



8 Tips to Attract and Retain Top Talent

Finding and retaining quality team members can be a challenge during ordinary times. Currently, senior living facilities across the country are struggling to fill a variety of positions in their dining departments as they compete with higher-paying, and sometimes less demanding, jobs in the food industry.

As our nation's economy slowly began to reopen this spring, we sat down with managers from senior dining facilities around the country to discuss their experiences and what they've learned over the past year.

At Sodexo, our commitment to staff development is reflected in our exceptional employee retention rates. Our secret? We've created the consummate blend of team culture, training, and growth opportunities that make partnering a valuable choice for hundreds of communities across the country.

Here are eight ways you can enhance your ability to build and nurture a high-performing team:

1. Begin with the staff you have. Build a sense of trust and camaraderie that keeps your team excited to go to work each day.

“It all goes back to people. Your team can make you feel like you can get anything done.”

Kyle Williams, District Manager (California)

2. Staff, residents, and departments should communicate regularly and effectively.

The more everyone knows, the more they'll feel like they're part of the team. Make a concerted effort to bridge department silos for an integrated community experience.

“Throughout the pandemic, we stayed in constant communication with our team, the client, the residents, the nursing staff, etc. This communication has helped us stay safe and reopen safely.”

Jason Naegely, District Manager (New York)

3. During times of crisis, as well as in times of calm, provide all managers with the latest news and policies that impact your industry.

“Being organized is helpful, and our district calls gave us all the necessary information we needed. We were able to provide our client with information before he even asked for it.”

Jennifer Mondolino, General Manager (North Carolina)

4. Train and train again. Providing information is much more effective when combined with training. Empower your staff with training to deliver deeper engagement to residents.

“Throughout the pandemic, Sodexo regularly provided us with up-to-date information and training.”

Jack Forrest, General Manager (California)

5. Listen to your staff and fulfill their requests for supplies whenever possible. If they know they can rely on their superiors and get what they need in a timely manner, they'll be happier employees.

“During the pandemic, having clear instruction and communication was key. But it wasn't the only thing that made Sodexo stand out. They provided us with the necessary supplies and materials to maintain a sanitary work environment, and keep our staff safe and protected.”

Felicia Miller, Clinical Nutrition Manager (Pennsylvania)

6. Encourage communication among managers in different communities. Sharing best practices and providing support helps managers remain nimble and confident.

“The additional communication between Sodexo teams was crucial during the pandemic. We were able to troubleshoot and problem-solve with each other.”

Brent Ridenour, District Manager (Virginia)

7. Empower your employees to take a therapeutic approach to service. Nurture your staff and lead by example—displaying empathy for your employees will inspire them to show compassion toward the residents they serve.

“As we slowly returned to hosting residents in our communal dining room, we considered each person's situation. The first group to return to the dining room included residents whose mental health had most declined during the pandemic.”

Felicia Miller, Clinical Nutrition Manager (Pennsylvania)

8. Mentor young employees. Whether it's their first job or their third, pairing young employees with a member of the senior staff can enhance their loyalty.

“A large part of our staff are teenagers. We're in contact with their parents and school guidance counselors. For many of them, this is their first job, and we want to make sure everything is going well.”

Patrick Day, General Manager (Virginia)



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