

# THE GET AND KEEP PLAYBOOK

The ultimate playbook for getting the right people into your workforce... and setting them up for success so they stay.



**A**s a service contractor, you're well aware that hiring is one of the toughest parts of the job. Over the past fifteen years alone, supply and demand in the labor pool has seen wide changes. In the U.S., for example, there was a high supply of applicants seeking jobs, but low demand following the housing bubble pop around 2006, when nearly six people were vying for every one job available. As a hiring manager, this meant you could be choosy, set high requirements for your applicants and really take your time trying to find the best fit. Gradually, though, the labor market inverted. By 2018, there was less than one person available for a single job opening across the U.S. labor market. Even factoring in the slingshotting effects of COVID, which produced a short-term spike in layoffs around March 2020, the labor pool is back to being extremely shallow, meaning you have to work harder to find, hire and keep your workforce.

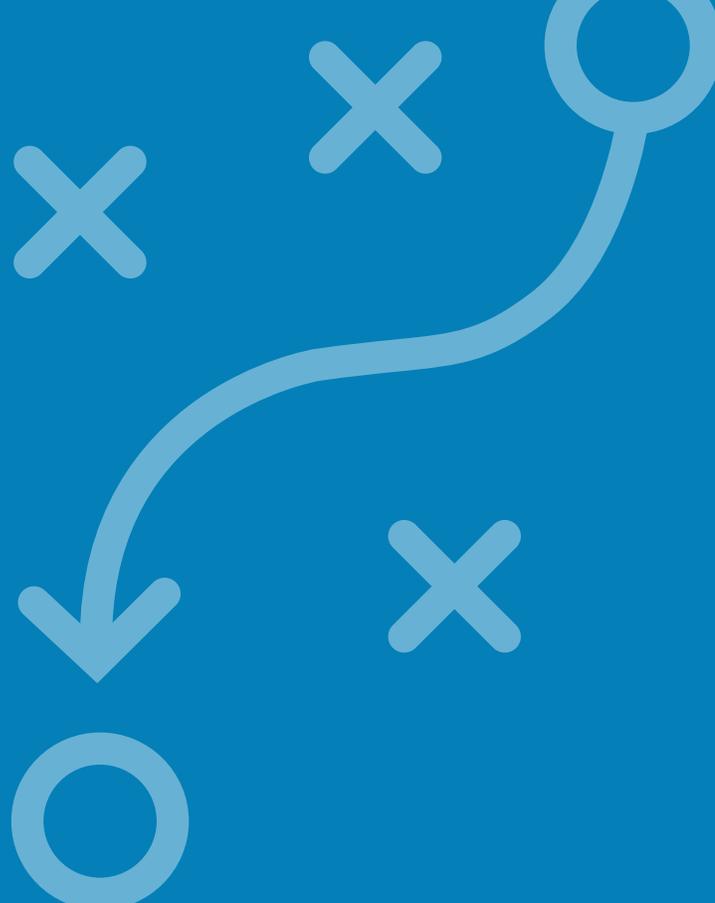
In this playbook, we outline the predicament of the current labor market, and suggest some tactics for how to get — and keep — your employees. With an improved hiring process and retention effort, you can save time, money and headaches when it comes to keeping your security or cleaning company fully staffed and ready to tackle your customers' needs.

