



# Staffing Your Coworking Space: The Survival Guide

---

When opening and operating a Coworking space, your staff will be required to wear different hats at different times. They are there to manage your operations, to help your community flourish, and establish the philosophy of your brand.

This ebook covers the best practices for hiring as well as managing your staff. We'll cover a myriad of subjects such as how much training your staff needs, whether your hires need prior experience in Coworking, as well as what budgetary considerations you'll need to make.

We conducted our research and reached out to two industry leaders regarding what practices to have in mind for staffing their workspaces. This ebook will show you the departments you must address immediately and what steps to take into consideration. By following the outlined practices of this guide, you can entrust your staff not just with the survival of your space, but the livelihood of the community as well.



## Collaboration Partners

---



### Nancy Dudash

Chief Operating Office  
Quest Workspaces

Nancie Dudash has a long career in executive suite operations and sales management. Her motto is simple: “Imagine it. Believe it. Do it. Achieve it.” With 20+ years in the shared office environment, Nancie has held the position of Vice President of Operations at both Carr Workplaces, and Synergy Workplaces. Prior to that, she was Area Director for Corporate Office Centers, overseeing a portfolio of business centers in California and Georgia. Before COC, Nancie was Area President-West for HQ Global Workplaces, where she was responsible for the successful operation of numerous business centers in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Colorado and Nevada. Before moving to California, she was HQ’s Regional Vice President in Dallas having been promoted from an Area Director position in Chicago. Joining the industry in 1992 as a center manager, Nancie’s accomplishments include articles she has authored, seminars she has conducted, and winning prestigious industry awards.



### Scott Chambers

Co-Founder  
Pacific Workplaces

As co-founder of Pacific Workplaces (Pac:), and with over twenty years of experience in the industry, Scott’s ability to master the organization’s operational efficiencies as well as the deployment of rapid changing technology, has been instrumental in facilitating the explosive growth of Pacific Workplaces (Pac:). As the industry has experienced significant changes in the last few years with mobility, flexibility and the desire for more community-based environments, Scott has brought about evolving and modifying facility designs and staffing needs. Scott currently serves as Past-President of the Global Workspace Association, the international trade association of the Workspace-as-a-Service industry, which includes serviced offices, coworking, hotels, and maker spaces, to name a few. Scott has a B.S. in Business Administration from The University of the Pacific.



# Table of Contents

---

## **PART 1: HIRING YOUR STAFF**

- How many employees do you need to run a Coworking space?
- Does your staff need experience working in a Coworking space?
- What qualities do you need to build your team?
- What experience should you be seeking?
- How much of your overall budget should you dedicate to staffing?
- What are the best practices for hiring?

## **PART 2: MANAGING YOUR STAFF FOR GROWTH**

- What are the key factors to keeping your staff lean and efficient?
- When should you consider outsourcing or automating?
- What is the best way to train your staff?
- How can you maximize your staff's time?
- How can you keep your staff happy and engaged?
- How can your staff work more toward growing the workspace, rather than just maintaining it?



## How many employees do you need to run a Coworking space?

**In Coworking, your staff does more than service.** They represent the DNA of your workspace. They are the ones who engage with the members and significantly drive the experience. The challenge to staffing in Coworking is finding a balance between overcoming operational complexities, maintaining the workspace, and providing for members. The answer to how many employees you need varies upon your size (in terms of members) as well as the level of activity within the workspace.

**For instance, some spaces benefit from the use of a receptionist. Others may opt for a more cost-effective alternative such as a digital visitor management system through which members and guests can self-service.** This is just one of the many scenarios facing Coworking operators today. By virtue of size, having more members within the space will require more attention and maintenance in meeting demands such as having available internet and conference rooms for meetings. As the demand for these services continue to increase with an expanding member population, providing more avenues of self-service through a workspace management platform will go a long way in overcoming these obstacles.

