

# Understanding Hotel Food and Beverage Job Seeker Priorities

Embrace Technology and Flexibility  
to Hire Qualified Employees for  
Hotel Food and Beverage Services



# Introduction

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As has been the case for the past several years, the job market continues to see ongoing shifts and disruption. Many businesses in the tech sector have continued to reduce or restructure their workforces as a result of over-hiring and inflation. Businesses across industries are also increasingly adopting artificial intelligence (AI). While many fear AI will lead to job loss, the latest technology also presents opportunities to drive efficiencies and create more jobs for workers with technical skills.

The broader job market is showing signs of softening and coming into a closer power balance between job seekers and employers. However, hiring remains difficult for hotels and restaurants, with 91% of respondents in our Future of Hospitality Hiring 2024 report agreeing that hiring is somewhat or extremely challenging. Additionally, research from the National Restaurant Association shows that 45% of restaurant operators need more employees to meet customer demand.

If you're looking to hire employees in your hotel restaurant or food and beverage operations, understanding job seeker perspectives and preferences is critical to standing out from other employers and building the best team. We recently conducted a survey of hotel food and beverage job seekers to understand what they're looking for during the application process and in their next role.

This report uncovers key insights among this group of job seekers, along with best practices to help you quickly fill roles, drive employee engagement, improve guest and customer satisfaction, and maximize revenue in your hotel food and beverage operations.



# 1.

## Hotel food and beverage job seekers are selective

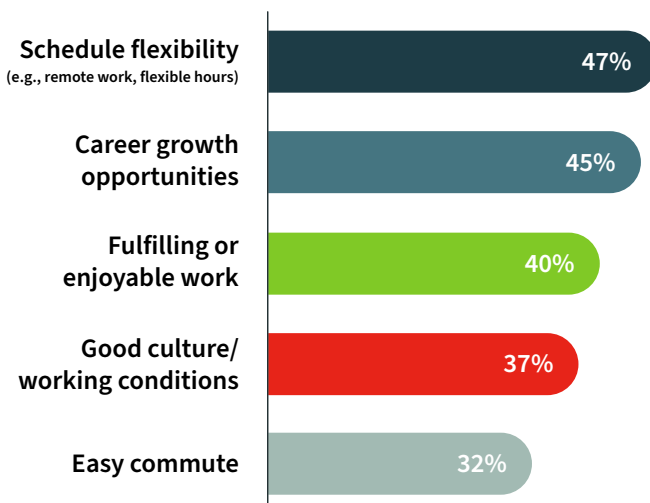
Even when actively seeking their next opportunity, hotel food and beverage job seekers don't settle for just any role or company.

What are hotel food and beverage job seekers looking for in their next job opportunity? When asked about the most important factors when searching for a job, salary is the most important by far (40%), schedule flexibility is second (14%), and career growth opportunities are third (13%).

While pay is a top factor for accepting one job over another, if presented with multiple offers that both meet pay range expectations, hotel food and beverage job seekers are motivated to accept offers that include schedule flexibility, career growth opportunities, fulfilling and enjoyable work, a good culture/working conditions, and an easy commute, among other benefits.

If presented with two job offers that both meet your pay range needs, which of the following benefits would motivate you to choose the lower paying option?

