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Frontline Voices:

Understanding the Human Experience of Hourly Work

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Introduction

Welcome to the world's fastest-growing workforce.

Every day, 2.7 billion people around the world and 82% of U.S. workers clock in to start their jobs as frontline workers.[1] According to the March 2024 jobs report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of part-time roles has susbtantially increased by 691,000.[2]

From Gen Z to retirees who are returning to work, this category of workers continues to grow each year, so employers who hire them need to understand who they are, what they want, and how they expect to be treated.

This report dives into where employers are lacking when it comes to attracting these worker populations, and how they can improve their processes to make them more human-focused, resulting in better hires and better business outcomes.

The Human Experience of Frontline Work

When frontline workers prepare to apply for jobs, they face frequent barriers that even recruiters may not be aware of.

This section uncovers some of those barriers and offers best practices to improve the application experience for candidates, from the moment they find your opening to their first day on the job—and beyond.

Challenges Faced by Frontline Workers

Frontline workers face specific challenges that don't always apply to corporate workers. For example, dated processes that require paper applications, slow response times, and manual movement through the funnel on the part of recruiters serve as major blockers to timely and efficient hiring. But more importantly, they negatively affect the applicant experience.

Frontline employers who do offer more tech-savvy application options need to keep in mind that not all frontline applicants have access to the devices they may need to apply (e.g., a desktop or laptop computer). Plus, the next generation of workers is more likely to apply from their mobile phones.

Communication between recruiters and applicants is another potential area for improvement: Although 65% of frontline leaders feel their communication with their employees is adequate, only 35% of front-line workers agree.[3]

Once hired, recruiting teams need to use the time post-hire to acquaint new workers with the expectations of the role so that from their first day, frontline workers receive the continued support and resources needed to excel at their jobs and exceed both company and customer expectations.