



# Staffing Success: The C-Store Workforce Guide

Best practices and guidance for fuel and  
convenience retailers from PDI Technologies

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# Key Workforce Challenges Facing C-Stores

The fuel and convenience retail industry is one of the most complex and dynamic business environments to navigate. Whether you're part of a large chain or an independent operator, ongoing industry consolidation, stiff competition from other retail channels, and staffing challenges can dramatically impact your bottom line.

According to a 2025 Outlook Survey from *CSP Daily News*, 56.4% of c-store professionals identified the ability to hire and retain employees as the top factor that would most affect their business in 2025.






That statistic highlights why the ability to maintain adequate staffing is so critical to staying competitive. Understaffed stores can quickly suffer from inefficiency that ultimately results in a negative customer experience. Moreover, high turnover and recruitment costs directly cut into store profitability.

## About This Guide

This guide highlights the top workforce challenges for the convenience industry, featuring powerful technologies and training options you can use to overcome those challenges.



## The Growing Impact of C-Store Workforce Challenges

Challenge	Impact
 <b>High turnover</b>	Higher labor expenses, operational inconsistencies, and a decrease in customer service quality
 <b>Labor shortages</b>	Understaffed stores, difficulty maintaining operating hours, potentially lower revenue
 <b>Wage pressures</b>	Rising labor costs that reduce profitability or lead to price increases for customers
 <b>Training gaps</b>	Undertrained staff, which negatively affects customer service, store operations, and safety practices
 <b>Employee engagement</b>	Low morale that can result in turnover, decreased productivity, and poor customer interactions

# 4 Critical Areas That Impact Staffing

As the fuel and convenience retail landscape evolves, you must consider both global and local factors when it comes to managing your workforce. Your staffing strategies might vary widely based on specific regional circumstances, including everything from cultural nuances and labor costs to government regulations.



## 1 Labor Availability and Cost

- **Minimum wage laws:** These laws directly impact hiring and retention—and might require higher budgets.
- **Unemployment rates:** Areas of lower unemployment have stiffer competition for workers and require higher wages.
- **Cost of living:** Areas with higher costs require higher wages to attract both entry-level and professional staff.

## 2 Cultural and Demographic Factors

- **Labor demographics:** Areas with a younger population tend to offer a larger pool of entry-level candidates.
- **Language diversity:** If your customer base speaks different languages, you might need to hire multilingual staff.
- **Consumer preferences:** Regional or cultural nuances might require specialized employee awareness training.

## 3 Operational Considerations

- **Store traffic:** In densely populated areas, you might need more staff per store to handle the foot traffic.
- **Seasonality:** Areas with significant tourism or extreme climates might face significant staffing fluctuations throughout the year.
- **Population density:** Highly populated urban areas tend to provide a larger pool of job applicants than rural areas.

## 4 Regulatory Compliance

- **Labor laws:** You must account for any laws that impact overtime, scheduling, or other employment practices.
- **Age restrictions:** Adhering to laws for selling age-restricted products (such as alcohol and tobacco) is critical.
- **Paid leave:** Some areas have mandates that require employers to offer paid sick or family leave.

# Top 5

## Universal Staffing Challenges

### 1. High turnover

The difficulty in hiring and retaining employees causes many c-stores to rely heavily on part-time staff, with many stores exceeding 100% turnover rates annually.

### 2. Compensation

Low wages are a primary factor in turnover, with many employees departing for higher salaries.

### 3. Competition

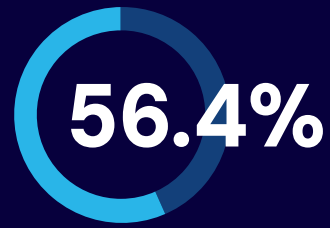
Ongoing competition for talent from other retail channels has placed additional strain on c-store staffing.

### 4. Demographic changes

Younger workers are often less attracted to traditional retail jobs, making it harder to find new employees.

