



# Peak Season Staffing in 2023: Optimistic or Obscure?

Survey of HR & Operations executives uncovers the reality of peak season staffing

**Wonolo** |  **HRDIVE**

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# Peak Season Staffing in 2023: Optimistic or Obscure?

Peak staffing season always has a way of sneaking up on you. You're in your post-mortem one second, and then you're looking for workers again in the next. And in between each season, new challenges like changes in customer demand, rising pay, and finding the right amount of quality workers always seem to pop up.

After all the hard work you put into each season, it may feel easiest to wrap it up knowing you engaged with enough workers and got the job done. But the more complex question is, did the job get done well? The answer to that question reveals areas of opportunity to make the next season far less frustrating. And that's the question we asked of 150+ senior HR and operations executives nationwide.

In the spring of 2023, Wonolo partnered with HR Dive on a survey to understand business preparedness for peak staffing season. The findings uncovered that while leaders were optimistic about feeling prepared and filling jobs, they were far less confident about the reliability of the workers or the quality of their staffing plan.

Inside this report, you'll find a barometer to measure your company's peak season against hidden truths you and your HR team probably haven't discussed yet—plus smart new ways to boost your peak season performance.

**150+**

senior HR and operations executives nationwide included in our survey on peak season preparedness

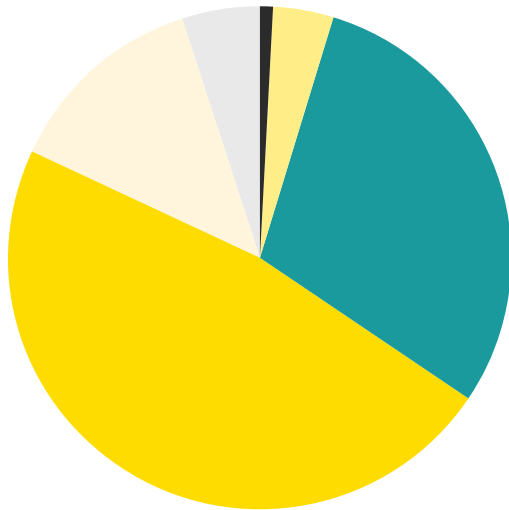




# INITIAL INSIGHTS

Overall, most companies seem prepared for peak season staffing and satisfied with their planning efforts.

## How far in advance do companies develop staffing plans for peak season?



- 1%: 10-12 months
- 4%: 7-9 months
- 30%: 4-6 months
- 48%: 1-3 months
- 13%: <1 month

**5% of executives reported that their companies don't use any staffing plans**

## SUMMARY OF SURVEY FINDINGS

**Companies feel prepared.** Almost all HR and operations executives (94%) believe their companies were very or somewhat prepared for sufficient staffing during their last peak season.

**Companies engage accordingly.** 68% of executives believe their companies engaged with the right number of workers during their last peak season. And 62% say they are more concerned about engaging with *too many* workers in peak seasons than *too few*.

**Companies look ahead.** 91% of HR and operations executives agree it's important to work with seasonal workers who could potentially be brought on as permanent workers.

**Workloads only *slightly* increase.** More than seven in ten HR and operations executives (71%) report that their companies' employees experienced slightly or moderately higher workloads during the last peak season. And just 26% report their employees experienced significantly higher workloads and/or had to work overtime.

**But here's the thing: *it's not always as it seems.*** So, let's peek behind the curtain of peak season and see what else our data showed us, shall we?

# WHAT PEAK SEASON REALLY LOOKS LIKE

While some of our data makes it seem companies have peak seasons under control, we uncovered a different story when looking deeper. From insufficient projections and processes to a lack of reliability and consistency, our research shows the unspoken pain points of peak season staffing.

## 1. ON RELIABILITY

You probably don't need data to tell you that most companies want reliable workers who show up consistently. However, our data did tell us that *actually* finding reliable workers is a significant concern for many companies. In a previous survey exclusive to Wonolo clients, 70% of companies told us that—before partnering with Wonolo—they struggled with workers not returning to do the job due to today's labor landscape.