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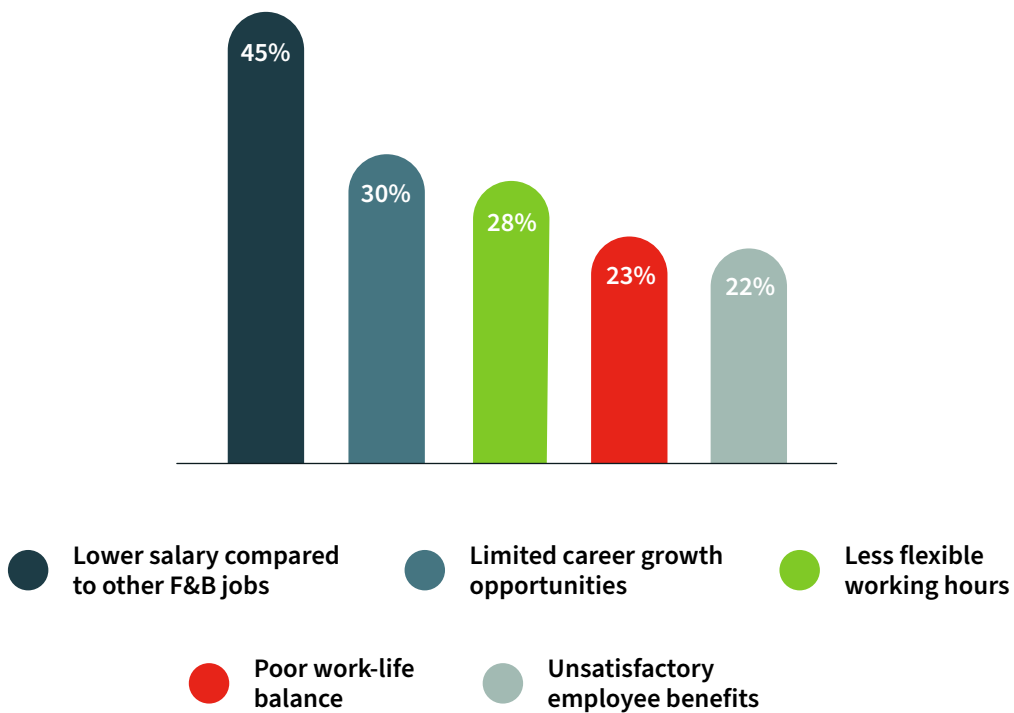


A positive finding for hotel food and beverage operators is that when asked what type of work environment they prefer for food and beverage jobs, hotel restaurants ranked first with 28%, followed by independent restaurants at 22%, and catering/event services at 13%. Younger generations are slightly more likely to want to work at hotel restaurants than the overall average, with 30% of Generation Z and 30% of Millennials preferring to work at hotel restaurants. This is another positive sign, as Generation Z and Millennials make up the majority of the workforce.

Survey respondents also shared the factors that have driven them away from applying to food and beverage jobs in a hotel. Top reasons include lower salary compared to other food and beverage jobs (45%), limited career growth opportunities (30%), less flexible working hours(28%), poor work life balance (23%) and unsatisfactory employee benefits (22%)

Another factor that can help you attract food and beverage job seekers at your hotel is being inclusive toward bilingual workers. Nearly one-third (32%) of respondents would be more likely to apply to a role that states their supervisor is bilingual and 31% said having a supervisor who is bilingual would be beneficial.

### What are the main reasons you chose not to apply for an F&B job in a hotel?





# ✓ Advice for hotel food and beverage operators

## ♥ Review and update your employee benefits

Pay may be a top factor when searching for a new job but most of today's job seekers expect comprehensive benefits that go beyond pay and health insurance. Review your existing employee benefits and compare them against other employers to ensure the benefits you have to offer employees are competitive. Also survey existing employees to better understand which benefits they're most interested in.

Based on the survey results, to attract selective hotel food and beverage job seekers, include benefits such as fulfilling work, a good culture and working conditions, career growth opportunities, and schedule flexibility.

Once you update your benefits, highlight what you have to offer in your job descriptions and on your career site so job seekers can see your latest offerings when they consider applying to your hotel.



## 2.

# User-friendly and flexible scheduling drives job seeker and employee engagement

The survey clearly shows that hotel food and beverage job seekers value flexibility and one area in which flexibility is especially important is with employee scheduling. Almost three-quarters (72%) of respondents agreed that the choice of shift options and flexibility (such as morning, mid-day, and/or evening) plays a role in their decision when looking for a new job.

Hotel food and beverage job seekers are particularly interested in morning and mid-day shift options (47%) and having schedules available up to two weeks in advance (37%).

Technology can play a critical role in making the employee scheduling process easier and more engaging. Almost 70% of respondents have used a shift work platform to let employers know when they're available. Additionally, 80% of those who have used a shift scheduling platform said it was beneficial to them.

