



SEVEN HR PRACTICES FOR RESTAURANTS IN 2012

This article outlines the seven best human resource practices for restaurants in 2012. You should make sure that you align your employees to duties they are most suited for in the workplace. "If you manage your people really well and give them the chance to do something they are really good at and align them to the business objectives, it becomes a win-win," says Kathy Kolbe, founder of Kolbe Corp. The second practice is to communicate to employees as clearly and concisely as possible. "It is very important to help employees understand the business reasons behind decisions. Many employers when expanding internationally view communication as an after-the-fact alternative for implementing an employee pay and benefits program. Smart employers start by considering the communication potential at the outset and then design the right tax-efficient reward program for the international franchise consultant or F&B executive," says James Berkeley, who is an international consultant for restaurants that are trying to expand overseas. The third best practice is to know and understand technology as much as possible. "It is crucial that moving forward restaurant companies have to be very savvy about technology. The business demands it. Historically, human resources has been a very paper-driven department, but that's not the case anymore. And that makes good business sense because the better job that companies can do to automate the paper side of things allows more time to be spent on the people side of the business, where it can really make a difference to the bottom line," says Steven Wallace, the executive vice president and chief people officer at Real Mex Restaurants Inc. The fourth practice is to make sure that your employees are productive and engaged in their jobs. "Engaged not just satisfied. If you have not taken steps to measure engagement, now is the time. Then hold HR accountable for the results and strategies to improve the scores," says Joleen Goronkin, president of People & Performance Strategies. The fifth practice is to create a change in culture. "Entitlement or performance? What things do you need to do to move the needle? Put them in place and really understand what your culture is. It is like a culture in a Petri dish. You can let it grow on its own and take on its own shape and form, or you can modify it and grow it in a way that aligns with your expected results," says Goronkin. The sixth practice for 2012 is to retain and reward important employees as much as possible. "How do I keep those employees happy so that they know they are valued, that their knowledge and their skill are valued. It is going to get much tougher. There is no way around that because the economy is going to improve and there is going to be less of that young workforce," Toni Quist, senior vice president of human resources and training for Perkins and Marie Callender's Inc., said. The seventh and final practice is to use social media as much as you can. "Operators should use social media listings on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn to drive applicants. The very first impression that an applicant has with an operator is the application, and you have to grab them there. Once you have them, you will want to retain them, so you need the engagement tools that social media offers," says Nate DaPore, president and chief executive of People Matter.

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