

**CONTROLLING  
RESTAURANT &  
FOOD SERVICE  
LABOR  
COSTS**

By Sharon Fullen

**The Food Service Professional's Guide To:  
Controlling Restaurant & Food Service Labor  
Costs: 365 Secrets Revealed**

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## INTRODUCTION

From the parking attendant to the chef, the people who serve your customers are your restaurant. You can have a prime location, a beautiful dining room and impeccably prepared food and have it all spoiled by a rude server, sloppy busperson or an inattentive janitor. Your restaurant’s success is based upon your ability to locate, hire and solidify a group of people into your Customer Service Team.

The food service industry has long been plagued with an inadequate workforce and exceptionally high turnover rates. The increased demand for service workers and culture changes within the workforce means less-educated recruits, more non-English-speaking employees and fewer younger people interested in restaurant work.

Whether you own a celebrity-filled, trendsetting establishment or a truck-stop diner, the situation is the same. Where do you find good employees? How do you keep good employees? How can you get your money’s worth?

Labor costs typically run 25–35 percent of your budget and, depending upon your menu offerings, can equal or exceed your food costs. Keeping your prime costs (food and payroll) in the 60–69-percent range is your profit-making goal. Simply cutting staff won’t do it though. Your aim should be to get the highest productivity possible for your money. But to save money without losing quality of service, you have to start at square one.

This guide has been written to help you tackle the never-ending process of reducing your labor costs. You’ll find practical ideas and suggestions with immediate and long-term results. We’ll be helping you to examine your attitudes