Hiring and Staff Training

A repeatable system for choosing fairly and helping new team members succeed



PRACTICAL GUIDE / WORKED EXAMPLES / EDITABLE TEMPLATES

Tools for independent restaurant owners and managers

Start with one practical change

Use this toolkit to define a restaurant role, run consistent interviews, and turn the first seven training shifts into observable skills. It is an operating aid, not an employment contract, legal opinion, or food-safety certification. Examples are hypothetical and written for a US context. Before use, check your location’s employment, wage, scheduling, accommodation, youth-employment, and food-safety requirements with qualified local help. Do not collect sensitive applicant information in these worksheets.

Inside this toolkit

1. Define the job before the person
2. Run a consistent interview
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Make the templates your own

Read the short guide, work through the example, and choose the forms you need. The printable forms follow the guide. The companion Word file lets you change instructions, add your restaurant name, and replace every blank or bracket before use. Duplicate a clean copy for each new shift, campaign, employee, or event.

Edition October 2026. Examples are original and hypothetical. This is an operating resource, not legal, employment, accounting, or food-safety advice. Confirm location-specific requirements and get qualified review where needed.

Define the job before the person

Begin with the work that is actually uncovered. Review two weeks of rosters, overtime, service bottlenecks, and manager rescue tasks. Decide whether you need an additional person, a different shift pattern, clearer station ownership, or more training for the current team.

- Write three to five essential outcomes: accurate orders, a stocked station, safe handoffs, or a completed close. Separate must-have capabilities from skills you will teach.
- State the actual schedule window, work location, compensation structure, reporting line, and how applicants can request help with the application process. Confirm required pay disclosures locally.
- Describe the work accurately without turning preferences into unnecessary barriers. Replace “rock star” or “perfect culture fit” with observable, job-related behaviors.
- Choose the interview criteria and questions before meeting candidates. Use the same core questions and comparable information for everyone.

Hypothetical role: Cedar Table needs a part-time dinner server for two specified weekday evening shifts and one weekend shift. The essential outcomes are accurate order entry, clear allergy-question escalation, timely communication, and a complete station close. Previous experience with its particular POS is preferred, not essential; paid training covers that system.

A clear role also improves retention. Show candidates the actual service pace, expectations, schedule, and training plan. Do not imply guaranteed hours, tips, promotion, or long-term employment unless you intend and are authorized to make that commitment. Set the review date and hiring owner before posting.

Run a consistent interview

Use a short structured conversation: explain the role, ask the same core questions, offer a job-relevant scenario, invite candidate questions, and explain the next step. Allow examples from school, volunteering, caregiving work, or other industries when they demonstrate the required skill.

- Ask: “Tell me about a time you noticed an error. What did you do, and how did you check the result?” Look for accountability rather than a perfect story.
- Ask: “Two tables need help and a food order is ready. How would you decide what to do first?” Give everyone the same restaurant context.
- Ask: “Describe a time you learned a new process. What feedback helped?” Look for a concrete practice and correction loop.
- Ask: “These are the required shift windows. Can you meet them?” Keep the question about availability, not family arrangements, religion, disability, or the reason for availability.

Keep inquiries focused on job qualifications. Do not ask about pregnancy, children, medical history, religion, age, or other protected personal characteristics; pre-offer disability inquiries are specifically restricted. US coverage and local rules vary. If a candidate requests an accommodation, route it through your appropriate process rather than scoring the request. (Source 1)

Hypothetical scenario: “A guest says they have an allergy. You do not know whether the sauce contains that ingredient. What do you do?” Provide the house procedure first. Evaluate whether the candidate follows it and asks the designated person, not whether they already know every ingredient. Do not use a live unpaid service shift as an interview exercise. Review any working trial with a qualified wage-and-hour adviser first.

Score evidence rather than chemistry

Immediately after the interview, each interviewer records evidence independently. Score what the person said or demonstrated against the same rubric. Do not score appearance, accent, handshake, similarity to the team, or how entertaining the conversation felt.

