



American Bakers Association



# THE WORKFORCE GAP IN U.S. COMMERCIAL BAKING:

TRENDS, CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

*COMPANY BEST PRACTICES GUIDE*



CYPRESS RESEARCH

A S S O C I A T E S

Industry research conducted by Cypress Research Associates, LLC, 2016

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The American Bakers Association (ABA) and the American Society of Baking (ASB) are excited to release ***The Workforce Gap in U.S. Commercial Baking: Trends, Challenges and Solutions***, a multi-phase study aimed at assessing and reducing the workforce skills gap in the baking industry.

The workforce skills gap is a critical issue for U.S. baking. Bakers and all manufacturers are struggling to attract and retain individuals to fill increasingly technical positions. The question of how to fill this gap has become one of the most pressing issues facing our industry.

To address the current gap in technical talent, ABA and ASB commissioned Cypress Research Associates, LLC to collect data from bakers, manufacturers, and other companies throughout the country to produce a comprehensive report on how the skills gap affects the US baking industry. This research includes original survey data from an aggregate of 73% of the US commercial baking industry, making this research truly indicative of the concerns facing our industry and providing a clearer understanding of the scope of the current gap. Most importantly, research gathered through this project offers tools, best practices and resources that can be deployed to help attract and retain a skilled workforce.

ABA and ASB believe this research provides direction on how individual companies can make progress in filling the workforce skills gap. That being said, this project is just the beginning. ABA's and ASB's goal is to continue to work with industry leaders in finding and creating innovative solutions to help attract, retain and develop highly qualified talent. We strongly encourage you and your company to engage in this process. Together we can fill the gap and secure our industry's future.

Sincerely,

**Rich Scalise**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rich Scalise".

President & CEO  
Hearthside Food Solutions

ABA Chairman, 2014-2016

**Mario Somoza**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mario Somoza".

President & CEO  
Pan Pepin, Inc.

ASB Chairman, 2016-2017

**STUDY CONDUCTED BY**



**MEDIA SUPPORT BY**



## The Workforce Gap in U.S. Commercial Baking: Trends, Challenges & Solutions

### COMPANY BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

#### RECRUITMENT

EMPLOYER/INDUSTRY BRANDING	
CHALLENGE	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Making bakery manufacturing <i>appealing</i> to qualified candidates (shift work, plant environment)	Strategies to foster a positive workplace environment and culture (e.g., internal company website/social media; address working conditions; foster collaboration and teamwork)
Lack of <i>awareness</i> of production employment opportunities in <i>bakery manufacturing</i>	Employer branding efforts (e.g., Website/Facebook video on company appeal, working in a manufacturing setting; social media marketing; community events)
	Regular outreach to high schools, technical schools, and community and 4-year colleges about careers in bakery manufacturing

FINDING CANDIDATES	
CHALLENGE	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Candidates do not have the <i>skills</i> we need (i.e., a gap in the pipeline)	Partner with educational institutions (e.g., vocational high school program, two-year technical colleges, four-year universities) on programs that develop candidates who are competent in required manufacturing skills
	Internships/apprenticeships through high schools, community/technical colleges, and 4-year colleges
Difficulties <i>identifying candidate pools</i> for hourly, skilled production positions	Hire hourly, unskilled production employees and train them into skilled positions
	Target underutilized or new talent pools (e.g., women, military veterans, millennials, industry-based talent communities)
	Participate in local job fairs
	Hold company-specific job fairs
	Formal relationship with local, non-profit organizations or coalitions for recruitment resources and potential candidates
	Formal relationship with campus recruiting programs
	Formal employee referral programs
Lack of <i>awareness</i> among candidates about our <i>company's</i> job openings	Use third-party search firms
	Online job boards (e.g., Monster.com, CareerBuilder)
	Online application and resume process via company website (vs. paper-only application)
	Social media recruitment efforts (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn)

COMPETITIVE SALARY/BENEFITS	
CHALLENGE	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Candidates don't appreciate the <i>value</i> of company benefits – primary focus is on cash compensation	Formally communicate the monetary value of company benefits
Offering compensation that appeals to qualified candidates	Competitive starting salaries
Offering competitive benefits	Competitive benefits
	Offer DIY benefits packages that allow employees to custom design their own dollar allocations to particular benefits

QUALIFICATIONS/JOB REQUIREMENTS	
CHALLENGE	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Difficulties accurately <i>assessing</i> candidates' skills/abilities	During hiring process, formally assess candidates for skills such as basic math, technical skills, problem-solving and ability to work in teams.
Job requirements are too <i>rigid</i> for today's changing workforce	Redefine qualifying criteria to include candidates who lack some required skills or bakery qualifications, but have the potential to acquire them

## TRAINING

CHALLENGE	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Lack of formal skills/job training programs for new and existing employees (NOT including regulatory or compliance-based training)	Focus on the following skills (Particularly among machine operators vs. maintenance/engineering): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baking-industry specific technical skills</li> <li>• Leadership skills</li> <li>• Problem solving/decision making skills</li> <li>• General manufacturing skills</li> <li>• Technology/computer skills</li> <li>• Math skills</li> </ul>
	Provide <i>formal</i> INTERNAL training: Formal skills/job training programs for new and existing employees (excluding regulatory or compliance-based training); Formal cross-training
	Provide EXTERNAL training (provided by third party either in-house or off site): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training and certification programs focused on skills deficiency areas (excluding regulatory or compliance-based training)</li> <li>• Partnership with educational institutions on tailored training/certification for potential/current employees</li> </ul>
New/shifting technologies that require training	

**RETENTION**

<b>CHALLENGE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
Difficult working hours/shifts	Modify work hours/staffing to reduce stress
Understaffing the production floor (contributes to employee stress/burnout/loss)	Hire more full-time production staff to lessen employee stress/burnout/loss
Undertrained first-line supervision	Formal first-line supervisor training
Challenging manufacturing environment	Focus on improved work environment, culture
	Use of contingent workers (e.g., temporary workers, contractors)
First-year retention issues	Formal on-boarding process (e.g., Formal employee orientation, introductions to senior leadership, exposure to full production process)
	Formal employee recognition program
Compensation	Performance-based pay (e.g., bonuses, profit-sharing)

**WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT**

<b>CHALLENGE</b>	<b>POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS</b>
Lack of formal accelerated company career path (takes too long for promotion to next level)	Formal, accelerated job promotion program
Lack of clear company career pathway	Outline clear job career pathway to job candidates, new employees, and existing employees