



YOU'RE HIRED

Finding the right staffing agency

By Sandy Heath

Per staffingtoday.net, two million people per day are employed by staffing companies. An astounding number, isn't it? Connecting with the right staffing/employment agency is akin to engaging your own personal agent to represent you to potential employers.

Okay – you say – I'm ready, now how do I choose an agency? Referrals are your best bet. Ask relatives, friends, neighbors, business associates if they have ever worked with an agency. Other resources are the internet, yellow pages, or actually calling some larger companies to ask which agencies they use. Research and asking the right questions will lead you to the right fit.

Every profession has its share of unethical or incompetent "bad apples." Your goal is to find a firm that will treat you with respect and represent you diligently and honestly. Choose an "agent" that specialized in placements that match your skills. If an agency represents a large variety of job classifications (office, labor, IT, healthcare, etc.) they may not be focused on finding opportunities within a particular specialty.

Here are some questions you can ask:

What can I expect when I come to your office? Hold out for an agency that offers personal, one-on-one interviews. Virtual recruiting and testing may be fast and easy but it won't help you stand out from the crowd. It's important they know you personally. You don't want to be "just another name" in their database.

Do I have to sign an agreement or contract? It's

unlikely a reputable agency will require a contract.

Do I have to pay a fee? Never should the employee pay a fee. This holds true for temporary and permanent placements.

How much of your business is temporary, temp-to-hire, contract or permanent? What is their temp-to-hire policy? What is their specialty?

What type of benefits do you offer? When do they take effect? Benefits are a good indication that you'll be considered an employee, not a commodity.

When you find the right agency, be specific and honest about your needs and be open to constructive feedback. You've found professionals who spend all day, every day, interacting with business owners, executives and hiring authorities – make the most of it!

Sandy Heath, is a Certified Temporary Staffing Specialist, with over 20 years in the employment industry. Her firm, Sandra Heath & Associates (SHA), specializes in the placement of office support personnel both on a permanent and a temporary basis. Sandy has earned numerous awards and accolades including Top 10 Women Business Owners in Northeast Ohio, The Weatherhead 100 Award and NEO Success Award (Inside Business Magazine). In addition Sandy has been invited to participate in various forums dealing with employment, diversity and certification issues. SHA is located at 16500 W. Sprague Road, Middleburg Heights, Ohio. Phone 440-243-3700 or visit our website at www.sandraheath.com.