

# Hiring Headaches: How to Find Talent in a Labor Shortage

By Kara Rice

Here we are, two or three years into a labor shortage, and hiring is not getting easier for apartment operators. Companies and communities continue to limp along, short staffed. Customers who may once have been understanding have lost all patience with the resulting service delays. A tough situation gets tougher.

How can you fill the empty positions on your team? Here are some success strategies I've uncovered via conversations with numerous rental housing leaders. I hope you'll find some useful ideas to help you solve your hiring challenges and reduce the strain on your entire staff.

1. **Recruiting is everyone's job.** Whether you are an HR manager, property manager, or groundskeeper—you're in recruiting. Every team member plays a role in building the company's reputation as a great place to work. Similarly, everyone should be actively trying to bring candidates in for the good of the organization. If you're lucky enough to have one or more full time recruiters on staff, that doesn't mean everyone else is off the hook. This is an all-hands-on-deck activity, and every member of the team must participate.
2. **Build a pipeline of talent.** If you are a manager at any level, the time to begin identifying candidates is now—not when you have an opening on your team. Be deliberate in your networking activities so that you don't have to start from zero when that opening crops up. Instead, you'll already have relationships that you can activate into a hiring conversation. This can be done both in the real world and virtually such as on LinkedIn.
3. **Show off your employer brand.** Every property management professional is well-versed on the impact brand reputation has on communities' ability to attract new customers. Job candidates are customers too, and just like prospective residents do, they're passing judgment on your organization based on any information they find including posts on your social media accounts. Be sure your social feeds include posts that showcase how satisfying it is to work at your company. Show off your training classes, community service events, special celebrations, team member anniversaries, and other positive stories. Use a hashtag so your posts are easily found.
4. **Encourage employee evangelists.** Do you have members of your team who practically live their lives online, posting every meal they eat and move they make? Tap them to post positive things about their work life. For example, day-in-a-life videos, funny things that happen on Mondays, how I prepare my workspace, etc. It can really bolster your overall visibility, helping job candidates to discover you, and positively impact the reputation of your workplace.

5. **Ask new hires to leave a review on hiring sites.** This is another one of those skills that translates from working with residents. You know how important reviews are to renters; they're equally important to job seekers. Employees may be perfectly willing to leave positive reviews on sites like Indeed or Glassdoor, if only you would ask. Reach out to new hires once they've been on board for about 30 days to request a review. Provide them with a specific link to make it easy for them. Your personal invitation really makes a difference.
6. **Beware of ghosts.** I've heard from a number of multifamily leaders about an unfortunate trend: new hires failing to show up on what was supposed to be their first day of work, or 'ghosting' new employers. The best way to prevent ghosting from happening to you is to be aggressively proactive. From the moment your candidate accepts the job offer, take steps to increase their commitment to your workplace and their new coworkers. Connect them with an onboarding mentor ASAP to answer their questions before they start. Get new hire paperwork underway immediately. Provide them with uniforms and company swag so they feel part of the team. Schedule time to meet in advance of day one to socialize with the staff and start building relationships. All of these steps can help increase the likelihood that they will, indeed, start as planned.

Economists predict that due to demographic shifts and an aging population, the labor shortage we are currently facing is unfortunately our new normal. If the staffing situation is not going to get better, we have to get better at recruiting and hiring. I hope these tips will be useful. Please chime in with any solutions of your own.

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