuals want to feel pride of place and to know that they are a trusted and valued member of the team.*
- Investing in staff teams by knowing something about them personally goes a long way and helps achieve business growth goals. Do you know why an employee is 15 minutes late every Tuesday? Do you know why an employee recently started looking tired?
- Restaurant employees have busy personal and family lives. Understanding their other obligations, personal ambitions, and education goals and being able to work with them to continue to build loyalty is essential. In the Metro Vancouver area, operators need to be aware of employees' housing and transportation needs. If someone travels two hours to work, eight hours between shifts is not enough to make sure they are performing at their best.

5. BE PART OF BUILDING A NEW CULTURE

- *Nurturing culture is as much about sharing what you believe in as an operator as understanding what motivates and inspires your workers.*
- Tackling the public face of the culture in kitchens is essential. Vancouver operators may not be doing what TV chefs are doing, but the image that TV portrays is strong and it spreads a message that is hard to overcome. The issues of intimidating, aggressive, and sometimes sexist cultures come up time and again and are consistently listed as reasons why chefs and cooks leave a business. These must be addressed and a culture that all team members invest in must be fostered from the ground up.
- Sharing the values that drive a business and being transparent about what matters to the leadership team, increases employee buy-in and provides a landing place for common ground and pride in the workplace.
- Workplace Codes of Conduct, agreed to by all employees, have a role to play in setting up responsibility and transparency. These policies are also leading the charge against bullying and harassment in the workplace.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

6. APPEAL TO TODAY'S EMPLOYEES

- *Making up nearly 50% of the global workforce (PwC), Generation Y and Z employees are considerable influencers on food trends, dining out, AND what is expected in the restaurant workplace today.*
- Research shows that these workers are demanding more from their employers. They want mentorship, they want to learn at work, and to have the opportunity to grow in their positions. They want to share the values of their employers, but they also value their family and time off. At face value, these are things that all employees should want for themselves.
- In our interviews with students, they indicated that if companies aren't ready to accommodate these workers, they will take their skills and talents elsewhere.
- In a tight labour market, and because 15-24 year olds account for 30% of BC's restaurant workforce, restaurateurs have to take on the challenge of meeting the needs of these passionate, creative, and entrepreneurial workers because they are the present and the future of our workforce.

7. BE AN INFLUENCER

- *Who better to help change the perception of the industry than the role models within our own Vancouver area who are making a difference?*
- Our outreach with chefs and cooks is clear – the visibility of careers in kitchens is at an all-time low. Showcasing the everyday heroes, role models, and opinion leaders is essential to building up new engagement in restaurant careers. Bartenders, sommeliers, chefs, and restaurant managers enjoy exciting careers that can be profiled. Help put Metro Vancouver restaurants on the career map so that we can invest in our teams and their development.
- Increasing visibility isn't just altruistic. It can help recruit workers for individual kitchens. Restaurateurs and chefs who partner with culinary programs at high school and college levels gain workers by creating personal connections in industry and education.

8. CHANGE SYSTEMS

- Kitchens are under pressure from customers to meet time constraints, quick turn arounds, and tight service timelines. With less staff, this is a significant challenge to operators – systems and technology changes offer real solutions worth exploring.
- Creating the mental shift to analyze the flow of the work and the roles that each staff member plays allows operators to improve outputs by putting in place technology and work flows that improve efficiency.
- Some chefs taking part in this research have successfully de-skilled, changing their staffing needs to work with available talent pools. Increasing the prep versus service ratio offers a solution, as does simplifying the serving and plating without compromising taste.
- Technologies exist that reduce the ambient heat in kitchens (think induction) or help teams with training through, "Smart Kitchens." This on-screen technology tool can help ensure that team members create dishes more consistently and efficiently.



PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ TACTIC 1: BE STRATEGIC ABOUT RECRUITING

CHANGING HIRING PRACTICES

There is a saying that, “when you are up to your ears in alligators, it is difficult to remember you initially planned to drain the swamp.” Operators consistently told us that there is considerable pressure to hire any warm body that comes in the door. Under strong hiring pressure, we know it is challenging to remember that getting the best staff must drive the effort and time spent on recruiting. However across all sectors, poorly vetted and poorly trained employees have a higher potential to be disruptive in the workforce and may reduce the efficiency of the core team.

Recruiting new people is always a costly proposition. Increasing retention is a long-term goal, but finding the right people, one at a time, and building stronger teams is the first step. A lot of restaurant staff do not clearly know what their job is. Even worse, they think their job is one thing when it’s actually quite different. While our research indicates that this applies less for chain environments, where many Human Resources and training systems are in place, the problem is widespread.

In kitchens, supervisors and chefs faced with hiring pressures are building teams with cooks that don’t have the required level of skills. However, on the other side, students and instructors consistently report that they are disillusioned because there are limited opportunities to express their creativity and talent. Many instructors highlight the number of students who leave the industry in the first year of working as a cook or don’t return to complete Levels 2 and 3 of the current training model. In the back of house, rigorous hiring procedures benefit the employer and the employee.

When starting the hiring process, we found that it is crucial to invest in clearly identifying the job roles, responsibilities, and reporting structure and to have the job description vetted by existing team members to ensure that the parameters actually align with the workflow and the kitchen (or front of house) experience. Employers who include pictures of dishes or videos of the line in action report increasing their success getting qualified people.

“PEOPLE MAKE THE MISTAKE IN JUST HIRING A WARM BODY. IF YOU HIRE A WARM BODY, THAT’S WHAT YOU’RE GONNA GET.”

PETER CHRISTIE
FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE
MASSACHUSETTS RESTAURANT
ASSOCIATION

Consider the cost of the recruiting process: the British Columbia industry average cost to recruit and train a new person to full productivity in an entry-level position is \$3,000. (US figure provided by the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment is \$4,000.) For a skilled position, the cost can increase above \$10,000. When involving a talent agency, the fees can exceed 50% of the first year salary of the targeted position. Understanding these costs will help to establish stronger parameters around the entire recruiting process and will help to strengthen how much value, and investment, is placed on orientation and training.

For restaurants dealing with turnover, the problem is not just the cost of onboarding. High employee attrition can have a negative impact on restaurant morale and on the customer experience. If a restaurant gains a reputation for employee turnover, new employees and long-term employees alike may begin to see the jobs as transient – and begin looking for other opportunities.

Although the investment in strategic recruiting is significant, the long-term benefits are substantial. Setting realistic expectations ensures that potential applicants are being set up for success through the process.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ TIPS FOR RECRUITING TOP PEOPLE

DETERMINE CORE VALUES

Understand your company values and recruit people who will fit your brand and your culture. What motivates you, your business, and your team to be successful? Some sample core values include: teamwork, reliability, loyalty, commitment, open-mindedness, consistency, honesty, and efficiency.

- Be proud of your workplace culture, be transparent about it, and promote it as a feature of joining your business.
- Explain what you believe in and give people a reason to connect to your business. Having convictions and staying with them builds respect in teams.
- Always list your core values in your job listings. They will excite those who are right for the job and turn away those who are not.
- By making your expectations clear and tying them back to your core values, employees know how to become better team contributors.
- If you include more details in your job postings, then you will attract people who share your company values.

TAILOR YOUR POSITIONS TO THE CANDIDATES

- Create a package that combines the best aspects of the job you can offer – including wages, benefits, employee perks, recruitment, opportunities for growth, and retention bonuses.
- Set your goal to offer the best salary you can. Look at your budget and be realistic.
- Post information about your company and where it is located. The time it takes to get to the workplace determines who will apply and be successful.
- Hire people who can grow into the job. Don't hire someone who has already done the job.
- Look for personality and skill. Know what skills you can train for and make sure that the fit is there with the rest of your team.

THINK BEYOND SALARY

- Create a package that combines the best aspects of the job you can offer – including wages, benefits, employee perks, recruitment, opportunities for growth, and retention bonuses.
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MAKE YOUR POSTING STAND OUT

Prospective job seekers often have many positions to choose from and are interviewing with a range of companies simultaneously. What are you doing to make your business be attractive to candidates? You could be the best employer, with the top compensation and benefits package, but if you don't convey that accurately in your job posting, you still won't recruit successfully. In the past, employers could safely rely on word of mouth and industry connections, but with Glass Door and many other online employer rating tools employers have to market strengths and employee value propositions from the outset.

- Sell your business. Be descriptive: include photos or videos that show the food you create.
- Be authentic. Talk about what drives your business.
- Define the role and required skills.
- Talk about opportunities for growth or advancement.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

TALK ABOUT PERKS

While high-tech companies offer video games and free snacks, the hospitality industry has a history of welcoming people and providing quality experiences. What lifestyle perks can you reasonably offer to improve the employee value proposition without increasing your bottom line?

- Do you allow your chefs and cooks to host family and friends at a discount?
- Do you have a mentorship program?
- Do you offer business coaching for senior positions?
- Do all of your kitchen teams participate in menu development and new flavours?
- Do you host food and beverage tastings so people experience the menu and features?
- Do you have partnerships with other businesses in your neighbourhood that are a benefit to your staff? Discounts at spas, clothing companies, and taxis all offer perks that employees can benefit from.
- Do you support your employees' charities?
- If you are a family restaurant, do you provide opportunities for parents and grandparents to be proud of their family members?

CONDUCT SMART INTERVIEWS

The interviewee will be interviewing you as much as you them.

- Use the interview as a marketing opportunity to showcase your company and the workplace culture.
- Use the time to understand what the job seeker is looking for in a position and how that aligns with what you need. Even if your posting is clear there may be a mismatch.

THINK PAST THE INTERVIEW

- Be clear about the steps of the hiring process.
- Offer to host the chef or cook for lunch before they start so they can try the food and get excited.
- References may be difficult to check but networking with colleagues helps to ensure the right fit.

IF YOU MAKE AN OFFER:

- Have a strong welcome package that you go through with new hires that includes best practices and workplace code of conduct.
- Offer an onboarding and training program that is comprehensive and helps bring people up to speed quickly.
- Have a contract that employees sign that includes a workplace code of conduct that employees must agree to.
- Have a meeting with the new employee to set a series of short term and long term goals that you can work together on. This sets a new employee up for success, allows them to strive for growth and be excited about their role.

