

Can't find hospitality workers? ShiftPixy's 'Miami Works' campaign can help

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It's no secret that South Florida's hospitality industry has struggled to find employees in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

That's why ShiftPixy is kicking off its Miami Works initiative, a staffing and recruiting campaign designed to match restaurants and other hospitality businesses with eligible workers.

The Miami-based platform for short-term hires and gig workers (Nasdaq: PIXY) is partnering with several organizations to host a series of job fairs, the first of which will take place June 26 at Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus in downtown Miami. From there, ShiftPixy will launch a 60-day marketing campaign that will connect potential workers with open positions throughout the Miami area.

"The pandemic deeply wounded Miami's lush and vibrant hospitality industry, so we were inspired to develop an actionable campaign with the best cohort of local groups to help restore that vitality – and fast," ShiftPixy founder and CEO **Scott Absher** said.

The job fair will include local restaurant and hospitality businesses seeking on-demand workers. The campaign will include advertising across the city that will feature "scan to apply" QR codes for potential job seekers, another way to match workers and businesses after the event.

"Through the upcoming job fair, and other efforts to connect workers with businesses in these sectors, we're helping our businesses solve their current staffing issues by promoting the economic, social and cultural health of downtown Miami," said Miami City Commissioner **Manolo Reyes**, who serves as chairman of the Miami Downtown Development Authority.

In addition to the Miami DDA, ShiftPixy partnered with Miami Dade College and the Florida International University Chaplin School of Hospitality, which houses the ShiftPixy's ghost kitchen incubator, to launch Miami Works.

Restaurant, retail and hotels nationwide have reported hiring woes after many closed or severely reduced staffing during the pandemic. **While some restaurant owners blamed** Florida's \$300-a-week unemployment subsidy for keeping workers at home, experts report many longtime hospitality employees found other work or pivoted to better-paying careers after their workplaces shuttered.

But now, as vaccination rates rise, more diners are heading back to their favorite eateries. Restaurants, however, report they cannot hire enough staff to keep up with demand. Some are offering higher wages and bonuses to new workers to find and retain talent.

In a news release, ShiftPixy said political efforts to reclassify third-party delivery service employees from independent contractors to employees – a move supported by U.S. Secretary of Labor **Marty Walsh** – would disrupt the business models of on-demand companies that rely on lower-cost labor. That, in turn, could exacerbate the hospitality industry's labor shortage.

An estimated 55 million people in the U.S. are employed as "gig workers," largely as independent contractors who do not receive the same benefits (such as health insurance) or workplace protections as employees.

Founded in 2015, ShiftPixy moved its headquarters to Miami from Irvine, California, in 2020. In May, the company formed multiple special purpose acquisition companies that aim to raise a combined \$1.25 billion on the stock market through initial public offerings. Absher previously said the SPACs will give ShiftPixy the capital it needs to expand its gig economy platform nationwide.