Meanwhile, in the survey done in partnership with HR Dive, one respondent noted that new workers don't last long in their field and don't complete the tasks correctly or sometimes even complete the job altogether. It's no wonder then that looking ahead, **finding high quality, reliable workers that are trusted (51%), and having consistency from the same workers showing up (51%)** are the two factors that will play the biggest role in companies' future peak season staffing strategies.

Wonolo simplifies finding reliable and repeat workers to augment these concerns. Customers can utilize features that enable job posters to identify workers who performed well previously and invite them back, or even post jobs for a longer duration to ensure interested workers can fill those types of jobs.

Using features like these led one general manager of a food company to tell us how Wonolo enabled their organization to get consistent, reliable workers. "Gone are the last-second dropouts and constantly changing faces... knowing that our jobs of need are filled for the next 30 days with Wonoloers we know and trust helps me better serve my customers through more strategic planning," they said.

**70% of companies struggled with workers not returning to do the job before partnering with Wonolo**



## 2. ON PROCESS

Yes, the research shows companies utilizing the right amount of workers. But it also indicates that companies need help incentivizing workers to complete their jobs, return to future jobs, and plan for both efficiently. To get those better results, you need better processes. *Period.*

Our data indicated that internal processes routinely get in the way of leaders seamlessly preparing for the next season. More than four out of five executives **(82%) agree internal challenges are more likely to deter their companies from adequately preparing for their next peak staffing season than external ones.**

The most prominent internal improvements leaders hope to make for the next peak season are better sourcing (39%) and a better hiring process (32%). To make internal improvements, companies said that **efficient staffing to save time and money (39%)** and **streamlining staffing into a single solution (21%)** would play the biggest role in their upcoming peak season staffing strategies.



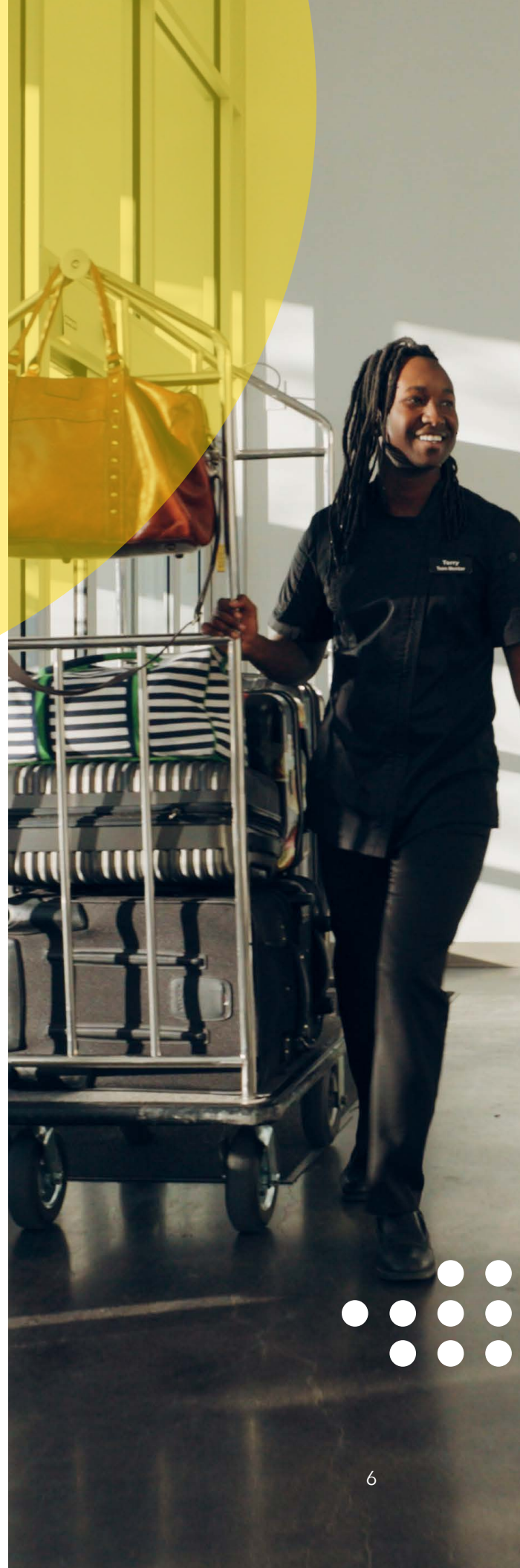
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**When you introduce a streamlined solution, it allows for better communication, understanding of company objectives, and the ability to consistently source workers who meet your specific criteria. And, at the same time, this leads to improved quality in terms of worker reliability—a key concern for today’s HR leaders, according to our research.**