TURNOVER WITH NEW WORKERS

Students we spoke to thought six months was a long time to stay at a new job. When we asked what would lengthen the time spent in a particular position, the students unanimously felt that ongoing mentoring, setting goals, and learning expectations from day one would allow them to stay longer and contribute more.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ TACTIC 2:

TARGET IMPROVING YOUR RETENTION THROUGH TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Opportunity for advancement, recognition, engagement, and transparency are precursors for retention. They are signs of how employees are valued and how people experience that their employer believes in them and wants to empower them.

TALK CAREERS

Our discussions with hospitality students told us that they don't see a career path within the restaurant setting and experiences they are having are keeping them away from further investigation of restaurant as careers. Tackling the challenge of defining a career ladder within an organization and developing a path by which individuals can grow in their careers is an essential step to changing the face of restaurant recruiting. It's about thinking in career terms first: people stay a short time and invest little in a "job"; however, people across the board invest time and energy in their career and their own personal development.

DEVELOPMENT

It starts with empowering restaurant teams. Employee development shouldn't end with the first-week, or first-day, on the job orientation, and training. A small step forward that has proven successful is to invest in the potential of existing employees through a solid learning and development program. These opportunities can be in-house or through support of existing apprenticeship training models, and should be tied to career advancement and raises. Opportunities to enhance in-house training include digital training resources such as videos, online quizzes, and online courses. Professional development should be part of the employee feedback process, continually evolving with new opportunities for learning and goal setting.

>> If your organization hasn't calculated the cost of recruiting, consider doing so. Understanding and reducing turnover can make funds available for training and recognizing the existing team.



>> *Restaurants who support Red Seal training and mentorship report strong retention and staff loyalty.*

However, we did hear that not all programs are followed up on. If a business sets up mentoring or management training, it is key to support career growth, promotions, and raises follow through on successful completion of management training programs. Development is an investment on both sides.

Determining set paths for advancement, competency training, cross training, and personal development should help to define expectations and improve retention.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

RECOGNITION

Emphasizing a culture of recognition offers a second opportunity that presents a clear opportunity for improvement that can be made without it costing money and can be reflected in the bottom line. Sharing feedback with the full team and promoting recognition and appreciation go a long way to improve the morale of teams facing shortages. Regular recognition and feedback drives successful employee engagement and advancement. Operators who invest in training, but don't recognize individuals for their efforts, will not gain the full advantage of either process.

- A PWC study found that 60% of its survey respondents would like to receive feedback from their bosses on either a daily or weekly basis; among Millennials and Generation Z, that number jumped to 72%. Significantly, only 30% of respondents said they were receiving any feedback at all!
- Leadership development firm Zenger Folkman found that 69% of employees said they would put more effort into their work if they received acknowledgment of a job well done.

DEFINE SUCCESS

Young workers report that they want to have a clear discussion about successes, expectations, and exactly what their job is when they join a new work team. It is an easy win for an employer who invests as little as 15-30 minutes with each new employee. Being transparent in those discussions and talking about targets (food costs/business costs/salaries) helps teams support the goals and understand the benefits.

IN THE KITCHEN

“PEOPLE DON'T LEAVE BAD COMPANIES, THEY LEAVE BAD MANAGERS.”

One surprising result of the shortage in the kitchen is that many chefs are being put into human resources, coaching, and administration roles that they don't have the training or the time to take on. Chefs are usually promoted because of their culinary skills and many haven't received the management and leadership development that would have been available to other roles in the industry. No matter how technically

competent senior chefs are, if they're terrible managers, they'll keep losing staff.

Making sure that senior chefs have the skills (and the time) to communicate, engage, support, develop, and motivate their teams can have a major impact their personal engagement and their commitment to the business. Instilling strong management training on people doing hiring and orientation in kitchens helps to ensure new hires are delivered a strong message and set of expectations. It also helps all members of the team to understand what they are going to get out of their kitchen work experience. Giving top people access to training helps make them successful managers. This training is readily available through continuing education and leadership courses across Metro Vancouver. One employer was offering their senior chefs access to one-on-one business coaching services; the cost versus impact assessment proved this was a great investment.

“THE FUNDAMENTAL POINT TO MAKING CHEFS HAPPY IN WORK ISN'T PAY OR HOURS, IT'S ABOUT RESPECT AND GIVING THEM GROWTH WITHIN THE BUSINESS.”

BIG HOSPITALITY.CO.UK OCT 25, 2017

Some larger chains have built in-house programs that emphasize learning and development of culinary skills at all levels, sharing of knowledge of existing chefs and cooks. However, this is something that is transferrable to small independent operations as well. One independent operator we spoke to has had remarkable success with mentoring and creating a network of other chefs around the world that he sends his top cooks to for their ongoing growth.

CROSS TRAINING

Another new idea that comes from the research is connected with cross-training. Providing kitchen staff, in particular, the opportunity to work in the front of house sphere, presenting meals or even taking serving shifts has worked for Metro Vancouver operators who are trying to create strong connections between the quality of the food and the service. The chefs and cooks know the dishes intimately and are proud to share their creations – this has a positive impact on guest experience as well – because when the passion is shared, the dining experience is enhanced.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS



→ TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT IDEAS

ENGAGE YOUR TEAM

- Make work as interesting as possible.
- Things like butchery and sourcing great ingredients encourages people to get passionate about their jobs.
- Encourage cooks to make menu suggestions and be part of creating features.
- Make people proud of their own work so they want to keep coming back.
- Offer every employee a path to grow in his or her skills or in their career.
- Ensure that your team isn't just bored: apathetic employees aren't necessarily slacking. They might simply be looking for a challenge.

INVEST IN YOUR EMPLOYEES FROM DAY 1

- Include ongoing training as part of your employment package.
- Once you bring a new hire on board, strive to make them fully functional members of the team as swiftly and efficiently as possible.

- Create mentorship relationships.
- Have an employee package that talks about the culture and expectations.
- Set onboarding and training gears in motion on the new hire's first day.
- Stand by your values to show your employees respect.
- Set up a referral program that pays a bonus to employees who successfully refer a colleague to your organization that stays three months.

BUILD LOYALTY

>> **Loyal employees are worth much more than their weight in gold.** Loyalty is something you earn:

- By doing something good for your people
- By taking real risks for your people
- By getting them what they need
- By standing up for them
- By being there for them when they need you
- By helping them realize their goals and dreams

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS



REWARD GOOD PERFORMANCE

- Set fair targets
- Find savings in food costs to increase the ability to pay fair wages.
- Praise publicly – Recognize people publically for making a difference or doing something right.
- Correct privately – If someone needs speaking to, do so privately.
- Offer simple perks that reward good attendance and teamwork: if an employee has worked six months without a sick day – consider a gift card or a day off to recognize their commitment.
- Create retention rewards (bonuses for staying prescribed lengths of time)

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

- Never let your staff get to the place where they plateau.
- Offer to sponsor or reimburse additional management training or certifications. That way, your staff will feel invested in your restaurant and driven to put the skills they have learned into action.
- Tell people what will make them stand out for promotions or career building.

HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES UNDERSTAND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUR RESTAURANT'S FINANCES.

- Understanding the financial picture encourages individual responsibility and provides opportunities for individuals to find savings and efficiencies.
- Financial management is a value-added skill every employee can benefit from. This is a great learning to include within annual goal setting.
- This helps employees understand how they contribute to the restaurant's bigger picture and see value in their role.
- It fosters an environment of trust and growth.

NEVER CLOSE THE DOOR

Your employees move around. A lot of businesses consider these people as quit and gone. But, they usually come home. If they were good workers, wouldn't you rather they come back to work for you instead of going to work for your competitor? Make sure employees who leave you to pursue other interests are welcome back. This bit of understanding costs you nothing.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ TACTIC 3:

SCHEDULE EFFICIENTLY AND THOUGHTFULLY

We all know that restaurants do not conform to a traditional 9-to-5 business model. Workers in our industry are often busiest when others are at leisure: evenings, weekends, and holidays. Late nights, weekend work and 24-hour operations offer scheduling challenges to the most considerate employers. This combination of grueling hours and poor work-life balance are key factors driving people out of the industry. Taking a serious look at how employees are being scheduled is a challenging task, but one that has a great potential for positive change in every organization.

At many restaurants, scheduling is a disorganized process that doesn't respond easily to change. As a result, if employee or employer needs change at the last minute, the system isn't in place to be handle it. In the new workforce, last-minute changes are becoming more the norm than in the past. Proactively understanding and tracking what team members need is essential. Many operators report staff simply not returning for a weekend shift. Even the most responsible employee, when faced with an inflexible manager who weekly calls out expecting a last minute shift or daily unscheduled overtime, will look for another position in this economy.

In jurisdictions around the US, new regulations around predictive scheduling are on the rise. Simply put, predictive scheduling requires employers to provide employees work schedules a set time in advance and puts an end to "on-call" scheduling. Part of a movement to employee-friendly legislation, we feel that watching these changes and being responsive to them in advance offers employers in Metro Vancouver an opportunity to positively impact the work-life balance for their staff teams.

In addition to getting ahead of legal requirements, scheduling efficiently and thoughtfully has the potential for bottom line benefit:

- In the kitchen, can your teams be organized to reduce the number of hours worked?
- Can shifts be re-organized to account for different skills needs at different points of the day?



- Can you assure shifts end in time for employees to get transit home?
- Can you limit the number of late night shifts?

The answers to these questions will be different for each operator. However, taking a step back and thinking differently offers real opportunities for operators. We find that engaging in conversations with employees to find out what they need is a great starting point.

Scheduling shouldn't be a source of uncertainty and dissatisfaction. It should be an inclusive process. Conversations with young employees who tried restaurant work reported that the employer didn't offer scheduling that aligned with their stated availability. It's a complex problem: however, restaurateurs today have access to a wealth of online staff scheduling programs and stand-alone software that optimizes the complex relationships between many staff needs, their availability, and the businesses shift requirements and empowers employees to manage their availabilities. Maintaining your own staff availability template and updating it on a regular basis helps tackle these challenges too.

Effective planning and scheduling has a strong role to play in building strong and respectful relationships within teams both up and down the career ladder. It is crucial to create a work place that respects the employees' personal lives and their commitments.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ TACTIC 3:

A 2015 report from the US Economic Policy Institute investigating the psychosocial effects of shift work and overtime presents compelling insights relevant to foodservice. Workers who maintain an irregular schedule (working on rotating or split shifts) are more likely to be subject to involuntary overtime. This group is further narrowed down to workers who earn between \$22,500 and \$40,000 annually, who work longer weekly hours, whose daily schedules are largely out of their control, and who feel there are never enough staff members on hand to get the job done. Not surprisingly, last-minute shift changes, cancellations, and overtime impede workers' ability to carry out a routine and can be the cause significant conflict both at home and at work. Since workplace stress is linked to employee disengagement, lack of productivity, and increased absenteeism, restaurateurs will see these effects directly reflected in their profits.

