

The Staffing Agency Releases 2026 Hotel Workforce Outlook as Labor Becomes the Defining Factor

New white paper finds labor has become the primary constraint on hotel performance - overtaking demand, rate growth and development

NEW YORK CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, February 2, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the global hotel industry enters 2026, [The Staffing Agency](#) released a new white paper titled '[The Hotel Workforce Reset: The Year Ahead 2026](#)'.

The U.S. focused report analyzes workforce trends across luxury, extended stay, midscale and economy hotels. Its central conclusion is that labor is no longer cyclical or temporary; it is a permanent structural force that now determines execution, guest satisfaction, brand compliance and long-term asset value.

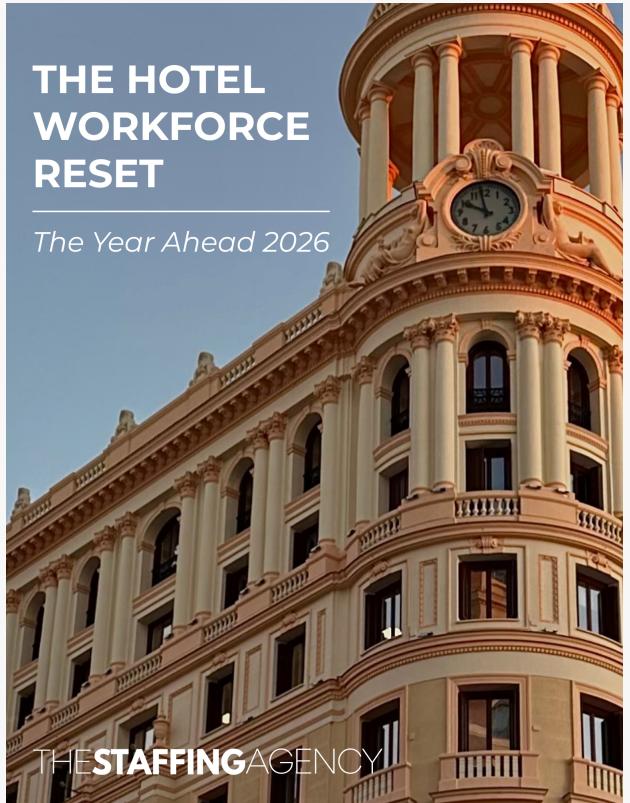
Based on operational intelligence drawn from multi-market hotel portfolios, long-term placement data and years of workforce deployment across U.S.

properties, the report reflects real operating conditions. The data shows that 65% of U.S. hotels report ongoing staffing shortages, turnover remains elevated even as wages rise, and Payroll Per Occupied Room (PPOR) is now replacing payroll as a percentage of revenue as the preferred labor metric among asset managers.

"Demand has stabilized and costs have reset," said Steven Kamali, CEO of The Staffing Agency. "What has not expanded is the labor market. The operators who will outperform in the next cycle are not those who hire the fastest or spend the most."

Key Findings

1. Extended stay remains the most resilient segment due to labor-aligned service models



New Report - The Hotel Workforce Reset

2. Luxury hotels face rising service expectations alongside acute skill shortages
3. Midscale hotels operate with thin margins where labor instability quickly impacts reviews and brand standards

The report also highlights the structural forces that now reshape hotel labor economics in the U.S.:

1. Immigration constraints that continue to limit traditional hospitality labor pipelines
2. A demographic pipeline gap as fewer workers enter frontline service roles
3. The rise of alternative labor sources, including contract staffing, gig labor models and offshore administrative support

Labor Strategy as a Competitive Advantage

Drawing on real-world operating data and field experience, The Staffing Agency argues that hotels with stable, intentionally designed workforce models consistently outperform their competitors, even in softer demand cycles.

The findings show that retention, supervisor stability and flexible staffing models now deliver higher returns than aggressive hiring alone. "Labor today is not simply an operational input; it's the heart of the experience," said Brad Wilson, Chairman of Ace Hotel. "The hotels performing best now are the ones where teams feel seen and supported, where service is human rather than scripted."

A Timely Roadmap

With brands accelerating conversions, tightening standards and adopting technology faster than workforce capacity can follow, the report warns of a widening gap between brand expectations and on-property execution. "The next operating cycle will reward realism," the report states.

This whitepaper by The Staffing Agency is a practical guide for owners, operators, asset managers and investors navigating a constrained labor environment heading into 2026. The full white paper - The Hotel Workforce Reset: The Year Ahead 2026 – is available to download [here](#).

About The Staffing Agency:

The Staffing Agency is a national recruiting organization built on a growing portfolio of sector specific divisions, including The Chef Agency, The Hotel Agency and The Estate Agency. The company specializes in hospitality and service industry recruitment and maintains a proprietary nationwide pipeline supported by more than 14 years of industry experience. The Staffing Agency provides talent solutions to operators, ownership groups and corporate brands across the United States.

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