Among hotel food and beverage workers who haven't used a shift work platform, 42% agreed that companies using this type of system would appeal to them over companies that don't use a shift work platform. The data also shows that younger workers see the potential value in a shift work platform over older workers. For example, 48% of Generation Z respondents say a shift work platform would appeal to them, compared to 24% of Baby Boomers.



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# ✓ Advice for hotel food and beverage operators

## Support flexible scheduling

While flexibility for many job seekers often means remote work, this isn't possible for hotel food and beverage roles. One way you can support flexibility includes offering flexible schedules to pick up kids from school, care for a relative, or handle other personal matters. Other options may be allowing employees to share their input and preferences as part of the scheduling process, sharing schedules further in advance, and offering more paid sick days or personal time off.

## 😊 Leverage a user-friendly scheduling or shift work platform

Rather than asking employees to share their availability over email or on written, paper calendars or templates, leverage a streamlined scheduling, shift work, or HR platform. Centralizing all information about employees' availability and scheduling can make the scheduling process more engaging and transparent for workers and help your team drive efficiencies. Promoting your seamless scheduling process in recruitment materials can also help you attract job seekers looking for simplified, flexible scheduling — especially those in younger generations.



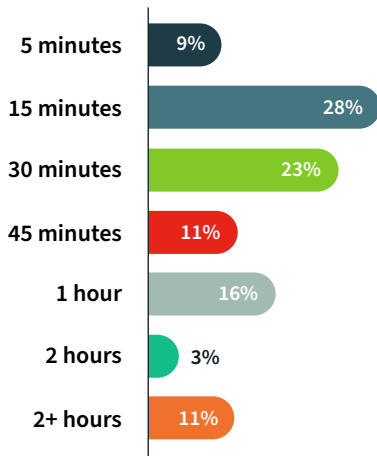
# 3.

## Speed can make or break your chances of hiring the best candidates

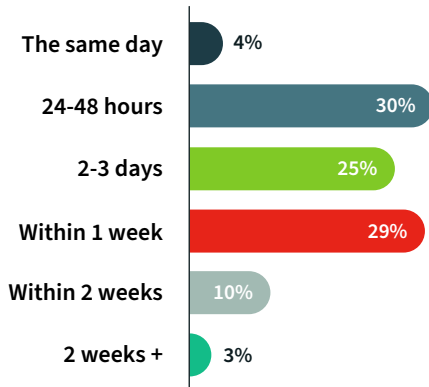
Today’s active hotel food and beverage job seekers are eager to apply to and start their next role. Given the competitive job market and job opportunities available, many job applicants aren’t willing to spend time on lengthy job applications or wait around for drawn out hiring processes.

Almost two-thirds (64%) of hotel food and beverage job seekers have given up on an application because it took too long to complete and more than one-third (36%) would only spend up to 15 minutes on an application before giving up.

### What is the maximum amount of time you would spend completing a job application before giving up?



### How soon after applying to a job would you ideally like to be interviewed?



After applying to jobs, hotel food and beverage applicants want the process to move forward swiftly. Eighty-eight percent want to be interviewed within a week or less of applying, which is slightly higher than the 85% among all job seekers across industries.

Younger workers are the most eager to move forward quickly with the hiring process. The survey shows that 67% of Generation Z and 66% of Millennial respondents want to be interviewed within two to three days of applying or sooner, compared to 47% of Generation X and 56% of Baby Boomers.

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# Advice for hotel food and beverage operators

## Simplify your online job applications

If you're not receiving many applicants for your open roles, you may need to revamp and simplify your job applications. Hiring platforms can help you create user-friendly job applications that only require a few fields — such as name, contact information, and a resume attachment. Avoid requiring applicants to repeat information from their resumes in other application fields and requiring a password or login to apply.

You may even want to consider making a resume optional, as not all applicants will have a formal resume. In place of requiring a resume, consider adding a few brief prescreening questions to the application or sending them as soon as applicants apply to weed out those who aren't a fit.