REGULAR SCHEDULING:

- Regular scheduling and scheduling as much in advance as possible helps people organize their lives and gives them an opportunity to show loyalty and respect in return.
- When hiring, talk about what your scheduling practices are and understand what potential employees need.
- When conducting employee reviews, seek to understand changing circumstances that might impact an employee's availability. Do they have exams coming up? Are they preparing to finish school? Do have young children? Are they planning for a big trip? Do they have a sick parent?

SETTING EXPECTATIONS:

- People want to know how many hours they will get and how often they will work.
- Set and maintain a strong set of rules around sick days, days off, and vacations.
- Ask for team members to volunteer for overtime, but don't expect people to stay late every day as this will be perceived as being unorganized.
- Value contribution.
- Don't cut shifts after posting a schedule. This develops trust within the staff team.
- Allow more cross-over and role changes during longer shifts so that people remain interested and engaged.
- Build your schedule for work-life balance.
- Limit the number of late shifts that each person works each week and add a financial incentive for employees working late shifts.
- If overtime is necessary, pay according to the Employment Standards Act.

OPPORTUNITY:

We have spoken to a number of students who wanted to work two days a week during the school year. They started working – and the employer scheduled four shifts one week, none the next. After a short period of time, the students decided to quit instead of fighting with the scheduling.

Scheduling is a challenge – but when young people are hard to replace – setting shifts so that people's needs are met will create a loyal employee. There are many online apps to help make scheduling easier.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

AVERAGING AGREEMENTS:

- Compressed workweeks offer real solutions for small and medium workplaces.
- They help control costs by eliminating a lot of overtime, create potential for hourly wage increases, and are ideal for employees attending school, have a second job or have families, and want to spend more time with them.
- These are legal under BC Law.
- Employees can agree to work longer daily hours in exchange for longer stretches of time off. For example, three twelve-hour days followed by four days off or four ten-hour days followed by three days off.
- Understand the requirements of the Employment Standards Act and run your business on the understanding that you treat your employees according to current laws.

SUCCESS:

Three operators who have worked on averaging agreements to offer employees four ten-hour days shared that they found team members became more engaged and felt more ready to contribute when they are requested for overtime. Having three days off means that even if you work an extra shift, you still have scheduled down time.

ACCOMMODATE TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

- If someone travels 1.5 hours to work or relies on public transit, understanding and accommodating how and when they can get to work matters.
- Getting to work may be easy, but getting home after a shift may be complicated and considered for scheduling purposes.
- Long commutes also impact productivity. Consider how long a staff person reasonably has off between shifts to reboot after you calculate for travel time so you get a rested and effective employee the following shift. New US laws are starting to regulate longer times between shifts for this reason.

FLEXIBILITY:

- Be flexible as an employer. However, it is important to be aware of the impact of the flexibility on other team members.
- Consider having chefs help with serving. This allows them to participate in tip structure and make more money, plus they know the food better than anyone else and may do a better job of selling it and serving it.
- More flexible working hours would make it easier for professionals with family commitments to pursue a career in the longer-term.
- Create flexibility for salaried managers around vacations. Allow them to build up time and take longer trips as long as they provide enough notice. Help stop people from quitting because they want to go on vacation. People will pitch in to cover because they want the same privilege.
- Treat staff as individuals but remind them that they are part of a team that needs to work together to meet the targets.
- Making hours that work for your staff helps to maintain more consistent service.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ TACTIC 4:

KNOW YOUR STAFF

Invest in staff teams by knowing something about them personally. Do you know why an employee is 15 minutes late every Tuesday? Do they have a kid they drop off? Or does a bus not run on that day? Do you know why an employee recently started looking tired?

With 30% of our workforce between 15-24 and a significant portion between 25-45, our industry employees have busy school, personal, and family lives. We need to understand the other obligations, personal ambitions, and education goals that our employees have and be able to work with them to continue to build loyalty. In the Metro Vancouver area, operators also need to know about their housing and transportation needs because it impacts output and availability. As housing prices rise, more people are commuting so it's worth asking about.

Build trust through authenticity. Know about their goals and triumphs so the whole team can celebrate when an important event happens (birthdays, graduations, new babies). Be honest when dealing with your teams and listen to their stories so they will value yours in return.

Students reported to us that they wanted an opportunity to provide feedback up to managers, but weren't always confident that managers were open to their suggestions. They liked the idea of an anonymous feedback process. A box in the staff room works. Next Gen solutions include digital platforms that exist for creating a feedback system that is convenient both for the employee and for the operator to review and analyze the feedback they are receiving. These offer real opportunities for analytics to transform insight into action.

Fostering strong staff relationships through face-to-face opportunities between staff and managers as well as places for staff to provide their ideas and suggestions helps restaurateurs see the front line from a new perspective and lead to positive change and profitability.

Standards Act and run your business on the understanding that you treat your employees according to current laws.

WHAT MAKES YOUR STAFF HAPPY?

- In the kitchen setting, knowing what makes your chefs and cooks tick is critical to keeping them happy.
- Talk to your existing staff to find out why they stay with you and don't be afraid to ask them what they don't like, too.
- Understanding what motivates them will help you to reinforce those areas and make sure you promote them in your recruitment process, as well as reviewing any problem areas.

CREATE AN ONGOING CONVERSATION

- Performance reviews are a valuable tool for managers, but the way businesses are using them is changing.
- There is a clear move away from annual performance reviews towards more frequent, informal conversations that help your teams feel valued, and give you more opportunities to address potential issues before they result in a staff member leaving.
- Gather information through regular coaching and mentoring meetings or simply through conversations with staff. Having regular catch-ups is a critical step to support employees and keep them on board.
- Through this process, set goals and development plans that allow team members to benchmark their progress and set a plan to help address any issues.

SUCCESS STORY:

One restaurant owner we spoke to makes a point of taking a different employee for coffee, away from the workplace, every week and talking to them about their lives and hopes and dreams, just as he would with a friend. It has paid off in loyalty and respect.

PART 3 SOLUTIONS FOR TODAY

BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ TACTIC 5:

BE PART OF BUILDING A NEW CULTURE

Leaders today must work to create a culture where values and how people treat each other are as important as results and where successful teams work in an environment of mutual respect and accomplishment. In a labour shortage wages matter, but the work environment matters even more.

While in many businesses the front and back of house cultures are separate and distinct, the kitchen antics often highlighted on cooking television seemed to have gone unchecked. While yelling, bullying, rudeness, and harassment may not occur in most restaurants, TV celebrity chefs have given the impression this toxic environment is normal and it is drawing people away from careers in our industry. This needs to change. One way of doing this is to make sure Metro Vancouver kitchens are respectful and inclusive and that talking about workplace culture is an important part of recruiting and retaining staff.

“CANADA’S WORKFORCE IS SHRINKING OVERALL, WHICH MEANS THE STRUGGLE TO HIRE AND RETAIN GOOD EMPLOYEES IS ONLY GETTING HARDER. SURVIVAL WILL REQUIRE ADAPTATION, AND THAT MEANS EMBRACING THE FLATTENED HIERARCHIES, INCREASED AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBLE STRUCTURES THAT THESE EMPLOYEES PREFER.”

**GRAHAM F. SCOTT,
CANADIAN BUSINESS.COM JUNE 3, 2015**

Across all segments the, “Big Boss,” who is the holder of the absolute truth is being rejected in the workplace. Where, “never apologize, never explain,” was an accepted mantra, leaders today in every segment are asked to explain every significant decision to their teams. Employees want to be informed of events and decisions that may impact their work life. Transparent leaders seek earned authority.

The question of culture is also relevant to the recent increase in the awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace. As men, and women, are being caught up in sexual harassment

“EMPLOYERS AND HEAD CHEFS CONTINUE TO WORK NEW COOKS INTO THE GROUND. THEY SEE IT AS A RIGHT OF PASSAGE THAT THEY ENDURED AND MADE THEM A BETTER COOK. WHILE MANY EMPLOYERS ARE CHANGING, THERE ARE EMPLOYERS WHO STILL USE AND ABUSE THEIR EMPLOYEES. THE NEXT GENERATION WILL QUIT BEFORE THEY PUT UP WITH IT.”

CURRENT CHEF

within the restaurant community, staff are seeking to feel safer in their workplaces. When an operator gets called out, not only do mere apologies not suffice for their staff, but their apologies have generally rung hollow to their customers and turned more people against them and their businesses. Operators need to ensure that their workplace culture welcomes diversity and is positioned strongly against bullying and harassment.

“EARNED AUTHORITY IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING, NOT TITLE AUTHORITY OR A NAMEPLATE. BE INCLUSIVE AND COLLABORATIVE, AND KNOW THAT THE TEAM IS GOING TO HELP ELEVATE YOU MORE THAN THEY’RE GOING TO HELP SUFFOCATE YOU. THE TEAM’S GOING TO LIFT YOU UP, NOT PUT YOU DOWN. MAKE SURE YOU MATTER. MAKE SURE PEOPLE CARE THAT YOU’RE THERE.”

**LYNDON CORMACK, CO-FOUNDER
HERSCHEL BAGS, VANCOUVER BC**

Our research highlighted that the impact and role of culture isn’t limited to the walls of each business. Social media has the momentum to influence customer decisions based on reporting of what would previously have been internal company issues. An employee culture may influence the bottom line both positively and negatively. Ontario’s minimum wage hike provided two different scenarios where company cultures were reported through social media and became

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headline news. One company experienced customer backlash and public shaming for taking away employee paid breaks, paid benefits, paid uniforms, and other incentives. On the other hand, other operations were publicly applauded for their efforts to support staff and embrace change. The latter are seeing positive results from staff and customers even though they have marginally increased prices. One operator proactively took the opportunity to extend wages to employees in our region – rather than just in Ontario – and gained exposure and promotion as a result of their employee forward approach.

“I REMEMBER THAT WHEN I WAS INTERVIEWED FOR THE POSITION, MY MANAGER MADE A POINT OF TELLING ME WHAT THE OWNERS BELIEVE IN, AND PART OF THEIR MANDATE IS THAT THEY BELIEVE IN PAYING WORKERS FAIRLY, ABOVE MINIMUM WAGE,” COFFEE PUBLIC PORT HOPE EMPLOYEE MALLORY FORD TOLD GLOBAL NEWS SUNDAY. “BEING PAID MORE THAN THE BARE MINIMUM IS VERY MOTIVATING. IT MAKES ME FEEL LIKE MY HARD WORK IS VALUED AND THAT I’M NOT DISPOSABLE [OR] REPLACEABLE.”

