

Choosing a Staffing Partner

It is important when deciding to work with a staffing service to be sure that you select one that will best suit your needs. To better understand the agency, or agencies you're considering to aid you in your recruitment efforts, start at the main source.

Research tips for selecting a staffing agency:

- Request brochures, articles or other written material for background information.
- Visit their website (if applicable) to learn more about them and to get a sense of the message they're sending to prospective clients.

Here are some questions to ask. The answers will speak to their professionalism, quality and quantity of candidates available as well as the associated costs.

- How are you greeted when calling the agency? What is the overall mood and climate?
- Call to arrange informational interviews with the principals of the staffing company.
- Ask about the collective background and experience of their employees and candidates.
- How long have they been in existence?
- Determine if you would be best served by a specialty staffing service that handles your industry exclusively (or at least semi-exclusively) or if a general agency will suffice.
- If they do cater to niche markets, ascertain which industries their client companies represent.
- Do their contract workers fit the demographics of what you're looking for?
- Are they members (in good standing) in industry/trade associations?
- What are their business practices like?
- What is their success ratio in placing candidates?
- What are their sources for obtaining candidates?
- What is the size and industry focus of the agency? Is it compatible with your staffing requirements?
- Will they meet your testing requirements?
- What are their policies and procedures for handling temp to perm situations, last minute staffing emergencies, changes etc.? Do they charge additional fees?
- What is the fee structure?
- Can they offer candidates with skill sets specific to your industry and can they supply the volume of staff needed?
- If you have multiple locations, domestically and/or internationally, are they equipped to handle this? Will they assist with obtaining work visas and other required paperwork if clients are assigned overseas?
- Do they work collaboratively with other agencies? If so, who are they?
- What is the turn over rate of their internal and external staff - both permanent and temporary?
- Do they offer training? If so, on what type of software/hardware systems is the training available?
- How do they prep candidates for assignments?
- Are they a contingency or retained search firm?

Contingency - just like it sounds - means they only get paid once a placement is made. They are likely to present you, and other clients who may be your competitors, a large number of candidates. Volume translates into speed of placement.

Retained search firms receive compensation whether or not a placement is made. They will search until they find and present the person they feel is uniquely qualified for your organization. This may or may not happen in as timely a fashion as needed to resolve your staffing challenge.

Both contingency and retained search firms generally receive between 20-33% of your candidate's starting salary. Oftentimes the fee depends on the volume of business that you do with them.

Use this questionnaire as a guideline for choosing a staffing agency that uses an electronic job board/website.

In bold are the questions to ask to assist you in determining if they provide what you need in order to facilitate the recruitment process. In regular typeface are the responses given by Strategic Staffing executives regarding their services to give you a point of reference for answers received by those companies you poll.

1. How often do you update your job board's postings?

Our job openings are updated everyday. Because our jobs are representative of what's happening in the Staffing industry, most of the positions are filled very quickly, and therefore removed with new ones being added everyday.

2. How much space am I allotted for describing my positions. What information do you suggest we include in job postings?

You are allowed up to 1500 characters in the job posting, and 1500 characters in the job description. We advise you to include job title, job description, and job requirements, pay range, type of job (Contract or Direct), length of contract (if applicable), pay rate, any benefits offered, contact information (name, address, email address, telephone and fax numbers).

3. From where do you receive your new job listings? Does your site have a section for free postings from Usenet and Newsgroups?

All new jobs descriptions are entered by our customers. Though all jobs can be viewed at no charge, we do not offer free listings of jobs.

4. If yes, how is the quality of these postings maintained?

(Not applicable)

5. How current are the resumes in your database? For how long are they kept active?

Resumes are entered by candidates. As soon as these new resumes are placed on our website they are available to employers/recruiters and therefore are current on a daily basis.

6. How do you obtain the resumes on your site? Do you allow Usenet and Newsgroups to post resumes?

They are obtained through our website, and partnerships with resume creation tools. No, we do not include Newsgroups and Usenet.

7. If yes, how is the quality of these postings maintained?

(Not applicable)

8. Are you able to report matches to candidates and those posting jobs? Is this an automated system? What are the associated costs and turn around times? Can it be integrated with any email system?

Yes, we do have an online response system, and it will integrate with email. There is no extra charge for this as it is part of the service that we offer to our clients. They are made available generally within 1 - 3 hours.

9. Are your job listing entries automated? What are the associated costs and turn around times?

Yes, we do offer automated job listings. This too is included in the price of our service. It will integrate with any e-mail system. We have had customers be able to integrate usually within 1 - 3 hours.

10. Are your job listings pre-formatted or tailored to the specifications of the employer/recruiter?

We have Employer Profiles, designed as requested by the client. They are made based on the content provided to us by the customer. Once that data has been entered, it is immediately available on our website.

11. Do you provide online, real-time activity reports with page views and responses?

Yes, we do.

12. How are customers updated regarding their account's monthly activities, statistics and status?

Job statistics are available in real-time.

13. Are all services performed in-house? What, if any, are sent out to sub-contractors?

All work is performed in-house.

14. What kind of technical and customer support services do you provide to your customers?

Strategic Staffing prides itself on Customer Service and constantly ranks very high in this area by industry polls and publications.