## Identify hiring process bottlenecks

You may notice that some of your top candidates drop out at some point during the hiring process. Hiring analytics and insights can highlight data such as hiring velocity, process adherence, and time spent in each hiring step. This can help you identify potential bottlenecks, along with solutions to streamline the hiring process and drive candidate engagement. For example, if it takes your hiring managers a week to review applicants, implement timing mandates, such as requiring applicant reviews every 24 hours.

Also aim to connect with candidates at least every other day — if not daily. Messages can be a simple update about next steps to keep candidates engaged and excited about the possibility of joining your team.

## Automate hiring steps

In addition to implementing timing mandates for human tasks, you can also leverage hiring technology to help you automate certain hiring steps. Look for hiring and HR platforms that automate routine, manual steps in the process like screening applicants, scheduling interviews, and administering reference and background checks.

# 4.

## Frequent and fast mobile communication is table stakes

Mobile devices have significantly impacted the hiring process in recent years. Just as job seekers rely on their phones in their day-to-day lives and can hail Ubers or order packages on Amazon in one click, they expect to use their mobile devices to seamlessly apply to jobs and engage with hiring managers.

The survey results show that 63% of hotel food and beverage job seekers primarily use smartphones during the job search, compared to 31% who use a laptop or desktop computer, 6% who use a tablet, and 6% who use none of these (they likely use another channel such as paper applications).

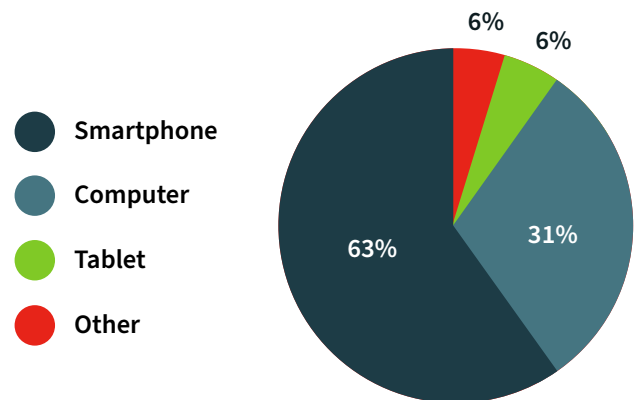
Younger generations of food and beverage job seekers rely on smartphones during their job search at a rate slightly higher than the overall average. The survey shows that 67% of Generation Z, 71% of Millennials, and 66% of Generation X primarily use their smartphones, while the number drops to 43% for Baby Boomers.

Mobile usage is higher among hotel food and beverage job applicants than all industries as a whole, in which 50% of applicants primarily use their smartphones during the job search. The survey also found that 58% of job seekers in this industry have given up on a job application because it was too tough to complete on a mobile device. Generation X appears to have the least patience with complicated mobile applications, with 70% saying they've given up on an application.

Mobile-friendly capabilities are particularly relevant when hiring for hotel food and beverage roles because many employees in this industry may be directly interacting with customers or completing work in the restaurant or around the hotel, rather than sitting in front of a computer, and want to quickly apply to a job or check on the status of an application during a break.

Most hotel food and beverage job applicants (85%) would also be willing to communicate with hiring managers via text if it meant the hiring process would move faster.

Which device do you primarily use in your job search?



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# ✓ Advice for hotel food and beverage operators

## 💬 Keep candidates engaged with text messages

Sending text messages can help you move the hiring process forward quickly and ensure important messages and status updates don't get overlooked. Text candidates to confirm you've received their applications, schedule interviews, or share updates about next steps.

## 📱 Create mobile-friendly job applications

Today's job seekers expect the application experience to be similar to how they interact with companies in their day-to-day lives — seamless, instantaneous, and through their mobile devices. When you're in the process of refreshing and simplifying your job applications, also make sure they're mobile-friendly. This includes using responsive design to ensure applications are easy to complete on a small screen. A hiring platform that understands the mobile candidate experience can help you develop mobile-friendly applications.

