

APRIL 2023

Facing the Labor Dilemma

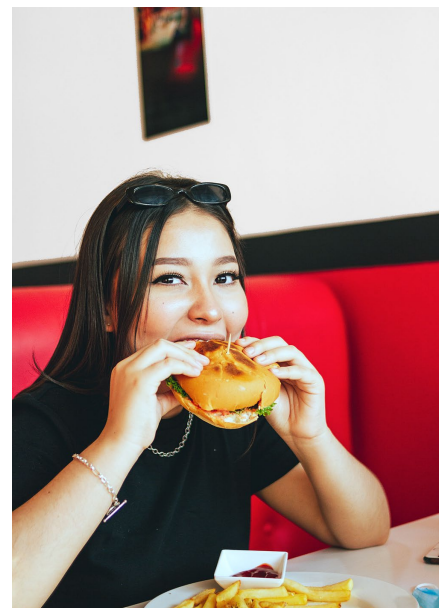
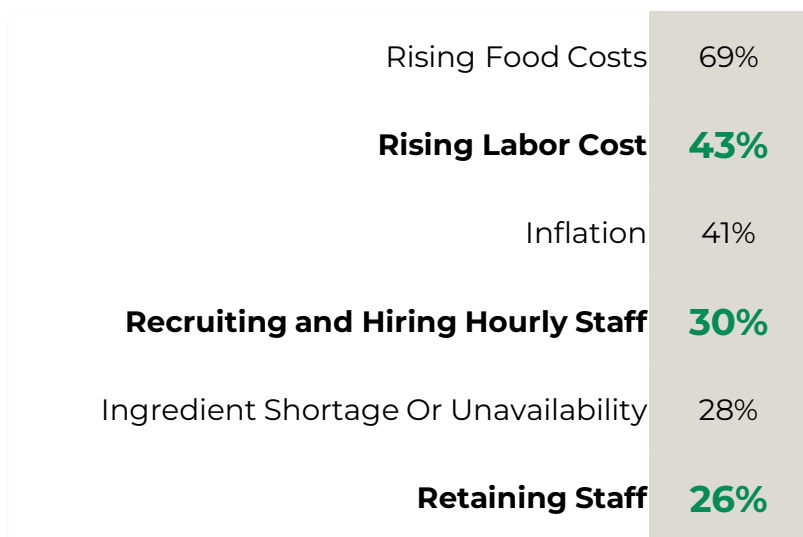
Everyone is talking about hiring more staff – but is that really the solution? Uncover useful labor-saving tactics that reduce back-of-house overhead, improve employee satisfaction and enhance customer service.

Employee satisfaction and patron experience are suffering, but they don't have to.

For years, labor struggles have been the cornerstone of nearly all foodservice businesses – with labor costs, recruiting and retention at the top of the list¹.

With 90 percent of operators reporting that they believe the labor dilemma will continue through 2023², **now is the time for operators to think holistically about their labor program and to get creative with strategic labor-saving solutions.** Gone are the days of seeking a short-term labor shortage “fix” and overlooking its impact on customers; it’s time to implement long-term programs and tactics to enhance employee fulfillment *and* customer service.

DATA DIVE: Top operator challenges¹



¹SupHerb Farms Operator Research Conducted by Datassential, Jan 2023

²Datassential 2022

A man wearing glasses, a white long-sleeved shirt, and a blue denim apron is cleaning a wooden bar counter. He is holding a white spray bottle in his right hand and a cloth in his left. The background shows a restaurant interior with wooden walls, shelves, and a window with plants. The lighting is warm and focused on the man and the bar.

Current Labor Landscape

FOODSERVICE STAFFING EXAMINED

Perpetually in the weeds.

Foodservice operations are being squeezed in almost every department, with most businesses' back-of-house (BOH) getting the brunt of it. Sixty-seven percent of operators are reporting slight/significant understaffing of prep/line cooks and 51 percent slightly/significantly understaffed on dishwashers.