**MALLORY FORD
COFFEE PUBLIC PORT HOPE**

Where toxic cultures develop, they not only drive existing staff away, but also put young people off entering the industry altogether. A number of students we interviewed had become disillusioned after negative experiences working in restaurants, including reports of both sexism and racism from colleagues and patrons, and do not want to return to the industry. This is a huge hurdle that we need to overcome as an industry – and all operators have a role to play in challenging bad behaviours in the workplace. It seems both shocking and depressing that thousands of passionate young people are entering our restaurants each year, only to see their roles not align with their values, hopes and aspirations, resulting in them leaving the sector.

DO YOU HAVE A CODE OF CONDUCT?

Introducing a code of conduct to clearly spell out what is acceptable can help to create the right culture in the kitchen, but to be truly effective, it needs buy-in from staff themselves. Students in our focus groups wanted to be involved in the development and evolution of codes of conduct and for the code of conduct to be enforced fairly and consistently. Having a poster or chalkboard with the code of conduct visible in a high-traffic location was considered to be an ideal situation because of the reminders it offers to teams. They felt this provided an opportunity for accountability among team members and transparency by leadership.

Annually reviewing these codes with all team members will ensure that staff reflect on the expectations set and compare them with other workplace settings, as well as making sure they feel responsible to other team members for upholding the best practices.

Defining a desired culture with a code of conduct is the easy part. Aligning all plans, decisions, and actions to these new expectations is the hard part.

CHANGE HOW YOU LEAD

- Encourage a positive culture in the workplace.
- Have a diverse workforce and a zero-tolerance policy against bullying.
- If your kitchen doesn't have a mix of men and women, think about how to change that.
- Be transparent in your business and prepared to explain why you have made a decision. If it affects the staff team, be prepared to listen to their feedback and ideas.
- Set and Maintain Standards
- Let your employees know that discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated in your restaurant.
- Confront issues that are brought to your attention immediately and terminate the employee if required.
- Be respectful and polite and expect the same of your team.

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→ TACTIC 6

APPEAL TO TODAY'S EMPLOYEES

- >> People born between 1981 and 1997 (Generation Y/ Millennials) are the largest segment of the Canadian workforce at 37% in 2015 and have dramatic spending power, representing more than 9.5 million people.
- >> People born between 1995 and 2014 (Generation Z) are the bulk of the first time workers currently entering into the restaurant workforce. Many of their generation are predicted to opt out of the traditional higher education route – preferring to finish school online or take the entrepreneurial route. Gen Z'ers have grown up with Google – and nearly 92% have their own digital footprint. They are high-tech and hyper-connected.
- >> They are the largest influencers of food trends currently in our market - actively sharing their love of food on social media.
- 69 percent of Millennials take a photo or video of their meal before eating, essentially creating a free spotlight on the brands or restaurants they choose to feature.
- 68 percent of Millennials are willing to pay more for organic foods, and 66 percent are willing to pay more for sustainable foods – that's around 30 percent more than those aged 55+.

Making up nearly 50% of the global workforce (PwC), these workers have something to teach the restaurant industry about valuing work-life balance. Research shows that the workers are demanding more from their employers. They want mentorship, they want to learn at work, and to have the opportunity to grow in their positions. They want to share the values of their employers, but they also value their family and time off. At face value, these are things that all employees should want for themselves.

As past generations retire and Millennials rapidly account for a larger stake in the workforce; hiring, training, and retaining millennial employees is becoming increasingly important for any company. For employers today, people under 40 years old are the most educated and culturally diverse generation yet.

Shaped by technology and social media, they want to reach their professional goals faster and crave an environment that nurtures their professional development. They want a coach, not a boss, and they will take their skills and talents elsewhere if they don't feel appreciated or see advancement.

Every generation has its specific challenges. But for the restaurant industry, Millennials and Generation Z are our present and our future and we must court them as valued employees.

Based on our focus groups:

Generation Y and Z want employers to:

- Share their passion for their work and in the services of the company provides.
- Be part of making the world a better place.
- Provide feedback (often).
- Gen Y and Z seek leadership, and even structure, from their older and managerial coworkers, but expect respect and value for their ideas in return.

Students we spoke to want to:

- Chart a course for success from the first meeting
- Have a defined and comprehensive job description
- Have an opportunity for development and on the job education
- Work with team members they respect
- Have ongoing meetings with bosses to pace their progress
- Embrace a work culture that allows them to have lives outside of their work believe in opportunity – everything is one click away.
- Work in a fun yet structured environment

Our research and focus groups found that a mismatch between students' expectations and the reality of working in restaurants is significant. In the kitchen setting, it means that a large number of young chefs turn their back on the industry after just their first job.

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“RESTAURANTS NEED TO RETHINK AND MODERNIZE THEIR WORKING ENVIRONMENTS. THE WORLD HAS MODERNIZED, AND OUR GENERATION WON'T TAKE IT ANYMORE. WE HAVE MORE OPPORTUNITIES IN OTHER PROFESSIONS.”

CURRENT CHEF



ATTRACT UNDER 40S WITH:

- Competitive wages
- Personable and flexible work environment
- Quality online postings
- Personal social media accounts that reflect company culture
- Simplified application process

WHAT CONVINCES MILLENNIALS TO STAY?

- Pay increase or bonus
- Better work-life balance
- Recognition from managers and colleagues
- New Project or promotion
- Clear career path

OPPORTUNITY

The operators we interviewed on the whole valued creativity, entrepreneurship, contribution, engagement and teamwork. With the opportunities to travel and work in different cities that restaurant careers offer, restaurants have a unique proposition to offer potential new employees.

If operators position careers in kitchens through this lens, and they begin to shift the culture towards employee development, operators will retain the under 40 workforce.

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→ TACTIC 7

BE AN INFLUENCER

Who better to help change the perception of the industry than the role models within our own Vancouver area who are making a difference? Restaurateurs and Chefs have an opportunity to grow interest and gain workers by creating connections in industry and education. We feel that all operators have a role to play in helping to put Metro Vancouver restaurants on the career map. Regions around the world are facing this reputation challenge – this aspect is certainly not unique. But the pairing with a smaller group of young workers is unique to our region – and is escalating the operator experience of the labour shortage dramatically.

Our outreach with chefs and cooks is clear – the visibility of careers in kitchens is at an all-time low. Showcasing the everyday heroes, role models, and opinion leaders is essential to building up new engagement in restaurant careers. Bartenders, sommeliers, chefs and restaurant managers enjoy exciting careers that can be profiled.

Increasing visibility isn't just altruistic. It can help recruit workers for individual kitchens. Restaurateurs and chefs who partner with culinary programs at high school and college levels gain workers by creating personal connections in industry and education.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Actively involve K-12 students in culinary programs and engage with teachers to make cooking more material for younger students.
- Support and create opportunities for students in the Ace-It program.
- Provide opportunities for work-alongs in your kitchens for high school students interested in checking out careers in restaurants.
- Talk about the opportunities for advancement and travel and the number of positions available for skilled people.

- Promote the team atmosphere. Restaurants are great place for young adults who are active in sports. The high pace and good energy allows for team players to thrive.
- Partner with a local college by offering to be a guest speaker or advisor.
- Help instructors and students set job ready goals and expectations for their work postings.
- Offer work experience placements and part-time jobs so you can start connecting effectively with new, passionate workers.
- Share your insights on what it's really like to work for your business and, in return, listen to what they are saying that you can take and apply to your business.
- Grow chef and cook training awareness as comparable to other Red Seal trades.

ENCOURAGE MORE WOMEN TO JOIN THE PROFESSION

- A large percentage of chef apprentices are female and yet only a fraction stays in the industry long-term.
- While there are no definitive figures for the gender breakdown of full-time chef students, our conversations with chef instructors at British Columbia public and private culinary colleges suggest that roughly half of chef students are female.
- Creating a more welcoming climate, welcoming women into kitchens and promoting women from within existing organizations to be role models has the potential to increase our recruitment among women.



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BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS

→ TACTIC 8

CHANGE SYSTEMS

physical environment. Kitchens are under pressure from customers to meet time constraints, quick turn arounds, and service timelines. With less staff this is a significant challenge to operators. Creating the mental shift that prioritizes employees to gain better results offers operators a chance to look at how their kitchen flow is working and what process and technology changes can be implemented to help improve outputs.

Some chefs taking part in this research have successfully de-skilled, changing their staffing needs to work with available talent pools. Increasing the prep versus service ratio offers a solution as does simplifying the serving and plating without compromising taste. Going through the equipment and the kitchen layout with an outside consultant or trusted colleague to ensure that the best use of space and technology combined can make an employee's work magnitudes more efficient.

Technologies exist that reduce the ambient heat in kitchens (think induction) or help teams with training, efficiency, and consistency in dishes through, "Smart Kitchens," with recipes on screens may help ensure that team members are more effective when they are working.

SUCCESS

One operator is looking at bringing in a range of induction cook technologies in order to reduce the heat in his kitchen. The change involves a large investment in technology and start up electrical costs, but the new work environment for the employees will be cool year-round.

Strategic menu development for features can be a time-saver for businesses located near theatres and in business districts. Thinking about the time it takes to prepare and present a dish and making sure that the menu will be delivered within the 45-minute time slot brings in more diners through return guests and referrals. A restaurant in Calgary recently changed their lunch menu to have a 45-minute service guarantee that business professionals love.

IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Improving the comfort, convenience, and aesthetic of the workplace will make it more pleasant and differentiate your business from its competitors.
- Investing in better and brighter lighting and repairing floors to create a safer workplace
- Investing in staff by paying for uniforms, shoes, and clogs.
- Renovate staff changing rooms and eating areas to make them more attractive, secure, and hygienic.

INTRODUCE CLEVER TECHNOLOGIES

- Technologies aren't the enemy of the independent operator. They often help to offer cost savings and tracking that would previously only be available to large chains.
- POS Systems are available to help track staff, food costs and profitability. Taking advantage of these modules – although they require an investment of time to input costs and staffing – they provide value in helping to assess real costs and opportunities for savings. David Scott Peters, The Restaurant Expert, strongly advocates that menu costing and time tracking are two of the best tools for tackling increasing wages and staff costs.

