



Breakout 1 Notes

What are some of your best practices for employee engagement and retention? What questions do you have about this topic?

- Flexibility with schedules. Regular communication, regular meetings, check-ins. Including teaching staff and keeping them engaged. Refined our hiring practices, onboarding, and determining strengths.
 - Used Zoom to ensure face-to-face time.
 - Being hands-on owners, getting in the trenches, and creating that family atmosphere. We share profit with bonuses and do outside trips. Took everyone camping, taking them to ball games. We celebrate an Employee of the Year, and make sure the staff lounge is welcoming. The little things go a long way.
 - Trust and flexibility.
 - Empower people to make decisions, and put back on the team to lead. Give freedom to make mistakes and learn how to improve.
 - Employee Assistance program. This was less than \$12 a month. Found a plan that was economical. Financial assistance, mental health. Showing our employees we want to help them.
 - Focus on employee strengths and passions, and allow them to exercise those interests/capacities in their work duties. One employee who was given web development responsibilities went on to get his masters degree web design.
 - COVID has stretched everyone. One store's repair tech became their YouTube personality for product demos and discussions.
 - "The better the relationship the more engaged the staff is." Show sincere interest in your employees. COVID demonstrated how loyalty goes both ways.
 - Exercise honest communication with employees even when it's not positive. When COVID first hit, there was a possibility of the store closing and corresponding furloughs and this was communicated transparently to the staff. Luckily, it did not turn out to be the case, but staff was in the loop the whole time.
 - One participant has multiple locations over several states. They publish a monthly "social newsletter" with personal updates so employees can stay in touch with what's happening in their colleagues' lives. This member also has a "university" for training, in which employees are paired up with others so that they learn from their peers. Finally, this member offers a "peer recognition" program where employees reward points to each other and prizes are offered based on accumulated points.
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- "How have your staffing levels changed during the pandemic?"
 - Initial shutdown was terrible; employees all laid off and instructors all went online. Discovered our staff wants a more flex schedule.
 - Strong ecommerce platform and PPP loan helped to bring employees back. We have one employee who works remotely, so some job roles changed. Reopenings vary state-by-state in US. Lessons are still 100% online. Ecommerce is high and staying steady, even though doors are open.
 - Stay in communication with employees. PPP loan really helped. Not being able to consistently get products has been challenging. Communication is key. Using games, social get-togethers, and family atmosphere to strengthen bond & camaraderie inside & outside store.
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- "Employees have left for less money - how have others handled that?"
 - Communication and listening to employees is key. Checking in and asking how they're feeling. Use training to help eliminate any friction between employee/customer. Have open discussions about the pandemic. Ask employees where they see themselves fitting into the business, and give them the opportunity to redefine their role within store.

Breakout 2 Notes

What are some of your best practices for business fraud protection? What questions do you have about this topic?

- Using ClearSale or Riskified. We do a lot of business on Reverb, which feels safer because there is seller and buyer protection.
- Big scam going around where orders are placed over the phone with one person, and shipped to another person in a different state. They don't ask for discounts, and will pay in full with credit card and the charge is fraudulent.
- We have seen online dip as people are coming back into the store.
- We do in-store pickup or curbside. Everything over \$500.00 is pickup only.
- We use a stolen instrument registry on our store website, and notify pawn shops and other music shops.
- "The more business you do, the more fraud you have to deal with."
- Find a good service that offers chargeback protection to reduce your exposure to risk.
- Design your POS system to alert on "high-risk" transactions that cannot proceed until they are reviewed and approved by an employee/manager.
- One member is dealing with "shipment fraud" and false claims by documenting and photographing product and packaging of each order as it is prepared for shipment. When someone files a false claim about the condition or packaging of the order, they can refer to the pictures to refute the claims.
- One red flag is when the delivery address is different from the credit card billing address. Dealers are particularly susceptible to this with phone order because the caller can be very persuasive. If the order is "too good to be true, it probably is."
- One area of concern is buying stolen or counterfeit goods. Many stores communicate with each other and track known stolen items so they are on the lookout in case someone tries to sell them that item(s). It can be helpful if the serial numbers of stolen items are known.
- Stay alert for large transactions & noises in background. Look up home address. If it's a vacant lot or warehouse, it's likely a scam. Do your due diligence.
- Employee training is key to educate them on what to look out for.