## ••• Include an option for text-to-apply

A top channel for hotel food and beverage recruiting may be physical signage in your neighborhood or advertisements in local newspapers. Instead of directing potential applicants to your website, include a number to text or a QR code to make it easy for prospective employees to apply right away. Otherwise, they may think to check out your website application later and forget. The right hiring platforms will offer this feature — including giving you the option to create new phone numbers based on your location and generate custom QR codes for each job.



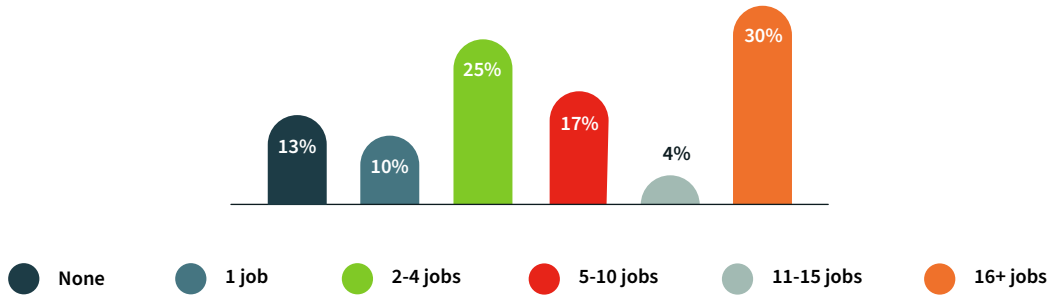
# 5.

## Hotel food and beverage job seekers conduct research and cast wide nets in their job searches

Reaching job seekers where they're searching for open roles is critical to building the best team. The survey results show that while job seekers use a variety of channels to research for open roles, most rely on job boards to begin their search.

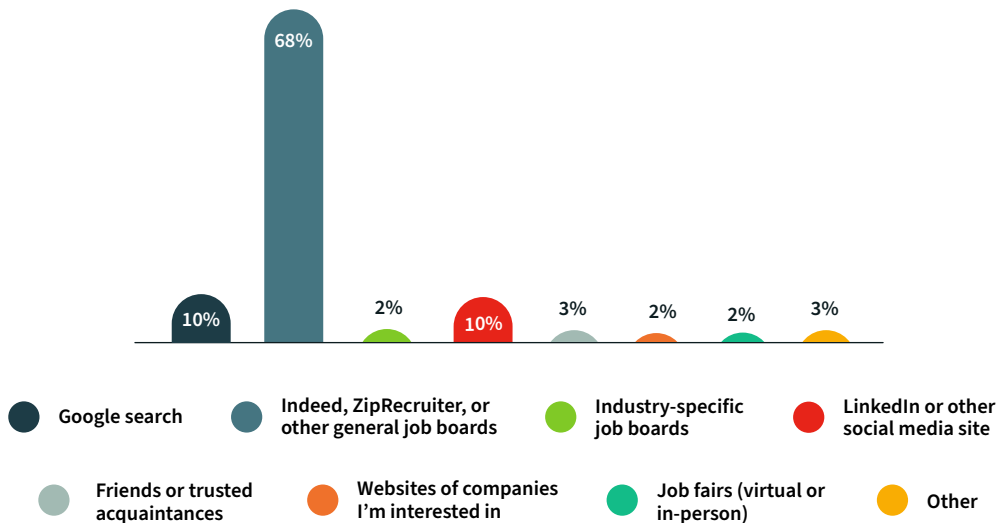
Additionally, hotel food and beverage job seekers are casting a wide net with their job applications to find the right fit — nearly one-third (30%) of hotel food and beverage job seekers applied to 16 or more jobs.

### How many jobs did you apply to in the last 6 months?



Even given the preference for job boards, candidates also use a variety of other channels during their job search, including websites of companies they're interested in, Google search, LinkedIn or other social media sites, and recommendations from trusted friends or acquaintances, among other channels.