**– YONG KIM –**  
CEO and co-founder of Wonolo

“When you introduce a streamlined solution, it allows for better communication, understanding of company objectives, and the ability to consistently source workers who meet your specific criteria,” explains Yong Kim, CEO and co-founder of Wonolo. “And, at the same time, this **leads to improved quality in terms of worker reliability**—a key concern for today’s HR leaders, according to our research.”

Centralizing everything under a single partner, like Wonolo, can also significantly **reduce administrative burden and inefficiency**. One customer, an operations manager of a professional services company, noted that the most valuable thing about using the platform is how it enabled them to streamline their staffing solutions and reallocate their time to other projects with all the time saved. Overall, Wonolo’s customers save 18 hours per week on average by using Wonolo to fill jobs.







### 3. ON QUALITY

We already mentioned how 62% of companies are more concerned about sourcing too many workers than too few. But what might surprise you is that nearly all companies surveyed indicated that they engage with these workers intending to fill permanent roles down the road. Our data revealed that 91% of executives believe it's important to utilize **seasonal workers who could be a good fit as permanent workers**.

It's clear from this data that there's a benefit to focusing on **quality over quantity** when sourcing workers. Otherwise, "focusing solely on quantity often leads to workers who lack the necessary skills and competencies required for the job," says Kim. "This can result in reduced productivity and quality issues—potentially increasing the overall operational costs."

To meet this desire, "businesses must ensure that new or temporary workers are adequately prepared, familiar with the business' procedures,

and deliver the expected level of quality," says Kim. At Wonolo, businesses can do this with the help of Modular Onboarding, which facilitates Wonoloers' understanding of the job tasks and specifications for an upcoming job so they can hit the ground running when they arrive at the jobsite.

To further deliver on the desire of having fewer workers to source and pay while maintaining a solid output level, Wonolo enables businesses to post Long-Term Jobs ranging from weeks to months. This gives customers the advantages of a traditional temp-to-perm model while enjoying the flexibility and transparency they need.

89% of Wonolo customers told us they've hired workers they previously engaged with into a full-time role. Some customers have even said that "Wonolo's long-term jobs have helped our organization tremendously" including eliminating "the burden of constant job posting" and getting jobs filled with workers they trust.

**89% of Wonolo customers told us they've hired workers they previously engaged with into a full-time role**



## 4. ON PLANNING

In looking ahead, we know internal challenges worry companies the most. We also know they can be mitigated by “carefully planning for the peak season and managing ahead potential risk factors,” as Kim explains.

Beyond the forecasting tools mentioned, one way to plan better is by optimizing your post-mortem. Almost all HR and operations executives (95%) say their companies hold post-mortem meetings to assess their last peak season staffing. But there’s always room for improvement, and here’s how you do it—according to Kim.

