

Combining interviews with a site walkthrough solves walkout problem for food manufacturing customer

Casual staff not showing up for their shifts causes food and beverage manufacturers huge problems. Short-staffed shifts means lost production, the need to do more with fewer resources, lost sales and lower profits. And it's more of a problem than ever with the current labour shortage due to COVID, vaccination concerns, and the closed borders.

Symmetry HR was brought on as a provider of casual labour at the Melbourne production facility of a large healthy meal delivery service and set the task of reducing no-shows.

Background

Our client adopts a 24/7 roster to prepare customer meals. The morning shift production line packages the individual meals, the afternoon shift pick/packs customers' orders into containers, and the night shift gets all the deliveries ready to go out in the morning. Like lots of food & beverage manufactures, the client relies on labour hire agencies to provide casual workers to fill these shifts.



Solution

The client was using two large recruitment agencies to fill its casual positions. With a high number of no-shows and walkouts, however, there was a constant need to hire to fill shifts. When Symmetry was brought on board our first task was to get to know the business and facility inside-out.

As with all customers, we do regular site visits and even more frequent phone calls to intimately understand their business and what they need from us. Our first innovation was to move interviews with new candidates to the client's site. We could do our usual interview and assessments and at the same time show people round the facility. Why is this important? Food and beverage manufacturing facilities can be challenging places to work. They can be cold room environments, like this one is, or have strong odours that challenge the senses. All have strict safety and quality protocols.

Showing candidates around the site lets those who know it's not for them tell us immediately. This almost eliminates walkouts in the first week, which is a major source of attrition. Training is not wasted on candidates who will not stay, saving significant supervisor time. As an extra bonus it lets the client's managers and supervisors have more of a say in the hiring process. We also find people are more likely to show up if they've given their commitment onsite, face-to-face with the client.

“Symmetry HR is the standout agency that services our site and have proven that they can genuinely add value by selecting candidates that can stay and be highly productive.”

Dawn Whiting
Production Manager



The Symmetry Way

While Symmetry HR was brought on board to help solve the no-show issue, the client also wanted to improve the speed and responsiveness of the hiring process. Symmetry does this through general good business practices; we get back to people the same day or same hour if we can, and we're available 24/7 when clients need a shift filling at short notice or have a problem on-site.

We also get to know every client's business inside out. This means we know, for example, what it means for the client's production capacity and profit when a shift goes unfilled. And our dedicated account managers can also anticipate what the client will need and make sure to ramp up recruitment in good time.



Management and Risk

Symmetry also manages the casuals we provide. We communicate the roster to them and talk to them regularly to check how they are fitting in and solve problems. We do this by working closely with the client's managers and supervisors. We're not afraid to raise issues with the aim of improving the workplace culture. At the end of each casual's term we also manage the perm conversion process. This takes away a big admin burden and also ensures clients don't fall foul of the new casual conversion rules by transferring the risk to us.

“The communication and resolving of issues seems to be a seamless and easy process with Symmetry that separates them from other agencies.”

Dawn Whiting
Production Manager

Get in Touch

If you're interested in finding out what Symmetry HR can do to help you speed up your recruitment and find better candidates, get in touch for a 15 minute introductory chat:

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