## The Skinny on the Current Labor Market

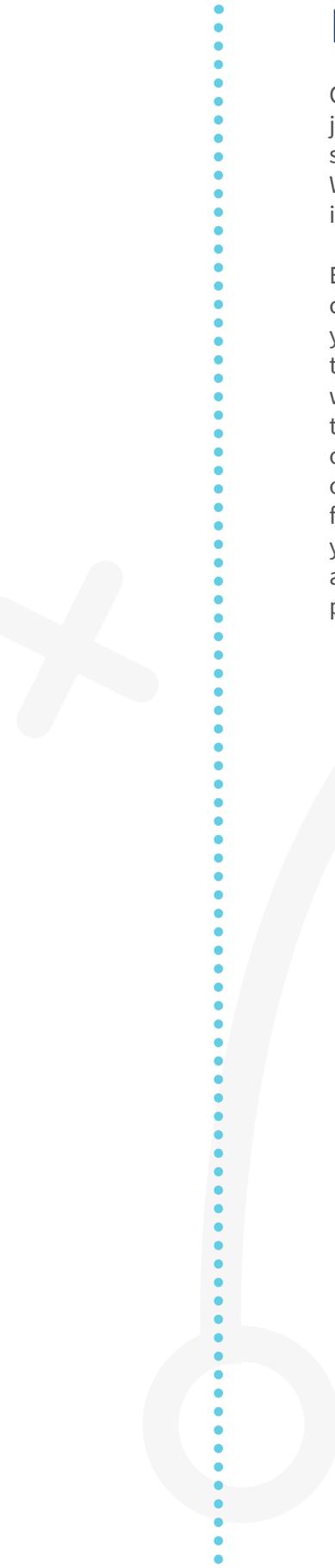
Over the past few years, industries across the world have been riding a rollercoaster of employment, unemployment, hiring freezes and hiring shortages. While the global pandemic is certainly adding to the bumps, other factors (like Brexit, for example) are adding to the mix.

The bigger issue with the current hiring market is that application volume still isn't matching the demand for open positions. Some regions are reporting there is less than one person available per open job in the current market. That's a problem for your hiring efforts. If the applicants don't come, then your positions stay open, leaving your contracts short-staffed. That leads to overtime and extra costs on your overhead to complete the same amount of work. So how do you attract applicants to your open jobs? Let's explore.





**GET**



## Promote your jobs.

One side effect to the labor market is classic supply and demand: rising job board advertising costs. Due to the lack of job seekers, employers have sponsored more job listings on job boards, leading to an all-out bidding war. With placements coming at a premium, companies have had to aggressively increase their job board spending budget simply to remain visible.

Before you start throwing excessive amounts of money around, though, consider your options. From a recruiting perspective, it's important to diversify your applicant search. We've found one source of job postings may garner a ton of applicant volume, but with a lower quality — meaning you may end up with candidates in your hiring funnel who either have little interest in being there, or who aren't qualified based on the job you're trying to fill. Or, the opposite may be true, where a particular job board may only generate a sliver of applicant volume, but they're highly qualified and potentially a great match for long-term retention within your company. It's important to evaluate what your KPIs are in the hiring process and parcel out your advertising budget accordingly. Once you do, there are [many job boards available](#) to post open positions through, each offering a variety of benefits.

- Indeed. With over 250 million unique visitors every month, Indeed is one of the largest job sites in the world and gives job seekers free access to job search tools. Indeed integrates with most applicant tracking and HRIS systems, easing the hiring process.
- Zip Recruiter. More of an aggregator than a job board, Zip Recruiter specializes in posting jobs to multiple sites and recruiting applicants to your job.
- Social media. Even though some social media companies are scaling back on their job listing strategies, social media is an effective, and highly visible, way to advertise your open jobs.

Some examples: Facebook has grown to nearly 15% of organic applicant volume over a 12-month period. Even as Meta reevaluates job integrations, Facebook is a key opportunity for some regions to post job openings. Another option? LinkedIn. [LinkedIn reports](#) that 87% of candidates are open to new opportunities — that's a pool of potential just waiting for your HR team.

- Google. Google now allows advertising above their 'Jobs' section. In fact, they now have two sections for advertising: one for 'Google Guaranteed' companies and a traditional pay-per-click advertising model.

## Become a marketer.

One of the best ways to improve your candidate quality is by improving your job listing. A job listing for potential employees is like the back of a book for potential readers. If the blurb on the back of the book is unclear, people won't read it. If it isn't representative of the actual content inside the book, people will buy it, decide they don't like it, and put the book down. The same is true for job listings. If the listing is unclear, people won't apply. If it misrepresents the type of work officers and cleaners would be responsible for, they apply, decide the job isn't right for them, and turn over quickly. But, there are some things you can do to improve your job listing to turn your "book" into a bestseller.

### **The elevator pitch.**

One of the missing ingredients in most job descriptions is the why. Why should someone apply for your job instead of a similar role at another company, especially when the market is flooded with competitive opportunities? Add a short elevator pitch to the top of your listing. Speak to what's unique about your company, what might make it a good fit for the right candidates, or why people should be excited to join your team. If this is your story, you want people to read it.

