



Smart Strategies for the Human Resources Side of Our Supply Chains

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Before COVID-19, many American business sectors faced increasing demands coupled with a labor shortage. The pandemic has tilted that dynamic for logistics and warehousing, with skyrocketing demand for home delivery and a surge in available labor, as other sectors suffer slowdowns. That's forced human resources professionals to adapt quickly. With proactive strategies to meet talent, training, and scheduling challenges, teams are optimizing operations in an era of fluctuating demands.



START WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

There's been a lot of emphasis on handling the physical aspects of logistics, and responses to COVID-19 will likely add physical challenges to the job, including new personal protective equipment or steps added for health and safety protocols. But the real job is much more than moving boxes. Today's facilities are high-pressure environments that need great communicators and problem-solvers.

A single error can force delays or even shutdowns. It's important to have associates in place who can thrive under that pressure, who know how to adapt and help others adapt. Team members need to be able to ride the waves of overtime and downtime, work

with changing technology, and step into new processes efficiently. Focusing on soft skills during recruitment helps you build a resilient and productive team.

MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM TO APPLY

An easy application process may not seem like a priority, but with so many hiring decisions to make, easier applications should speed better applicants to your team and make sorting and finding qualified candidates easier.

In their study of 12 million users, Glassdoor found that 56% of jobseekers with at least a high school education used mobile phones to search for jobs. The logistics and retail sectors were the second- and third-most common industries to

attract mobile job seekers. Mobile applicants, however, are more likely to have trouble with the application process, resulting in 53% fewer completions than desktop users.¹

That reduces your applicant pool and slows down the candidate evaluation process. A mobile-friendly applicant tracking system (ATS) allows you to capture attention quickly, simplify applications, and expedite evaluations.

TAKE A PROACTIVE APPROACH TO FINDING TALENT

The most efficient recruitment process is still a process, taking hours and energy from the other parts of your talent management equation. This is where a facility solutions partner can be extremely valuable. Their recruitment teams already handle multiple job types, from janitorial to engineering experts. They can work with you to build a database of qualified candidates for distribution and logistics positions. That helps you dedicate your own human resources teams to specialized roles that are more critical to your core business.

Another approach is to partner with education programs that want to provide an alternative career path to young people who aren't on the college track. Reach out to local schools to see if they work with employers to help place skilled graduates.

HEALTHY SPACES FOR HEALTHY TEAMS

Once you have the right people, you need to keep them. Employee turnover in this sector is high, as nearly one-third of companies reported employee churn between 10% and 25% per year (according to ARC Advisory Group). A strong company culture will prioritize well-being to support their employee engagement efforts.

As part of your COVID-19 response, associates will want to know their workspaces are being

cleaned and disinfected. From both a service and internal communications standpoint, clear protocols will help your team understand and trust the actions you are taking to protect them.

Employees are also more conscious than ever of health and safety issues like indoor air quality. In facilities where work is repetitive, it is easy for associates to focus on worries or disconnect from the positive impact they can have on productivity. It takes consistent effort to keep employees engaged. For instance, Gallup has found that companies that invest in employee development are twice as likely to retain their associates.

One way to promote employee development is with a strong feedback and evaluation process. Start by setting and communicating realistic performance goals. Make it clear how employees can contribute and grow and communicate progress on those goals regularly.

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FEEDBACK GOES BOTH WAYS

The feedback process helps employees improve. Getting feedback from employees also helps you solve problems. Associates on the floor can help you and your team leaders stay connected to key details. Employees in the thick of it, so to speak, can offer solutions that management may not think of without their input.

The experiences and ideas of your associates are resources, so feedback and evaluation processes should make capturing that information a priority. And if associates feel heard, they're more likely to be invested in a process they feel a part of, improving engagement, retention, and productivity.

¹ <https://www.glassdoor.com/research/app/uploads/sites/2/2019/06/Mobile-Job-Search-1.pdf>

STAY CONNECTED

Another key component of an engaged and effective workforce is internal communications. With round-the-clock schedules that fluctuate with demand (and supply issues, too), associates can feel boxed into their roles, disconnected from your company's total success story. Technology can help them feel that they're a part of a thriving team. With social distancing and safety rules restricting workplace interactions, internal communications will be more important than ever.

An employee intranet can act as a hub for company news, employee recognition efforts, and important changes, to make it easy for everyone to feel informed and connected. The rise of smartphones (and the fact that some workers may not have broadband internet access at home) means that a mobile-friendly company intranet will help you drive more interaction with internal communications.

PROVIDE A PATH FOR GROWTH

If an employee feels capped in their growth, they're more likely to leave. A rise in unemployment doesn't change the fact that talent is key, and you've invested in finding and training yours. They've developed key skills in their time with you that make a difference to your bottom line. To keep talent engaged, it's more important now than ever for people to feel there's a future.

If today's janitor can rise to be tomorrow's supervisor, then employees are more likely to stay engaged. This is why feedback and performance evaluations are so critical. When you give associates an opportunity to shine and be recognized, they'll be more likely to stay with the company or refer people they know.

UNIQUE STRATEGIES TO MAXIMIZE CURRENT RESOURCES

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, logistics and warehousing have had to prepare for both increasing demand and possible surges in sick leave. Expanding the available labor pool through a facility service provider can help you prepare for both.

Cross-training and cross-utilization can also be big factors in efficient, flexible work scheduling. Being able to shift from bundling boxes to changing a light bulb can be a great advantage. While there are many strategies for taking the pressure off your human resources teams and keeping productivity high, consider what an experienced service partner can provide, including a pre-vetted labor pool, flex-staffing resources, and cross-training expertise.



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