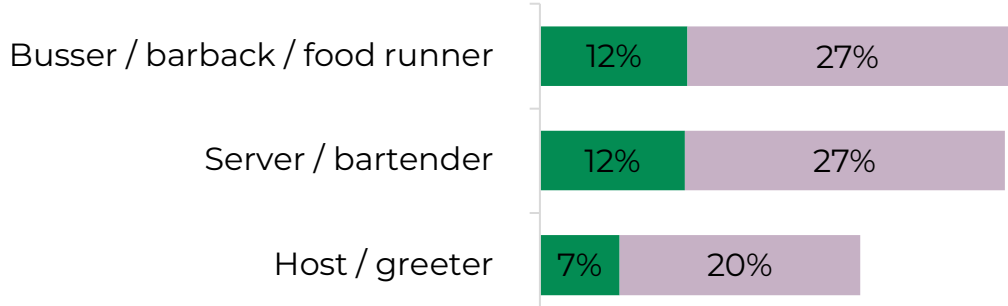


OPPORTUNITY

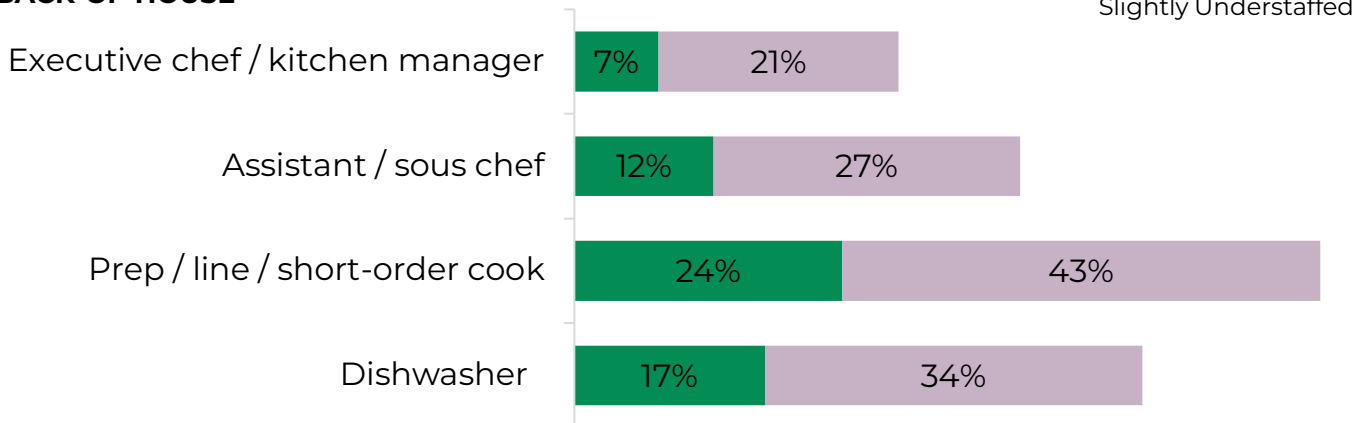
Seeing how significantly understaffed BOH prep cook positions are, it's essential now – more than ever – to get creative with implementing labor-saving prep solutions, such as sourcing pre-prepped ingredients and/or fully-prepped products.

DATA DIVE: Current staffing levels by role

FRONT-OF-HOUSE



BACK-OF-HOUSE



Less skilled workers.

Sixty-five percent of operators are hiring less qualified staff, with 32 percent reporting that their culinary skill is lower today than it was a year ago (just six percent of operators report higher culinary skill today). But for most operators, focusing on filling BOH positions isn't the answer **and here's why:**

- 1 Our job force is becoming more selective, many people do not want to work backbreaking BOH positions;
- 2 Hourly wages are increasing for all positions, making staffing-up not feasible for many businesses;
- 3 Experienced staff are becoming progressively more expensive as well, plus they tend to require additional benefits, salaried pay, and paid time off paired with purposeful retention programs;
- 4 Unqualified staff require more training and with thinly spread managers, 24 percent of operators are reporting cuts to training programs.