### **Highlight any benefits.**

If you offer insurance benefits, pay extra for less desirable shifts, offer set schedules or provide employees with enhancement opportunities, include those benefits somewhere in your listings. Pro Tip: If you can't afford to pay rates as high as some of your competitors, describing the unique benefits you offer can attract candidates who might otherwise skip applying because your rates are lower than what your competitors might be advertising.

### **Make job responsibilities crystal clear.**

This is a case for surprises being a bad thing. Don't surprise new employees with responsibilities they didn't anticipate. For example, failing to mention that moving heavy objects is a requirement of the job may quickly prove to be a deal-breaker on day one for a new employee with a medical condition that prevents heavy lifting. The better you set expectations, the greater likelihood your new hire sticks around.



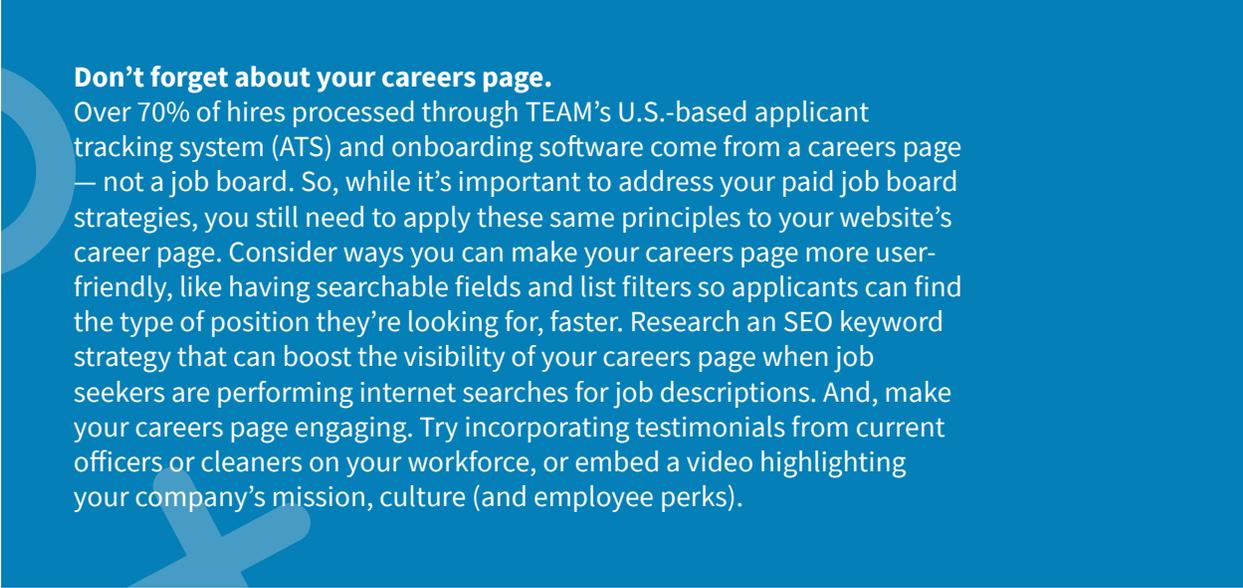


### **Format listings to make it easy to read.**

Long paragraphs become walls of text on mobile devices, which can encourage candidates to skim your listing or skip it altogether. If people don't bother to read your listing, it won't matter how clear your responsibilities are, how enticing your benefits are, or how compelling your elevator pitch is. Try to incorporate lists for job responsibilities, requirements and benefits. That way, each piece of important information is on its own line, making it easier for candidates to scan for key details and avoid overwhelming applicants with information.

### **Be social.**

Social media helps boost your available job visibility. And, with mobile-friendly postings, you can get more eyes on available opportunities through targeted ads and organic scrolling. Plus, applicants can get a quick, clear look at your company and its brand simply by glancing at your social media accounts.



### **Don't forget about your careers page.**

Over 70% of hires processed through TEAM's U.S.-based applicant tracking system (ATS) and onboarding software come from a careers page — not a job board. So, while it's important to address your paid job board strategies, you still need to apply these same principles to your website's career page. Consider ways you can make your careers page more user-friendly, like having searchable fields and list filters so applicants can find the type of position they're looking for, faster. Research an SEO keyword strategy that can boost the visibility of your careers page when job seekers are performing internet searches for job descriptions. And, make your careers page engaging. Try incorporating testimonials from current officers or cleaners on your workforce, or embed a video highlighting your company's mission, culture (and employee perks).



