

# December staff: What to consider when scheduling your roster

By [Lyndy van den Barselaar](#)

28 Oct 2022

The festive season is fast approaching. At the same time, employees' energy levels are starting to wain as the temperatures are rising and thoughts of holidays are taking shape as workers push through the last quarter of the year. This is the time to start planning holiday work schedules and identifying what temporary staff you'll need to fill the gap while employees take a break. For some industries, such as retail and leisure and hospitality, this is the busiest time of the year and requires all hands on deck to meet customer needs. This could mean hiring extra staff to meet the longer trading hours and customer demand.



Image source: Rodnae Productions from [Pexels](#)

To make holiday planning easier, there are a few points to consider.

## Communicate December plans with employees

While many staff will most likely be planning time away from the office, it is important to manage employee expectations upfront and ensure that all staff members are aware of important December trading information before submitting their leave forms.

Employees will need to know if the company will be trading during December, or if it will be shutting down for a period. If the company will continue trading throughout, how many employees will be required to work daily? If employees will be required to take leave, will this leave come from their leave allocation or not? Although these details do not need to be cemented at this time, employees must be kept in the loop and know what will be expected upfront.

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## Have skeleton staff in place to keep the office running

If the company will remain open but expects the business to have a quiet December, it may be best to put a skeleton staff plan in place. This means having the right number of people in place to continue the essential work. However, more than having the right numbers, you also need to have the right mix of skills in place to ensure things run smoothly at this time.

To achieve this, you would need to look at your customer needs, the functions that will need to be performed throughout the period and whether a hybrid or work-from-home model would be suitable to meet the minimum requirements of the office at this time.

If running on skeleton staff is going to impact your customer delivery, you may want to alleviate some of the pressure from permanent employees, particularly those that will be carrying the load over the December period while others are away, by appointing temporary staff to fill certain roles. Not only will this allow permanent employees to focus on their duties and meet customer expectations, but it will also prevent a backlog of work from building up while employees are on leave.



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## Increase staff count for the busy period

While consumers around the world are experiencing the impact of the economic pinch, the post-pandemic environment continues to see people venturing out and experiencing the world around them. After two years of lockdowns and pandemic fears, consumers have moved out of their homes and are shopping, eating out and touring again. As such retailers, leisure and hospitality industries are preparing for a busy December after a two-year slump.

Businesses in these industries should start putting hiring plans in place to meet this revitalised consumer demand with staff ready to meet customer needs with excellent customer service. However, to ensure that employees can step in and perform the job at hand with ease, it is best to hire temporary employees with experience. This will limit the amount of training required and provide peace of mind that they engage customers professionally.

To ensure you have the best available talent to meet your needs, it is important to get into the running early. Many companies will be competing for the same skills and those that get in first will have a better chance of finding the best

employees that will meet their specific needs.

To help find the right employees to assist your skeleton staff or increase your staff count to meet increased customer demand, partner with a reputable workforce solutions company that can provide qualified temporary staff with specialised skills for your industry.

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