

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF THE YEAR: NOURISHING TALENT

Babson College

Introduction:

The Nourishing Talent program at Babson College Dining is designed to support and develop our frontline employees, ensuring they feel valued, motivated, and equipped to provide an outstanding student experience. By investing in staff well-being, accessibility, and professional growth, we cultivate a positive workplace culture that enhances both employee satisfaction and student engagement. Through initiatives such as transportation support, wellness benefits, and programs that celebrate the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our team, Nourishing Talent empowers our staff, strengthens campus connections, and reinforces our commitment to fostering a welcoming and thriving community.

Essay:

A key focus of Nourishing Talent is enhancing accessibility and supporting work-life balance. To help ease daily commutes, we provide associate shuttles from local transportation hubs to campus, ensuring staff can arrive on campus reliably and with less stress. We also prioritize health and well-being by partnering with the College to offer recreation center memberships, giving team members access to fitness and wellness resources that contribute to their overall happiness and productivity.

We recognize that work is just one part of our team members' lives and embrace them for all that they are. To foster connection and celebrate our community, we host an annual year-end celebration where employees and their families come together to enjoy food, camaraderie, and appreciation.

Our program is built on fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment where everyone feels valued. Dining is one of the most representative groups on campus, bringing together individuals from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. To celebrate this richness, we invite team members to share meaningful recipes from their lives. Each month, a selected recipe is featured in our dining hall, accompanied by a photo and story from the team member, highlighting the diverse perspectives that make our community stronger.

Introduction:

Our employee retention program has been highly successful, with a retention rate of 91% over 3 years reflecting our commitment to a supportive workplace. We build lasting connections by showing genuine curiosity about our team's interests and goals, valuing them beyond their job titles. Transparency is key—we engage in open conversations about career growth, ensuring employees feel heard and supported. This approach fosters a strong sense of belonging and purpose, creating an environment where team members are motivated to stay and thrive.

Essay:

One of the ways we've improved retention is by embracing the unique skills and passions of our team. For instance, a dining hall supervisor with a talent for construction has become an invaluable asset beyond his primary role. His expertise has also transformed our special events, from designing stunning photo backdrops to stringing lanterns for Lunar New Year celebrations. By recognizing and utilizing individual strengths, we empower employees and deepen their investment in our team's success.

Transparency is another cornerstone of our retention strategy. Instead of relying solely on annual performance reviews, we engage in ongoing, open conversations about performance and career aspirations. This proactive approach allows us to create a clear path for employees to grow from their current roles to their desired positions. By fostering open dialogue, we demonstrate our investment in their future, leading to greater job satisfaction and long-term commitment. Through curiosity, transparency, and meaningful engagement, our employee retention program has created a thriving workplace where team members feel valued and inspired to stay.

Introduction:

A strong workplace culture not only encourages employees to stay but also inspires them to refer others, helping us build a more connected and committed team. Since launching our referral program, over 35% of our current workforce has been hired through employee recommendations, allowing us to address hiring challenges with strategic incentives.

A new job can be overwhelming, and we recognize the importance of supporting employees through that transition. To ease the adjustment and encourage retention, we've introduced signing bonuses for hourly team members, an incentive typically reserved for salaried employees, setting us apart from competitors and attracting top talent.

Essay:

Like many in our industry, we have faced hiring challenges across all levels. To address this, we introduced signing bonuses, a perk not usually available to hourly staff, giving us a competitive edge. These bonuses have helped us attract and retain high-quality team members who may have otherwise sought opportunities elsewhere. Offering financial incentives signals our commitment to investing in our employees from day one.

Beyond signing bonuses, our referral program has significantly boosted recruitment and engagement. Employees who enjoy their workplace naturally become our best advocates. We implemented a structured program that provides bonuses at 45 and 90 days of employment to both the referring employee and the new hire. This not only incentivizes recommendations but also encourages long-term retention. As a result, word-of-mouth has become one of our most effective recruiting tools, helping us build a dedicated team that values our workplace culture. Through these efforts, we've created an environment where employees feel valued, leading to higher retention and a steady pipeline of new talent.

Introduction:

From their very first day, we ensure our team members feel valued and appreciated. Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that fosters long-term retention and job satisfaction. To reinforce this, we partner with the campus store to provide welcome packages filled with branded swag to make new employees feel connected to our institution. We also celebrate our team through our biannual Employee Appreciation Week.

Essay:

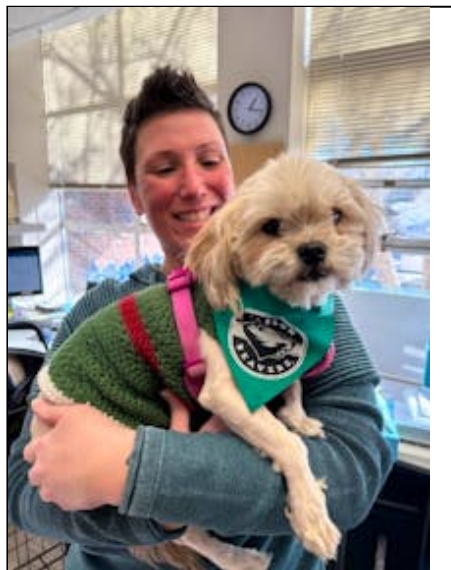
When new employees join our team, we make their first experience memorable by gifting them a welcome package filled with branded t-shirts, hats, and other items. Partnering with the campus store allows us to reinforce institutional pride while making employees feel like a valued part of the organization. We invite our team to proudly showcase their swag every Wednesday as part of the campus-wide "On Wednesdays We Wear Green" initiative, fostering school spirit and team unity.

Beyond daily recognition, we host an Employee Appreciation Week each semester to highlight our team's hard work and dedication. This year, we celebrated by curating a special lunch and dinner menu inspired by the diverse cultural backgrounds of our staff. The meals were served in a private dining area, creating an exclusive and meaningful experience just for them. Additionally, we gifted each team member a personalized gratitude note from the management team and a branded lunchbox as a token of appreciation. These intentional acts of recognition reinforce our commitment to our team, ensuring they feel seen, valued, and proud to be part of our organization. Through these efforts, we continue to foster a positive and engaged workplace.

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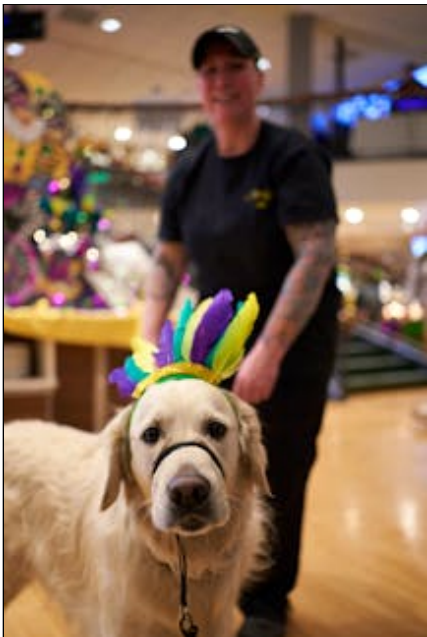
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