## Maximize organic visibility.

Just because you should be putting an emphasis on paid advertising to fill your hiring pipeline, you shouldn't forget about organic visibility. Organic visibility shows job postings ranked solely by relevance or date versus jobs that may require other criteria — and are free to job posters.

There's a caveat. With the current, highly-competitive hiring market atmosphere, free placements that used to garner traffic for a company are now buried on the third or fourth page of search results, behind the high volume of sponsored advertisements. A few tips to consider with your organic strategies:

- Indeed only accepts one post per location, per job title, every 120 days. For example, if using the job posting descriptor of “General Cleaner, Atlanta, GA” would severely limit your organic visibility. Instead, try using a more specific location and title, or narrow in on geographies by zip code. Don't forget, you can sponsor as many duplicate posts with the same location/title as you like.
- Rotate your job postings every 60 days — minimum. This doesn't mean reactivating an old job posting. In order for some job boards to recognize the post as 'new', it truly must be created as net new with a fresh job ID.
- Use simple job titles. Job titles like “Cleaners – Hiring Bonus – All Shifts – Multiple Locations” won't show up on an organic feed. Be mindful of descriptors you use. In the U.S. security industry, for example, we've found that the term “[officer](#)” rather than “[guard](#)” garners nearly twice as many searches, and four times as many clicks.

## Expand your search.

The truth is, COVID-19 has changed the hiring landscape and it's too early to tell if the changes are permanent. Between unemployment benefits, child care concerns and fear of the virus and its variants (or a mixture of all three) it's possible we could see continued impact on when applicants return to the hiring market. And, even as applicants do return, there could be a shift in who is coming back. A recent [ZipRecruiter survey](#) found 70% of job seekers who last worked in the leisure and hospitality industry say they're now looking for work in a different industry. This isn't specific to the security and cleaning industries, but if the hospitality industry is having this type of movement, it's logical to hypothesize much of the service contractor employee base may be looking to switch industries as well. As a result, you may need to rethink the type of candidate you're trying to attract, what qualifications are make-or-break prerequisites, and what kind of investment will need to happen during the onboarding phase.



### **Make it speedy.**

Do what you can to make the hiring process quick and easy for the applicants that do return so they don't abandon the process halfway. Quick apply tools and ATS systems with data capture features help gather applicant information, meaning you have a larger pool of candidates to draw from, even if they aren't able to complete an application in full.

### **How to move even quicker.**

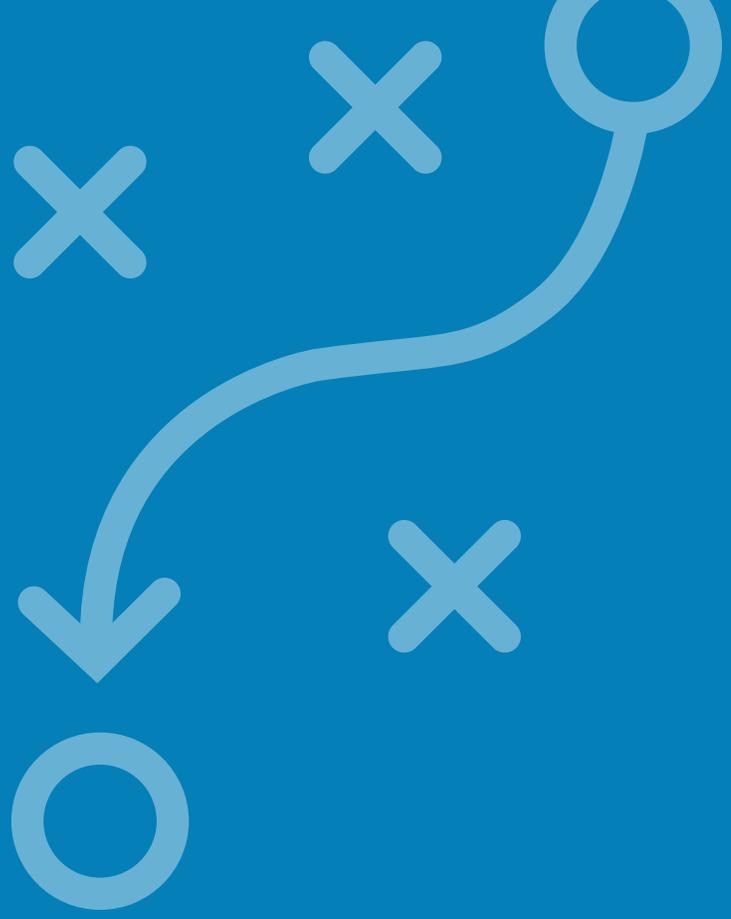
In this intense job market, it's time to take a hard look at what's important and what's less important when it comes to hiring. That's right — it's time to shorten your job applications. We've seen interested applicants migrate to the "lost" category when they're overburdened by questions related to their past experience. When it boils down to it, do you really care where an applicant worked six years ago, or their supervisor's name? Focus on the questions that look at a candidate's capability to do the job. Reliable transportation? Check. Applicable experience? Check. Ability to lift? Check. Key in on what really matters to your open jobs and focus on collecting secondary information later.