Criterion	Evidence to record
Clear communication	States the issue, checks understanding, and explains the next step
Prioritization	Identifies urgency and seeks help when simultaneous demands conflict
Learning and correction	Describes practice, feedback, adjustment, and a check
Procedure judgment	Uses the provided rule and escalates uncertainty rather than guessing

Use a simple three-point scale: 1 = no usable evidence yet or an unresolved response inconsistent with the provided procedure; 2 = workable evidence with a specific gap or prompt needed; 3 = clear evidence, appropriate action, and a sensible check. Mark not observed rather than inventing a score. Ask the same neutral follow-up where evidence is missing.

Hypothetical comparison: Candidate A scores 3, 2, 3, 2, totaling 10 of 12; Candidate B scores 2, 3, 2, 2, totaling 9. That one-point difference is not proof of superior performance. Review the actual evidence, essential requirements, and trainable gaps. Candidate A needs coached prioritization; both need supervised procedure practice.

- Do not invent a pass score after seeing who applied. Decide how criteria will be used before interviews.
- Resolve missing evidence before making a decision where practical. A total is a discussion aid, not an automatic hiring decision.
- Record a concise job-related reason. Keep applicant records in an appropriately restricted system under your applicable retention policy.

Make onboarding paid and observable

Give each new employee one named trainer, one current station checklist, and a predictable way to ask questions. Prepare access, uniform expectations, the shift schedule, timekeeping instructions, and the manager contact before arrival. Keep payroll, identity, and other sensitive records in approved systems, not this toolkit.

Plan required onboarding and job-related training as paid work and record the time. Under US Department of Labor guidance, training can be excluded from working time only when all four stated conditions are met, including that it is voluntary and not job-related. Do not assume a video watched at home is unpaid. Check applicable rules and coverage. (Source 2)

- Explain: describe the task, why it matters, and the approved standard.
- Demonstrate: perform the task slowly, including the judgment points and when to stop.
- Practice: let the learner try with supervision and immediate feedback.
- Observe: ask for a second demonstration without prompting when appropriate.
- Confirm: record what was demonstrated, remaining limits, and the next review. Attendance is not the same as competence.

For safety-critical tasks, use your approved procedures and qualified supervision. Cover illness reporting, hand hygiene, allergen escalation, cleaning, relevant equipment, and emergency reporting without substituting this booklet for local requirements. FDA provides a model Food Code; restaurant oversight is largely state, local, and tribal. (Source 3)

Hypothetical POS lesson: the trainer enters a sample order, demonstrates the correct modifier and allergy escalation, then observes the learner repeating the process twice in training mode. A mistaken modifier becomes a coaching point, not an instruction to practice on an unsuspecting guest.

Use seven shifts to build confidence

The seven-day plan means seven training shifts, not necessarily seven consecutive calendar days. Adjust it to the role, scheduling rules, workload, and learning needs. A person can need more time without being a poor hire. Never sign off an unsafe task to meet a calendar target.

Shift	Main outcome
1	Understands the workplace, reporting routes, timekeeping, and basic safety procedures
2	Can prepare the assigned station with a trainer
3	Can enter or execute standard orders accurately in supervised practice
4	Can handle an exception and escalate uncertainty
5	Can manage a limited section or station with active support
6	Can complete opening or closing checks and explain discrepancies
7	Demonstrates agreed tasks and receives a specific next-stage plan

Hypothetical review: a new server demonstrates accurate standard order entry on shifts 3 and 5 but needs prompts for modifications. On shift 7 the manager signs off standard orders only, schedules two more coached shifts for modifiers, and keeps allergy questions under the designated escalation process. “Needs practice on modifiers” is more useful than “not confident enough.”

- End each shift with three questions: what became clearer, where did you need help, and what should we practice next?
- At two and four weeks, review schedule fit, clarity, support, and demonstrated skills. Ask what surprises the employee encountered.
- Track training completion, repeated errors per comparable opportunity, time to task signoff, and early departures. Use small-team numbers for learning, not unsupported forecasts.
- If a pattern appears across several new hires, improve the instruction or process before blaming individuals.