**When it comes to the level of activity within your space, you need to consider what level of service you're looking to offer.** You can choose between how much of a personal experience you'd like with your customer service or how much you would like to offer avenues for self-service. Both approaches work well depending on your mission with your community and how you'd like to customize your experience.

When it comes to employing your space, here are the essentials to be met:

For Senior Leadership	For Operations	For Member Management	For Marketing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CEO/COO/Director</li><li>• Business Development Manager</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Operations Manager/Director</li><li>• Operations Coordinator</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Manager</li><li>• Assistant Community Manager</li><li>• Front Desk Associate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marketing Manager</li><li>• Sales Director</li></ul>

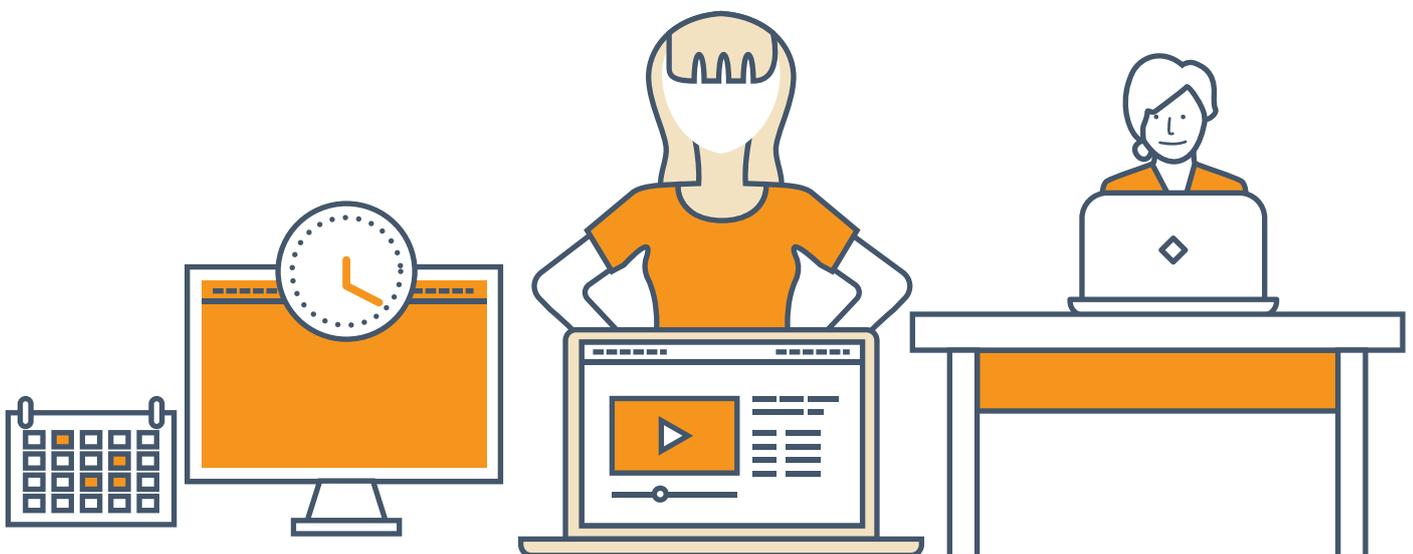


## Does Your Staff Need Experience Working in a Coworking Space?

---

**On the surface, the answer may appear to be a resounding yes. In practice, however, the answer is that it isn't.** Nancie Dudash, Chief Operating Officer of Quest Workspaces explains, "It's not the experience that matters at Quest; it's whether the applicant has the personality, high energy, and ambition that works within the culture. With my years of experience, I can teach anything to anyone, but I CANNOT teach them to have the kind of character and focus on customer service that is needed to be a successful team member at Quest."

**Attitude is crucial to making a hiring decision within a Coworking space. Not just for greater adaptability, but also because every position within the space will involve interacting with other members.** Understanding customer service, community, and providing members with a personalized degree of service are the main components needed to work a Coworking space. Coworking is an industry that generally chooses attitude over experience in terms of building staff. After all, this isn't just about the employer/employee relationship, it's about building lasting relationships with members.





