

RECRUITING IN SENIOR LIVING: HOW TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS





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RECRUITING IN SENIOR LIVING: HOW TO GROW YOUR BUSINESS

In senior living, your reputation is everything. It connects to all other aspects of your business—your ability to find new hires, hold onto the employees you've got, create a community where residents want to stay, and drive your business's growth.

There are plenty of challenges facing senior living that are outside of anyone's business's control. Luckily, there are aspects of staffing that you can control. That starts with your reputation.

In this guide, we explain how to improve your facility's recruiting and retention strategy for sustainable business growth.



UNDERSTANDING THE DEMANDS ON SENIOR LIVING

An Aging Population

Senior living is under great pressure. But where does this pressure come from? The greatest factor is America's changing demographics. By 2034, for the first time in history, America's 65-and-older population is projected to outnumber children under 18.

An older population means two things for senior living: greater demand and fewer potential candidates. The fact that America is about to see its largest ever population of older citizens is reason enough for senior living communities to expect greater demand. But add to that the fact that healthcare workers are also reaching retirement age (or leaving their positions early due to COVID-related stress and burnout), and you have the components for an ever-worsening candidate shortage.

Changing Desires

The population of older Americans is growing, but that's not the only change. Compared to past senior generations, this cohort is more likely to [hold onto their independence](#), and less willing to give up the aspects of their lives that make their days feel meaningful.

Today's generation of older Americans wants greater independence, more cultural and leisure activities, and more control in their care plans. In addition, more seniors are [middle-income](#) than any other income bracket, and they may neither qualify for Medicare nor have the means to pay for traditional long-term care. Senior living businesses will need to adopt more flexible care options to widen the pool of potential residents.



YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO HIRING AND RETENTION IN SENIOR LIVING

As of summer of 2021, 81% of assisted living businesses were experiencing staffing shortages. We all know senior living is facing new and unique challenges. To meet these demanding times, employers will need proven and scalable staffing strategies.





CULTURE COMES FIRST

Staffing and company culture can't be separated. A strong culture is one where workers feel respected, fulfilled, and confident in their ability to do their jobs well. If you're understaffed, all of these elements are threatened.

Culture or Wages?

Even if you successfully attract new hires with competitive pay or sign-on bonuses, your culture will determine your retention rate.

Compensation is vital, especially for lower-wage workers who could easily leave the healthcare industry and find comparable pay elsewhere. Recruiting with sign-on bonuses can work. But it won't work for long if you're dealing with an unhealthy work culture.

Fair pay is part of a strong culture, but it can't singlehandedly create the safe and supportive environment that workers seek.



HOW TO IMPROVE COMPANY CULTURE IN SENIOR LIVING

Culture is holistic. A strong company culture is supportive, safe, encouraging, and protects workers' mental and physical health.

Protect Your Workers

Workers should feel confident that their physical, mental, and medical safety will be protected at work. Stick to your safe staffing ratios and a schedule that allows adequate time for workers to rest between shifts. If this is a challenge, focus first on streamlining your recruiting practices so you can hire more rapidly.

Workers' protections should extend to the physical and emotional. Minimize the risk of [workplace violence](#) with de-escalation training and zero-tolerance policies. Additionally, protect workers' mental health with enforced time off, counseling services, and by normalizing mental health care.

Support Career Growth

Career growth ties directly to retention rates. For every 10 months an employee stays in the same position, their likelihood of turnover increases by a [percentage point](#). Schedule quarterly meetings with employees to check in on their career goals and plan their growth.

Provide Flexible Benefits

Allow employees to opt into services like childcare and transit reimbursement so they can proactively choose the benefits that would actually help them.

Build Relationships With Your Surrounding Community

Your relationships, both within and outside of your community, have an impact on workers' self-image, fulfillment, and stress levels.

Host regular events that are open to the community. Reach out to staff at skilled nursing facilities and social workers. These may very well be the people who are directing residents to your community.

In healthcare, we should be **leading the charge** against mental health stigma. Caring for our senior population can be both tremendously rewarding and psychologically taxing. We need to fight the shortage of geriatric care professionals every way we can, including making it **easier for workers**, both from a practical and social standpoint, to **seek help and access medication**.



Pritma Chattha
VP of Healthcare Innovation
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CREATE COMPELLING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Accurate Job Descriptions

Your first priority when writing a job post is to make sure it's accurate. Be careful when recycling job descriptions—"close enough" is rarely truly close enough.

Inaccurate job descriptions can attract the wrong candidates, slow down hiring, and irritate candidates. If an employee is let go for failing to meet responsibilities that are not accurately represented in the job description, it's even possible they could sue for wrongful termination.

SEO Quick Tips

With search engine optimization, you can make sure your job posts are seen by more candidates. Here's how:

- Create a separate web page for every one of your open positions to make it easier for candidates to find your jobs through a search engine
- Include the most important information, such as job title and location, in the title of the job description
- Include keywords related to duties, requirements, specializations, and work culture in the body of your job description ("entry-level," "flexible," "full time," "associates degree," "remote," et cetera)
- Use job titles that are common to your industry, even if internally you call the roles by different names
- Try to include multiple descriptions of the same role so candidates will see your post no matter their search term ("CNA," "nursing assistant," "healthcare assistant," et cetera)
- Include relevant links to your other webpages to give candidates a sense of your work culture and business goals

Unbiased Language

After you've drafted your job description, read it through one more time searching for biased language that could negatively affect your hiring. Use gender-neutral language (including the singular "they") when talking about candidates and hires. Overall, candidates [prefer generic language](#).

