

Spring 2012

## ASA: STAFFING EMPLOYEES



### OF A "HIGHER CALIBER"

Staffing employees are motivated people who want to work. In a survey conducted by the American Staffing Association:

- 77 percent of staffing employees said they decided to work through staffing firms to find permanent jobs.
- 80 percent worked full time, the same as the traditional work force.
- 90 percent were satisfied with their jobs (compared with only about 60 percent of workers in traditional employment arrangements) and would recommend temporary or contract work to a friend or relative.

Staffing clients have noticed the high caliber of today's staffing employee. In an American Staffing Association survey of 500 staffing clients:

- 72 percent said the quality of temporary and contract employees provided by staffing firms is equal to or better than their own regular employees.
- 80 percent said that staffing companies offer a good way to find people who can become permanent employees.

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## Consistency in Hiring Practices Increases Long-Term Profitability

It seems that one of the eternal struggles for any staffing company is either having too many clients and not enough qualified applicants, or too many qualified applicants and not enough clients. Rarely, it seems, is there a perfect balance between the two and often times staffing firms find themselves compromising their standards to attract and retain either.

In the hard economy over the past few years the pendulum seemed permanently stuck on the side with staffing companies having too few clients but now, it seems, that pendulum is finally swinging back. With an economy that appears to be heating up, firms may find it more and more difficult to find qualified applicants and because of this they may compromise their hiring standards. Staffing companies need to remain vigilant about maintaining good hiring practices because if they do not, problems such as decreased work productivity, increased injuries and increased turnover will ultimately result in higher costs, higher bill rates, smaller margins and ultimately, unsatisfied clients. By maintaining good hiring practices and hiring qualified employees, staffing companies set themselves up to be profitable for the long term. Good hiring practices consist of prescreening applicants, having a solid application, providing a consistent and thorough interview and conducting a solid orientation.

**Pre-screening applicants** is the number one way to get rid of unqualified applicants early in the hiring process so that more time can be focused on qualified ones. Pre-screening is primarily communicating the company's stance on substance abuse, criminal history, safety and w/c fraud early and often to any applicant. This can be done via job advertisements, postings in the office, an applicant questionnaire and phone screening. The bottom line is if an applicant isn't willing to adhere to the company's stance on these issues then they don't need to get very far in the hiring process.

**The application** should always contain a drug consent form and criminal records release even if the applicant never takes one. Having these forms in the application is a sign to them that

these issues are important to the company and if they have problems with these policies then they need to move on to another opportunity.



**The interview** piece should always consist of a review of the application first, in order to identify any red flags regarding work history, skills, experience, education, etc. That way, any red flags can be thoroughly discussed and reviewed during the interview. Another element that should be reviewed during the interview is the applicant's attitude towards safety. This can be done by asking open-ended questions such as, "Tell me about a time when a client asked you to do something unsafe?" or, "Tell me about a time that you witnessed a co-worker doing something unsafe on the job?" These types of questions provide insight on how important safety is to the applicant and whether or not they are the right fit.

Finally, all applicants should receive a solid **orientation** that includes a company w/c philosophy statement, company handbook or policy/procedures checklist and general safety orientation, including general safety rules, an interactive training piece, as well as a quiz. Each of these elements helps the staffing company determine how serious an applicant is about obtaining a job, what their attitude regarding safety is, and provides opportunities to educate them on the company's policies.

While many of the previously mentioned elements are not new, the key is to be consistent in applying them with *every* applicant. When these pieces fall by the wayside in the name of "filling job orders", companies open themselves up to hiring unqualified personnel. By maintaining good hiring practices, companies can help ensure that it has qualified employees, and therefore, fewer injuries, less turnover and lower costs, which lead to higher margins, satisfied clients and long-term profitability.

*Risk Control Services (RCS) is a risk management consulting firm for the staffing industry.*

## Advice for Life

### What to Do With All Those Herbs

Herb gardens are fun and easy to grow. Just give them rich soil, plenty of sun, water, and a nice trim every so often, and your herbs will thrive — so well in fact that you might need to store them. Here are some tips to ensure you have spring-fresh herbs all year long.



- **How do I store fresh herbs?** Whether you grow them or buy them at your local market, the trick here is to resist the urge to rinse them before you're going to use them. Just snip the bottom stems and place them in a jar with water. That's it. Herbs such as cilantro and parsley do great in the fridge with a plastic baggie placed loosely over them. Basil is a bit more sensitive to the cold, so leave that on the counter instead.
- **Can I freeze herbs?** If you ask most moms, you can freeze anything — and herbs are no exception. Wash and thoroughly dry your herbs before freezing in zip-lock bags. Be sure to remove as much air from the bag as possible. You can use these herbs straight from the freezer. Another way to freeze herbs like basil and parsley is in ice cube trays. Just blend together 1/3 cup oil and 2 cups herbs, pour into trays and freeze.
- **How do I dry herbs?** This is easier than you might think. Just rinse your herbs in cold water. Then dry thoroughly, tie the stems together with some twine and hang them upside down in a low-humidity environment. You can use a cookie cooling rack for drying, too.
- **How long do dried herbs last?** Chances are, if have to ask, it's time to toss it. Dried herbs maintain their freshness for about a year and store well in low-moisture, low-light areas for up to three years. Any longer and they're compost.

## You Did WHAT?!

### Top interview blunders

Several thousand hiring managers shared their most memorable or unusual interview experiences with CareerBuilder.com. Here are some of the highlights:

- Candidate brought a "how to interview" book with him to the interview.
- Candidate asked, "What company is this?"
- When a candidate interviewing for a security position wasn't hired on the spot, he painted graffiti on the building.
- Candidate wore a Boy Scout uniform and never told interviewers why.
- Candidate was arrested by federal authorities during the interview when the background check revealed the person had an outstanding warrant.
- Candidate referred to himself in the third person.
- Candidate took off his shoes during the interview.
- Candidate asked for a sip of the interviewer's coffee.
- Candidate told the interviewer she wasn't sure if the job offered was worth "starting the car for."

### Believe It or Not Real W/C injury claims

Wise man once said,  
"Do not take cookie from  
strangers."

**I ran down  
the steps and  
when I got to the end,  
my feet wouldn't stop.**

**I was proving that I could carry  
an air compressor and I  
strained my back.**

**I sprained my ankle the same  
way I sprained my ankle  
before.**

**I chipped my tooth on a cookie  
while visiting a customer.**

