

All About Seasonal Hiring



Sales aside, both the increased foot traffic and extra operational duties the busy season requires means store owners often find themselves in need of a few extra sets of hands. And it's a good time too—college students are home, and many others are looking for ways to bring in some extra income to help with personal holiday expenses. But a surplus of seemingly qualified candidates doesn't mean you shouldn't make your hires thoughtfully and cautiously.

Hiring and training employees is one of the best investments you can make, and getting answers about a candidate's availability, experience, and general personality doesn't always cut it when putting together a top notch team that is going to drive sales and create an environment that delights customers. While those things should not be discounted, charisma, strong customer service skills, and a personal connection to and/or interest in the brand are crucial traits of strong sales associates.

Here are a few tips for hiring seasonal sales associates, plus questions you should always ask.

- Start by reaching out to past seasonal employees (from the holidays or summer break) to see if they are interested in returning.
- Advertise that you're hiring on your social media accounts and website, as well as in store.
- There are many sites that will allow you to post jobs for free: Facebook, Indeed, Glassdoor, and Jora, to name a few. Unless you're really getting down to the wire, there's no need to invest too much money into sponsoring your posts.
- If you don't feel as though you have a good grasp on your state's basic labor laws, now is the time to review them. Pay attention to things like minimum wage, overtime, and breaks.
- Look at your sales and foot traffic data from last holiday. Which were your busiest days, and how many people will you need on the floor to meet that demand this year?
- Be clear that this is a seasonal job and you won't be able to keep them on the schedule past X date.
- Be up front about hours and dates your candidates absolutely need to be available to work, especially if that includes the few days leading up to Christmas.
- Choose interview questions that prompt thoughtful responses instead of yes or no answers.
- Offer a competitive salary, and if you can't, offer an incentivizing employee discount.



- Be clear about whether that employee discount may or may not be used on family & friends and if any products are excluded from it.
- Give candidates an idea of a typical busy-season day and what kind of sales plan they should expect to reach.
- Create a buddy system: Pair new hires with veterans so they have a go-to mentor.
- Hold a kickoff meeting so your entire staff can meet and get motivated for a successful season.
- Make sure your POS's permissions are set up accordingly so you know who has access to different features and data.

Best Interview Questions for Retail Employees

- What is your connection to our brand or store?
- What have you enjoyed about your experiences while shopping here?
- Tell me about a time you dealt with an angry or frustrated customer.
- Describe a sale you lost and why you lost it.
- If you disagreed with another employee, how would you handle it? What if it was a manager?
- In today's competitive retail environment, what does a superior customer experience look like?
- How would you handle multiple customers asking you questions at the same time?
- I'm a customer buying X product - how would you upsell me?
- We're out of a product a customer is looking for - how do you handle it?
- A customer is trying to return an item past the return date - how do you handle it?
- A product is incorrectly marked as being on sale and the customer demands the sale price - how do you handle it?
- Do you prefer being on the floor as a seller, or working on store operations and orders behind the scenes?
- How would you feel if you were asked to work in the opposite role?
- What point of sale software are you familiar with?
- How flexible is your schedule?
- *Multi-stores:* Are you willing to work at our X location if we are short handed?