

Workforce Planning: Aligning your talent/labor with business goals (ensuring people fit the work they are doing, and that their work optimizes the progress a business makes).

- While planning your workforce, keep in mind:
 - What your applicant pool looks like
 - What needs the business has now and what needs the business might get in the future.

Workforce planning can help set businesses ahead of their competitors as it means you optimize the talent of your business.

There are several models that can help with workforce planning, as they help you assess staffing needs; this guide will introduce two: the **equilibrium model** and the **deterministic model**.

Equilibrium model: Look at historical data of the business to predict future trends .If you have any files or records on your current workforce, you would list logical needs based on what your business has needed in the past.

If your business is relatively new, then begin collecting data now, such as retention data (the percentage of employees who stay after a year, etc), churn rates (the percentage of customers who cancel their subscription to your service, or do not return to your business), development profiles (information on your employees' strengths and weaknesses, or past job history that may reveal information on their talents).

For example, if your business has had a high retention rate in the past, you might consider not hiring new employees for the next few years until the retention rate drops. Conversely, if the retention rate is low, you may consider hiring more employees now to prepare for the future.

Deterministic model: This model focuses on predicting future needs. Promotions and retirement are frequently discussed in this model. If you are observing your employees and want to provide a promotion, then you would have to think of who would take over the employee's old responsibilities. Additionally, for wage increases you would have to calculate how much you would increase wages, and how often, to satisfy employees' needs and inflation. For retirement, you would look at the ages of your workers and predict whether they may retire or leave soon; you would plan when you would look for replacements.

Job Analysis and Job Descriptions: Job analysis involves documenting and analyzing information about a job. For small businesses, this process helps employees to understand the tasks and qualifications required for certain positions.

Recommendation: Small businesses should conduct regular job analyses to ensure that job descriptions are up-to-date and reflect the current needs of the organization.

Supply and Demand Analysis in Workforce Planning: Small businesses should identify gaps in skills or potential shortages to either develop training strategies or know what to look for when hiring new employees.

Similarly, a **skills inventory** is an assessment of skills and education of the workforce. This inventory serves as a foundation for strategic HR decisions, such as identifying areas for training, development, or potential restructuring.

Forecasting involves estimating the demand for labor based on business growth projections (how much your revenue projections are increasing, etc) and assessing the available supply of employees you'll be able to hire from.

Gap analysis helps organizations understand the disparities between the current skill set of their employees and the skills required to achieve business goals. By conducting a gap analysis, businesses can make informed decisions about training, recruitment, and development strategies.

Identifying Skill Gaps:

Identifying skill gaps involves assessing the difference between the skills an organization currently possesses and the skills needed to meet its strategic goals.

1. Define what skills you need for your business; this may mean technical skills, soft skills, leadership abilities, or industry-specific expertise.
2. Assess the current skills of your employees; this can be done through surveys, looking through experience profiles of employees, and skill observations.
3. Compare the current and wanted skills for your business and identify skill gaps.
4. Prioritize skill gaps based on how important they are to your business's goals.
5. Create a plan to address gaps; this could mean creating a training program, providing individualized tips to your employees, or hiring different employees to fill the skillsets you need.
6. Adjust if the plan is not effective at addressing skill gaps. Repeat steps 1-3 after plans have been implemented.

Recruitment strategies for small businesses:

1. Using Online Job Platforms and Social Media:
 - Actively use social media platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook to promote job openings. If your small business wishes to target more of the younger audience, use Instagram.
 - Search which social media sites are best to reach the type of employees you need (older employees, younger employees, etc).
2. Existing employees
 - Encourage current employees to refer new candidates; they often have a good understanding of the company culture and can refer candidates who may be a good fit.
3. Collaborate with Local Networks and Community Resources:

- Engage with local colleges, universities, and schools to spread news of your opportunity. Attend career fairs or workshops to connect with potential employees.
 - Partner with local community events or host local events related to your business and spread the news inside the event.
- 4. Website marketing and other forms of communication:
 - Use your website, or other communication channels to communicate that positions are open; for example, have a banner at the top of your website about hiring employees.

Hiring and Onboarding

Some ways, techniques, strategies to create an effective recruitment process:

- Create clear job descriptions: what you're looking for (qualifications and expectations), and responsibilities.
- Have a maximum of 2 methods to apply, so don't create multiple channels to apply or it may confuse some applicants. The top two you should have are in-person resumes, or submitting applications online.
- Consider using technology, such as an ATS, to help manage resumes, track candidate progress, and facilitate communication, improving efficiency and organization. If not, make sure to communicate transparently with your candidates throughout the entire process so they know what is going on.
- Consider an initial screening process to identify the most promising candidates (this can include phone interviews, skills assessments, etc).
- Consider interview questions very carefully, as certain behavioral and situational questions can provide insights into a candidate's skills.
- Consider proactively building relationships with potential candidates, even if there are no immediate job openings, as this can help for any future openings.

The interviewing and selection process for small businesses may be more streamlined compared to larger corporations but should still be thorough. Here's an overview of what the process might look like:

1. Define job description (skills/qualifications needed) and how to apply; then, post on marketing channels (online job boards, social media, company website, etc).
2. Review received resumes and narrow them down to those who meet your company's needs. Look for relevant experience, skills, and qualifications.
3. Reach out to those that fit your list for an interview (can be in-person or online). This helps assess their communication skills and dedication to the role.
4. Check any references if you believe the interview has gone well for a candidate. Reference check not needed if you are not satisfied with the interview.

5. Depending on the role, consider a skills assessment or task to evaluate a candidate's practical abilities. This could be a test, a brief project, or a simulation of tasks they would encounter in the job.
6. Extend a formal job offer to the selected candidate, specifying details such as start date, compensation, and any other relevant terms.
7. Once the candidate accepts the offer, initiate the onboarding process. This includes completing necessary paperwork, providing training, and integrating the new hire into the team.

How should small businesses do background checks and reference checks while you're recruiting?

Background Checks:

Compliance: Obtain consent to perform a legal background check.

Job Relevance: Tailor checks to job requirements for efficiency.

Reference Checks:

Candidate Permission: Obtain consent to contact provided references.

Ask Open-Ended Questions: Ask about strengths, qualities, performance, etc.

Verify Employment Details: Confirm job title, dates, and responsibilities with the reference.

Professionalism: Handle checks confidentially and with respect for privacy.

Examples of effective onboarding best practices and orientation programs:

Google: "Noogler" Program:

- Google's onboarding program "Noogler", is designed to make onboarding smoother for new hires. During the orientation, Nooglers receive a welcome kit, attend orientation sessions, and are assigned a "buddy" or mentor to help them navigate their first weeks at Google.

Salesforce: Trailhead Onboarding

- Salesforce, uses its training platform, Trailhead, for onboarding. The platform offers interactive modules and guided learning paths that help new hires understand Salesforce's products, values, and culture.

Facebook: 30-Day Welcome Kit

- Facebook provides new employees with a 30-day welcome kit that includes a personalized welcome letter, a company t-shirt, and a handbook. The kit is designed to create a sense of belonging and focuses on connecting new hires with their teams and providing them with the necessary tools and resources.

Zappos: Culture Immersion

- New hires at Zappos go through a four-week training program, which includes understanding the company's core values and spending time on customer service calls.

Netflix: Freedom and Responsibility

- Netflix gives employees freedom to innovate while holding them responsible for achieving results. This approach is communicated during the onboarding process, setting expectations for autonomy and accountability.