

## **Holiday Hires: Are You Treating Yours Nice?**

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Hiring extra help for your store during the holidays is often a necessity - and in a good way. After all, if you need extra help it means you are getting extra traffic and extra sales. Kuddos to that! The kicker is extra help also means training and managing these folks – which means you now have more on your to-do list.

To help effectively manage your holiday help, consider when you hire them and how you treat them. Allow for adequate time to train them before your busy season starts, then be sure to support them once your busy season is in full gear.

### **Store Buddies**

A great way to support holiday help is to partner each seasonal employee with a “full timer” or at least a “full time, part timer” as their store “mentor.” It should be encouraged and welcomed for your holiday help to ask questions, seek answers and want to know more about your store. It’s also a good idea to have your mentor check in on their holiday employee, offering suggestions for general store success, providing tips on product inventory, helping in sales, and being their overall go-to-person while working in the store. These combined efforts from both your holiday employee and regular staffed employee will translate to a more successful season of sales – since educated employees are the best kind in securing customer satisfaction and generating sales in stores.

### **Behind the Scenes**

For those employees who are holiday help without customer interaction involved, consider how you can still help them thrive in their roles. Whether customer focused or not, all holiday help should feel part of the team. This feeling of being included is important in delivering a team player attitude. For employees working behind the scenes, this is even more important since often they feel neglected. Include your behind the scene players in employee pow wows – from holiday gatherings to in store prep days to staff meetings and more. Be sure to say “thanks,” as well. It’s amazing what a simple word can do for employee morale – especially when behind the scene folks get left in the dark too often. Remember – it truly does take a team effort and whether someone is doing stock or managing a website, every effort matters in making a single store or more a success.

### **Checking Yourself Twice**

During the retail chaos of the holidays, it’s easy to forget the spirit of the season – not to mention the spirit of a good boss. As difficult as it may be or as busy as you may be, try to deliver an upbeat, supportive attitude towards all your staff. This isn’t the time of year to play favorites (then again, no time is). Be mindful of each employee on your payroll and consider those who aren’t on your payroll, as well. City staff? Other local businesses? If you consider how each of them may – or may not – influence traffic to your store or help you generate local press, it will be easier for you to keep a positive attitude in supporting all your team players. People tend to like helping people who are nice – plain and simple. Say thanks. Be genuine. Smile. It will go a long way. And when you have to put your foot down and get down to business, it will be much more tolerable for your entire team – and outside team players – to get on board.

For those stores who want to really have some fun with holiday help, consider creating a themed training or themed rewards program. For example, you can use an “Advent Calendar” to offer a tip a day with some candy included. Or deliver training in the form of a present during a weekly meeting, such as “Unwrap Success This Holiday.” You get the idea. The goal is really to deliver strong support to your holiday staff – which includes your regulars, as well.