



Workforce Recruitment Trends & Best Practices in U.S. Commercial Baking

Key Findings from 2021 Workforce Gap in U.S. Commercial Baking Study

In October 2021, Cypress Research conducted a member-based study on behalf of the American Bakers Association and the American Society of Baking to assess challenges and best practices in workforce recruitment. Research focused on the following positions in the U.S. commercial baking industry: hourly skilled and unskilled production and transportation. 2016 data comparisons are sourced from ABA and ASB's 2016 Workforce Gap in U.S. Commercial Baking study.

1. **The top 5 recruitment challenges for baking employers have not changed in the last five years.** Identifying talent pools and building awareness about baking manufacturing careers have remained as some of the primary recruitment challenges for hourly skilled and unskilled production positions. Up to two-thirds of baking employers anticipate the challenges will continue to be significant for their companies over the next five years.
2. **Baking employers have expanded their portfolio of recruitment strategies to address workforce challenges.** Since 2016, there has been a significant increase in the number of companies using formal employee referral programs, social media channels, virtual or in-person local career fairs, and company-specific career fairs to attract hourly, skilled and unskilled production employees.
3. **The top recruiting strategy in 2021 is online job boards.** 98% of employers are using online job boards, such as BakingWorks.org, to recruit for hourly skilled production positions and 90% for hourly unskilled production employees.
4. **Baking employers are reporting high to severe shortages among company drivers.** 50% of baking companies predict the high to severe shortage of drivers will continue into the future.
5. **Company-specific career fairs have significantly grown in popularity among employers.** Only 28% of baking companies were hosting virtual or in-person career fairs for hourly skilled positions in 2016, while 69% of companies are now doing so.
6. **Employers' focus on recruiting female talent to baking manufacturing careers has risen dramatically.** In 2021, 96% of baking employers have a focus on recruiting women – a 22% increase from 2016.
7. **Baking employers are investing in strategies to foster a positive workplace environment and culture.** Most companies reported that they have implemented these strategies, including via internal company websites or social media channels to connect employees, and encouraging collaboration and teamwork.
8. **Second chance workers are being introduced to baking careers at growing rates.** The share of baking companies with some or considerable focus on recruiting second chance workers has increased 40% since 2016.
9. **More baking employers are taking a new approach to the qualifications needed for skilled production employees.** 77% of companies have redefined their qualifying criteria to include candidates who may lack some of the required skills but demonstrate the potential to acquire them on the job. Only 59% of companies in 2016 were utilizing this strategy
10. **The relationship between schools and industry employers is becoming stronger.** Baking employers who have relationships with two-year technical colleges and/or local vocational high school programs has increased in the past five years to 77% and 65% respectively.

ABA and ASB members can obtain the full report by contacting:

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