

## Succeed with Workplace Diversity



**Food service staff turns over fast, which makes finding new workers an ongoing issue. Learn how using workforce diversity in recruiting can reap multiple benefits.**

Hiring and retaining workers has always been a challenge for the food service industry, and the current low 4.1% unemployment rate makes it particularly tough right now.

For many employers, diversity is the answer—for practical as well as public relations reasons.

In fact, according to a study on Social Responsibility, Health & Wellness conducted by Technomic Inc. for Nestlé Professional, 42% of consumers feel that employee diversity is an important part of social responsibility.

An increasingly diverse population means an increasingly diverse workforce in food service organizations. According to the Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance, as of 2014 ethnic/racial minorities represented 50% of all hourly employees in the restaurant industry, versus about 36% for the total workforce.

Generation Z is the most ethnically diverse cohort surveyed by the US Census. And 65% of Hispanics and more than 50% of African-Americans in the United States are Millennials, who represent a prime labor pool as well as a customer base for food service. Both of these generational cohorts are not only used to ethnic/racial diversity, they also prefer to work in environments that are diverse.

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Employee diversity goes beyond ethnic and racial distinctions, however. Depending on the operation and the job, other potential labor pools include veterans, the disabled, and older workers. Savvy operators don't draw lines at labels, and challenge themselves to look beyond traditional sources and typical profiles, focusing instead on finding people that share their values and passion for hospitality and community.

In consumer-facing positions, there's a real payoff in customer loyalty. For instance, the disabled represent the country's largest minority group, numbering 56.7 million Americans with a powerful incentive to frequent your business.

- **Create a Diversity Vision and Statement**—Having a strategy or mission statement that will help guide all future efforts is important in today's competitive battle for talent. The Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance reveals that 45% of all restaurant companies reported having a corporate diversity statement. The payoff is clear, as average restaurant turnover is 19% lower than that of companies that have a statement or other clear policy, and management turnover was 7% lower

A side benefit of having a guiding diversity strategy is being able to share it with customers as well as other employees, for the goodwill such policies build

- **Be Creative About Recruiting**—Work with organizations like the Department of Labor's Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) and Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN), as well as local advocacy groups for immigrants and refugees, and resources such as senior centers
- **Get the Word Out**—In addition to posting information on a dedicated website page, social media is the perfect vehicle for promoting hiring efforts and human resources policies. One growth-oriented casual restaurant company reached out to the disabled with a video detailing why "We Hire Everybody"
- **Enlist Existing Employees**—Chances are that your hardworking and talented staff members will know other people like themselves who want a job. They will also take an added interest in their friends' or family members' success and may even be able to help with training. It's no surprise then that many food service operations offer a "bounty" for job referrals

## What Nestlé Is Doing

Nestlé USA has a number of initiatives that support diversity and inclusivity in its workforce. In 2016, the company implemented an employee [Parent Support Policy](#) designed to enhance gender balance while offering up to 14 weeks of paid leave for primary caregivers of newborns, with the option of extending unpaid leave up to six months.

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Nestlé has launched a global Maternity Protection Policy for its employees worldwide that is believed to be one of the most progressive programs of its kind in the industry. The policy, which is based on the [ILO Maternity Protection Convention](#), establishes minimum standards that must be implemented at Nestlé workplaces across the world by 2018.

The policy gives employees a minimum of 14 weeks paid maternity leave and the right to extend their maternity leave up to six months. This will be applicable to all primary caregivers of newborns, including male employees and adoptive parents. It also includes employment protection, flexible working arrangements, and guaranteed access to [breastfeeding rooms](#) during working hours in head offices and sites with more than 50 employees. Nestlé currently has more than 190 breastfeeding rooms across its global working facilities.

In addition, Nestlé USA is among the top US businesses embracing [inclusive policies for LGBT workers](#) as highlighted in the 2017 Corporate Equality Index report. This includes non-discrimination workplace protections, domestic partner benefits, transgender-inclusive health care benefits, competency programs, and public engagement with the LGBT community.

Another area in which Nestlé has demonstrated a leadership position is in the area of [hiring veterans](#). In 2015, the company launched a program to address military veteran employment, with a 2017 goal of establishing Nestlé as an Employer of Choice among veterans. Nestlé in the United States employs more than 2,400 veterans across its various operating companies—including 415 hired since 2015—and is benchmarking veteran hires at 7% of all external hires.

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics; Technomic Inc. for Nestlé Professional, Consumer Insights: Social Responsibility, Health & Wellness; U.S. Census Bureau; Multicultural Foodservice & Hospitality Alliance, State of the Foodservice Industry Diversity Report 2014

*The information provided is based on a general industry overview, and is not specific to your business operation. Each business is unique and decisions related to your business should be made after consultation with appropriate experts.*