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BEST PRACTICES & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPERATORS



→ ACTIONS

- The BCRFA is ideally situated to deliver the message of better ways of operating, to attract and retain workers. Through Inspired Restaurants, our existing pilot project, we are working with restaurants to teach them better resource management and better employment practices.
- The BCRFA is using its web site as a platform to deliver information to restaurant owners and operators about best practices in hiring and retaining workers. This report will, once approved and accepted by government, be available online.
- We have and will continue to conduct employer information sessions talking about best employment practices. We will be seeking partnerships with agencies representing unemployed and underemployed people to work in matching people with kitchen jobs.
- The BCRFA is a founding partner of the HAVE training program that trains marginalized (homeless, substance abuse recovered) people to be job ready. We are looking to expand the incredibly successful HAVE program into another community.
- Our staff people are passionate about helping restaurants succeed and will be working with groups and in a one on one capacity to assist employers to action many of the recommendations that have come from this report. We understand that many restaurants have no HR management resources and we will be offering counselling on an individual basis to restaurants who ask for our help.

PART 4 LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

While we recommend the above tactics and best practices, we're realistic that change from within tackles reputation and retention challenges on a small scale. Aspects of the labour shortage will take time and broader change within the Metro Vancouver and British Columbia business communities. Although many jurisdictions around the world are facing chefs and cooks shortages, we are unique in experiencing shortages throughout the restaurant environment and it's coupling with a workforce that is retiring faster than young people can replace them.

Even proactive change will never completely eradicate the need to bring in staff from outside the area, not only to address a shortage, but also to bring in innovation and specialty skills. Therefore, the sector needs to work strategically within the broader business community to bring about labour shortage solutions that will stimulate change over the longer term.

1. INNOVATION & SPECIALTY SKILLS

We believe that innovative flavours and taste presentations are at the heart of every restaurant's success. Each owner, operator or chefs adds their personal flair or secret ingredient that makes their burger or banana bread unique and sought after by customers. In Metro Vancouver restaurants, international culinary flavours are huge influencers on western menus – and on the palates of diners. The fusion style requires an exchange of ideas with chefs and cooks from around the world. In addition, the range and caliber of international culinary styles represented in restaurants in our area is world leading. Both western and international restaurants require chefs and cooks with the highest level of training. Whether it be dim sum, tandoori, sushi, pho, tapas or innumerable other cuisines – each traditional cooking style requires specialty instruction and many years of experience.

Problematically, there are a large number of specialty cuisines for which no training is offered within the province, or in fact the country. A preliminary, "Introduction to Asian Cooking," program offers a six-month basic course at VCC for a limited number of students, but does not offer the degree of specialty training for any of the cooking styles that are widely represented in the Vancouver area.



This leaves operators who offer cuisines outside of the classic traditions taught in public and private culinary programs, including Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, Spanish, Thai, Greek, North African, Middle Eastern and many others, limited by the existing talent pool. We spoke to a number of Chinese and Indian operators in specific who continually experience a shortage of skilled workers – and no Canadian place from which to source younger skilled workers. In Chinese kitchens in particular, the chefs that possess the highest level of skills required are in very high demand – and they are moving towards retirement at a steady rate with limited to no young people in position to replace them. Operators are finding that they are relying on retirees returning to work in order to access the level of skill that customers require.

Temporary Foreign Workers represent a solution for these operators. But, access to the LMIA and PNP programs must be streamlined to ease the accessibility to workers where there are no trained Canadian workers. Many operators have attempted to use the LMIA process – but without the aid of professional services – LMIA applications are being consistently rejected. Operators are concerned that the English language requirements are too strict given that the technical skills are in such high demand. For these specialty cuisines and the high level of specialty skills required for these chef and cook positions, the skills are 100% transferable and no

PART 4 LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

training will be required in Metro Vancouver for the chef to be able to apply their previous training. This is unique to culinary – as in many positions retraining or refreshing is required upon entry to Canada.

In addition, although English is an asset, the language of operation in the work environment will, in most cases, align with the culinary tradition of the restaurant – and, as a result, the workplace will be welcoming to any successful application from abroad. Until another solution is found, or new intensive culinary programs are offered, Temporary Foreign Workers offer the only solution to aging workforces where operators are at the mercy of large-scale retirements in coming years. Where the skilled talent and the language skills in the business allow synergies, we feel it is essential to support bringing in skilled people, fast and efficiently.

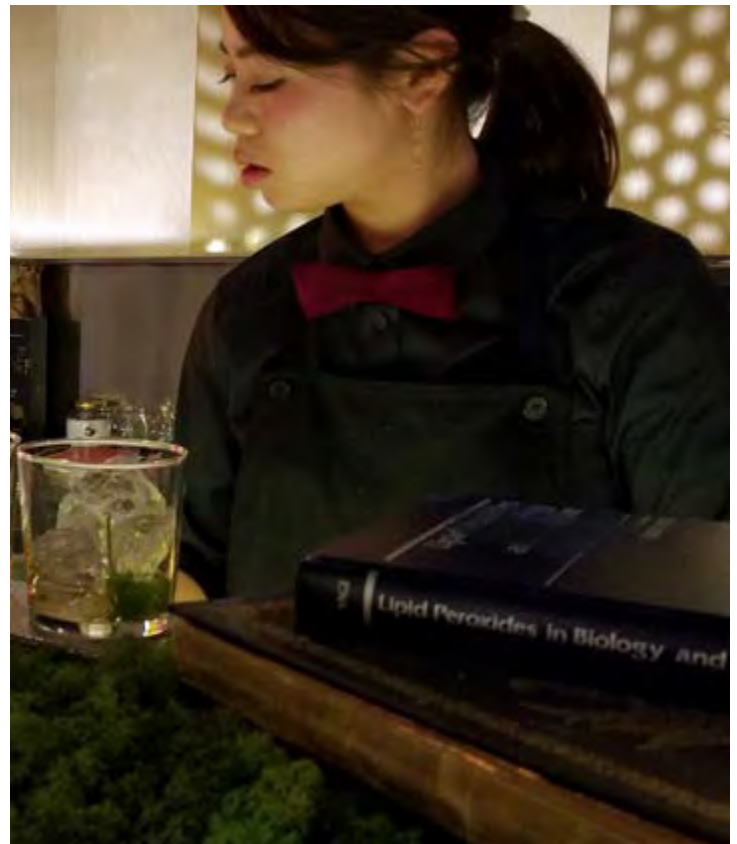
Streamlining access to temporary foreign workers to stimulate innovation and feed our market's palates for world-class international cuisine is essential. Suggestions for improving access include:

- Creating access to these programs through interpreters or clear language instructions that make programs more accessible without a lawyer or costly specialist
- Streamlining processes for applications where there is no skills training available in market
- Creating alignment between the language of the workplace and the language of the applicant in order to assist in a seamless transition to the Metro Vancouver area
- Creating a region-wide Labour Market Impact Assessment for specific defined positions (i.e. Dim Sum Chef, Sushi Chef, Tandoori Chef, etc.) to assist operators in bringing in much-needed skilled chefs and cooks.
- Creating relationships with culinary and hospitality degree programs internationally that offer the skills training that Metro Vancouver is not offering and offering TFW priority to students graduating from these programs.
- Reducing the cost of the LMIA application and reducing the processing time in order for applications to be processed and new workers be available within 4-6 months at the most.

Operators who are using the Temporary Foreign Worker Program are facing challenges with the high level of difficulty

and the delays between completing the paperwork and actually seeing results from the program. Providing a plain language guide that assists operators, including English as a second language business owners, would make the program more accessible.

Providing resources that can help operators understand what programs will work for them and which of the PNP and LMIA programs will work best for their particular situation would be an asset for small businesses. Providing guidelines for operators who successfully use the Temporary Foreign Worker program to bring a skilled applicant to Canada and to apply to have that worker stay in Canada longer, would be beneficial. Many operators are losing people that have skill and language abilities because the work term ends and there is no one in market to replace them.



2. PROMOTING JOBS ACROSS CANADA AND AROUND THE WORLD

The BC Labour Market Outlook 2017 Edition reports that 244,000 new workers must be recruited internationally and 80,000 workers nationally to fill projected vacancies between now and 2027.

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The BC Restaurant and Foodservices Association, on behalf of Vancouver area restaurateurs and restaurateur's province-wide, proposes that a feasibility study on national and international recruiting must be initiated in the short-term. The study would include the benefits of setting up a cross-sector panel to represent British Columbia nationally and internationally at job fairs.

broad-based group of industry representatives are needed to begin the projected national and international recruiting efforts if the 10-year goals are to be met. Not unlike setting up trade missions for BC products, we feel that proactive promotion of BC as a destination for skilled workers wishing to move or work through travel would begin a new phase of international recognition for our region.

Through a feasibility study, the goal would be to determine the make-up and effectiveness of a group of business and sector representatives would travel together to promote jobs from a range of sectors across the province. By building this group, we would start to build a long-term strategy for proactive recruiting committed workers excited about the international potential for our entire province.

3. INCREASED ACCESSIBILITY OF TRANSPORTATION

A full 30% of the restaurant workforce in Metro Vancouver area relies on young people. As a changing city with an increasingly high cost of living, entire neighborhoods in the cities of Vancouver, Burnaby, North Vancouver, and West Vancouver no longer have the young population that was once eager to fill much-needed positions in local area restaurants.

According to our surveys, 53% of the positions in restaurant are unskilled and rely on individuals with an aptitude for service and hospitality and the ability to work well with others. At the early phases of the affordability crisis, people new to Metro Vancouver filled many of these positions. However, new people to the Vancouver area are no longer settling in the core – settling instead in Squamish, Surrey, Langley and Abbotsford and beyond. In the past 6-12 months, these areas have begun facing their own affordability crisis.

As a result of these changes to housing patterns and the availability of rental units (less than 1% vacancy rate), transportation within the region becomes a huge influencer on hiring success. Access to transportation in our region is quickly rising to game changing status for for both young workers and new workers. One operator reported shortages

consistently until the SkyTrain began serving their area. Simple access to this fast transportation increased the pool of talent from which she could recruit – and made an instant positive change in her outcomes.

The long hours and 24-hour service within the restaurant community emphasize the transportation challenge. The service hours of public transportation and the accessibility of service outside of the Metro Vancouver core make early start times (5:30 and 6 a.m.) and late end times (10 p.m. or later), a near impossibility for new workers.



