

THE TEMP FACTOR

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**The Complete Guide to
Temporary Employment for
Staffing Services, Clients, and Temps**

Cathy A. Reilly



Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton

*The Temp Factor: The Complete Guide to
Temporary Employment for Staffing Services, Clients, and Temps*

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Universal-Publishers
Boca Raton, Florida • USA
2012

ISBN-10: 1-61233-061-4
ISBN-13: 978-1-61233-061-7

www.universal-publishers.com

Cover photo @Cutcaster.com/Yuri Arcurs

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Reilly, Cathy A., 1957-

The temp factor : the complete guide to temporary employment for staffing services, clients, and temps / Cathy A. Reilly.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-1-61233-061-7 (pbk. : alk. paper) -- ISBN 1-61233-061-4 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Temporary employment--United States. 2. Employee leasing services--United States. 3. Temporary employees--United States. I. Title.

HD5854.2.U6R449 2011

658.3'044--dc23

2011036937

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This book is dedicated to Katherine Sullivan, my great aunt and my inspiration. Here's to you and sporting high heels on camels in Egypt.

Your spirit lives on and I love you!

Acknowledgement

I wish to thank the following people for their contributions and support. They each became a part of this project, intentionally and otherwise: Pat (Eleanor) & John P. Reilly, Patty Reilly, Mary and Dave Epstein, Joseph Reilly, Katherine Sullivan, Patty Grasso, Janet Cortazzi, Kenneth Fox, Sid Monty, Donna Storm Lynch, Kate Olshever and my Huckleberry Friend.

Thank you also to my editor, Linda the WriteWatchman at Edit Avenue for her talent and care, Doug at WordZworth and his team for an excellent job, and to Jeff Young at Universal-Publishers for giving me a shot, and to his team who have been so patient and supportive.

Christopher Reilly worked many long hours, heart and soul as my advisor and never lost the faith. John E. Reilly USN (Retired) provided invaluable guidance and expertise to add the “spit and polish” that was needed.

A note of appreciation also to Eric at Starbucks on 51st Street for all the great Tall Decafs delivered with such bright “Hello’s” during this project. He understands customer service!

My sincerest apologies, if I inadvertently left anyone out that belongs here too. I thank you here and now!

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the staffing service executives, representatives and industry experts, human resource professionals, and temporary employees (past and present) who so generously provided quotes, wisdom and feedback for this book and who work daily for the betterment of the temporary work arrangement and contribute to businesses the world over.

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While each segment boasts expertise in its own area, having a full understanding of how each of the others functions and achieves success creates an important new level of business intelligence. This new intelligence ultimately, leads to better results and an ability to compete with innovation and skill outside what the others are doing.

To illustrate a bit further, when a client has increased knowledge about how staffing services and temps operate and what their “hot buttons” are, they are going to drive a better deal and obtain an improved temp employee. This success for a client means that they can offer more effective staffing solutions within their company. They can serve their own customers (company executives and staff members) better. The reason a client will reach this achievement is through an increased education about temporary staffing, which is what *The Temp Factor: The Complete Guide to Temporary Employment for Staffing Services, Clients, and Temps* is all about. Information is empowering.

Possessing an advanced knowledge about temporary staffing must include an adequate understanding about all three vital segments of this working relationship and partnership, regardless of which space within it you occupy. Opportunity can only present itself through this door. Let education lead you to new visions that will ignite and provide the fuel for your passion toward working with people.

SECTION I

THE STAFFING SERVICE

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CHAPTER 1

The Work World has Changed

The pulse of a business . . .

How we do business, view emerging opportunities, develop, and sharpen strategies to increase the bottom line all depend on many events that lie outside the precise control of a business. To survive and compete, companies must keep their eyes wide open. They must monitor and effectively interpret the big picture and execute accordingly. They must also pay particular attention to innovations, trends, and change. A staffing service is no different.

The economy, investor confidence, job market, and unemployment may be some of the more obvious business gauges today, but there are more. Politics, war, immigration, budget cuts, credit and housing markets, technology (discussed further below), and the environment all play into the business mix. Then you must factor in labor costs, raw materials, and borrowing money. All are becoming either costlier or scarcer. A fuller appreciation of what it takes to succeed in business begins to emerge.

