



For the Client Company

Tips on Choosing a Staffing Firm

In today's rapidly changing business climate, efficiency and effectiveness are crucial to your organization's survival. This means you must have the right person for the job—any job—whether that job is temporary or permanent. **America's staffing companies can help you find the best talent—for any job—when you need it.**

Today's staffing employee might be a highly trained nurse at one of our nation's finest hospitals, or a lawyer researching a big case. He could be a skilled technician, engineer, project manager, or scientist. She could be a truck driver, administrative assistant, medical technician, accountant, or architect. And he or she could be an interim CEO or CFO for a company in transition.

Staffing firms nationwide collectively employ an average of 2.9 million workers daily across all industries, providing work force flexibility and access to talent to businesses like yours. They also offer competitive wages and benefits to attract the best talent, and provide free training to millions of temporary, contract, and permanent employees each year.

How do you, as a business owner or executive, stand to gain? According to a major survey conducted for the American Staffing Association, companies use staffing employees for two principal reasons: flexibility and access to talent.

You'll Profit From Work Force Flexibility

Nine out of 10 business customers rated flexibility as an important reason to use staffing companies, saying it keeps them fully staffed during busy times. Whether it's a temporary job lasting a few hours or several years—or a permanent job placement—America's staffing companies allow businesses to adjust their work forces to meet their ever-changing needs.

There are three main types of job placements in the staffing industry:

- *Temporary or contract*, where you add a staffing employee on an interim basis
- *Temp-to-perm or temp-to-hire*, where you add a staffing employee until you're sure a spike in business will sustain itself or you want to make sure you have the right candidate for the job—if so, he or she becomes your employee
- *Direct hire or permanent*, where you tell the staffing firm what you're looking for, it selects candidates for interviews, and you hire the best one

You'll Enjoy Access to First-Class Talent

A staffing company not only offers you work force flexibility—it can provide you with specialized skills for a particular project. If you need a lawyer specializing in tax law, for example, a few calls to staffing firms in your area may fill your need. In addition, these firms can serve as deep recruitment pools for your permanent hiring. In fact, eight in 10 business customers say that staffing companies are a good way to find potential permanent employees—and industry research indicates that three out of four customers rank the quality of the employees they get from staffing firms as good as or better than their own employees.

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You'll Save Time, Money, and Worry

Consider this scenario: You've just realized you need to comply with the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, a recently enacted law requiring businesses to adhere to strict accounting practices. What do you do? You can develop compliance solutions yourself and hope they work. But if not, what then? Hire consultants or contract the work out at a significant expense? Remember, this expense is in addition to the man-hours already invested in the project.

Why not reach out to a staffing firm and bring in senior accountants and auditing specialists specifically to manage compliance with this law? Since these accountants have already been working on Sarbanes-Oxley, they know the new law from top to bottom. Time and resources are not wasted on false starts or missteps. And you might gain some valuable new permanent employees.

Determine the Type of Staffing Help You Need

OK, you've decided to use a staffing company. First, you need to choose a staffing firm that specializes in your industry or type of operation. Figure out if you need staffing employees for a one-shot deal, a long-term assignment, or a permanent job placement. Also, if it's a permanent position—or likely to become one—find out if the company will let you submit interview questions for job applications and participate in the selection process.

Shop Around

There are thousands of staffing firms out there, from small operations to large multinational firms. Use the Internet to visit various Web sites. Check out several companies and ask for references. Ask about their fees; the turnover rate among account executives, office staff, and staffing employees. Make sure the firm will visit your premises to get a feel for your corporate culture, meet supervisors face to face, and learn details about the jobs that need filling. If you're staffing a major project or function, expect a thorough review and presentation.

Also, find out if the staffing firm is an ASA member. These members represent 15,000 offices and branches nationwide, have agreed to conform to the industry's highest standards, and are up-to-date on all the latest human resources developments and trends. Find a Staffing Company will help you select an ASA member that offers the services and skills you need.

How Was Your First Interaction With the Companies You Contacted?

Their Web sites should be informative, up-to-date, and easy to use. Telephone or e-mail the companies to get your first clue as to their business styles. Remember, staffing firms are employers. Their management practices greatly affect the quality of the employees who come into your offices—on a temporary or permanent basis. Staffing firms recruit, hire, and train their staff, so make sure you are dealing with a professional, capable organization.

How Well Run Is the Organization?

This will reflect the quality of help you receive. Ask how long the company has been in business in your area. Call references. Ask how satisfied they were with the employees at the staffing company as well as with the workers assigned to their organization, whether temporary or permanent.

How Does the Company Recruit and Retain its Qualified and Reliable Work Force?

Get details. See ads. To what extent are its techniques passive or active? What kind of a database does it maintain? For temporary and contract positions, consider whether the firm's compensation and benefits are

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competitive to attract the type of workers you need. A more complete benefits package often attracts a better-quality worker. Also, ask about the firm's turnover rates.

How Are Potential Staffing Company Employees Screened and Tested?

Many staffing companies give their employees initial "skills tests." Some provide specific skills training, such as software tutorials in PowerPoint, Word, and Excel, and educate them on how to behave at businesses such as yours. This will help you greatly in determining the "quality" of worker you receive. In addition to skills testing, find out if the staffing firm conducts background checks and drug tests.

Does the Company Fully Understand Your Needs?

Get the most appropriate temporary or permanent person for the position. Make sure the company has an extensive database of available workers. This will help you get the right person for the job in a timely manner. If you need several jobs filled, ask the firm to help you determine the number of employees you should bring on board. Also, find out how to reach the company after regular business hours in case of an emergency.

Remember

The critical element in your relationship with a staffing firm is the quality of temporary employees and job candidates you receive. Reliance on a reputable and capable staffing company can be an important management tool for your business. A little investigation and observation beforehand can save you time and money and result in a long-lasting business relationship.