Advocacy within the region on increasing the hours of public transportation to assist in bringing workers into the core of the area include:

- Specifically lengthening the SkyTrain service hours for lines serving Surrey, Port Moody, and Coquitlam and the West Coast Express service to Pitt Meadows, Maple Ridge and Mission
- Addressing service hours for buses that make connections with SkyTrain and West Coast express
- In addition, BCRFA is advocating for the introduction of ride-sharing services to the area as this has additional potential to increase the mobility of workers in the Vancouver area.

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4. JOB CARVING & INCLUSIVITY OF RESTAURANT WORKPLACES

The diverse nature of work in restaurants presents an opportunity to analyze work flow and to start to carve off tasks in new and different ways that accommodate a new range of workers. Given the rate of retirements across BC and the demographic shift that is taking place as a result, the restaurant industry needs to target and attract more older workers if it wants to keep ahead of these demographic changes.

One example would be a busy operations manager who wears many hats every day. With constant recruiting, the manager has to spend several hours every week training and onboarding staff. In looking at their full job duties, the manager decides that they could carve off the training and onboarding to a part time person. In this case, recruiting a recently retired HR or training professional who wants to work 4-10 hours a week might just meet the needs of that business AND help the manager accomplish their other tasks.

Another example is a restaurant that has a very popular salad that goes with almost every meal. The kitchen team find this task repetitive but the customers love the salad and it's why they come back. An option exists to have a person with a disability take on just prepping the salads 2 hours every afternoon. The repetition makes the new worker build confidence and the short shift fits their lifestyle and abilities.

Recent retirees offer an opportunity for restaurants to use them as freelancers, consultants, contractors and more. With this group, there are opportunities to fill skilled gaps in your operation quickly and in a cost effective manner. As contingent workers, they are becoming an incredibly popular option for many, considering their expertise, availability and flexibility, which allows them to work within the confines of any time frame, budget and project.

With acute shortages across the region, BCRFA would like to set up a pilot project that works with a sampling of businesses to help set up company job descriptions and to see if there are opportunities within the business to carve off specific tasks and work with WorkBC or Business Improvement Areas to creatively bring new employees to the restaurant segment.

As an initial project, we feel that this will require some targeted research and test cases to put in place some specific

work placements that can be tracked and the successes documented. The strongest demand for success in setting this up will be to delve into the core business needs and drivers of the employer. Once targeted jobs are defined, key tasks can be coalesced into a project or task based job. We feel that this has opportunities for restaurants of all sizes and can connect recent retirees, subject experts and employees with disabilities with unique and rewarding work.

Continuing with process of learning as much as you can what tasks can be packaged off and what success in achieving



that set of tasks looks like will be essential in understanding what candidates to advertise for and what their strengths or abilities are.

The second part of the program would be to creating a model program that orients employers to the needs of specifically targeted groups (in this case recent retirees or people with disabilities) and that creates a list of positions within the restaurant work place that others can integrate into their own business model and that encourages them to seek employees outside of the traditional model.

In order to be successful, restaurateurs will need to be guided through the process of hiring and training. Workplaces must be audited and job descriptions vetted to plan for success for employer and employee. An orientation to creating an inclusive workplace will be necessary so that the workplace and the existing staff teams are supportive and inclusive of new team members.

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5. DEVELOPMENT OF A CAREERS CAMPAIGN

There is a critical need for a cross-sector careers campaign that brings together all interested organizations (trade associations, Chef associations, learning providers, careers organizations and, importantly, employers), to put competing agendas aside and unite around a central message and campaign to draw people into working in restaurants. This campaign could be connected to the Red Seal program and creating an awareness for this program that is parallel to other Red Seal programs across the province.

Careers in Restaurants Program must:

- Be delivered for a sustained period of time
- Target all age groups and abilities
- Showcase women in all aspects of restaurant careers
- Integrate with the government's existing career profile and promotions to build a stronger "career" brand for hospitality and restaurants

We feel that the BUY BC: Eat Drink Local program currently under development by the BCRFA may be an opportunity to start to build awareness and promotion for role models in

restaurant careers around the province. This campaign is a public facing campaign designed to show leadership in local food and beverage through the restaurant channel. As such, the social media and advertising will be people focused – and may create necessary awareness around the pride of place chefs and cooks have in their positions.

6. EARLY AGE INTERVENTIONS

Many children do not have the chance to cook at home and so it is important that we develop and support initiatives that give young people the opportunity to experience food and cooking through their schools. Chefs in the Classroom, Growing Chefs, and Agriculture in the Classroom in the K-7 curriculum may help create awareness and engagement with a new generation of potential workers. BCRFA will look for opportunities to connect with these communities and encourages individual operators to make connections with these future facing programs.

Integrating the Ace-It program into more schools and providing career awareness for restaurant and hospitality positions through the career curriculum at the high school level may also help to build awareness of post-secondary programs. go2HR is taking leadership in this area.

PART 4 LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

7. CONTRIBUTING TO THE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ACT CONVERSATION

The Employment Standards Act is the law that covers such things as wages, hours of work, statutory holidays and vacation. When the law is looked at for revision and modernization, the restaurant industry wants to be present and participate to assure any changes to the Act serve the interests of restaurants and the people who work in them.

Here are just a couple of ideas for changes that would serve restaurants and employees:

- The present law requires all employees take a full two weeks vacation annually. Many workers in our industry have family overseas. They would like to accumulate vacation over a period of two to three years and then take a longer vacation to fly to home. Under the present law, employers can't let employees do this.
- Many workers in our industry have a long commute to and from work. The present law requires 8 hours off between shifts. An employee commuting an hour and a half each way hasn't sufficient time to sleep if three hours are sliced off their rest time, travelling. A longer period between shifts would be healthier for employees.

9. BENEFITS FOR PART TIME WORKERS

Operators and employees have reiterated throughout this process how important benefits are to them and their employees. As a result, the BCRFA is currently working to create a part-time benefits program for restaurant workers and their families. The program will be designed to assist employers in offering benefits packages to part-time workers. The program will offer a small but comprehensive package at a price point that is affordable for operators with a reasonable employee contribution. When the package becomes available, we feel it will be an additional tool in the belt of restaurateurs looking to become preferred employers.



CONCLUSIONS

There are currently a number of factors that conspire to make a career in the restaurants, particularly kitchens, unattractive for even the most dedicated chef and this means the issue is a complex one to solve. The demographic shift in British Columbia and the sheer volume of projected vacancies province-wide calls for a comprehensive approach to making change.

The labour shortage in restaurants is a worldwide phenomenon. In Metro Vancouver restaurants, the costs of living and of doing business are escalating the challenge of recruiting from outside the region. The demographic shift and the massive rate of retirements is uniquely impacting Metro Vancouver – and is making the labour shortage even more acute because it is impacting all positions in front and back of house.

The first approach to the problem requires fresh thinking from our industry bodies and by employers themselves. The old ways of thinking will do nothing to address the pressures of retirements, ongoing retention issues, lack of new trainees, and a workplace culture that needs revisiting. Indeed, many of these issues themselves contributed to the problem in the first place. The BCRFA's extensive research on best practices offers an opportunity for us to provide outreach to members and operators around the province who can reach out to us and our in-house Human Resources expert for advice. Many examples of what employers are doing right are expressed above – but each business may require a unique to them solution. With the volume of information we have as a result of this research, we are positioned to help provide ideas and suggestions where required.

- The costs of the labour shortage are high. Many businesses are facing considerable financial pressures and small margins. The cost of recruiting alone can be crippling – and is better invested in retention of existing staff. If restaurants want to keep their staff on board, they need to create a work environment that's worth being a part of. By adopting technology that enables employee feedback, modernizes scheduling, tracks good work and fosters professional development, restaurants can boost overall productivity, keep attrition costs at bay, and build a loyal workforce that wants to stick around.



Operators who are not prepared for the expectations of today's workers are struggling to be competitive as a result. "Next Generation" workers have been part of the restaurant workforce for nearly 25 years and we need to understand and respond to their professional goals and to create an inclusive workforce that nurtures and promotes from within. We need to be creative with scheduling and, despite the limitations of our busiest periods, we need to offer work-life balance. We need to attract and keep more women to restaurant work.

The industry cannot wait to take action.

We believe that the way forward requires a joined-up approach with action at a business level and across the sector as a whole and by government. It also demands a holistic approach that doesn't just focus on careers, but on keeping talented chefs and cooks feeling pride of place, creatively fulfilled, and able to share their passion about their work. We need to tackle the challenges of operators that have no Canadian source of skilled talent and support initiatives to promote education that is more worldly and inclusive of a range of culinary styles.

Can this be achieved? If the passion with which everyone we surveyed and interviewed has spoken about the restaurant industry can be channeled, then there is every reason it can.

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ADDENDUM 1

→ THE METHODOLOGY

The interpretive methods focus on analytically disclosing the meaning-making practices of operators/chefs/managers [the why, how, or by what means people do what they do], while showing how those practices arrange so that it can be used to generate observable outcomes. Using these interpretive methods allowed us to recognize connections of the labour shortage challenges under investigation. This process does require careful examination of variables because it focuses on subjective knowledge.

The link to the online surveys was sent to BCRFA members three times through e-newsletter reminders to ensure that as many members as wished to comment could. In person interviews were determined through a mix of self-selection and outreach to specific under-represented restaurant sectors. Particular focus was put on meeting with a diverse subsection of non-Western operators. We thank William Lam, Chef Mike Li of the Chinese Canadian Chefs Association, and the BC Asian Restaurant Café Owners Association who provided introductions and translation to Chinese operators around the Metro Vancouver area. Invitations to chef focus groups was sent through the BC Chefs Association, Chefs' Table Society of British Columbia, BCRFA Membership, Facebook groups, and social media outreach. The industry meetings, which promoted preliminary results and an opportunity to provide feedback prior to this report being submitted, were promoted widely through the wide-reaching advertising in traditional media, social media, and BCRFA Membership. We thank the Okanagan Chefs Association for the opportunity to engage their members in the feedback process and to ensure that the recommendations were not limited in scope to operators in the Vancouver area alone.

Best practices for improving retention and understanding the chefs and cooks shortage in other regions around the world were reviewed to ensure that solutions would be tested prior to being presented. Third party statistics included within this report have been sourced through extensive online research – and sources are listed where required.

