



## 7 Things You Should Do Before Hiring for the Summer



It's getting to be that time of year again—the summer scramble for capable employees. Colleges are about to go on break. High schools will finish up soon thereafter, and eager summer employees are looking for jobs now.

In the past, you probably posted a job, hired fast as fast as you could, and hoped for the best. But seasonal hiring doesn't have to feel like a gamble. Done right, it can give you flexibility, protect your margins, and improve your customer experience. Done wrong, it creates more work than it solves.

Here's how to hire for summer without regretting it by July.

## Start With Demand, not Desperation

Most seasonal hiring decisions are based on a vague feeling that “it’s going to get busy.” That’s not a strategy. Before you post a single job, look at last year’s numbers. When did traffic increase? Which days or hours were stretched thin? Where did service break down?

Hiring should solve specific problems, not general anxiety. If Saturdays were your bottleneck, you don’t need more staff across the board. You need targeted coverage. When you hire with precision, you avoid overstaffing and protect your cash flow when business inevitably fluctuates.

## Hire for Flexibility, not Perfection

It’s tempting to wait for the “ideal” candidate who can do everything. But in seasonal hiring, that mindset slows you down and limits your options. Instead, look for people who are adaptable, reliable, and willing to learn.

A college student who can work varied shifts and pick up new tasks quickly may be more valuable than someone with years of experience who needs a rigid schedule. Summer business is unpredictable. Your team should be able to move with it.

Flexibility also applies to how you structure roles. Instead of hiring for one narrow position, think in terms of coverage. Who can help at the front and jump in elsewhere when needed? That kind of cross-functionality is what keeps operations running smoothly when things get busy.

## Shorten the Learning Curve

One of the biggest mistakes businesses make is assuming seasonal hires will “figure it out” or that the summer is short so why train them on everything. First, they won’t figure it out on their own or worse, they will... just not the way you would have preferred. Additionally, summer may be short but doing something wrong or a way your customers aren’t used to could cost you loyalty in the long run.

If you want temporary employees to perform like permanent ones, you need to set them up for success quickly. That means simple, clear onboarding. Not a binder no one reads. Not a rushed walkthrough during a busy shift.

Focus on the essentials. What do they absolutely need to know to do the job well in the first week? Create quick-reference guides, checklists, or short training videos. Pair new hires with someone who knows your standards and can model them in real time.

The goal is speed with consistency. The faster they feel confident, the faster they become productive.

## Build a Team That Can Cover for Each Other

Summer schedules are notoriously chaotic. Vacations, last-minute requests, and shifting availability can create constant gaps if your team isn't structured well.

This is where cross-training becomes invaluable. When employees understand more than one role, you gain flexibility without constantly adding headcount. It also reduces stress on your team. No one wants to feel like the entire operation depends on them showing up.

Set the expectation early that everyone contributes to the bigger picture. When people understand how their role connects to others, they're more willing to step in where needed.

## Don't Ignore Your Core Team

Here's where a lot of businesses struggle in the first few weeks of summer. They focus so much on bringing in seasonal help that they forget about the people who keep things running year-round.

Your core team is the anchor during busy seasons. If they feel overlooked, overworked, or responsible for "fixing" everything new hires don't know, burnout isn't far behind.

Involve them in the process. Ask for input on where help is needed. Let them contribute to training. Recognize the extra effort they're putting in. Thank them. Give them a gift card or extra day off to show

your appreciation. A supported core team will elevate your seasonal staff. An exhausted one will jeopardize your business future and company culture.

## Think Beyond the Season

Not every seasonal hire is temporary. Some of your best long-term employees will come from these short-term roles.

Watch for the people who show up on time, take initiative, and connect well with customers. Those are the ones worth keeping in your pipeline. Even if you don't have an immediate role, staying in touch gives you a head start the next time you need to hire.

Seasonal hiring isn't just about filling gaps. It's an opportunity to build relationships and strengthen your future workforce.

## Use Your Chamber as a Hiring Advantage

If you're trying to solve staffing challenges on your own, you're doing too much. Your chamber is one of the most underused hiring tools you already have access to.

Start with visibility. Many chambers offer job boards, newsletter features, and social media promotion that put your open roles directly in front of a local, engaged audience. These aren't cold applicants scrolling job sites at midnight. These people are already connected to the business community.

But the real value goes deeper than job postings.

Chambers are constantly making introductions. That includes connections to local colleges, workforce programs, and training organizations. If you need seasonal help, part-time support, or even interns, those relationships can shorten your search dramatically. Instead of broadcasting your need into the void, you're tapping into a network that already understands your local market.

This is especially helpful when you need something more specific than "extra hands." If your business requires certain skills, certifications, or experience, let the chamber know. Workforce development is a growing priority for many chambers, and they're actively working to close gaps between what businesses need and what the local talent pipeline provides.

That might look like partnerships with schools, targeted training programs, or initiatives designed to prepare people for in-demand roles in your area. But none of that works if businesses stay quiet about their needs.

If you're struggling to find qualified candidates, express it. If your industry has a skills gap, bring it forward. Chambers can't build solutions in a vacuum, but they can be incredibly effective when they have clear direction from the business community.

At the very least, you'll get access to better candidates. At best, you help shape a workforce pipeline that works for your business long term. And that beats posting the same job ad three times and hoping the algorithm finally shows your listing.

Sure, you can choose to do it like last year, just getting through the season. But while you're doing the hiring work anyway, why not sure up your business' future?

*[Christina Metcalf](#) is a writer and women's speaker who believes in the power of story. She works with small businesses, chambers of commerce, and business professionals who want to make an impression and grow a loyal customer/member base. She is the author of [The Glinda Principle](#), rediscovering the magic within.*

---

*Facebook: @metcalfwriting  
Instagram: @christinametcalfauthor  
LinkedIn: @christinametcalf5*