



Small Business Bulletin

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Overcoming Summer Workforce Challenges



Summer presents both opportunities and challenges for small businesses. Seasonal demand and warmer weather can boost growth, but increased employee absences, higher turnover among temporary staff, productivity fluctuations and spikes in customer demand can strain operations. To manage these pressures, small businesses should take a proactive approach to workforce planning by preparing for time-off coverage, simplifying seasonal hiring and onboarding, keeping employees engaged during slower periods and adjusting staffing to match demand. With thoughtful planning, businesses can maintain performance, support employee morale and make the most of the summer season.

Strategies for Navigating Talent Challenges During the Summer

Consider these best practices for overcoming talent challenges and boosting employee productivity and satisfaction:

- **Implement early vacation planning.** Encouraging employees to submit vacation requests in advance allows managers to anticipate coverage needs and adjust schedules.
- **Cross-train key roles.** Cross-training employees ensures greater flexibility when absences occur. This approach minimizes disruptions and supports employee development by broadening skill sets.
- **Leverage temporary and on-demand talent.** Partnering with staffing agencies or freelance platforms can provide additional workforce support during peak periods. These options are especially useful for businesses that need seasonal help without long-term commitments.
- **Enhance staff onboarding.** Clear expectations, concise training and regular feedback are critical for integrating short-term employees. Well-prepared seasonal staff can contribute meaningfully, reduce the load on permanent team members and maintain service quality.
- **Use technology to maximize efficiency.** Digital tools can help automate scheduling, streamline internal communication and reduce administrative burdens.
- **Maintain regular communication.** Frequent check-ins and open communication help managers stay informed about team capacity and morale. Listening to employee concerns and recognizing contributions are key to sustaining engagement throughout the summer.

Employer Takeaway

Employee absences, workforce fluctuations and shifting productivity patterns can disrupt operations. By approaching the summer months with strategic foresight, small businesses can mitigate disruptions, maintain performance and foster a supportive work environment.

How Small Businesses Can Protect Their HR Teams From AI-driven Scams

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly changing how small businesses recruit, communicate with and manage their workforce. Whether it's AI assisted resume screenings or automated scheduling and onboarding tools, this technology offers efficiency gains that are especially valuable for lean teams. However, the rise of AI has also introduced a growing risk: increasingly realistic and scalable scams targeting HR teams. For small businesses, where a single individual may manage hiring, payroll and employee data, one successful scam can pose considerable financial and reputational consequences.

AI has enabled scammers to move far beyond the poorly written phishing emails of the past. Today's attacks may include highly polished messages that reference real employees, convincingly written job applications, audio clips mimicking a business owner's voice or even live video interviews with AI-generated faces (also known as deepfakes). These tactics are particularly effective against small businesses because fast decisions, informal communication styles and limited oversight can create openings for deception. Understanding how these scams work and putting simple safeguards in place can significantly reduce related risks.

Consider the following six tips to help avoid AI scams:

1. **Understand how AI has changed scams.** AI allows scammers to create realistic emails, resumes and even voices that closely mimic real people within a business. Small businesses should expect scams to look professional and personalized, making consistent processes more important than gut instinct.
2. **Strengthen hiring measures.** Fake applicants may use AI-generated resumes, documents or deepfakes to appear legitimate. Small businesses should verify identities through secure platforms and ask experience-based interview questions that require detailed, real-world answers.
3. **Verify leadership requests.** Scammers often impersonate business owners or executives to push urgent payroll or data changes. Any unusual request should be confirmed through a second channel, such as a phone call or in-person conversation, before taking action.
4. **Build simple, consistent HR processes.** Clear approval steps help reduce risks, especially when only one or two people manage HR tasks. Requiring dual approvals for payroll changes or access updates makes scams much harder to execute successfully.
5. **Train HR staff to spot AI red flags.** Regular, short trainings can help HR staff recognize evolving AI scam tactics, such as overly polished communication or urgent pressure. Employees should be encouraged to report concerns early and reassured that verifying requests is a best practice, not a delay.
6. **Use technology as a backup, not a replacement.** Security tools can help flag suspicious resumes, emails or documents, but they shouldn't replace human review. Small businesses are safest when technology supports strong processes and careful decision-making rather than automating trust.

Employer Takeaway

As AI driven fraud becomes more sophisticated and widespread, HR teams are among the most targeted entry points for scammers. By staying informed, alert and proactive, HR can transform from a vulnerable doorway into a powerful first line of defense, helping businesses remain resilient in an evolving landscape of AI enabled threats.

Contact us today for more small business resources.

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