## What qualities do you need to build your team?

---

**Chances are you probably don't have deep pockets or access to any robust recruiting pipelines such as those afforded to established brands in other industries.** Being resourceful when it comes to staffing your Coworking space doesn't just limit itself to being cost-conscious. When it comes to hiring staff members that can help you build a thriving workspace, finding lower costs is only a variable to what is a much greater equation.

**If the goal is to stay lean, the answer may not always be the cheapest option. In Coworking you're gambling on your hires making it to the long term.** Sacrificing the right fit for your workspace can not only prove less productive, but counter-productive to your growth. These factors can extend well beyond the already costly process of onboarding and training.

---

**How do these costs add up? According to recent studies it has been reported that the improper staff can negatively impact:**



Your Productivity



Your Sales



Your Time



Your Morale



Your Community

---

Employee turnover is a major concern. Whereas large companies have protocols for replacing employees with little impact to their profit margin and overall sustainability, Coworking spaces do not have such luxury. Cost-efficiency certainly does play into the equation, but it's more important to make a smart hire rather than a decision to hire based on financial limitations.



**According to a recent report by Leadership IQ, 46% of new hires fail within 18 months with only 19% of those hires finding success within the company and moving up.**

For Coworking, the qualities that create the framework of a good hire include:

- Whether the candidate can receive and understand feedback from both management and members.
- Whether the candidate is motivated to help build the community and grow the workspace.
- Whether the candidate is competent to serve and assist with members without the help of their superiors.

**The most overlooked component for this is attitude.** There's an old saying from people within the field of Human Resources that goes, "Hire for attitude, train for skills." It is believed that when assembling your staff, workers who are unskilled and inexperienced but have excellent attitudes will better apply themselves and succeed overall over those who are skilled and qualified but have poor attitudes. For Coworking a positive attitude is critical in helping build community among members and staff within the workspace. If you can find a candidate that fits into your company philosophy as well as the culture of the Coworking space, they will always strive to do what's best for your brand. These factors are critical to ensuring the best decisions for hiring.





## What experience should you be seeking?

When looking for the right candidate, it's critical to find the people that can specialize in certain areas. To keep operations lean, your members will need to switch hats to attend to where they are needed. To help with their search Scott Chambers, CEO of Pacific Workspaces, likes to place an emphasis on soft skills as an indicator of future success in the workspace. "This is a very trainable industry. You're looking for personality and attitude, which is what Pacific looks for most. A can-do attitude is more intriguing than industry experience. We like to bring people from different industries because it brings something new. Not so much a team, but a set of skills."

Nancie Dudash of Quest Workspaces also believes that experience can serve as an indicator of a potential hire's aptitude, "There's no question that we are drawn to applicants with hospitality experience if they are going to be working at the front desk or as an Operations Manager. Sales experience is vital for our center managers to ensure they can focus on the right solution for our prospects."

### The general skills you're looking for includes familiarity and a desire for training in the following fields:



#### Marketing

One of the most important aspects includes the skills for presenting the organization with the image the leadership wishes to convey. This also extends to being able to communicate, manage social media and publish website content on behalf of the Coworking space to attract leads and prospects.



#### Community Management

Experience with this field can prove helpful in making your workspace a place where you members want to be. These skills can also assist with helping the members of the community become more self-sufficient, organizing their own events, and finding ways to make your workspace more sustainable.



#### Finance

You need someone to handle the finances within the company. These skills can go a long way in applying new strategic decisions for the betterment of the workspace and its community.



## How much of your overall budget should you dedicate to staffing?

Regarding how much you should allocate your budget to staffing, **Scott Chambers believes in going for what the market will bear.** “Establishing wages is a market-driven phenomenon,” explains Chambers. Having insights into what your competing spaces are willing to pay to fill the positions you’re seeking could go a long way in making sure your offers are always well-received.