### The last time you started looking for a job, where did you start your search?



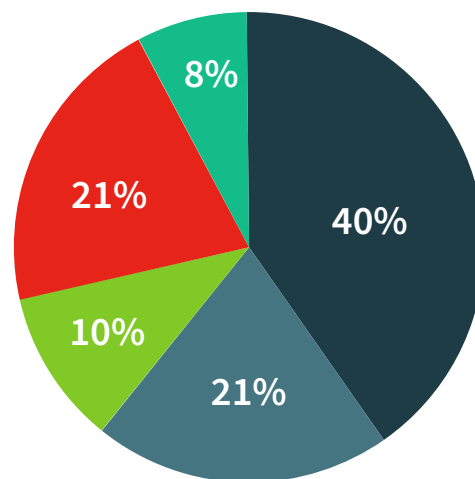


With so many job seekers searching for and applying for jobs on job boards, you may want to use sponsored job posts to help your hotel food and beverage jobs stand out from other opportunities. Your applicant tracking system can help you make data-driven decisions to determine when and where to invest sponsored budget in job boards and increase awareness.

While a majority of hotel food and job seekers research and apply for jobs on job boards, if they're looking to learn about a company's culture and benefits, more than one-third (40%) say the company's website is their top source of information, while 21% use Google search and 20% turn to Glassdoor or other employee review sites. Generation Z (45%) is the most likely to turn to company websites to learn more about what potential employers have to offer.

### What source/channel do you check first to determine if an employer's culture meets your needs/standards before applying to a job?

- The company's website
- Glassdoor or similar review site
- Social media
- Google
- Other



**Generation Z (45%) is the most likely to turn to company websites to learn more about what potential employers have to offer.**



# Advice for hotel food and beverage operators

## Develop a multi-channel sourcing strategy

Because such a high proportion of hotel food and beverage job seekers start their job search and general job boards, posting your ads on these platforms (whether sponsored or organic) is essential — or you may miss out on the majority of job seekers. However, avoid putting all your eggs in one basket when it comes to attracting job applicants.

Make sure you also invest time and resources in your career site, industry-specific job boards, LinkedIn, and other social media channels to help you reach as many interested job seekers as possible.

## Enhance your career site

Motivated job seekers — especially younger workers like Generation Z — are likely to visit your career site to learn more about why your hotel may be the right fit for them. In addition to listing your open jobs, make sure to include engaging content to entice job seekers to apply.

Share information about your hotel's mission and core values, a comprehensive overview of your employee benefits, visuals highlighting career paths, and employee success stories and testimonials, among other details. This can help job seekers understand what you have to offer and imagine what it would be like to join your team.

With a comprehensive hiring platform like Hireology, you can access everything you need to captivate talent with an effective career site, including integrated templates, search engine optimization (SEO), and mobile optimization, among other features.

## Analyze the effectiveness of your sourcing channels

Continually evaluate which channels your applicants and eventual hires are coming from, along with the recruitment marketing messaging you're using on each channel. This can help you determine which channels are reaching the most qualified candidates and understand which messages are resonating most with hospitality job seekers.

Also continually track the effectiveness of your sponsored job postings. If one job post isn't delivering many applicants or qualified candidates, you may want to consider reinvesting your paid advertising budget in another channel. An advanced hiring platform will include insights about your top performing sourcing channels to help you optimize your budget.

# 6.

## Referrals and candidate networks are effective applicant sources

While you likely invest a significant amount of time and effort into external applicant channels, in many cases, your current employees — as well as past employees and applicants — can be a top source of talent.

Most hotel food and beverage job seekers (84%) somewhat or strongly agree that they'd be more likely to apply for a job if a trusted friend or acquaintance vouched for the company. This number jumps to 90% for Generation Z respondents.

Additionally, just because an applicant didn't receive an offer when they initially applied or an employee has left your team, this doesn't mean the door is completely closed on the worker joining — or rejoining — in the future.

### Among hotel food and beverage job seekers:



84% would consider working for a company for which they previously applied but didn't receive an offer.