65%

of operators are hiring **LESS** qualified staff

32%

of operators report their **culinary skill is LOWER** today than it was a year ago



A woman with voluminous, curly blonde hair is standing in a modern office. She is wearing a white, long-sleeved button-down shirt with the sleeves rolled up and dark trousers. She is looking towards the camera with a serious expression. In front of her is a dark desk with a silver laptop open. To the right of the laptop, there are some papers and a pair of glasses. The background features a large window with a view of a city and a green plant on the right side.

Today's Operator Priorities

**WHAT U.S. OPERATORS ARE FOCUSED
ON RIGHT NOW**

Safety, speed, simplicity.

THE OPERATOR PERSPECTIVE

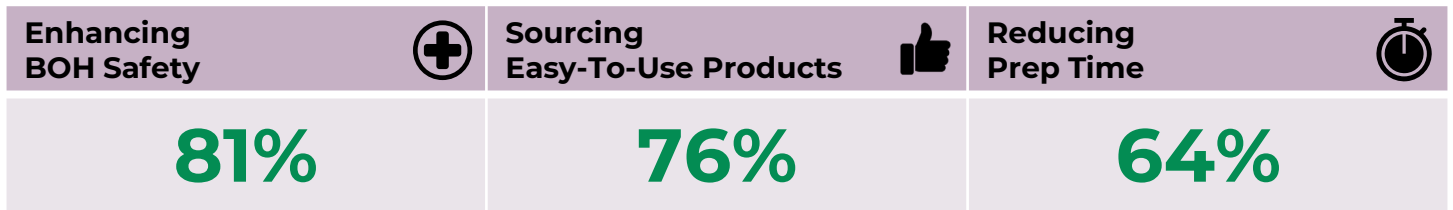
We spoke with hundreds of foodservice operators across the U.S. to discover how current BOH staffing struggles are affecting their priorities. **Eighty-one percent of operators put BOH safety top of their list** (visit page 9 to see the employee's perspective on safety), followed by 76 percent who prioritize easy-to-use products and 64 percent who prioritize a reduction in prep time.

The solution is not always "hire more people." **Operators can adjust different "ease-of-use" and "time-saving" levers in their labor programs to keep BOH workers safe and to reduce staffing overhead.**



Injured BOH Employee, Knife Accident

DATA DIVE: Given the labor shortage issue, how important are each of the following to you?



★ OPPORTUNITY #1

Pre-prepped herb-vegetable blends can take the knife out of unskilled workers' hands.



SupHerb Farms Mango Salsa Blend

★ OPPORTUNITY #2

Pre-prepped vegetable purées, pastes and sauces reduce prep time and are easy to use.



SupHerb Farms Specialty Vegetable Purées

A group of chefs in a kitchen, smiling and interacting with each other. They are wearing white chef coats and black aprons. The background shows a professional kitchen environment with stainless steel surfaces and equipment.

Employee Satisfaction, Safety & Patron Experience

RETENTION & LABOR-SAVINGS
TACTICS THAT ENHANCE CUSTOMER
SERVICE

Start with a holistic approach.

One in four operators report that **employee retention is a major challenge**¹. No business wants to spend the effort to recruit, onboard and train an employee who, in turn, quits weeks later.

Labor touches on all tiers of human requirements – from basic to well-being needs. **The operators who take a systemic approach to identifying and implementing well-rounded labor solutions will retain more staff.**

