

## MOTIVATING SEASONAL EMPLOYEES TO RETURN

If you operate a seasonal tourism operation, having great qualified and committed employees return to you year after year can be critical to your success. Unfortunately, it is not always easy. Here are some ways to motivate your seasonal employees and keep them coming back:

### **Talk openly with your departing employees**

Before your season ends, ask employees if they would like to return the following season. Sit down with them over coffee, ask about their work experiences with your company, or conduct a formal exit interview.

### **Stay in touch to make employees feel part of the team throughout the year**

Maintain an updated employee list and keep seasonal employees connected by making phone calls, sending cards or mailing company newsletters to them. Encourage them to drop by for coffee if they are in the neighbourhood. Create an Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or other social media page for employees to "like" or "follow" where they can find regular updates and information. The more ways you can make the employee feel like 'part of the family', the more inclined they will be to return next season.

### **Help employees find work in the off-season**

By helping employees find other seasonal work in the off-season, you are showing an interest in their livelihood outside of your operation. If an employee knows they have a job to go to for the time your operation is closed, they will feel more secure and feel more inclined to return to you once the other seasonal job ends. Many seasonal employers have informal arrangements with other employers who operate in the opposite season (i.e. a golf course and a ski resort), thus providing the employee with year-round employment and the employer with a more consistent workforce.

### **Offer employee incentives**

One of the many advantages of having seasonal employees return to your business is that it is not necessary to retrain them each year. Saved training dollars can be used as incentives, such as offering seasoned staff a higher salary upon their return or paying a returning bonus.

Become known as a business that has a reputation that puts employees first. This reputation will keep top seasonal employees coming back to you which is why focusing on your employee engagement and retention efforts are so crucial. When you demonstrate respect, pay attention to employee development, loyalty and morale, you become a magnet for top talent.