The potential limits of the methodology are the size of the population sample and the lack of representation of every style and size of restaurant that operates within the Greater Vancouver area. Our conversations with operators were comprehensive and most operators dedicated an hour or

more to providing their insight. Through these meetings, we found that the experiences of operators across all the interviews paints a clear picture of a limited resource of young people (skilled and unskilled) aggravated by market pressures specific to Metro Vancouver. While the impacts on operators were different, the range of the impacts falls within the same spectrum. Where we say that an operator's experience or practice fell outside the range, we asked more questions and sought to understand how the unique experience could be translated into shared knowledge and become a learning opportunity that benefits other operators.

In order to understand who is currently looking for work within the Vancouver market and what programs are currently available to help both job seekers and job posters, we spoke to a range of employment services providers including:

- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Employment Services – Vancouver (Individualized Case Management Support For Employers Program)
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Immigrant Settlement & Integration Program – Surrey/Delta
- Pacific Community Resources Society: WorkBC Vancouver Midtown Employment Services Centre
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver: WorkBC City Centre Employment Services Centre
- Immigrant Employment Council of BC
- Go2HR: The Resource for People in Tourism
- MOSAIC: WorkBC Vancouver Northeast Employment Services Centre
- Canadian Culinary Federation

To understand the incoming workforce that is coming up through culinary and hospitality programs, we conducted interviews with:

- Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts
- Camosun College
- HAVE Culinary Training
- Vancouver Island University
- British Columbia Institute of Technology
- Capilano University
- North Shore Culinary School
- Douglas College
- Vancouver Community College
- Northwest Culinary Academy of Vancouver

ADDENDUM 1

For broader context, we also reached out to:

- National Restaurant Association (NRA)
- American Academy of Chefs
- California Restaurant Association
- Washington Hospitality Association
- Restaurants Canada
- Canadian Culinary Federation
- Chefs' Table Society of British Columbia
- Chinese Canadian Chefs Association
- BC Asian Restaurant Café Owners Association
- Hua Foundation
- Workpop Recruiting
- Okanagan Chefs Association

ADDENDUM 2

CONSULTED RESTAURANTS (DOES NOT INCLUDE ONLINE SURVEY PARTICIPANTS)

MULTI UNIT (4 or more units) (11):

- Brown's Restaurant Group
- Earl's Restaurants
- Global Restaurant Group
- The Keg Steakhouse & Bar
- Kirin Restaurant Group
- Moxie's
- Pizza Hut Restaurants
- Romer's
- Tractor Foods
- Vintage Hospitality
- WhiteSpot Restaurants

SMALL INDEPENDENT (up to 3 units) (45):

- 1886
- Amici Miei
- Banana Leaf
- Bao Bei
- Belgard Kitchen
- Black Bear Neighbourhood Pub
- Cacao
- Chambar
- Cioppino's
- Dario's
- Deluxe Chinese Restaurant
- Dublin Crossing
- Flamingo House Chinese Restaurant
- Floata
- Flying Pig
- Forage & Timber
- Fraser Court Chinese Restaurant
- Giardino
- Grand Palace Restaurant
- India Bistro & Swad
- Jambo Grill
- John's Place Restaurant
- Juniper
- Kissa Tanto
- Kobe Seafood + Steak House (Japanese)
- Kypriaki Mediterranean Grill
- L'Abattoir
- Lee Garden Seafood Restaurant
- Lhy Thai Restaurant Ltd.
- Lift Bar Grill View
- Nelly's Grill
- Maenam

- Martini's
- Olive & Anchor
- Red Star Seafood Restaurant
- Ritual Restaurant
- Rose Garden Restaurant
- Sun Sui Wah
- Taki's Taverna
- The Capital (Warehouse Group)
- Tomahawk Barbecue
- TWG Tea
- Uva & Cibo
- Vancouver Aquarium
- Wah Wing Restaurant Coquitlam

CLUBS, HOTELS & CASINOS (11):

- Gateway Casinos
- Grand Villa Casino
- Grouse Mountain
- Hollyburn Country Club
- Mayfair Lakes Golf & Country Club
- Northview Gold & Country Club
- Pretty Lake Resort
- Richmond Golf & Country Club
- University Golf Club
- Vancouver Alpen Club/Deutsches Haus
- The Trump International Hotel & Tower

OUTSIDE VANCOUVER (9):

- Beacon Drive-In (Vancouver Island)
- Blu Saffron Bistro (Okanagan)
- Butchart Gardens (Vancouver Island)
- Rock Salt Restaurant (Salt Spring Island)
- Romeo's
- Rose's Waterfont Pub (Okanagan)
- Strathcona Hotel (Vancouver Island)
- Sturgeon Hall Restaurant, Fernando's Pub & Bordello's Fine Italian Pizzeria
- Tigh-Na-Mara Seaside Spa Resort & Conference Centre (Vancouver Island)

ADDENDUM 3

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

What are the key survey findings among Greater Vancouver Operators?

- Our Labour Shortage Survey says:

Of the businesses surveyed, operators (by percent) are having problems filling the following core positions:

• Chefs and/or cooks	94%
• Dishwashers	77%
• Servers / Front of House	43%
• Restaurant Managers	41%
• Seasonal Workers	40%

Employers are looking for:

- A mix of unskilled/skilled and part-time/full-time workers.
- •People with a good attitude and, preferably, previous experience that can be built upon.
- •Skilled employees are in highest demand - with a shortage, many people have limited time for training up.

The greatest staff need, by shift, is for:

• Weekend Evenings	64%
• Weekend Days	50%
• Evenings – 3 to 6 p.m. start	37%
• Weekend Mornings Shifts	36%
• Weekdays – Monday to Friday 8 to 10 a.m. start	29%

Why are people leaving?

• Career advancement	35%
• Seasonal work	23%
• Hours of work	23%
• Skills training	8%
• Work Environment	7%
• Lack of Benefits	4.5%

Operators are using all available tools for recruiting:

• Social media	82%
• Word of mouth	74%
• Career websites	72%
• Traditional media advertising	54%
• WorkBC Programs	41%
• Signs in the business	40%
• International recruiting	22%

According to our survey, to keep staff, operators are taking proactive steps:

• Promoting from within	97.5%
• Offering in-house training	97.4%
• Offering paid vacation	84%
• Opportunity to take courses	62%
• Extended medical	62%
• Dental benefits	59%

Turnover represents significant challenges:

- 39% of operators have a 25% annual turn over
- 18% have a 33% annual turn over
- 17.5% have less than 10%
- 19% of restaurants have staff who leave every six months.
- On average, 46% of the restaurant teams are skilled individuals.
- 81% of surveyed restaurants are looking for casual dining skills in the kitchen.

The biggest challenges that employees identify with regards to their work in restaurants are:

- **Hours:** not getting enough regular hours; having to work too many additional hours due to lack of staff;
- **Cost of living:** finding available affordable housing and access to transportation; distance to work
- **Volume of Work:** Volume and fast paced nature of the work; low wages/high workload
- **Low Wages:** Outside of servers and bartenders, staff want to be paid more
- **Late nights:** late nights are tiring and aren't easy with public transportation
- **Understaffing:** overwork is leading to burnout, particularly for chefs and cooks
- **Seasonality:** seasonal nature of the work; not enough hours in the off season
- **Advancement:** Limited possibility for advancement
- The biggest changes that operators want to make to improve the work environment for their employees are:
- **Increase compensation packages:** offer a positive environment, increased remuneration and medical/dental benefits
- **Improve skills training opportunities:** including paid training days, a culture of career growth possibilities and some job prestige

ADDENDUM 3

ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

- **Improved communication:** encourage all team members to have a say in decisions and set up more one on one time to help with development
- **Introduce new scheduling:** including averaging agreements and a better employment environment for employees with families
- **Increase hiring:** bring on more people on to distribute work and stress more equally

ADDENDUM 4

COSTS & WAGES SURVEY

Our Cost of Hiring, Housing & Transportation Survey says:

- 56% of surveyed operators need to offer higher wages to recruit cooks/Chefs
- 27% must offer higher wages for both managers and dishwashers
- 61% of respondents are paying cooks between \$15-\$20 per hour
- 56% are paying managers between \$15-\$20 per hour
- 53% are paying front of house minimum wage (40% between \$12-\$15)

Cost of living and availability of housing are increasing the recruiting challenges of 70% of surveyed operators. Long hours of work increase the recruiting challenges for 53% of employees.

>> 66% say that labour shortage itself is the greatest barrier to finding candidates.

Skills new employees need to succeed in restaurants:

- Working with others – 46%
- Previous experience – 46%
- Thinking skills – 23%

What would disqualify a candidate?

- Poor attitude – 58%

> 60% of employers believe that the pace of work in restaurants is impacting their ability to hire and keep employees.

50% of employers in Metro Vancouver believe their staff commute more than 15 minutes.

42% don't know how long it takes for their staff to get to work.

42% of Vancouver businesses are within one to two minutes' walk from transit.

15% are more than 20 minutes' walk.

>> 69% of employees are challenged by the kitchen environment, 63% by weekend work, 59% by long hours.

- 78% of employers do not believe there is affordable rental housing close to their business. 62% say that is impacting whether chefs take an offered position.
- 70% of employers use young adults (16-25) as their main source of employees.

ADDENDUM 5

CHEF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

SUMMARY:

Restaurants customers have a lot of power. With many restaurants, more jobs and a limited pool of talent, employees have power too. Operators can offer a job, have them accept, and not show up for the first day of work. These are realities that we can't change. However, recommendations that might increase the number of people entering kitchens and keep people staying longer in their roles.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:

Colleges are struggling to fill seats – and the apprenticeship program is industry driven – so we need to grow the profile of the industry in order to growth the interest in joining our industry. Building a positive public awareness campaign built to showcase leadership opportunities in kitchens and increase visibility of role models is essential.

CAREER PATH:

People entering into kitchens don't see a career path or a path for advancement and personal development. Creating opportunities for personal development and career building will encourage retention and keep people within an organization for longer. Many people entering our industry don't have realistic expectations so this should also help people have real expectations.

HOURS OF WORK:

Kitchens are long known for being a difficult workplace – particularly with regards to long hours. Success tackling long hours is being found through creating a strong culture that values contribution but doesn't require it. Better balance has been achieved through averaging agreements, setting shifts so that people's needs are met, finding opportunities for chefs to serve and creating flexibility around vacations for salaried managers.

COMPREHENSIVE RECRUITING:

Recruiting new people is a costly proposition. Increasing retention is the long term goal – but finding the right people and building stronger teams is first step in that long term goal. Creating a more rigorous recruiting process will help fill positions with more diligence. It is a competitive market

where employees have the upper hand. Let's start to market ourselves from the very first point of contact with potential employees.