Consider your requirements carefully, and try to only require what's truly important. The popularity of college majors varies by [gender](#) and [ethnicity](#), and degree of experience will depend on a myriad of factors. Make your job post as open as you reasonably can.

It's not perfect, but a tool like the [Gender Decoder](#) can help you guess if candidates assume you favor one gender over another.

Visual Interest

Make your job posts easy to read, even if a candidate only looks at them for a matter of seconds.

Include plenty of white space, and break up sections with images from your business.

Include your own unique assets, like logos and company colors. Keep your templates consistent, both for the sake of professionalism and to make them easier to control and create.



YOUR FREE JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

CHECKLIST: ELEMENTS OF A STRONG JOB POST

Check off each of the following items before you publish your newest opportunity.

- A header including the job title and location
- Accurate description of duties and responsibilities
- Salary range
- Benefits
- Education requirements
- Experience requirements
- Neutral and unbiased language
- An equal opportunity employer statement
- A clear call to action instructing the candidate on their next step

TITLE

[Full-Time/Part-Time/Seasonal] [Job Title] at [Business], [City]

QUALIFICATIONS

- Required licenses
- Required credentials
- Required availability

RESPONSIBILITIES

List of duties, such as:

- Evaluate patients' needs
- Assess residents' progress
- Document care in electronic medical records system
- Supervise aides
- Assist residents with personal care

SALARY

- Base pay or salary range
- Information about frequency of pay

BENEFITS

List of benefits, such as:

- Medical insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance
- Life insurance
- Disability insurance
- Tuition reimbursement
- Student loan support
- Child care
- Transit reimbursement

ABOUT [YOUR BUSINESS]

- Brief description of your organization's mission
- Any awards or notable achievements that set your business apart
- Link to website or employee testimonials

CALL TO ACTION

Insert a button or form where candidates can begin their application



DISTRIBUTING JOBS ONLINE

Pick Your Job Boards

Since many job sites charge a fee, you'll probably need to be selective about where you post your opportunities. If you're not using a service like Applio, which distributes to dozens of job sites for a bundled fee, your best bet is to start with the most popular job boards. Most healthcare candidates come from widely used job sites like ZipRecruiter, Indeed, and Google Jobs. Prioritize these. You can branch into healthcare-specific job boards as necessary.

Post to Social

Once your job is live, share it to your social media channels. Distribute jobs on whatever social channels you maintain. Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and TikTok are all good options. One study suggests that almost [92% of healthcare professionals](#) use social media while at work, making it an extremely promising channel to connect with qualified candidates.

Promote With Job Ads

Sponsored job ads are one more way to connect with passive candidates. Job ads can be digital (including Facebook and Indeed campaigns), but they can also be more catered to your local media. Employers can advertise jobs on local radio, with billboards, and even with vinyl car wraps.

Encourage Sharing

On social media, you can encourage your followers to share your job openings, which is one of the easiest (and cheapest) ways to expand your reach. Ask your followers and current employees to share openings, and make it easy for visitors to subscribe to your job notifications.



RECRUITING IN-PERSON

Host Hiring Events

Along with appearing at existing job fairs and connecting directly with local medical programs, employers can host their own community hiring events. Schedule time for open interviews and facility tours to make it as quick and easy as possible for candidates to apply.

In-House Training

Some roles, like certified nursing assistants, can be trained in-house. Offering in-house training attracts candidates who are new to healthcare roles, and allows employers to train workers on the exact practices and policies that are relevant to their business. Free training programs can greatly improve a business's reputation in their surrounding community.





HOW RECRUITMENT TECHNOLOGY HELPS

Recruiting technology has a marked impact on staffing. Perhaps most critically, recruiting software affects [how quickly employers can make an offer](#). During a worker shortage and intense competition for candidates, hiring more quickly is the most effective change employers can make to secure qualified employees.

Streamlined Hiring

A digital applicant management platform may allow you to move through recruiting, hiring, and onboarding from one place. Since employers spend less time manually inputting information and can more readily access candidate histories, they're better able to make hiring decisions rapidly. Apploi data shows that a full-service human capital management model cuts down on days-to-hire by 71% over time.

Recruitment That Supports Retention

Your recruiting strategy and your retention strategies can and should be closely interlinked. Digital recruitment technology that records, stores, and organizes candidate information can dramatically reduce the risk of clerical errors that would impact administrative tasks, including payroll. A service like Apploi uses information gathered at onboarding to create digital employee records that make it easier to monitor work-readiness and communication history.

Reduced Costs

The bundled cost of a single recruiting platform is often far cheaper than paying to post and promote jobs at individual rates. Staffing technology like Apploi cuts costs even further by including background checks, license verification, credential management, and digital onboarding tools.



Applii is on a mission to help healthcare hire, onboard, and retain staff more successfully with smart job distribution and better engagement. With automatically created digital employee records and up-to-date credential analytics, we make it easier to keep your staff work-ready, whether you're a team of tens or hundreds.

Interested in learning more about how you can recruit, hire, and onboard healthcare staff quickly?

CONTACT US TODAY

for a free demo of our end-to-end solution.