Job description builder

Fill in one role at a time. Check all advertised terms and local disclosure requirements before posting. This worksheet is not an offer letter.

Field	Complete for this vacancy
Role and location	_____
Manager and employment arrangement	_____
Compensation and applicable benefits	_____
Required shift windows and expected hours	_____
Three essential outcomes	1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____
Necessary job capabilities	_____
Skills we will teach	_____
Actual work conditions and essential duties	_____
Application method and deadline	_____
Application assistance contact	_____
Interview criteria and hiring owner	_____

Hypothetical server wording
“Take and enter accurate orders, explain menu choices, escalate allergy questions through our house process, communicate delays, and complete assigned station checks. Training includes our POS and service sequence. Required availability: [actual shifts]. Compensation: [verified terms].”

Hypothetical line cook wording
“Prepare assigned recipes to documented portions, maintain the station using approved procedures, communicate stock and timing issues, and complete opening and closing checks. Training includes our recipes and equipment procedures. Required availability: [actual shifts]. Compensation: [verified terms].”

Review for unnecessary barriers and vague promises.
Approval owner: _____ Date: _____

Structured interview worksheet

Candidate reference: _____ Role: _____ Interviewer: _____
Date: _____ Same scenario and core questions used: Yes / No

Core question	Evidence notes
What interests you about these actual duties and shift windows?	_____
Tell me about an error you noticed and how you handled it.	_____
How would you prioritize the supplied service scenario?	_____
Tell me how you learned a new process and used feedback.	_____
Using our supplied procedure, what would you do with an uncertain allergy question?	_____

Scenario supplied to every candidate
“You have just been told food is ready for pickup. A guest asks for another drink and a second guest says an item on their plate may contain an allergen. Explain your first steps and who you would involve. For this exercise, the manager handles allergen concerns and another server is available to help.”

Neutral follow-ups
“What happened next?” “What was your role?” “How did you check it was resolved?” “What would you do differently?”

Candidate questions and information to clarify: _____
Essential schedule requirements confirmed: _____
Next step and date communicated: _____

Keep notes job-related. Do not record volunteered medical or other protected personal details here. Route requests for assistance appropriately.

Anchored interview scorecard

Score independently before discussing. Use the same criteria and anchors for everyone. If evidence was not observed, mark N rather than treating it as a low score.

Criterion	1 Needs evidence	2 Workable with gap	3 Clear evidence
Communication	Issue or next step unclear	Explains issue but needs a check prompt	Clear issue, next step, and understanding check
Prioritization	Misses urgent issue after context	Recognizes urgency but needs help sequencing	Addresses urgency and delegates appropriately
Learning	No concrete correction example	Describes practice with limited checking	Describes feedback, change, and result check
Procedure judgment	Guesses despite supplied procedure	Uses procedure after a prompt	Uses procedure and escalates uncertainty

Criterion	Score or N	Specific evidence
Communication	____	_____
Prioritization	____	_____
Learning	____	_____
Procedure judgment	____	_____

Total only if all observed: ____ / 12
Missing evidence to obtain: _____
Essential requirements confirmed separately: _____
Trainable gaps and planned support: _____
Job-related decision and reason: _____

Hypothetical evidence note: “Asked the manager to address the allergen concern, requested a colleague collect the ready food, and told the waiting guest what would happen next.” This supports a prioritization score better than “seemed like a good fit.”

Reviewer: _____ Date: _____ Next step: _____

Paid onboarding checklist

Employee reference: _____ Start date: _____ Trainer: _____
Manager contact: _____ Scheduled paid training hours: _____

Task	Owner	Completed or next action
Confirm schedule, arrival instructions, and actual role terms	_____	_____
Set up approved payroll and employment paperwork process	_____	_____
Explain timekeeping and how to correct an error	_____	_____
Show reporting routes for concerns and emergencies	_____	_____
Review applicable illness and hygiene procedures	_____	_____
Demonstrate allergen question escalation	_____	_____
Identify equipment requiring training or authorization	_____	_____
Provide current station and recipe procedures	_____	_____
Practice POS or station tasks under supervision	_____	_____
Explain breaks and scheduling through approved policy	_____	_____
Schedule end-of-shift and seven-shift reviews	_____	_____

Teach back
Ask: “Who do you contact if you are unsure?” “How do you record a time correction?” “What should you stop and escalate?” Do not treat a signed checklist as proof the employee can perform every task.