**As a rule of thumb, Chambers recommends that a good Coworking space should dedicate 25%-30% of its expenses toward human capital.** You can supplement your offers by providing competitive non-salary benefits ranging from flexible schedules, remote working opportunities, and perhaps even transportation/childcare support.

**An excellent way to figure out whether or not your space is understaffed is to utilize the real-time reporting features of a workspace management platform.**

By understanding the demand of your members, as well as what resources are on hand to meet them, you can make more informed decisions as to when it’s time to hire new workers.





## What are the best practices for hiring?

---

**Hiring a top-level team on a tight budget is an artform within itself. The common belief is that it's more desirable to spend money on the right staff than save money on the wrong one. Especially when it comes to the growth of your Coworking space.**

Posting online can bring quick results, depending on which avenue you use can determine the quality of the hire. Some would recommend services such as LinkedIn, ZipRecruiter, and Indeed as they have an emphasis on highlighting the skillsets of an applicant.

Outsourcing to a staffing agency, however, is not a recommended practice from an industry standpoint. You will be paying extra for the company to manage your employee, not to mention that you'll be leaving extremely critical decisions in the hands of a select group that may not have the best ideas for your community or your brand in mind.

**In regards to assessing for soft skills, Nancie Dudash of Quest Workspaces uses her own unique methods based on her industry experience,** “We search for people who have that special magic when it comes to their behavior and temperament. I ask a lot of probing questions during the interview process with an emphasis on the applicant’s work ethic, how they handle specific situations, and how they work within a team environment. Someone with an outgoing, helpful attitude and an eagerness to learn and be part of our unique family is what’s important to Quest.”

Another proven tactic is to utilize the existing employees that you are most satisfied with. By reaching out to them and asking if they know someone with a similar work ethic and skillset, you can hire more workers who represent the culture of your workspace. Through this practice you can hire staff members who are already fans of your workspace—employing ambassadors who can find ways to better the experience.

**The final step is to make sure that you clearly set the expectations for the position.** With insights into what unpredictable elements may be part of the job. This way you can ensure that your new hires are comfortable with the culture they are getting into.



## What are the key factors to keeping your staff lean and efficient?

If you have a highly-motivated staff that is geared toward growing the Coworking space, the best strategy for improving their efficiency and productivity is to empower them by simplifying and automating the manual processes for running the operation.

**Through a trusted Coworking Management Software you can optimize your staff's time through the following services:**



**Automated Billing:** Save on hours that would otherwise be spent on confirming transactions, manually following up on leads, manually processing payments, and inputting various fields of information while ensuring accuracy across all platforms.



**Automated Member Management Features:** Save your staff from having to manually assign access to certain areas, generating PINs and confirmations for conference rooms, manually creating and filing terms and conditions, and manually following up on renewing members with expiring contracts.



**Integration with One Platform:** You can add a user profile once and never have to input their information again. When a member is booking a conference room through a self-service wizard, the fields will auto-populate based on the information saved to the profile. Another example may include having membership packages with additional services for internet and amenities added in. The workspace management platform will automatically sync your membership information and perks with all other aspects of the workspace. This can be achieved best by having everything connected to one platform. Using this method, you can add new members through a process that cuts the time from hours to minutes.

**The added benefit to employing these features through a workspace management platform is that it cuts the expertise gap.** For instance, through the platform a lesser-trained staff member can handle tasks at the same quality as a more-qualified, higher-paid employee can. This saves time while empowering your staff to be more resourceful.