- **Set clear objectives.** Determine what specific aspects of the peak season you want to evaluate. For example, do you want to focus on the process or the outcomes? Having strong alignment on objectives will focus the analysis and produce actionable insights.
- **Involve all relevant stakeholders.** Gather feedback from leaders from all functions. If using external staffing partners or online job marketplaces, gather their perspectives on what went well and what could be improved.
- **Analyze key metrics.** First, look at time-to-fill, fill rate, overall cost, worker turnover rates, and performance indicators relevant to a specific industry. Compare these metrics against historical performance. If not available, see if you can find industry benchmarks or leverage your staffing partners and/or job marketplace platforms who have this information.
- **Identify what contributed to a successful (or unsuccessful) peak season.** Determine what led to positive outcomes and identify the root causes of issues where your process fell short. These factors can serve as best practices to be replicated in future initiatives and/or help you address weaknesses to enhance future staffing efforts.
- **Develop a comprehensive action plan.** Prioritize your identified improvement opportunities and outline specific steps, responsibilities, and timelines for implementing the necessary changes—for each stakeholder. Then, continuously evaluate the progress of the implemented changes and iterate as needed to ensure continuous improvement.



**95% of HR and operations executives say their companies hold post-mortem meetings to assess their last peak season staffing**





## 5. ON FORECASTING

“Having access to dependable forecasting and historical staffing data **optimizes staffing costs** and leads companies to avoid engaging with an excessive number of workers, unnecessary costs, and last-minute panic,” explains Kim.

“With historical data, companies can use the data for insight into worker patterns during peak seasons while also determining the specific types of jobs, skills, and experience levels needed during their peak season to optimize efficiency and worker consistency,” he adds.

HR and operations leaders yearn for this kind of robust and complete data. Our research uncovered that the **lack of accurate projections** (40%) and **historical staffing data** (28%) were the top two internal challenges that prevented companies from being prepared in their last peak staffing season.

And that concern lingers on. One out of every three executives surveyed (34%) believes a **lack of accurate projections** will be the number one internal challenge to block them from being prepared for their next peak staffing season.

What exactly holds companies back from accurately forecasting labor needs? Our data told us it’s a mix of **constant changes in consumer demand** (38%), **lack of data and tracking** (35%), or **having too little bandwidth to track, analyze, and forecast** (29%). And one executive, in particular, noted that “using data to analyze past trends, forecast future demands, and make informed staffing decisions” was their biggest internal challenge.

Meanwhile, **all customers on Wonolo have access to their customer portal**, which provides real-time data and insights so customers can easily track key metrics and pull all relevant data into one central view, allowing them to make critical business decisions ahead of peak season.

Looking ahead, **HR and operations leaders unanimously agree optimizing staffing strategies for their next peak season is essential**. What the data doesn’t say is that it’s indeed possible to optimize your peak season—and that’s done by improving how you plan and forecast and by choosing the right streamlined solution. Plan better, staff better, and get better results.

# WHEN YOU'RE READY FOR BETTER, PARTNER WITH WONOLO

At Wonolo, we understand the barriers that make it difficult for companies to find quality workers, and we believe there's a better way to connect people and jobs. Our customers believe in it, too. Nearly nine in ten organizations **(89%) agree that Wonolo's all-in-one platform solves the commonly accepted pain points of finding quality temporary workers**—time, cost, and job management, and 80% believe the Wonolo platform is easy to use and enables them to find reliable workers.

So, if you're looking for a transparent and efficient way to find workers who bring together people from diverse backgrounds and enable people to choose work that works for them, look no further than Wonolo. If you are a company preparing for your next peak season, we've got you covered. Learn more [here](#).

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

The findings of this research are based on an online survey conducted by Wonolo in partnership with HR Dive conducted between April 17-27, 2023. A total of 151 operations and HR executives participated in the survey. Survey participants work mainly in the Food/Beverages/CPG, Transportation/Warehousing/Logistics, and Wholesale/Retail/Ecommerce industries. All participants work for companies with 1000 or fewer employees and have a peak season (i.e., a period when there is a sudden spike in demand).



# Wonolo

Wonolo is an on-demand job marketplace that has connected over one million workers (“Wonoloers”) to retail, manufacturing, hospitality, and other types of hourly and flat-rate jobs posted by thousands of businesses across the United States. Wonolo is on a mission to make work flexible and fulfilling for everyone, while enabling businesses to efficiently fill local job opportunities.



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