Separately or combined, *these issues reach across industries and companies domestically and globally. They can be powerful driving forces to varying degrees for every business and its goals. As a result, they will affect a staffing service in two major ways. One way is the*

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impact on a staffing service's client companies regarding their strategies, budgets, and staffing. The other impact is on the general labor pool. There will be an increase or decrease in available workers, the richness of their qualifications, and their fluctuating experience levels.

Worth further consideration is the issue and scope of technology. It has penetrated our business and personal lives, often blending the two and blurring the boundaries. Just look at our usage of portable electronic devices and cell phones. We use them while sitting at the beach, on trains and planes, eating in a restaurant or just walking down the street at all hours of the day and night. There used to be such a thing as “down time” or obvious places of leisure, but no more.

The efficiency with which we can work is increasing as we multi-task all day long through the advantages of technology and the array of portable devices at our fingertips. Keeping up with it all is imperative for a business. *Keeping ahead of the curve is an absolute challenge and a necessity.*

Time and Technology

We use email, voice mail, scanners, faxes, laptops, iPads, Wi-Fi, Blackberries, smart phones, audio and video conferencing. So, consider the issue of “time” as it relates to technology. How has it changed our perceptions and expectations? *“As soon as possible”* used to mean just that and there was a small amount of breathing room to react. Today, it means right now, without delay, so customers, clients and employees expect results with immediacy. *Turnaround time* has dramatically narrowed. Everyone wants results pronto and at the touch of a button, very quickly and very easily.

These faster timelines have helped shrink the world and have *expanded our horizons*. It is very easy to do business across town and in many cases, just as easy to do business across the globe. Think about how simple it is in your own life, for example, to order anything you want from anywhere in the world online.

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In addition to the way technology has changed our concept of time, it has also increased *consumer sophistication*. In the past, it was only the wealthier set that went for high-end or luxury items and makers. Today's consumers are increasingly educated, and are extremely *high quality minded and brand savvy*. These buyers demand the most for every dollar they spend.

Moreover, with this larger demand, comes the issue of copycatting products. A completely *new market* exists for “knock offs”, which are made fast, cheap, and with close similarity to the pricey originals. This change puts a large burden on companies; they must protect the integrity of their products.

As the work world is changing, so is *staffing at organizations*. Often, one of the first areas to either ramp up or down, as the economy rises and falls and businesses cycles grow, is an organization's workers. Consider how fast you hear about staff cutbacks and layoffs following an announcement by a company that it is in trouble. They go hand in hand. We have seen so much employee juggling over the last twenty years that we have created many more politically correct or softer terms for “job loss”. We now call it a “reduction in force”, “downsizing”, “rightsizing”, “early retirement package”, “aligning business needs,” “consolidating job functions” and the ever popular expression . . . “restructuring”.

The term “layoff” has lost its original meaning, which is to have someone *actually return* to his or her job once business picks up again. That result is definitely not happening. Using the term “lay off” in many situations is now incorrect. Most laid-off workers today know a call-back will not be coming in the future. It is also unfortunately quite common with today's business standards that when job losses do occur, they reach into the thousands with one fell swoop rather than occurring little by little.

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As the level of employees' losing jobs goes up or down, so will the volume, backgrounds, skills and qualifications of the people who come knocking on the doors of a staffing service looking for work.

Older workers, for one will be showing up more frequently than in the past, seeking alternative work arrangements, new careers, or more flexibility. This shift in the labor pool may become even more evident as a large portion of baby boomers reach the age of eligibility to collect retirement benefits, Social Security, 401(k) investment payouts, and pension plans. These workers will be exiting jobs in the mainstream workforce.

Temporary work just may be the right answer to their new employment and benefit needs. College graduates who previously may have had more options in the job market will also now be considering temporary employment as a route to a permanent job. Retired military and re-careers (those leaving one career and starting another), corporate executives looking for more flexibility, and droves of talented, displaced workers who cannot find jobs will also be calling on the staffing industry for opportunities.