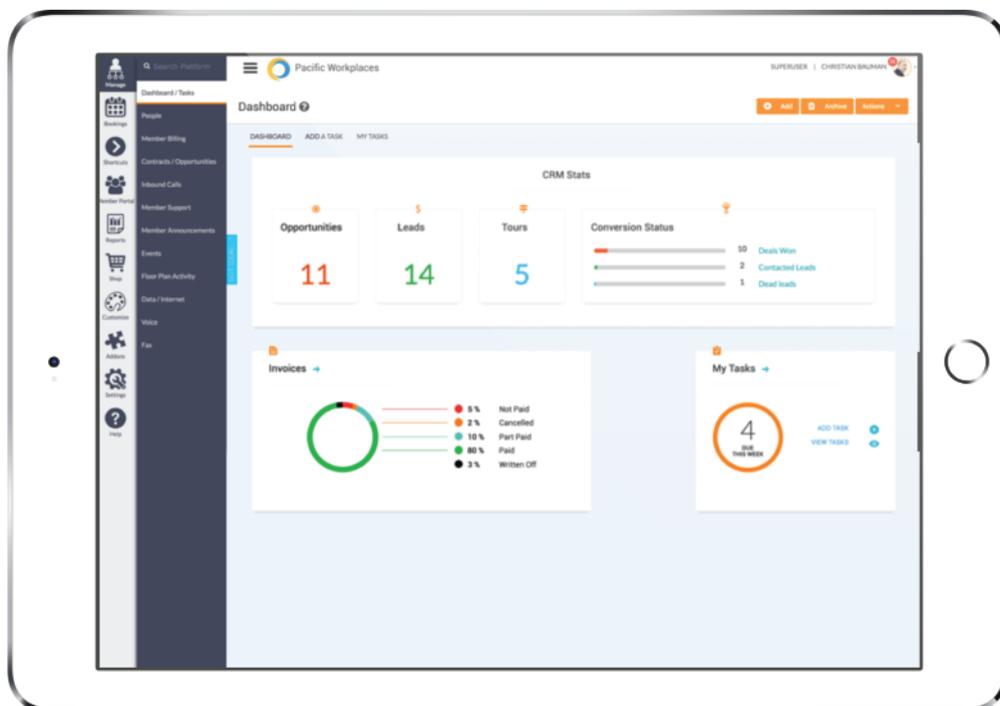


## When should you consider outsourcing or automating?

**When it comes to making considerations for which services to outsource it's best to do so when it makes economic sense or if you don't have the skill/means to perform the needed action.** Scott Chambers explains, *"Shared workspaces are a business, some people run them like a shared architect environment. Someone needs to make sure the place is making money and bringing people in. I think its important that people understand what areas are needed to outsource and insource."*

**For workspaces geared toward building the community aspect, it's critical to make sure the services you outsource and automate work to empower your staff members' ability to serve the community.** Nancie Dudash says, *"Automating our systems as well as providing a more formalized and structured training of the team to ensure longevity. By putting in a lot of automated systems, it freed up more time for our center team to spend with our customers."*

For the best performance, it's advised to setup automation through a workspace management platform. The most ideal one to use for situation is one that inter-connects all areas of the workspace, helping you save time and money.





## What is the best way to train your staff?

---

**A common issue with Coworking operators is the lack of time to train staff on using their service and methods for making tasks more efficient.** To account for this, staff members often must rely manual processes and other makeshift methods to meet the demands of the workspace. However, as the demand grows these methods will eventually fail to meet the demand as they are not scalable.

Scott Chambers explains, *“we use a library of training videos we’ve built over the last 5 years. Some things change, some don’t. A lot of our training is hands-on. We’re big enough to do quarterly management meetings and annual meetings, these aren’t so much training meetings as much as community events and celebration.”*

A very strong option to consider is employing a workspace management system that is interconnected to all parts of the workspace and is easy to learn. This will empower your staff to perform critical tasks at the same level and efficiency of those with greater expertise. By having the best tools for a connected workspace, you can train your staff to always stay a step ahead.





## How can you maximize your staff's time?

---

**There are many original approaches to making the most of your staff's time.** Some initial steps include being observant of how much time your staff is spending on busy work as opposed to actual work—finding which of these things can be automated. Another approach is to utilize the project management and collaborative aspects of a workspace management platform to hold your staff accountable and make sure you know who is responsible for each task.