Unresolved access or equipment issue: _____
Tasks not yet authorized for independent work: _____
Training time recorded through: _____
Employee questions and manager response: _____

Seven shift training plan

Set actual dates around the employee’s schedule. Each shift ends with a brief check-in. Extend training when evidence or safe practice requires it.

Shift and date	Practice focus	Evidence and next step
1 _____	Orientation, timekeeping, reporting, safety routes	Learner explains who to contact: _____
2 _____	Station setup and service sequence	Observed setup with checklist: _____
3 _____	Standard orders or recipe tasks	Accuracy in supervised practice: _____
4 _____	Modifiers, exceptions, escalation	Correct response to scenario: _____
5 _____	Limited live responsibility with support	Observed tasks and prompts needed: _____
6 _____	Opening or closing and handoff	Discrepancy identified and escalated: _____
7 _____	Demonstration and next-stage plan	Signed-off tasks and further coaching: _____

Use after every shift
One task that improved: _____
One situation that remains unclear: _____
Practice task for the next shift: _____
Trainer and date: _____

Hypothetical adjustment: standard orders are signed off after repeated accurate demonstrations; modifiers remain supervised for two more shifts. The employee is not assigned unrestricted solo responsibility simply because shift 7 has arrived.

Coverage plan while the trainer is coaching: _____
Fallback trainer if the named trainer is absent: _____
Paid training hours planned and actual: _____

Skills signoff and early review

Use observed behavior, not confidence alone. Status options: Not introduced / Practicing with support / Demonstrated to standard. Set the required observation for your operation.

Task	Required observation	Status and reviewer
Station setup	Uses current checklist; identifies missing item	_____
Standard order or recipe	Accurate supervised demonstrations	_____
Allergen escalation	Follows the approved route without guessing	_____
Guest or station handoff	Communicates status and checks understanding	_____
Opening or closing	Completes checks and reports discrepancies	_____
Timekeeping	Explains entry and correction process	_____

Evidence dates and notes: _____
Tasks still restricted or supervised: _____
Additional practice and trainer: _____

Two or four week conversation
1. What is clearer now than on your first shift? _____
2. Which expectation or schedule detail surprised you? _____
3. When was it difficult to get help? _____
4. What should your trainer explain differently? _____

One manager action with owner and date: _____
One employee practice goal with support: _____
Next review: _____ Manager: _____

Team review metrics to choose from: completed training shifts; time to specific task signoff; repeated errors per observed opportunity; and early departures with voluntarily shared reasons. Small samples are signals to investigate, not a basis for broad claims.

Sources and use notes

Official reference sources were checked during preparation in October 2026. Numbered source mentions in the guide refer to the entries below. Original worksheets, examples, and calculations are 63Labs planning tools, not material endorsed by these organizations.

Source 1 EEOC Prohibited Employment Policies and Practices

Job-related selection and restrictions on discriminatory hiring practices and pre-offer disability inquiries. This toolkit is not a legal compliance guarantee.

https://www.eeoc.gov/prohibited-employment-policiespractices

Source 2 US Department of Labor Fact Sheet 22 Hours Worked

Conditions for excluding training from compensable work time under the FLSA. Local law and coverage require separate review.

https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/22-flsa-hours-worked

Source 3 FDA Retail Food Protection

Model Food Code and state local and tribal oversight. No food handling time or temperature standard is prescribed by this toolkit.

https://www.fda.gov/food/guidance-regulation-food-and-dietary-supplements/retail-food-protection

Before use

Replace hypothetical values with verified restaurant data. Confirm responsibilities, approval limits, dates, offer terms, and local requirements. Do not send drafts, promise prices, or change operating procedures until the appropriate owner has approved them. The pack does not include legal contracts or ongoing updates.