Job seekers are also more diverse today. They span multiple generations of workers with varied work ethics, priorities, values, skills, abilities, education, experiences, and perspectives. The processes between job seekers and the companies who seek them have changed. There is pre-screening, web-based background checks, a vast array of testing tools, phone interviews, multiple rounds of interviews, emailing, texting and social medium research undertaken, not to mention the increased methodologies now available for finding a job or doing candidate sourcing, (i.e., job boards, LinkedIn, etc.). In addition, today's education system has had an effect. It is producing workers who know how to use a computer before they can ride a bicycle.

Staffing services need to be ready. They will need to be able to attract, screen, test, train, and place well-qualified candidates coming to them from many different directions with varying circumstances, requirements, and backgrounds. We will see a shift in worker strategies by

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companies and a greater influx of people looking for part-time and alternative employment. New business opportunities are everywhere. *Staffing services should be taking careful note in order to remain profitable, competitive, and able to understand changing job markets, labor pools, and client needs.*



The shape of the staffing service/client/temp relationship is also changing. That relationship now requires more linkage and understanding of each other's needs and challenges. It is more information-based and strategic in focus.

Overall, how is any company to become successful and thriving in a changing world, given the many obstacles it must navigate? It takes having a sharp focus on its purpose, skill in interpreting what is happening across the business landscape, creativeness, effective leadership, innovation, adaptability, flexibility, and the ability to execute a plan. Aligning strategies with economic changes will also be a critical issue for businesses in the future. *As the issues pile up however, so do opportunities.*

Many ways, many means . . .

Today's workers have more effective and convenient ways of performing their jobs. *Employees are no longer restricted to work by travelling to and from their employer's place of business.* They can telecommute. Suddenly, where you perform your work for a company may not matter and change in large part. Many employees that "go to the office" each day literally do not *go into an office*. They work from home. Having access to your own telephone, cell phone, voice mail, Blackberry®, computer, email, fax machine, printer, copier, and scanner makes it easy to set up an office almost anywhere. This change has a direct effect on a staffing service.

Employees can work in one city and live in another. Many times, you would not even know the difference since functionality is often seamless. (One TV commercial was about a boss who looked for a particular employee on a regular basis until one day someone finally

got up the nerve to tell the boss that the particular employee he sought out all the time lived across the country. I believe it was an airlines commercial making a point about so many flights being available per day, you could commute by plane.).

Today we have flexible schedules and often work different days, cycles, shifts, or hours. We job share, so two employees carry the headcount of one. We work remotely. We work on planes, trains, and in our cars. We work from the beach, the mall, or even our own backyards. We can easily have five or six generations working together at the same organization. We rehire employees. We welcome returnees and retirees back to the workforce. We have many, many work options!

Connecting the dots . . .

All the above issues should signal opportunity to staffing professionals. Unstable conditions in the economy, escalating costs, staffing shortages, excesses, or changes in labor markets, restructuring of companies, more choices in where and how we work, shortened reaction times, technological advances and sharpened sophistication levels on the part of consumers all relate to areas where a staffing service can fill, develop, or enhance a business need. Are any of these presenting an opportunity or positive condition for your staffing service? Should you consider a specialized niche or change in your current operations? It may be worth careful analysis in each area. Consider precisely where there may be room for growth for your staffing service. Can you provide a solution to a new need, fill an open space, or create a new angle on something traditionally done before in only one way?

Look at how all this change relates to a company's ability to maintain an effective balance between its resources and business demands. One of the quickest ways a company can bridge staffing gaps in times of need or change is by hiring non-traditional labor (aka contingency and temporary workers).

For companies to compete, they must continually determine how to do more with less. The current extremely high cost of employee

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benefits is an area of critical concern to a business, especially under tightening economic conditions. Companies are demanding more from their workforces in order to keep up. It is a known fact that Americans today work longer hours than the rest of the world. Just look at our vacation benefits or maternity leave policies. They are far below those of many other countries.

Certainly, there seems to be no shortage of problems facing businesses today and likely yet in the future. *Be clear on identifying the issues or potential changes in your own staffing service and your clients. Link this knowledge and provide better answers for your clients. Then market them.* Connect all the dots. See what others are missing or not noticing and gain an edge. Staffing services that prove they are innovative and progressive and can provide excellent, new solutions will see an increase in their business. As we continue our discussion, we will examine some of the opportunities and how a staffing service can raise the bar on their service and their product (temps).