

Best Practices: Innovative Ideas for the Labour Shortages

By Rosalie Hughes (Hughes Recruitment and Strategy Collective)

Tourism and hospitality are highly people dependent industries, and many Saskatchewan employers are facing reduced applicant pools, higher turnover, seasonal gaps, and increased

team burnout. This resource is focused on practical strategies to help businesses rethink how they attract, design, and retain talent.

Reframing the Labour Shortage

What Has Changed

The labour market has shifted due to:

- Fewer young workers entering service roles
- Higher expectations for flexibility and balance
- Increased competition across industries
- Greater focus on purpose and workplace culture

What This Means

The old model of posting jobs and waiting no longer works. Employers must:

- Clearly communicate their vision and values
- Build a strong employer brand and network
- Offer flexible work structures
- Actively engage with active and passive talent

Start with Vision

Successful organizations

- Start with a clear vision
- Build teams aligned to that vision
- Focus inward instead of copying competitors

This creates workplaces that attract both customers and talent!

Expanding the Talent Pool

Moving beyond traditional hiring pools is critical. Key opportunities include:

- The 10 to 3 workforce such as parents and caregivers seeking flexible daytime roles
- Retirees and semi retired professionals seeking purpose and connection

- Newcomers to Canada through partnerships and training pathways
- Hidden local talent including career changers and underrepresented groups

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Rethinking Job Design

Sometimes the job itself is the barrier

Common challenges

- Long or inflexible shifts
- Too many responsibilities in one role

Solution: Micro roles and split roles. Micro roles break a single job into smaller, focused tasks such as prep, service, or cleaning, allowing individuals to work in areas that match their skills and availability.

Split roles divide full time positions into shorter or more flexible shifts, making it easier to accommodate different schedules.

Benefits

- Attract more candidates
- Increase flexibility
- Reduce burnout
- Improve reliability

Leveraging Technology and AI

Technology should support staff and improve efficiency

Examples

- Online booking and automated communications
- Scheduling tools and AI chat support

- AI for job postings, content, and training materials
This allows teams to focus on higher value guest experiences.

Building Talent Pipelines

Long term success comes from relationships, not reactive hiring

- Partner with schools, agencies, and community groups
- Stay connected with past and seasonal employees
- Build ongoing talent networks

Creating Brand Champions

Employees play a key role in attracting talent

- Encourage authentic content sharing
- Showcase real workplace experiences
- Support and reward participation

This approach strengthens both employer brand and talent attraction by providing a genuine view of the workplace.

Practical Actions You Can Start Today

Small changes can create significant momentum.

Recommended starting points

1. Clarify your organizational vision
2. Introduce flexible scheduling options
3. Explore overlooked talent pools
4. Build local partnerships
5. Implement technology and AI tools
6. Empower employees as ambassadors
7. Reflect and iterate continuously

Even implementing one or two of these strategies can begin to shift outcomes.

Key Takeaway

The labour shortage is not just a hiring issue; it is a strategic challenge. Organizations that succeed will think creatively, build authentic workplaces, and invest in long term talent relationships.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rosalie Hughes

Founder & CEO of Hughes Recruitment and Strategy Collective and the driving force behind its growth and reputation, bringing extensive connections across industries and communities throughout Saskatchewan and Canada. Deeply committed to the province's long-term prosperity, she has dedicated her career to supporting economic development through strategic workforce and recruitment initiatives.

With more than 15 years of recruitment experience, Rosalie excels at helping organizations adapt to evolving labour market conditions and find creative solutions to their workforce needs. Her expertise lies in identifying and nurturing talent, building strong employer partnerships, and ensuring local businesses have access to the skilled workers they need to thrive.