### 5. Overtime

Potential changes in overtime regulations could increase labor costs, depending on how you classify and pay employees.



of c-store operators cite hiring and retention as having the greatest impact on their business.

Source: CSP Daily News



### Turnover Trouble



Full-time employee turnover rate in **c-stores**



Full-time employee turnover rate in other **retail stores**

Source: NACS



### Who Works in C-Stores?

2.74 million c-store jobs in the US

455,000 c-store jobs in the UK

The average c-store employs:

- **6 full-time** employees
- **10 part-time** employees
- **1 support staff** employee

Source: NACS, ACS

# Regional Differences in C-Store Staffing

While some industry challenges are universal, such as the shortage of truck drivers or the rising compensation required for entry-level staff, other challenges disproportionately impact certain countries, states, or even communities. As a result, you might need to adjust your hiring, training, and compensation practices for your specific areas of operation.



## What Differentiates C-Stores around the World?

	US	UK	Australia/ New Zealand	Latin America
<b>Purpose</b>	Primarily focused on convenience, fuel, and on-the-go foods	Known as “local shops,” commonly used for quick-trip shopping	On-the-go hubs known as servos, milk bars, or delis	Focused on fuel, convenience, and prepared on-the-go food
<b>Site location</b>	Often found near highways or gas stations, catering to car-dependent lifestyles	Located in rural, urban, and suburban locations	Found in inner-city, suburban, and remote locations	Found in high-density urban centers and along highways
<b>Offerings</b>	Packaged snacks, beverages, tobacco and limited ready-to-eat food options	Wider selection of chilled foods, bread and bakery items, and traditional groceries	Tobacco, beverages, café-style food, prepared meals, and groceries	Packaged snacks, beverages, tobacco, liquor, and ready-to-go food
<b>Services</b>	Primarily retail and focused on fast purchases	Services such as lottery, bill payments, ATM access, and click and collect	Primarily fuel and convenience locations with carwashes and ATM access	Retail sales, quick-service food, bill payment services, and ATM access
<b>Culture</b>	Mostly utilitarian, catering to quick needs and on-the-go consumption for drivers	Convenience and grocery context, social hub and support network, community center	Broad usage with ease of access, cleanliness, and safety being key factors	Catering to quick needs with a trend toward hubs for social engagement and remote work



# The Great Equalizer: Productivity-Enhancing Technologies

An increasingly popular strategy to overcome staffing challenges is to introduce productivity-enhancing technologies. The most forward-thinking convenience stores continue to invest in their digital transformation to gain a competitive edge.

Doing so can help minimize the chance of human error while automating as many repetitive processes as possible—freeing up your staff for more strategic tasks and customer engagement opportunities. These productivity-enhancing technologies can deliver immediate value across four key business areas.



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## Ways to Elevate Your Business



### Increase staff productivity with:

- Mobile technology integration
- Smart shelving systems
- Electronic shelf labels



### Streamline your business processes for:

- Effective pricing strategies
- Inventory management
- Automated ordering and replenishment



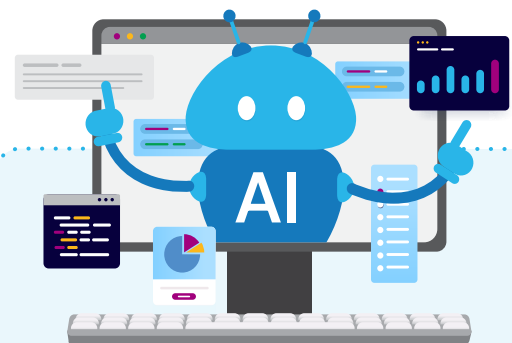
### Gain efficiency from:

- Artificial intelligence and machine learning
- Robotics and Internet of Things (IoT) devices
- Advanced data analytics