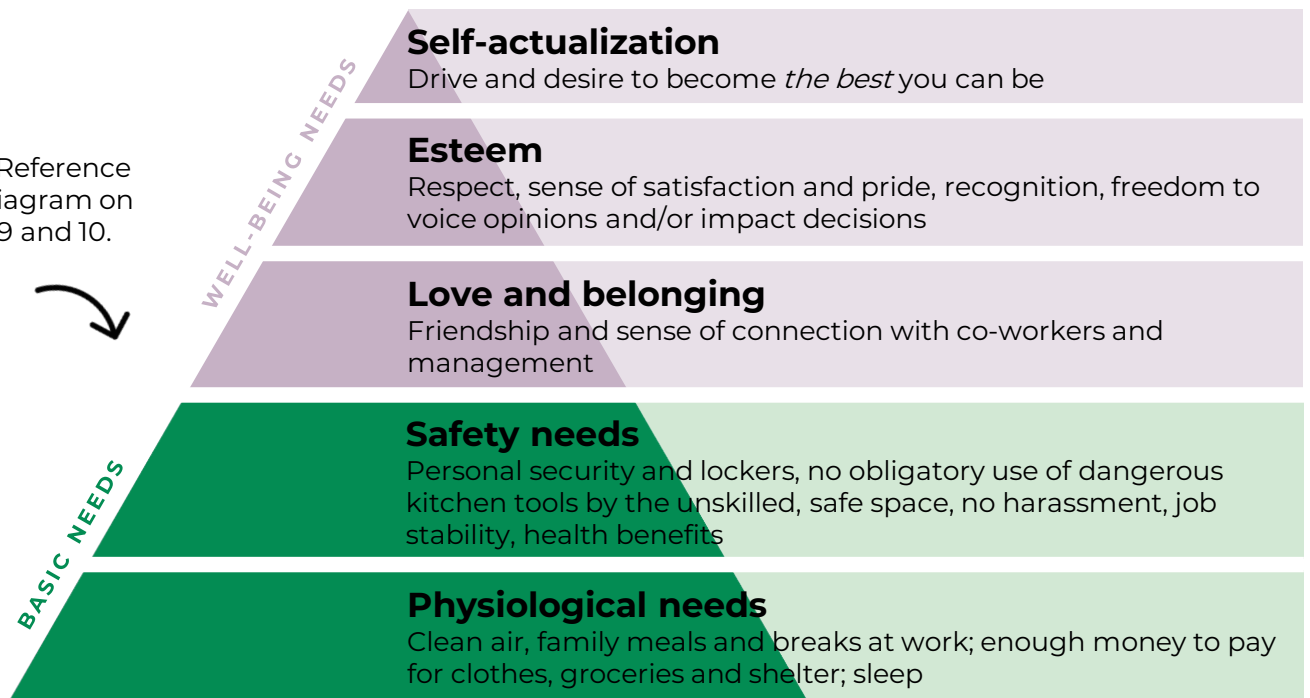


EXPERT INSIGHT

Labor is more than just the number of people on your staff. Looking at labor and how to make it “better” in all facets should be on every operator’s agenda.

MASLOW’S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS² | Adapted for Foodservice Human Resources

Psst...Reference this diagram on page 9 and 10.



¹SupHerb Farms Operator Research Conducted by Datassential, Jan 2023

²[Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs](#)



Continue to address basic needs, like safety.

THE EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE

Foodservice has come a long way over the past few years. The industry at large has recognized that addressing and *guaranteeing* the physiological and safety needs (see diagram on page 8) of foodservice workers are no longer ideals to strive for but **fundamental human rights and vital to employee retention**. Operators across North America continue to improve working conditions, enforce new harassment policies, offer higher wages with health benefits & more.

BRING SAFETY TO THE FOREFRONT

Eighty-one percent of operators have “BOH safety” as their top priority¹. Staff that have lower skill levels or are less-trained typically lead to more BOH safety incidents. In fact, 53 percent of restaurant workers’ compensation claims are made by first-year workers, so take the knife out of their hands by using products that eliminate cutting, like [pre-prepped herb-vegetable blends](#)².

53%

of restaurant **workers’ compensation claims** are made by **first-year workers**²

OPPORTUNITY

Reduce BOH hazards with cut gloves for employees and pre-prepped ingredients and/or fully-prepped products.



¹SupHerb Farms Operator Research Conducted by Datassential, Jan 2023

²2022 Safety and Health Magazine Article, Restaurant Workers’ Compensation

Improve employee well-being and reduce menial tasks.

