



General Job Search Strategies

Working with a Staffing Agency

Staffing agencies are hired by organizations to assist in identifying and hiring new employees, and are considered to be “third-party recruiters.” The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) defines third-party recruiters, as “agencies, organizations, or individuals recruiting candidates for temporary, part-time, or full-time employment opportunities other than for their own needs.” Because third-party recruiters are often hired by small companies in need of staff, seeking assistance from a staffing agency can be a rewarding - and typically free - step in your job search. To learn more about working with a staffing agencies beyond this resource, set up a career coaching appointment to help answer any questions you might have.

Applicable Career Communities:



Three Main Categories of Job Placement in the Staffing Industry

1. Temporary or Contract: When you work for the staffing agency’s client on a short-term basis
2. Temporary to Permanent or Temporary to Hire: When you work for the staffing agency’s client for a period of time in order for you and the client to determine if you are a good fit for the company based on your skills, performance, interests, etc. If there is a match the client would extend an offer of employment to you.
3. Direct Hire or Permanent Placement: When you are recruited by the staffing agency and then get hired by their client.

How do I Select an Agency?

1. Do your research: Before you commit to working with an agency, check to make sure the employers served by that agency typically have positions that correspond with your interests and qualifications. Which firm is likely to offer opportunities related to your skills, knowledge areas, and education? Most staffing agencies specialize in sourcing

candidates for one or more of the following occupational areas: office administration, industrial, technical, information technology, scientific, health care, and managerial positions. See link below for help identify staffing agencies. <https://americanstaffing.net/job-seekers/>

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- 2. Make sure they are a member of the American Staffing Association:** ASA members pledge to adhere to a code of ethics and good practices. Also, ASA members do not charge job seekers when they place them with employers.
- 3. Customer Service:** Pay attention to the treatment you receive during each interaction you have with the staffing agency. Are the individuals you meet with professional? What type of impression do you get from the office environment? Over time, how responsive are they to your requests?
- 4. Communicate what you are looking for:** It's good to let the agency know what type of opportunity you're seeking. Tell the agency's recruiter where you'd like to work, what you'd like to gain from a work placement, your ideal schedule, and perhaps share your short- and long-term career goals. Do they seem interested in your career goals?

Are There Questions I Should Ask the Staffing Agency?

- 1. How often are jobs available for someone in my field?** Confirm that the agency is

working with clients that have actual job openings. Sometimes an agency may only want to add your name to a candidate pool in order to attract more employers, or they may just be collecting resumes for future opportunities.

- 2. How will my information and materials be used?** The agency should advise you that your resume and other job search documents will not be shared outside their organization. The only exception to this, would be when the agency shares your information with a client for a potential placement.
- 3. Will I be treated equally and fairly?** As long as you are qualified for the job, a staffing agency must not discriminate by withholding your resume. Staffing agencies are covered by the laws enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). See https://www.eeoc.gov/employees/coverage_employment_agencies.cfm for more information.
- 4. Am I responsible for any fees?** Before you make an agreement or sign a contract, ask if you are responsible for any fees.

It is best to view third-party recruiters as one of multiple job search resources. Don't expect them to find employment for you. Instead, continue to apply directly to employer postings and pursue networking leads. If you revise your resume, send the staffing recruiter a new one.

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Benefits of Working with a Staffing Agency

Staffing agencies offer flexibility while you are figuring out a longer-term commitment, whether that be full-time work, an advanced degree, or launching your own business. Regardless, some type of income will be required to pay the bills and maintain your lifestyle. Staffing agencies offer the flexibility of earning an income without requiring a commitment to long-term employment or a full-time work schedule. You can work full-time or part-time, work five days a week or fewer. It depends on the work placements for which you qualify and choose to accept.

You may be unsure of a desired career path. A staffing agency can provide exposure to a variety of industries and companies that you otherwise might not have considered. Perhaps you haven't been exposed to a professional work environment or developed the full array of workplace skills required by companies hiring for regular, full-time positions. If so, because of the variety of jobs, professional environments, and opportunities for which they are seeking candidates, working with a staffing agency may be a great next step for you to advance your resume while clarifying your career goals.


Your placement may lead to permanent employment. According to the American Staffing Association, about three quarters of temporary and contract employees move on to permanent jobs. Such assignments allow you to get your foot in the door so both you and the employer can determine if there's a good fit. If the employer is impressed with your performance and the position becomes permanent, you are more likely to receive the job offer than an unknown applicant.


Professional training. Some staffing agencies offer training programs to maximize readiness for job assignments. Training may cover use of computer programs (e.g., PowerPoint, Excel) or other topics. With each placement you'll likely obtain training on the job that will further increase your marketability to employers.

What to do if a Staffing Agency Reaches Out via LinkedIn

There are company recruiters everywhere looking for talent to bring in, and use of LinkedIn is an easy way for them to connect with prospects. So, don't be surprised if you get an invitation to connect from a third-party recruiter if you are active on LinkedIn. All of the guidelines in this document apply as you evaluate offers received through LinkedIn, and a good place to start in your correspondence with the recruiter is to determine what type of placement (temporary or contract, temporary to permanent, or direct hire) they are working to fill. If the recruiter does not answer the questions you ask that is a sign you should probably avoid moving forward with that agency.

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