**Also instrumental to the growth of the workspace is working with your staff to get on the same page regarding revenue sources.** Not only is it important to track the demands of your members, it's imperative to stay ahead of changes within the industry. You need to know how much of your revenue is coming from rent, how much is coming from services, and where you will need to make changes.

*As Nancie Dudash explains, "The first challenge is innovation. New plans, programs, and products must be implemented to find new and additional revenue streams. I never accept the status quo. It's important to be open minded and understanding that client dependencies change over time. For instance, I remember when we made a substantial amount in years past with long distance fees. Now this kind of calling is complimentary with our voice offerings so we had to find a new means of increasing service revenue. When I first started, 50% of our income came from rent and 50% from services. Now this ratio is around 80/20. To build up service revenue you NEED to be cutting-edge and ahead of the curve."*

**This can be achieved through real-time reporting, as your staff can generate revenue reports in real time.** Another service that can help optimize time management with your staff includes having an online ticketing system to address your members' customer service requests. Without a ticketing system in place, simple—yet critical tasks could fall through the cracks & not get addressed in a timely manner.



## How can you keep your staff happy and engaged?

---

**When operating a space that caters toward building community, your staff must be a part of that community as well.** It's important that collaboration and connectivity is shared amongst the staff equally as with the community. It's important for you and your staff to embrace your own culture not just with the management process, but the brand philosophy as well.

As explained by Scott Chambers, *"We try to provide a very nurturing, supportive culture. You need to make your staff feel like they are making a difference. This includes making sure the projects they are putting their time into matters to the organization, community, the business operation, and the people that are there. Today's workers want to feel like their projects make a difference. It's important to give feedback."* Chambers also believes in creating greater convenience for his workers, *"we like to cluster and build a small distance between locations so our staff can move around easier."*

**Nancie Dudash believes that creating more avenues for networking between members and staff is a critical component.** *"We've focused on networking among clients within our spaces as well as between our locations. The value of sharing business with each other goes a long way in seeing the benefits of working in a Coworking center. We hold a minimum of 2 official networking events per month, per location."* Explains Dudash, *"We are more hands-on with our clients. We want to build with them and work with them. We know our clients on a more personal level. Our culture is the kind where you can sit down with us, put your feet on the coffee table, grab a fresh mug, and tell us about your weekend with your family. We seek to create more "sticky", lasting relationships. All Questers are family."*

**You can further enhance convenience and community is by providing an avenue of communication through a workspace management platform.** Through an elaborate and all-inclusive member portal, you can construct new ways of working together through features for messaging, as well as options for collaborating on events and special projects. With the platform you can connect through a simplified process that can drive collaboration between staff, members, and operators alike.



How can your staff work more toward growing the workspace, rather than just maintaining it?

---

**To maximize productivity while streamlining your operation you must strike a balance between focusing your efforts toward maintaining your space and attracting new members. You need to make sure you're not working on just one aspect and not the other.** If your marketing is on point, but your internet isn't connected, your members' first rent will be their last. Likewise, if you offer the absolute best service and technology for your members at the price—and you don't have your address or a social media profile online, your doors will pretty much stay closed. Therefore, it's critical to maintain a balance between sales, marketing, and service.

**Besides keeping an eye—both inward and outward—toward your growth and retention, another great approach to take is to train your staff to expand service revenue.** Right now you are probably selling one service: Coworking. Your members may have other demands for their business such as food, coffee, office supplies, as well as leisure activities.

Instead of having your members go elsewhere to meet these demands, you can use your staff to vertically integrate these offerings within the space. This includes opening an area to serve food and coffee, providing office supplies and services such as pens, notebooks, and printing capabilities, or opening a gym for your members to workout. Coworking spaces across the country are applying unique and original ideas to maximize their service revenue.

**Through a Workspace Management Platform, your staff can easily upsell services to your members. By utilizing these practices you can meet and exceed your member's demands while creating new streams of revenue.**



## More About WUN Systems

---

WUN provides all the tools needed to grow a smart and connected shared workspace.