## Whatever you do, don't ghost.

If you're reading this, you know how hard it is to source and hire qualified applicants to join your team. You also know that even after you find a seemingly good candidate, it's a whole other challenge actually converting that new hire into an employee who makes it through the first 60 days. It's not uncommon to hire a new employee, and then have that employee "ghost" you (never show up) before day one.

Knowing how challenging this is for your business, it's also imperative that you as the hiring agent don't ghost your potential employees, either. Make sure your hiring process is a well-oiled machine, with technology automations speeding up the process wherever it can. Don't leave applicants in the hiring funnel too long. Don't ignore potential candidates, or waste time holding out on an offer. While you still want to find a candidate who is a good fit, gone are the days that afforded you time to be super selective in your hiring schemes. If you don't move quickly, your competitors will.



**KEEP**



## The best solution for hiring is retention.

This may sound like an inspirational poster, but it's true. If your employees are happy and satisfied with their work, the odds of them wanting to leave for a different opportunity decrease significantly. This is a key metric to improve, especially as the security and cleaning industries experience notoriously high turnover rates even in pre-pandemic years, with estimations ranging between 100-400%. As you're optimizing your hiring processes, it's important to put at least an equal focus on your retention strategies in order to keep the employees you've already made an investment in.

## Be flexible.

The workforce — no matter the industry — is putting a higher value in company benefits like work-life balance as a result of the pandemic. Some common tactics companies are using to attract hires, like remote working options, just aren't a viable option when it comes to physical security or cleaning positions. That's where thinking outside the box can play a part.

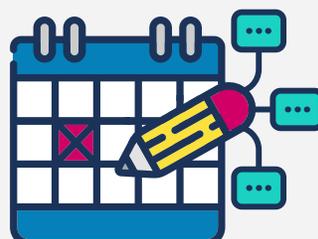
### **Look at scheduling, for example.**

The ability to use a mobile job board for self-scheduling activities in the security industry, for example, could be a way to improve employee engagement and retention, with the added bonus of reducing high-cost activities like overtime. Self-scheduling works by empowering officers to offer their shifts to others without needing to involve a scheduler or supervisor. Others can then pick up the open extra work, keeping shifts filled and closing any gaps without needing to go back-and-forth with a manager. The ability to swap shifts depending on what works best for an officer at any given moment is a huge step in the right direction in terms of employee engagement.

We've heard of security companies using a self-scheduling feature to pilot programs that take it one step further and strategically leaving a small percentage of the global work schedule unfilled. By hiring a subset of officers with the agreement they set their own schedules by autonomously filling open shifts, rather than having a set schedule as a starting point altogether, they're approaching retention from a whole new angle. Even if an officer leaves the company, they could still technically remain in the company system in this self-scheduling program. It's a win-win, as the company in question doesn't lose out on their investment into hiring, training and onboarding the officer, and the officer has a flexible avenue for extra income. Plus, if they ever chose to return to work full time, their employee records are pre-existing, streamlining the re-hire process. It's a tool that benefits any generation of the workforce, but as younger generations are already accustomed to leveraging technology in their everyday lives, it can especially be leveraged when retaining those officers.

