

Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia

Labour Shortage for Restaurant Industry

Report
September 2023



Introduction

The Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia (RANS) has conducted a survey to help gain insight into the labour shortage in the restaurant industry in Nova Scotia. With the data gathered from this survey, it is aimed to gain valuable insight into where the labour shortages are and what measures businesses are taking to draw in potential employees. With significant labour shortages occurring in our sector, this information can help determine how employers are currently handling the shortage as well as providing potential recruitment and retention solutions. This report can also be viewed in conjunction with the Exit Survey Report to better understand the gaps between what employers are doing and why employees are leaving the industry.

About RANS

The Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia (RANS) is a non-profit association that has successfully represented the food and beverage sector since 1947. RANS continuously makes a positive impact for the restaurant industry through advocacy, education, partnerships & promotion. Over the past 2.5 years, RANS has worked relentlessly to support the industry through the pandemic. The association worked closely with government and public health to make sure decision-making processes considered the best interests of the industry. RANS delivered programs, webinars, regular updates, and ongoing support to assist operators during an incredibly challenging time.

About the Survey

The survey was completed by 56 people and was targeted to anyone who owns or manages within the restaurant industry in any capacity. Survey questions and results are in Appendix A at the end of the report.



67.3%
Restaurant operators have increased wages to cope with the labour shortage

54% of respondents stated an increase in hours worked by owners/managers

3 Major Themes

The data was analyzed by a subcommittee of the Human Resources/Education Committee, and from that analysis 3 major themes emerged:

1 Managers and Owners are Working More

A lack of applications for management positions has owners and managers taking on more responsibilities.

2 There are Fewer Applicants

In the industry, businesses are seeing fewer applicants and there is an increase in applicants not showing up to interviews or newly hired staff not showing up to work.

3 Lack of Infrastructure

Overall lack of infrastructure support mean that employees struggle with affordable housing, adequate transportation and childcare which can significantly limit their ability to work.

A rural restaurant reported avoiding International Recruitment due to a lack of housing and public transport

How Restaurants are Coping


Based on the themes that emerged, the HR/Education Committee subcommittee identified 4 recommendations for the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia to consider.

1 Increased Compensation and Benefits

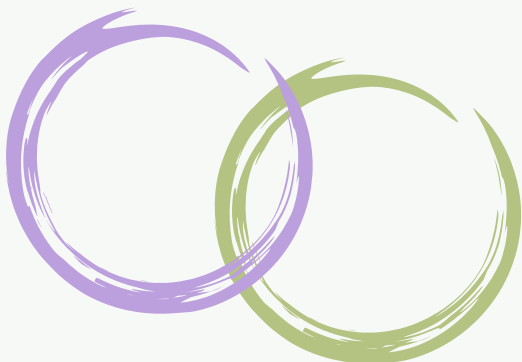
Employers have increased wages to entice new employees and to retain current staff. Other employers have gone a step further to have health benefits.

2 Reduced Hours of Operation

Restaurants are reducing their hours of operation to compensate for the lack of staff and to prevent burnout in staff and management.



49% of respondents
report their
organization has
reduced operating
hours



Recommendations cont...

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3 Increase Menu Prices

To offset the cost of wages as well as other price increase, employers are increasing menu prices.

4 Flexibility for Staff

Employers are more willing to work with employees in scheduling. In some cases, to work around class or childcare schedules but also to keep staff engaged.



Respondents reported a significant decrease in job applicants

Recommendations

Based on the themes that emerged in both the Labour Shortage Survey and the Exit Survey given to people that exited the food & beverage industry, the HR/Education Committee subcommittee identified 3 recommendations for the Restaurant Association of Nova Scotia to consider.

1 Invest in employees

Increasing wages with inflation so that it is feasible for employees who want to stay to be able to support themselves and their families. This includes investing in health benefits and other perks.

2 Advocating for Better Infrastructure

Employers and the Association can advocate for better infrastructure in the province to make it possible for employees to access safe and affordable housing, reliable transportation and other aspects of living that would increase their quality of life.

3 Third Party Supports

Employers can reach out for support with non-profit employment organizations to connect people looking for work and employers. Especially programs that offer wage subsidies.

Other than the labour shortage, increased costs and staff burnout are the issues affecting businesses