



Frontline Human Capital
Trends in Hospitality

Introduction

The confluence of new technology, evolving customer needs in an increasingly digital world, and changing workforce expectations is prompting guest-focused organizations to examine how they manage their workforce, with hospitality frontline workers at the center of this rapid evolution.

Deloitte's [2025 Global Human Capital Trends](#) report finds that employers who harness the potential of new technology solutions to empower their workforce can attract and retain top talent, improving business operations and gaining an advantage in the marketplace. This paper highlights three Human Capital Trends that inform how hospitality companies can most effectively equip their frontline workforces to drive improved business and guest outcomes.



Trend 1: Promoting ‘stagility’ while incorporating new technologies

Our 2025 Global Human Capital Trends report finds that 75% of workers are [hoping for greater stability](#) in work in the future. For frontline workers in hospitality, it is particularly challenging to adopt new technology and processes, as many roles consistently engage with guests or are in the field, limiting time to train or space to practice and understand new processes. Changes that aren't perceived as a benefit to the frontline (e.g., easier processes, improved experience) are often a roadblock to adoption. This is particularly important as only 25% of surveyed organizations' employees rate their senior leaders as highly capable in managing change.¹

Additionally, there's a growing disconnect between workers and executives. Many leaders are feeling added urgency to adapt to market changes, in part by shifting teams or work groups, and frequently changing how, where, and when work is done, depending on the need. As a result, they are struggling to find the right balance that workers crave—and the agility that their organizations require to stay competitive.

How can hospitality leaders balance needed frontline change with stability?

- ***Evaluate and implement highest-impact technologies:***

Focus on implementing technology solutions that offer significant benefits to both the business and the workforce. Consider workforce management (WFM) systems that support time-off requests and flexible scheduling for the frontline, while smoothing business operations and driving more consistent shift coverage. Evaluate any new technology for its likely impact on employees, including the potential to disrupt their workflow and compromise guest satisfaction. Wearable technology, like smart bands and smartwatches, enhances both the frontline employee and guest experience in hospitality by aiding in real-time staff communication, such as responses to guest requests. One fintech startup launched a wristband to enable cashless tips from guests through their mobile phones.² Bridging the gap between personal and business technology, wearables offer benefits like improved performance and streamlined communication; for example, a California hotel leverages smartwatch technology to expedite guest requests and staff communication for more efficient service.³

- ***Prioritize organizational change management:***

Facilitate a smooth transition when implementing new technologies by actively involving the frontline employees in the change process. Prepare and support them through comprehensive training and communication that meets them where they are. When using technology to enhance training, favor digital, on-demand solutions that aid accessibility and are easy to revisit.

Trend 2: The shifting responsibilities of managers

There's a lot at stake with the evolution of the hospitality manager role, as happy, engaged frontline workers are 13% more productive, leading to operational stability and better guest experiences, according to respondents of the Deloitte Global 2025 Human Capital Trends survey. What's more, research has found that those who feel satisfied in their jobs are not only more likely to stay but also to directly contribute to their organization's success.⁴

Next-gen technology advancements are automating many of the operational tasks managers traditionally undertook. Technology has streamlined tasks related to scheduling and resource management, guest communications, and operational analytics. These improvements are providing more capacity for value-add activities, such as guest and frontline engagement and strategic planning. With this additional capacity, hospitality managers can improve business operations by anchoring on two critical areas to drive frontline retention and productivity: developing employees and managing the transition to new processes and tools.

Where can managers focus to retain and enable frontline talent?

- **Develop your frontline workforce:** Focus on upskilling and cross-training to drive continuous improvement, engagement, and increased productivity. Develop formalized career paths and seek opportunities to coach and mentor high performers to drive retention and create a path to management. In response to surveys indicating frontline workers' lack of awareness about career opportunities, a packaged foods company launched campaigns to formalize career pathing and invest in skill development, equipping employees with the tools and knowledge necessary for career growth.⁵
- **Embed new technology and ways of working:** Hospitality managers are the link between corporate and the frontline, blending an understanding of the broader strategic vision with the detailed processes and activities of the operation. They can play a pivotal role in ushering in the adoption of new processes and technology, leveraging their understanding of both worlds to both bring frontline insights into process design and to champion and meaningfully frame changes for frontline workers.

Trend 3: Tapping into motivation at the unit of one

The US hospitality sector suffers from some of the highest attrition in the country, with a quit rate nearly twice the average rate across industries as of August 2025, making it one of the most challenging sectors in terms of job retention.⁶ Employees that are unmotivated or burnt out and whose needs aren't met are not only more likely to leave, but they're also prone to delivering poor guest service.⁷ Due to the time required to train new employees, job turnover often leads to lapses in guest service and disruptions to business operations.

As part of their evolving responsibilities, managers should get to know their workers as individuals, learning what inspires loyalty and commitment to the team to drive higher retention, productivity, and service levels.

How can hospitality managers motivate their frontline workforce?

- **Solicit feedback:** Gather data around common stress points, such as scheduling concerns, ease of switching shifts, challenges with childcare support, or lack of learning opportunities, to understand where to make efficient investments to improve the frontline experience (e.g., investing in improved scheduling technology versus increased benefits).
- **Personalize rewards:** In lieu of workforce-wide motivators, fine-tune your approach by offering flexible scheduling, career mobility, and upskilling opportunities based on preferences. Understand what motivates your employees, as it may not be the same across all roles or geographies.
- **Leverage technologies to increase engagement:** Invest in communication platforms that analyze behavioral data and provide advanced solutions for each employee, including customized messages timed to their daily patterns, in their preferred format and language. For example, as cited in our [Human Capital Trends](#) report, Salesforce's communication platform encouraged employees to take regular breaks, leading to a 21% increase in productivity scores. For the frontline in hospitality, this could look like periodic reminders about schedule management tools or relevant development opportunities.

Achieving the ultimate objective

As you position your organization to retain and empower your frontline workers to drive an enhanced guest experience and improved business operations, tapping into these trends will require thoughtful planning and execution. The rewards are within reach—provided you can effectively advocate for change while addressing resistance, adapt managers' roles to support ongoing transformation, and leverage the unique motivators of each employee group.



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Endnotes

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