

How to recruit employees for small businesses — 8 key tips

Running a small business isn't easy. On top of having to compete with large corporations for customers, small business owners also have to compete for employees. Small businesses often don't have the budgets that larger corporations or well-funded startups have, so they may not be able to offer the highest salaries or allocate as large of a budget to recruiting efforts.

In the current labor market, it's become even more challenging for small businesses to find quality employees to fill open positions. The Great Resignation has shifted the market in favor of job seekers while making it more difficult for companies to fill open roles.

However, small businesses can still attract, hire, and retain great employees — they just need to get a bit more strategic with their recruitment efforts. Here are 8 tips to help you find the best employees for your small business:

1. Offer non-monetary perks

While offering prospective employees more money is one of the more obvious ways to attract candidates, that is not always feasible for small businesses. Consider what else you can offer employees instead. Can the work be done on a flexible schedule? Are you willing to allow employees to bring their dogs to work? Offering additional vacation time is also a way to improve a compensation package without changing the salary itself. Think outside the box and come up with ways to improve the employee experience without increasing your spending.

2. Consider remote applicants

If you are hiring for a position that can be performed remotely, open it up to remote candidates. Offering flexibility around remote work can improve your recruiting outcomes for a number of reasons.

The first is that it widens your applicant pool. If you are targeting your recruiting efforts to employees in one specific city or metropolitan area, you are competing heavily with surrounding businesses for a finite resource. Expanding the geographic range that you are willing to hire in allows you to reach more applicants. Even if you are only willing to offer a hybrid work option rather than full remote work, you are still likely to reach a larger audience. People will be willing to commute a bit further if they only have to do it one or two days per week.

The second is that many employees simply prefer remote work, so offering the option makes you more competitive as an employer. In fact, many job seekers are only willing to consider remote or partially remote jobs at this time. If you're open to remote hires, be sure to mark your listing as remote or remote possible on job boards so that they don't get filtered out by candidates who are specifically looking for remote opportunities. LinkedIn and Indeed have both added remote filter options to their job search results.

Lastly, offering flexibility around remote work is a great way for small businesses to make up for salary

limitations. In the latest edition of the [State of Remote Work Report](#), 61% of those surveyed reported that they would be willing to take a pay cut to continue working remotely. Thus offering a remote work option may entice some job seekers to accept a job offer with a lower salary as long as you guarantee that they will be allowed to work remotely long-term.

3. Leverage employee referrals

Your current employees can be a great resource to tap for recruiting. Be sure to circulate new job listings regularly so that your staff members know what open positions the company has. They may know someone, such as a former coworker or classmate, that would be a good fit for the role. Some employers take it a step further by setting up more formal employee referrals programs with incentives for referring potential employees to human resources. Often, employees will get a small monetary bonus if one of their referrals is hired.

4. Spend some time on the job posting

A well-crafted job description can make quite the difference. Think of the job ad as a marketing document. You'll want to give a clear explanation of the job duties so that prospective candidates can clearly understand whether it is a good fit for what they are looking for. You'll also want to give an overview of the organization and your selling points for employees. Write a blurb about the culture and any unique benefits that come with working there. Also, be sure to list what employee benefits you offer and any extra perks like flexible scheduling.

Some employers write their job ads with a distinctive voice that fits the company's culture; quirky, humorous, nerdy, etc. This can be a fun way to help your ad stand out, though it's still important to ensure your ad sounds professional to not dissuade serious candidates from applying.

5. Build your employer brand

You probably already know how important branding is when it comes to attracting customers, but your employer branding is also important. You need to position your company as an organization that people want to work for. Now you probably won't be able to offer nap pods or in-house cafes like Google, but you can still build an employer brand that will encourage job seekers to put in an application.

Most potential candidates will do some level of research before applying, and almost all will do research before the first interview. Think about what you want them to see when they look up your business. Many employers have added career pages to their websites with an overview on what it's like to work for the company. Most of your website is aimed at selling your product or service, but it's a good idea to have a page or two focused on selling your company as an employer. Consider sharing some information such as diversity and inclusion efforts, employee success stories, and a little about your company culture. Your company values and mission statement should also be prominently displayed on your website.

You'll also need to be aware of your organization's Glassdoor page. You can't fully control what ends up on there, but you can influence it. Consider asking current employees to take a few minutes during the workday to write a review. Remember, a key part of building your brand as an employer is developing a strong company culture. If you have a good culture and your employees are happy, they'll share glowing reviews of your company on Glassdoor and in their LinkedIn posts. Having employees that are willing to vouch for your company gives you a great deal of credibility as an employer.

6. Improve your candidate experience

Today's labor market is tough for business owners. With staffing shortages in many fields, it's more important than ever to be aware that while you are interviewing a candidate, they are also interviewing you. Make an effort to provide a pleasant candidate experience from the initial application to the final offer stage.

One of the biggest mistakes that small businesses make in the recruiting process is being too disorganized. Having a clear and defined hiring process in place before you post a job is important. Investing in recruiting software such as an applicant tracking system is ideal for keeping the process and communications organized. However, if you don't have the budget or bandwidth for that, consider alternatives such as an excel tracking sheet.

Human resources or the hiring manager should be active in communicating with candidates throughout the hiring process. If a candidate doesn't hear from you for a prolonged period of time after applying or interviewing, they may assume that they were not selected and end up taking another offer. In fact, according to a [recent Robert Half survey](#), 62% of professionals report that they lose interest in a job if they do not hear back within two weeks after an interview.

If your timeline has changed, be sure to update any candidates that are still being considered. It's also a good idea to communicate with those that were not selected, especially if they were invited to interview. They may not have been the right candidate this time around, but it's good to leave a positive impression in case a position that is a better fit for that candidate opens up at your company in the future.

7. Consider university recruiting

Fill your entry-level positions with entry-level candidates. Many employers look for candidates with several years of experience to fill roles marked as entry-level. Small businesses that are willing to invest a bit more time and effort into training new employees should tap into the talent pool at their local universities.

Recent or soon-to-be graduates often make the most motivated and enthusiastic employees. You don't need to set up a booth on campus to recruit candidates. Job boards like Handshake partner with schools to help employers solicit online applications from students and recent graduates. Businesses may also consider starting an internship program to create a talent pipeline of future candidates for full-time work.

8. Use social media

Social media can be a great avenue for small business recruiting. Of course, LinkedIn is a popular social platform for candidate outreach. Businesses can post job ads on the site, share posts on company pages to solicit applicants, encourage employees to share job openings with their own networks, and recruiters can proactively reach out to job seekers that appear to be a good fit for the role.

However, if your company has a strong following on other social media sites such as Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok you can also use that to your advantage. Don't be afraid to share your job posts on these less traditional recruiting platforms. The people that follow your pages are already fans of your brand or product. This makes them more likely to be interested in working with you. Plus, you want prospective employees to be excited about your product so you're likely to find some of the best candidates within your current fanbase.

Overcoming small business recruiting obstacles

Incorporating some or all of the above tips into your recruitment strategy will help you reach more qualified candidates and make hires more efficiently. Recruiting is an ongoing process, so while some of these will take longer to implement they are likely to pay off down the line. Stay up to date on your employer branding and recruiting initiatives even when you don't have open roles so that you can be prepared for your next round of recruiting.

Also, remember that the process isn't quite over once you find the right candidate. If you are running into obstacles in hiring employees, you need to work hard to retain the staff you currently have. Ensuring that each new hire has a positive onboarding experience is the first step in boosting retention. Get your new talent started

off on the right foot and continue to provide support to them throughout their tenure with your company.