

# Implementing Innovative Workforce Management Strategies to Attract and Retain Frontline Staff



As the post-pandemic workforce continues to navigate through uncertainty and a desire for increased control over their work lives, retailers must consequently navigate operational pressures amidst an ongoing labor shortage and changing expectations of today's retail workers.

Addressing these new challenges requires creative approaches and tools to attract and retain valuable hourly associates. Solutions that ensure the associates with the right skills are available at the right time create a win-win solution for both associates and employers to deliver a win for store customers. This starts by retaining good associates through better engagement and flexible opportunities to deliver work-life balance, which each associate may define differently.

Purna Mishra, Founder and CEO at Logile, sat down with RIS News for an exclusive Q&A to explore effective workforce management strategies and solutions today's retailers can leverage to attract, engage and retain associates while concurrently improving store operations and customer service.

**RIS: What is one of the most promising approaches retailers can consider right now to help attract and retain in-demand retail associates?**

**Purna Mishra:** First off, hiring the right people is critical. Then it's about what we can do to retain them. They must get the hours they expect within their preferred availability. Next, it's about what we can do to excite them – what makes their work meaningful. And finally, focus on associates' perceptions of fairness. We want associates to see their schedules and work assignments as fair, as agreed upon when they were hired.



Purna Mishra  
Founder and CEO of Logile

Implementing these imperatives starts with really understanding the business needs. Using labor modeling, we can quantify what skills are needed and at what days and times. Then, the challenge is building a staffing strategy with associate cross-training to determine the right number of full-time, part-time and gig associates to deliver the flexibility needed to meet the business demand. Without building in this flexible capacity for shifts covering multiple tasks, the business will either waste valuable labor resources or tasks will not get done, and the associates certainly will not get the hours they were promised.



It is all about having associates available to work when the work is needed. Providing flexible scheduling to cover the business needs while meeting associate preferences creates a win for customers, associates, and the business. With gig scheduling, on-demand shifts can be created to fill any remaining gaps.

**Purna Mishra**  
*Founder and CEO, Logile*

### **RIS: How can workforce management platforms serve as a strategy to engage associates and increase job satisfaction?**

**Mishra:** Accurate forecasting, demand-based staff planning, and the tools to put the right associates in the right place at the right time, doing the right things in the right way, with minimal waste, are key to customer service, overall customer and associate satisfaction, and delivering top-line sales growth.

A good automated wall-to-wall scheduling process at the task level that is capable of cross-scheduling within the same shift is critical to matching demand staffing to associates' preferred availability, while meeting all scheduling rules and associate preferences. Priority-based scheduling is crucial to ensure that key labor tasks get done and business requirements are met, even if the right number of associates are not available. With the right gig scheduling strategy, week-to-week staffing shortages can be addressed by the scheduling system through shift bidding. Manual edits are not needed, which increases fairness throughout the scheduling process.

Effective mobile associate self-service tools empower associates to manage their schedules and availability. They can swap and replace shifts with other associates, relinquish a shift for a last-minute personal emergency, or review and seek guidance on their tasks. Scheduling logic that accommodates predictive scheduling including advance notice and preferences further engages associates, and improves job satisfaction.

### **RIS: What strategies can retailers leverage at the store level to help make them an employer of choice?**

**Mishra:** It is all about giving associates choices that best fit their needs and situations. Offering full-timers the option of four 10-hour shifts instead of five 8-hour shifts can make a huge difference for some associates. Enabling associates to opt for working only weekdays and working during tough-to-schedule hours may save working parents costly childcare services and greatly improve their work-life balance while giving them the hours they need. Allowing other associates to opt for weekend work and longer shifts may be another win-win situation for both associates and the business.

Associates having a say in how they will be scheduled will make a business an employer of choice. Retailers must remember associates have choices today on where, when, and how long to work, including flexible employers like Uber, Lyft, food service delivery, etc.



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### **RIS: How does the focus on attracting and retaining associates impact the pursuit to also improve store operations and customer service?**

**Mishra:** It is all about having associates available to work when the work is needed. Providing flexible scheduling to cover the business needs while meeting associate preferences creates a win for customers, associates, and the business. With gig scheduling, on-demand shifts can be created to fill any remaining gaps. And, during times when not enough associates are available, prioritizing labor-task work assignments ensures that key tasks get covered by putting the right associate, in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing.

With the right tools in place, retailers can be the employer of choice while satisfying customers, operating great stores, and enabling future growth, while avoiding unnecessary or replacement hires, expensive overtime, and premium shifts and pay.

Hiring the right associates, giving them the hours they need within their preferred availability, exciting them with meaningful work, and delivering fairness through automated scheduling are keys to success in the post-pandemic workplace.

**Watch related webinar on demand:**

**Employer of Choice – How Retailers Like Heinen's Use WFM Strategies to Attract and Retain Frontline Staff.**

<https://www.logile.com/videos/heinens-riswebinar/>

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