Designed for overcoming operational complexities, KUBE by WUN is an award-winning Workspace Management Software and Technology Platform empowering operators to increase revenue, maximize productivity, and build community.

KUBE by WUN provides a complete package for software, data, internet, voice, as well as 24/7 door access. KUBE empowers operators and members with greater accessibility when it comes to billing, booking spaces, managing opportunities, and communication. Over 80,000 members utilize WUN's technological solutions across the world making WUN an industry leader in providing avenues for automation, integration, and collaboration.

## Resources

---

<http://coworkinginsights.com/coworking-roles-and-their-proper-function/>  
<http://everythingcoworking.com/episode-19-hiring-a-community-manager-for-your-coworking-space/>  
<https://levels.io/coworking-space-economics/>  
<https://www.inc.com/elizabeth-dukes/why-your-workspace-should-be-more-like-a-coworking-space.html>  
<http://openwork.agency/business/coworking-for-company-employees-what-why-how/>  
<https://securityintelligence.com/protecting-your-staff-in-co-working-spaces/>  
<https://qz.com/859832/coworking/>  
<https://www.business.com/articles/co-working-for-the-modern-employee/>  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jacobmorgan/2015/12/03/how-the-physical-workspace-impacts-the-employee-experience/#5c2cb7fd779e>  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/geristengel/2016/04/20/coworking-more-than-just-space-its-a-community-of-support/#56ec79067b6e>  
<https://www.inc.com/tess-townsend/wework-cuts-7-percent-of-staff-but-insists-it-is-growing.html>  
<http://connectcoworking.com/connecting-the-community-and-defending-the-arts/>  
<https://citydeskmiami.com/blog-en/coworking-space-for-the-non-profit-crowd/>  
<https://www.themuse.com/advice/work-nice-with-others-etiquette-rules-for-coworking>  
<http://coworkinginsights.com/category/roles-and-responsibilities/>  
<http://coworkinginsights.com/prevent-staff-turnover-part-2-coworking-staff-allocation/>  
<https://dangerouslyawesome.com/2016/07/standard-operating-procedures-for-coworking/>  
[https://books.google.com/books?id=24GaZrwmaHUC&pg=PA302&lpg=-PA302&dq=advice+for+hiring+staff+for+coworking&source=bl&ots=Naj3KiFoxc&sig=fq6eWGToOB23ijZzi3pfw30Ty94&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewi79qjK\\_b3TAhVGQIYKHQQwB9Y4FBD0AQhGMAY#v=onepage&q=advice%20for%20hiring%20staff%20for%20coworking&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=24GaZrwmaHUC&pg=PA302&lpg=-PA302&dq=advice+for+hiring+staff+for+coworking&source=bl&ots=Naj3KiFoxc&sig=fq6eWGToOB23ijZzi3pfw30Ty94&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewi79qjK_b3TAhVGQIYKHQQwB9Y4FBD0AQhGMAY#v=onepage&q=advice%20for%20hiring%20staff%20for%20coworking&f=false)  
<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/240002>  
<https://www.fastcompany.com/3004915/coworking-nextspace>  
<https://www.fastcompany.com/3038116/10-questions-to-ask-before-choosing-a-coworking-space>

### HIRING

<https://www.business.com/articles/tips-and-tricks-for-hiring-employees-on-an-extremely-limited-budget/>  
<https://www.thepennyhoarder.com/jobs-making-money/how-to-hire-employees-for-the-first-time/>  
<http://www.businessnewsdaily.com/7155-startup-hiring-tips.html>  
<https://www.officespacesoftware.com/blog/a-quick-guide-to-purchasing-coworking-space>  
<http://www.cio.com/article/3147866/careers-staffing/coworking-tips-to-increase-your-productivity-and-privacy.html>



**WUN**

Want To Know More About WUN Systems?  
[www.wunsystems.com](http://www.wunsystems.com)