RESTAURANT PRICING:

Restaurant pricing is a constant drive to reduce the cost for the diner. Restaurants are competing to have lower prices. This is the only industry where reducing the price is a trend – other trades are increasing their prices and have similar pricing expectations. This “race to the bottom” is out of touch with the reality of food pricing. We need to consider real cost pricing without reducing the value proposition for guests and to overcome the sense that restaurants are too expensive.

MINIMUM WAGE:

No one in kitchens is making minimum wage because the competitiveness of the market for employees is pushing up wages. However, in the overall restaurant setting, raising the minimum wage does put tremendous pressure on the bottom line. If the wages of people already getting tips go up, businesses struggle with the financial impact without actually being able to raise the wages of those who receive little or no benefit from tips. Consensus is that operators want to raise the wages of chefs and cooks where possible – but concern exists over increasing server wages impacting the ability to do that.

TIPPING:

Tipping is very much personal motivation for the front of house staff and creates a huge disparity from back of house who don't directly influence tipping. Tipping poses a challenge to operators as even with tip sharing it creates an imbalance between the front of house and back of house. Creating equality between front and back of house might be solved through removing tipping. The European or Australian models don't include tipping and they have higher wages in kitchens.

LEADERSHIP:

Due to the pressure in restaurants many chefs are being put into Human Resources, management and leadership roles that they don't have the training or the time to take on. Executive chefs are literally becoming the coach, mentor and make nice. It comes down to too many hours, not enough people. Interest exists for instilling strong management training on

ADDENDUM 5

CHEF FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

people doing hiring and orientation so that they are the front line for new employees. Also in supporting the development of leadership training industry wide or within larger organizations.

RECRUITING & RETAINING INTERNATIONAL WORKERS:

Temporary foreign workers used to be a larger part of the labour pool. The sheer number of vacancies means finding new sources of workers will help reduce the scale of the problem. Interest in understanding new ways to make recruiting/retaining international workers part of the solution including looking at where the ITA places chefs/cooks within the Government of Canada careers categories. Creating a pathway for Temporary Foreign Workers to become longer term employees or permanent residents is a must. Renewing the potential for students training in BC to stay and contribute to the work force in BC would be beneficial for employees, students and colleges offering programs less than 2 years.

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION:

Employee recognition goes toward setting a better climate for retaining workers in restaurants. It also increases morale and has a positive effect on employee work ethic. Interest in models for retention rewards, setting employee goals, creating welcome and training packages and ways to include public recognition within the workplace.

SYSTEMS CHANGES:

Kitchens are under pressure from customers to meet time constraints, quick turn arounds and service timelines. Models for improving efficiency include using Smart Kitchen with recipes on screens and increasing the prep versus service ratio. Creating menus based on skills of the kitchen teams together with an emphasis on cross training lends itself to systems success.

WOMEN IN THE KITCHEN:

The reputation of the working environment in the kitchens is constantly perceived as being unaccepting of women. Many horror stories emerge every year – and new people entering into kitchens are leaving after having negative experiences. Without an increased number of women in kitchens, we are reducing the pool of workers before we even start. Attendees

were in favour of creating systems that work for women with families to come back to the workplace and that build up a reputation of gender equality. Simple goal is to attract more women – 85% of many kitchens are male.

HONESTY AND AUTHENTICITY:

To be an employer of choice, restaurants need to be seen as honest and authentic employers. The reputation of employers matters significantly to Generation Y and Z workers. They also want to match their values to the values of their employers. Chefs have seen success leading by example – stepping in whenever possible. Creating a training document that is clear and sets expectations helps build strong teams. Having meetings that allow team members to buy into planning, budgeting and execution models works. Bottom line: be transparent.

ADDENDUM 6

STUDENT FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

SUMMARY:

1. What is the driving force that leads you in your studies?

Portability: Opportunity to travel abroad and work; exposure to new cultures

Strong Tourism Numbers: Many opportunities in Metro Vancouver

People: Being able to work with people

On the job learning: it is an engaging experience and very customer focused

Passion: Combining work, travel, food and experience

Work Culture: excited about the team atmosphere

Universal Appeal: hospitality is never going to be a dying industry people; will always have a want or need to travel

Transferability: You can work in one sector of tourism and then transfer to something completely different using the same skills

2. Who were your influencers or role models that guided you to consider a career in hospitality?

Individual Influencers: Family & friends

3. What skill set do you value most bringing with you to your career?

Organization: Coordination/planning

Hospitality: Caring for people and their experiences

Communication: Outgoing personality & customer service focus

Problem Solving: thinking on your feet and being able to be independent and not hold someone's hand

Openness: to different scenarios and cultures being able to adjust to those environments

4. What fields of hospitality are you considering?

- DMOS
- Event route
- Hotel operations
- Hotels
- Cruise ship
- Food & Beverage (but not restaurants)
- Airport

5. Can you describe the work culture you would like to be part of?

- Happy coworkers
- Good team
- Responsible people
- Good management
- Alignment between personal and business values
- Positive work atmosphere
- A place that both staff team and the customer have positive experiences/fun
- Goal setting and deadlines are important
- Want a set of rules to follow and want to be accountable

6. Would you like to have a set of rules that all team members agree to in order to have expectations set and managed accordingly?

Yes

- People would like a policy with rules about tardy/missing work
- It is important to have an approachable boss to address issues
- People want an anonymous tip box or reporting system for people who are not pulling their weight

7. What are you looking for in a job offer?

- Good starting wages and benefits package.
- Feeling confident in the values of the business and that they align with personal values
- Benefits should include vision care.
- Opportunity for advancement.
- Professional development opportunities.
- Access to classes and certifications and have employer pay for the courses.
- Opportunity for bonuses.

8. How long do you anticipate staying in your first job?

- 6 months
- Between 6 months to a year, people would like to get a promotion or move to another company

ADDENDUM 6

STUDENT FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

9. If you had a meeting with your boss about what your career path with that organization would look like in the first year, would that make you stay longer?

Yes

- A meeting with supervisor at the start of the job to set a work plan with individual milestones, goals and personal learning targets helps you build skills.
- Helps set up expectation of ongoing feedback and debriefing on the employee is doing in the job.
- It is a competitive advantage to employer and employee.
- Shows that the employer is interested in your development as an employee.
- Would be very valuable going in to a company and knowing if you can move up. Helps build commitment.

10. Have you thought about working in restaurants as a hospitality professional? Sample answers include:

- “As a server, it’s great money and people love going out but I don’t see myself making money in the management role.”
- “I work in a restaurant and think they doing the same things everyday. Not enough interest for me.”
- “Hotels have more to offer - they just seem fancier.”
- “Have had friends that worked as a server and got put in to a management role and got paid way less and would rather serve food then advance.”
- “I know a couple of restaurant owners and they put off from it because although it is a high end restaurant and they don’t seem to be very successful and don’t seem very positive about it. It doesn’t seem as rewarding.”
- “The volume of people and how people are impatient when it comes to foodservices makes it too stressful.”
- “When you’re working at somewhere like [lifestyle chain], it’s a good environment and the connections are good but I don’t see the opportunity for advancement”.
- Restaurants are a stepping stone to other jobs.
- Looking for positions in hotel food & beverage rather than restaurants.
- “I worked in a restaurant in Richmond and was subject to racist patrons and don’t want to do that again”

- “I don’t see advancement in restaurant positions the way I do in hotels”
- “Restaurants are underappreciated sector by customers so employees aren’t always treated well.”
- “When I worked in a restaurant, I was subject to sexist comments and behaviours and I don’t want that for my career.”
- “Restaurant work is not highly regarded by my peers.”

11. The restaurant industry is growing - and so are the places the restaurants operate: hotels, tourism destinations, wineries, breweries. What would make you consider working in restaurant management?

- Not sure: concerned about the opportunity for advancement.
- Interest in the food & beverage and events side of restaurant work.

12. What does a typical workday look like to you?

- New stuff everyday
- Dealing with different people, different campaigns
- Being creative
- Passion for their job is put in to people computer is supporting or people working with people.
- Working with a team to do all the jobs
- Want variety of dealing with people and problem solving

13. What challenges are you looking forward to your career bringing?

- Many unexpected challenges
- Stress managing budgets & finances
- Constant long hours & pace of the job is intimidating
- Don't want to work long days all the time but willing to work on projects that require an extra push every once and a while
- Working evenings and weekends all the time
- Cost of transportation and housing in Vancouver – more than half of the students were willing to leave to find work in other more affordable cities

ADDENDUM 6

STUDENT FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

14. What kind of hours are you imagining?

- Consistent schedule week to week
- Need to have 2 days of together – downtime is important
- Willing to pay dues but eventually want to work Monday to Friday
- Could put up with 3-12 shift but only as a stepping stone to advancement
- Willing to take evening and weekend shifts – but must see an end goal where weekends and evenings are not required. There has to be a light.
- Too many long shifts and unplanned overtime are demotivating.
- Starting in the industry they expect to work worst shifts for up to 5 years as they earn the right to move up – but not after that
- People want to get paid more to work late-night and graveyard shifts

15. How do you see your environment with regards to sharing ideas and working within teams?

- Teams are really suffering in this economy.
- Want to have a “code of conduct” that all team members agree to.
- Potential to have 3 strike rule for people who don’t show up to work.
- Want to have a visible code of conduct “poster” in a common area that reminds people of the company/team values.
- Team meetings where everyone is working towards a common goal and uses what each person’s strengths are.
- Really important to have communication to make sure everyone is on the same page and supportive of each other.

16. What are your salary expectations upon graduation?

- \$40-60,000 plus commission based on my own performance as well (2 groups)
- \$15 per hour / \$30,000 per year starting after graduation (2 groups)

17. Do you want to have professional development opportunities in your position?

Yes

18. Would you be interested in attending a “Taste of Tourism” professional development event? It would be an opportunity to connect with restaurants and taste the signature dishes of restaurants in your business area.

Yes

Would offer a chance to be educated about restaurants and make better referrals.

19. Number 1 thing students are looking for in a job:

- Opportunity for growth & advancement
- Want a detailed info about the company on job description
- Want opportunities for advancement listed on job description
- Want to know value and ethics of the company
- Know job duties and boundaries
- Want know what learning is beneficial for advancement in the roll
- Know what would make an employee stand out/succeed/advance
- Knowing expectations + what you can offer to customers