

# BUILD AN EFFECTIVE, EMPLOYEE-CENTRIC SCALE-DOWN PROCESS

**More.** It's typically the first word that comes to mind when it comes to business preparedness.

**“How can we scale up staff to handle more demand?”**

**“How can we solidify our internal infrastructure more to handle that desire to scale up?”**

These are two common questions business leaders ask themselves rhetorically or pose to their surrounding staff. But that begs another question: Why is *more* thought not put into scaling down a team?

When getting operations in order — specifically for seasonal employment — less is sometimes more. An established and well-communicated scaling-down process ensures a solid end-to-end associate experience that only stands to benefit your brand's public perception.

## The lowdown on scaling down.

Niche retailers, convention centers, and e-commerce platforms. These are just a few businesses that have annual peak and down periods, and they would greatly benefit from established downsizing processes.

On the surface, scaling down is a dollars-and-cents discussion. But when leaders take a step back, they might realize that scaling down properly is as much about the employee experience issue as it is about finances.

Why is that? Imagine you're running a business that operates partially or entirely on the backs of seasonal workers. Demand doesn't stay static, which means your company won't need to remain fully staffed all year.

This means scaling down is a matter of *when* rather than *if*. Your company will be able to forecast when it will need to reduce staff, just like it can probably pinpoint when it needs to bring people back to handle the busy season.

An employee's last impression of a company is a significant part of the employee experience. In short, how you offboard an associate is just as integral as how you onboard them.

A transparent and efficient scaling-down strategy sits well with employees. It speaks well of your company, helps turn your former associates into loyal advocates, and can make staffing back up a quicker and more effective venture.





# BUILD A TRANSPARENT AND FAIR SCALE-DOWN PROCESS

When scaling in any direction, you want to avoid anything getting lost in translation. Keep these four strategies in mind to build a scaling-down process that prioritizes associate experience:



## 1. Don't just say you put people first

Being considerate and people-first are two traits that resonate with talent and employees. A Forbes study found that **96% of workers** believe empathy is a vital part of employee retention, meaning it should be as central to your scale-down process as it is elsewhere.

At Integrity Staffing Solutions, we tend to the staffing needs of numerous partners. When we struggled to staff up for one of those companies — a well-known e-commerce site — the reason became abundantly clear. The organization's offboarding process for lack of work (L.O.W.) seasonal employees wasn't clearly communicated or empathetic, which adversely affected its reputation.

We worked with this client to add transparency to its scale-down approach, making it a helpful resource for associates at the end of an assignment. No matter how you downsize staff, build a process that puts people first and guarantees a positive end-to-end associate experience.



## 2. Communicate clear next steps

According to a Smarp study, well-informed workers tend to be more engaged. The employee communication platform found companies that keep their team members in the know regularly retain **18% more of their employees** than their competitors. Extend that same courtesy to your L.O.W. while creating a clear-cut transfer of information.

When working with our national e-commerce partner, we operated from the mindset that over-communication wasn't a bad thing. We worked to get seasonal employees informed about end dates for their assignments far in advance, even going as far as crafting a L.O.W. letter that went out to associates near the end of their contract to remind them of what was to come.



We then added as many touchpoints as necessary into the downscaling process to avoid any potential lapses. Furthermore, we took an omnichannel approach to outreach to make sure the message was relayed. We used e-mail for the L.O.W. message and leveraged phone calls, text messages, and other platforms to connect with associates.

This sometimes blurred the lines in terms of providing off-the-job updates concerning proper work-life balance, but we knew we had to get the point across. Even if the news was bad, we felt confident that we provided a positive experience for our workers by not surprising anyone.



### 3. Embrace external resources

Just because you've alerted associates that their responsibilities are winding down doesn't mean you can't still support them on the way out. To that end, your scale-down process could benefit from working with outside partners to help departing workers find their next landing spot.

Companies must balance scale-down plans with other day-to-day business, but any help is great to have. A staffing agency can complement those scaling-down efforts by communicating those next steps to associates — nudging them toward future professional opportunities.



### 4. Don't skimp on the follow-up

Unless they have a new job lined up, seasonal employees usually fall into a holding pattern until the next opportunity presents itself. Make that less daunting by following up with them and completing the downsizing process as thoroughly as possible.

It could be as simple as providing associates a ride from the facility after they've completed their assignments. You could also connect them with someone on your team or with your staffing partner to answer any lingering questions.

Payroll is one area where you'll need to be diligent. Make sure employees clock out and are compensated for every hour they work. Give them plenty of information regarding severance pay, offering a bonus to any employees whose assignments end early. This can bridge the gap between actual income and expected salary, ending the relationship on a positive note.





## MAKE SCALING DOWN A PART OF THE EXPERIENCE

Deloitte’s “[2019 Global Human Capital Trends](#)” report found that employee experience is an issue 84% of respondents called essential — and 28% of respondents said it should be a top priority at *any* company.



In that spirit, inject your associate experience with empathy by scaling down staff with care and strategic planning. In doing so, you’ll create an employee journey that keeps you in good standing with scaled-down employees and potential candidates.

Integrity Staffing Solutions is a full-service staffing agency and ranks in the top 2% of agencies across the country for quality service based on ClearlyRated’s “Best of Staffing” client survey. To learn more about Integrity or for help with your hiring needs, visit [integritystaffing.com](https://www.integritystaffing.com) or call 833-446-1300.