77% would consider returning to an organization they previously worked for — however, this number drops to 52% for Generation Z job seekers.





# Advice for hotel food and beverage operators

## + Develop an employee referral program

Job seekers often trust their friends and family over an employer when it comes to learning about what it's really like to work for a company. Your existing employees are also likely to refer qualified talent to your open jobs because they want to work with others who will help drive positive for your results. Referrals can also help you save time with initial recruiting steps because they're recommendations from trusted employees. This is why employee referral programs are an effective channel to recruit qualified talent.

Develop a formal referral program to simplify the process of your existing employees recommending qualified talent for your open positions. Offer referral bonuses or incentives to encourage employees to introduce friends, family members, or top performing colleagues they've worked with in the past. An effective hiring platform and applicant tracking system will include capabilities to seamlessly track and manage employee referrals.



## Build relationships with past applicants and employees

Maintaining a list or database of qualified talent can help you reduce hiring time and costs when you have open roles in the future. Centralizing details about past applicants and employees using an applicant tracking system or hiring platform makes it easy to search through past talent and share relevant open roles.

In addition to maintaining details about talent in your ATS, you can also proactively nurture relationships with prospective candidates and past employees. Include an option to join your talent network or community on your career site. Regularly share updates with your talent network, such as workplace awards, team member spotlights, open roles, and upcoming recruitment events. And support a positive experience for both applicants and employees so they'll be willing to reconnect with your team about future opportunities.



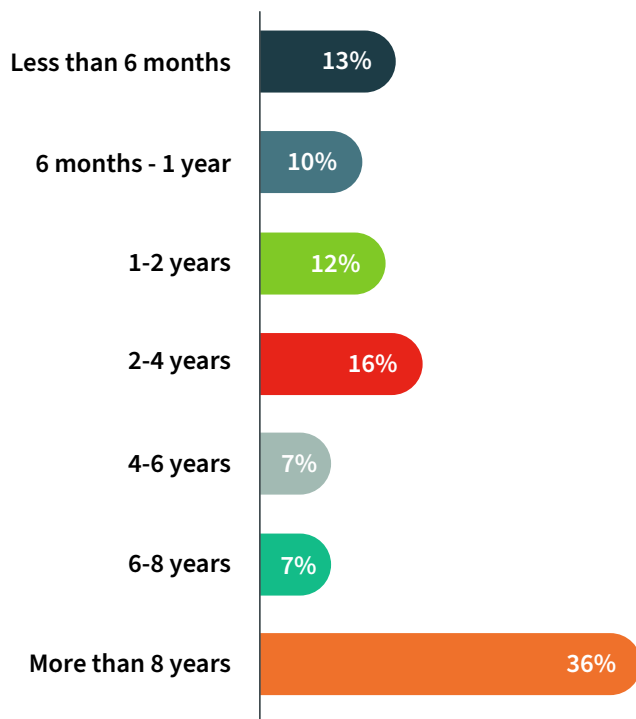
# 7.

## Hotel food and beverage job seekers are loyal

The good news for hotel food and beverage operators is that if you already have top performing employees on your team, many workers in the industry are loyal to their current employers and want to stay with the same company for the long haul. More than one-third (36%) of respondents expect to stay with their current or next employer for more than eight years. And 65% expect to stay for at least three years.

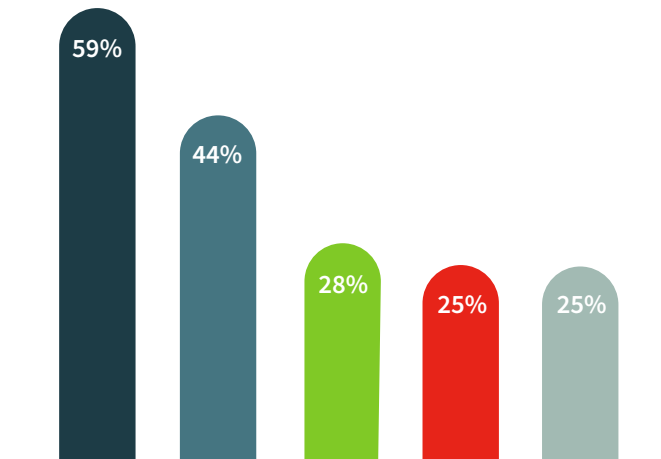
From a generational perspective, job seekers on the younger and older end tend to expect shorter tenures with their jobs. Only 10% of Generation Z respondents and 20% of Baby Boomer respondents say they expect to stay with their next (or current job) for eight years, while this number jumps to 39% and 48% for Millennials and Generation X, respectively.