The cleaning industry can also leverage flexible technology to attract and keep your workforce. Streamline your scheduled work tools so that cleaners can get to their worklist quicker. Explore demand-based cleaning models rather than interval, timed cleaning loops (because, let's face it, not all jobs are created equal. Some areas, like restrooms, need to be serviced at a higher frequency than, say, a landing space located on an upper level of a building). Avoid tasking your cleaners non-billable "busy work" and avoid burnout. And, leverage tools like mobile forms, which can be accessed and submitted by your cleaners in the field to generate real-time reports and visibility. Once you have your eye on all of that, you can reassess how much time it takes to complete tasks within your scheduled work, better plan and distribute your cleaners, and shuffle cleaning rotations so cleaners are able to have a break from certain tasks that might be less desirable (like disinfecting high-traffic areas for COVID safety.)

Think of ways you can get the benefits you already offer into your employees' hands, faster. On-demand pay tools can give your employees access to their income when they need it, rather than having to wait out a regular pay cycle without compromising your regular payroll schedule or adding more work to your HR team's to-do list. When supported by an API connection to your workforce management solution, on-demand pay promotes financial stability for your employees without being a hassle for your back-office staff.





## Communicate.

From supervisors, cleaners and guards in the field to back-office staff, employees across your business need to be able to [receive and send messages across all platforms](#). Key functionalities to look for include messaging tools that can send informative (one-way) communications, or responsive (messages meant to elicit a response) communications, with sub-messaging feature support based on responses received. This fosters a communication channel where cleaners and guards can ask questions, reply to work site instructions, manage safety and job site checkpoints and have a direct line of communication with their supervisor, and vice versa. Depending on what kind of solutions are available to your field-based cleaners and guards, look for technologies that can deliver messages via SMS text or push notifications. Technologies with messaging functionalities should also be filterable, so you can target your messages to the appropriate audience depending on subject matter to individual staff, groups or your global workforce based on location, employee classification, job name or other criteria.

## Recognize and reward.

If people are being told they're doing a good job (and, perhaps more importantly, are rewarded for doing so), they're less likely to leave in search of something else. There are obvious tactics you should always be aware of, like how your compensation and benefits package stacks up against a competitors'. But, we know that high labor costs in general make it difficult to constantly keep raising that bar. So, consider other avenues to boost morale and employee engagement. Underappreciation and burnout are common for frontline workers, especially given the added stress and implications of COVID-19. Think about offering employee referral programs with incentives for staying within the company for a certain period of time. Work in signing bonuses into new hire contracts that are paid out over six months or more, ensuring you see a return on the investment you put into new employees. Recognize high-performing officers and cleaners, as well as managers and supervisors, and offer professional development, trainings and certifications that increase their skillsets and foster career growth within your company. Perhaps there's the opportunity for a mentorship program to develop your frontline staffs' skills, creating a natural pipeline to fill future manager and supervisor positions. You could even consider recognizing specific workers within the reports you supply back to your customers, strengthening the bond they have with a specific location or contract and increasing the amount of ownership they have on their responsibilities at that job site.





## Rounding it all together.

The hiring world has changed. In ten years, things might look drastically different, but the reality of the here and now is this: you need to work harder to get, and keep, your workforce. Immediate tactics to explore and put into action can include:

- Look at how you're promoting your jobs. Weigh paid advertising along with organic visibility and take a hard look at your job titles and descriptions.
- Expand your search. The same people who have filled your hiring pipeline in the past may not be the direction it's headed in the future. Keep an open mind. And, if you identify an untapped market before your competitors, you're one step ahead in keeping your contracts fully staffed and serviced while everyone else is still scrambling to cover existing shifts and work.
- Look at how you can keep your current workforce happy, alongside your hiring strategies. Bump up the monetary incentives where you can, but don't forget about other ways you can recognize and reward your workforce (like investing in their professional development for long-term, in-company growth).
- Leverage flexible technology to help support work-life balance demands from employees, without creating more work for your back-office staff. And, communicate. Use mobile tools to your advantage in keeping your workforce engaged.



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