

Improve Your Staffing Results: Practical Tips for Success

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Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell once said, ***“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.”***

I’m fairly certain he wasn’t referring to staffing services when he said those words.

Still, the point General Powell makes *is* relevant for my industry. During my years as a staffing professional, I’ve learned that successful working relationships don’t happen by accident. They are the result of careful planning, constant communication, and yes – learning from mistakes.

Today, I’d like to share some of the secrets I’ve learned about staffing success. Here are a few practical suggestions for improving the working relationship with your staffing provider to get better results:

[Get to know one another better.](#) Given the opportunity, a staffing service can do so much more than just fill orders. Request a facilities tour or a formal presentation to learn about your staffing vendor’s full range of capabilities.

Likewise, you should help your staffing provider get to know your organization and its needs better. If possible, give the rep a tour of your location and let him speak with your employees to see first-hand how your company operates. Share your organization’s goals, culture, challenges, history and performance expectations.

The time you spend getting to know one another better will be worth the effort. Developing an in-depth understanding of your company’s needs and preferences will help your staffing vendor act as a true partner – a knowledgeable extension of your human resources department.

Plan your staffing needs. It’s never too early to discuss an upcoming need with your staffing service. With more lead time, your provider will be better equipped to find the perfect match for your needs. This is especially important with hard-to-find skill sets, or when you require a large number of workers. Of course, your staffing firm should be prepared to handle your last minute requirements. In cases where lead time is not an option, be sure to specify which skills and traits are most important for the assignment.

Provide thorough job descriptions. To get the best results, submit your staffing requests in writing. Be sure to include a complete job description, including required skills, experience and personality traits, as well as performance goals and standards. Written staffing requests give your

staffing provider a clearer picture of your needs and prevent miscommunications that can occur when requests are given orally.

Create processes for working together. Establish clear, mutually agreed-upon expectations for your working relationship with your staffing firm. Standardize and document processes for placing orders (see above), conducting quality control checks, resolving problems and providing feedback. Creating this structure can head-off potential problems, minimize miscommunications and ensure you receive the service and results you expect.

Discuss intangibles. Beyond these formal processes, teach your staffing representative how best to work with you and other decision makers in your company. Explain the types of work styles and communication tactics that will be most successful. Train your rep in how to best service your account.

Take advantage of value-added services. A good staffing service can provide not only top candidates, flexible staffing options and cost savings, but also a number of valuable extras (at little or no cost). Make sure you speak with your staffing representative about things like: detailed reports on staffing usage, skills training for applicants, customized orientation and training for new contingent workers and direct hires, paycheck drop-off or direct deposit for temporary employees, etc. Find out what your staffing firm offers and take advantage of the services that make sense for your company.

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