### Improve your customer experience with:

- Mobile apps and payments
- Digital store signage
- Self-checkout kiosks



## What Can AI Do for You?

AI can quickly automate manual, repetitive tasks—for both in-store staff and professional office workers. Leverage AI to identify new market opportunities in areas such as:

- Fuel pricing and logistics
- Predictive analysis
- Auto-scheduling and dispatch
- Inventory management
- Video and safety monitoring
- Cybersecurity

# Workforce Training Best Practices

Training your workforce to keep their skills current might seem like a luxury in such a competitive marketplace. In reality, training is one of the smartest investments you can make in your people and your business. Online learning platforms and on-demand training make it easier than ever to give your team convenient, cost-effective, and flexible training options.

Whether you're onboarding new store staff or creating career growth opportunities, training should be a continuous cycle of education, reinforcement, evaluation, and rewards.

## Comprehensive Onboarding

- **Store protocols:** Clearly define store policies, procedures, and expectations for areas such as POS operations, cash handling, and customer service.
- **Culture building:** Reinforce your brand's mission, solidify your values, and facilitate a positive working environment.

## Ongoing Skills Development

- **Customer service:** Explain how to deliver friendly customer service, building skills for effective communication, problem solving, and conflict resolution.
- **Product and service knowledge:** Help your employees get to know the products and services you offer, including promotions and special offers.

## Safety Training

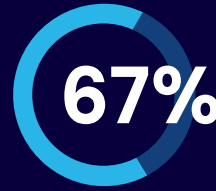
- **Workplace safety and security:** Focus on safety protocols, emergency procedures, and security measures to create a safer environment and prevent shrinkage.
- **Food handling:** Especially if you offer fresh foodservice, keep employees up to date on food safety and sanitation best practices.

## Leadership Training

- **Leadership skills:** Help employees expand their management skills through mentorship, coaching, team building, and performance reviews to boost retention.
- **Industry participation:** Leverage industry-focused training and certification programs such as those from associations such as NACS and Connexus.

## Engaged Employees = Loyal Customers

The most critical factor in building customer loyalty is employee engagement. Consider starting a training and incentive program that includes employees and rewards them for promoting your customer loyalty program.



Returning customers spend on average 67% more than first-time customers.

Source: PDI Technologies

## The Strong ROI of Employee Training

One of the best ways to differentiate your stores is by training your employees to deliver a superior customer experience. Regular training sharpens their ability to understand customer needs and resolve issues—improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

At a deeper level, product training shows your team how to make personal recommendations that delight your customers. Likewise, sales training gives your staff the confidence to promote special offers or upsell, which can lead to larger basket spend and revenue growth.

Lastly, safety and security training can help your team identify suspicious activities, deter crime, avoid accidents, and create a safer environment across your stores.



### What's Popular in Retail Training?

According to a study by Opus, retail service industry leaders are using or likely to use the following training methodologies:

- **Continuous learning** (92%)
- **Hands-on training** (89%)
- **Microtraining** (87%)

### Top 10 Benefits of Training

1. Elevated customer service
2. Higher sales and revenue
3. Increased productivity
4. Marketplace differentiation
5. Less turnover
6. Enhanced brand loyalty
7. Operational efficiency
8. Less store disruption
9. Improved safety and security
10. Lower business risk



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92% of workers think workplace training positively impacts their job engagement.

– Axonify

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Save time and money while keeping your team's skills sharp. PDI University offers the latest training designed specifically for fuel and convenience professionals—featuring live instructor-led classes, on-demand videos, and hundreds of valuable resources. You'll find educational content that benefits employees at every career stage:

- Flexible training formats
- Easy access to expert trainers
- Thought leadership and industry trends
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## About PDI Technologies

With 40 years of industry leadership, PDI Technologies, Inc. resides at the intersection of productivity and sales growth, delivering powerful solutions that serve as the backbone of the convenience retail and petroleum wholesale ecosystem. By “Connecting Convenience” across the globe, we empower businesses to increase productivity, make informed decisions, and engage faster with their customers.

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