### How long do you expect to stay at your current job (or at your next job if you're actively looking)?



Among those who would be willing to leave their current job, the top factors impacting their decisions include to make more money (59%), for better career growth or skill development opportunities (44%), for more fulfilling and enjoyable work (27%), for more schedule flexibility (25%), and for better culture/working conditions (25%).

## Top reasons hotel food and beverage workers would leave their current employer



● To make more money

● For better career growth or skill development opportunities

● For more fulfilling and enjoyable work

● For more schedule flexibility

● For better culture/working conditions

Because pay is important to hotel food and beverage workers, consider the following ways to drive retention:

- 💰 **Offering performance-based incentives:** According to the survey, performance-based incentives are important to 82% of respondents
- 💰 **Paying workers more frequently:** More than half (56%) of respondents would prefer to be paid weekly, compared to 31% who indicated biweekly
- 💰 **Supporting pay ahead options:** Nearly one-third (29%) see pay ahead options as a motivator to apply or stay in a role

While pay will always be important, offering job seekers opportunities for career growth, fulfilling work, and flexibility can help you excite top talent about joining and staying with your team.



# Advice for hotel food and beverage operators

## Promote your jobs like you do your hotel food and beverage offerings

Highlight employee benefits and key differentiators of your employer brand in a similar way to how you promote your hotel food and beverage offerings. Write engaging job descriptions and career site content just like you'd write advertising and website copy.

An integrated applicant tracking system and hiring platform like Hireology includes proven tools and templates to help make your career site content and job descriptions as engaging as possible. Also, advertise your open positions across social media and other channels to reach candidates where they're searching and excite them about joining your team.

## Focus on retention

The data clearly shows that hotel food and beverage employees want to remain loyal to their employers. By understanding factors that support loyalty — such as pay, opportunities to build skills, fulfilling work, flexibility, and a positive work environment — you can focus on meeting employees' expectations and driving retention.

If your hotel food and beverage team is experiencing high turnover, review your hiring and talent management practices — including your hiring process, onboarding, and employee engagement efforts, among other processes — to identify areas for improvement and drive retention as a result.

Because every worker is different, reach out to your team on a regular basis with surveys, focus groups, and 1:1 conversations to collect and implement feedback. Also, consider asking departing employees why they're leaving by scheduling exit interviews, which can help you improve the employee experience in the future.

# Looking ahead for hotel food and beverage operators

As hotel food and beverage operators continue to face challenges with hiring qualified talent, gaining a firsthand perspective of job seeker preferences and motivators can help you reach and engage skilled employees for your team.



Today's hotel food and beverage job seekers are tech savvy, loyal and eager to quickly find their next job — whether on a job board, career site or through a referral — but won't settle for a job that isn't the right fit or doesn't offer the benefits and flexibility they're looking for.

By understanding the key findings and applying the advice and best practices highlighted in this report, you can hire top performing hotel food and beverage employees who will have a positive impact on your bottom line and customer satisfaction.



Hireology is the leading provider of hiring software for multi-location businesses. The platform equips HR and business leaders with the support and tools they need to attract better quality talent, fill open roles faster, and make data-driven hiring decisions. Hireology was rated number eight on G2's 2023 list of 50 Best HR Products.

More than 10,000 businesses in industries like retail automotive, healthcare, and hospitality rely on Hireology to hire the skilled workers they need to build better teams and create a competitive advantage. For more information, visit [www.hireology.com](http://www.hireology.com)

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