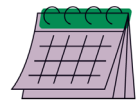
Now more than ever, operators are addressing employee well-being needs with 84 percent of operators putting mental health on a pedestal¹. (See diagram on page 8.)

A growing chain in Colorado has added digital surveys to their pre-shift meetings so staff feel *heard*. While some full-service restaurants in Chicago and other major cities are getting creative by implementing “well-being credit programs” – point systems based on a set of criteria that can offer yoga classes, gift cards, choosing shifts, paid time off (PTO) and more!

What’s more, replacing menial tasks with rewarding duties (when possible) can correlate to improved employee satisfaction and work-life fulfillment.



YOGA



CHOOSE YOUR SHIFTS



PTO

OPPORTUNITY

Consider sourcing more pre-prepped ingredients (like specialty vegetable purées and herb-vegetable blends) so BOH employees can focus energy on other important tasks that are both more satisfying to employees and can positively impact FOH.



DID YOU KNOW?

Thirty-six percent of U.S. consumers want restaurant kitchens to be easier for employees to work in².

84%

of operators say taking care of their employees’ mental health is very/extremely important to them¹

¹SupHerb Farms Operator Research Conducted by Datassential, Jan 2023

²Datassential 2022

Cross-training and redistributing labor is a game-changer for customer service.

Cross-training and redistributing workers across your operation can equate to a cleaner restaurant, better service and happier, more productive workers – and enhanced patron experience.

With the hourly wages of all foodservice positions increasing, nowadays many operators pay the same rate to a dishwasher as they do to a host. **This has encouraged many operators to identify which BOH tasks can be executed by an unskilled FOH worker (when they find available free-time), such as filling squeeze bottles, making a plus-one sauce, etc.**



GM Cross-Training Server on Support Staff Tasks

OPPORTUNITY

If prep cooks could be taken out of the weeds, operators report that those hours could be redistributed to supplement crucial support staff, management assistance & server aid, absolute game-changers for maximizing customer service. (See below data dive.)

DATA DIVE: If you could free up BOH labor and redistribute those hours to other areas of your operation, where would you do so?

Support Staff (bussers, food runners, barbacks, etc.)	47%
Shift Leads/Managers	35%
Servers	32%
Hosts/greeters	12%
General Manager	8%
Bartenders	5%
Other	11%

Opportunities

Labor is more than just the number of workers you hire and manage. Think holistically about your labor program:

- 1 **Reduce prep time.** Pre-prepped ingredients and fully-prepped products (i.e. [vegetable purées](#), [herb/vegetable blends](#), [pastes](#) and [sauces](#)) can reduce prep time and are easy to use.
- 2 **Decrease BOH hazards.** In this limited-labor environment, operators should consider sourcing pre-prepped ingredients (i.e. vegetable purées and herb/vegetable blends) that take knives out of unskilled workers' hands.



Chicken & Waffles with a Gochujang-Maple Syrup and a Fully-Prepped [Mango Salsa](#) Culinary Blend



Steak Pinwheels Using a Fully-Prepped [Chimichurri](#) Culinary Paste

- 3 **Reduce menial tasks to increase employee satisfaction.** Sourcing pre-prepped ingredients allows operators to cross-train BOH employees on FOH resulting in higher satisfaction, as they are no longer doing repetitive tasks and are learning the entire restaurant business, which can lead to future employee growth opportunities.
- 4 **Take prep cooks out of the weeds to have an immediate impact on BOH efficiency, FOH and patron experience.** Operators report that freed up prep cook hours can be redistributed to supplement crucial support staff, management assistance & server aid, absolute game-changers for maximizing customer service.




Globally Inspired Flavor Solutions™

SupHerb Farms® supplies *IQF Herbs*, *Frozen Specialty Vegetables* and globally-inspired *Culinary Blends*, *Culinary Pastes* & *Culinary Sauces* to restaurant chains, grocery retailers and best-in-class food brands who are passionate about sourcing farm fresh flavor.



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