



Become the Employer of Choice

For any business that has looked for talent in the last few years, it has been tough going. With unemployment rates under 4% and full employment considered to be 5%, everyone who wanted a job had at least one (if not more). Employees clearly have had an advantage over employers as a result of simple demand and supply dynamics. In order to attract the attention and interest of the best talent, companies needed to concentrate their efforts on becoming

to send their employees home to work remotely. In six weeks, there were more than 30 million workers who were either temporarily furloughed or permanently laid off. It took three years under the Trump administration to create 6.6 million jobs but only six weeks to lose five times that amount. So, what does this mean for employers and the staffing firms that support them?

We know that the US and world economies will recov-

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a true employer of choice. No longer was just having a slight edge in compensation enough to tip the scales.

In March 2020, however, that all changed.

The novel coronavirus spread throughout the world and was named a pandemic by the World Health Organization in March. In that same month, the virus began weaving its terrible path into the US. Almost overnight, consumer demand came to a halt. Retail stores closed and most non-essential businesses were required

er from this pandemic, and most likely, very quickly once companies resume operations. That being said, it will still be an employee market, even with a large surplus of available workers. Why? Because as businesses resume operations, they will quickly need to replace all of the workers previously let go. This will be the case throughout the US, and it will occur simultaneously across markets. Employees will have options – who to go back to work for, where, and when. So how should staffing companies position themselves to benefit from the approaching demand for and surplus of workers?

BECOMING A STAFFING “EMPLOYER OF CHOICE”

Staffing companies don't often think about becoming an employer of choice themselves. They take staffing orders from their clients and simply do the best job they can filling each order. Working at this level turns the recruitment process from one of adding value to simply becoming a commodity. The staffing firms that consistently outperform their competitors are the ones who understand that they are the employer and must become the employer of choice – not the client company.

COMPENSATION

While survey after survey suggests that money is not the most important consideration for potential new hires, it is always near the top of the list. But compensation is more than just an hourly wage or a salary. It includes things such as health benefits, savings/re-

also true for the client company for whom they will be working. All of the factors that differentiate each client company should be taken into consideration. If done correctly, the staffing company will be well positioned to attract strong candidates. This will also serve to gain the attention of more like-minded staffing clients who will, in turn, provide more recruiting successes – thus creating a continuous circle of success.

THE WORK

Staffing companies also need to go deep with each client company regarding the specific work involved. The top staffing organizations often have one or more of their staff actually “shadow” the client company's workers, and even work the jobs themselves, from one full shift to a complete work week. This is an ideal way to really understand the nature of the work and then communicate accurate expectations to candidates, and

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tirement plans, paid leave programs, educational assistance and employee loans and advances, to name just a few. Staffing organizations need to understand the complete compensation package available for each client engagement, as well as the compensation progression plan and promotion tracks. Then, after having done that, identify which client companies are the ones that will support their efforts in becoming a top choice for staffing talent.

THE CLIENT COMPANY

The staffing firm's client organizations need to be thoroughly vetted. What is the unique culture of each client company? How inviting is the work environment? How does the client company view contingent staff – do they treat them the same as their own workforce? What training opportunities are available? Are contingent workers considered important contributors to the company's performance or are they seen as fill-ins? Every contingent worker needs to understand that they are truly valued by the staffing firm they represent. This is

select those clients with work assignments that will be more attractive to the contingent worker.

The work should also be meaningful. Does the client company make it clear how each role contributes to the overall success of the organization? If people understand the “how” in addition to the “what,” they can often perform more productively and achieve greater levels of work satisfaction.

Next, what is the temperature of the client company's leadership? Are they collaborative and communicative or do they simply give work orders and expect them to be carried out? Are they perceived as truly caring for each person or is it all about the number of widgets they can package each hour? Finally, what is the client organization's record on safety? No matter what type of work is being performed, there is always the possibility of someone being injured. The chances of this increase dramatically for organizations that don't take safety seriously.

Most importantly, staffing firms should consider the preferences candidates have with regard to the work, culture, environment and leadership of the organization they may go to work for.

RECOGNITION

The best staffing firms take it upon themselves to develop programs that honor and recognize their workforces, and those programs go beyond performance metrics. They can and should include recognition for being a solid team player, bringing a positive attitude to the job, and being loyal to the staffing organization they work for. Of course, recognition may also include bonuses and other forms of earnings, but calling out positive work behaviors and attitudes and simply saying “great job” go a long way toward becoming that employer of choice.

The staffing company is the employer and needs to act like the employer. This means having a supportive and inviting application and hiring process, and choosing the work assignments that take into consideration the candidates’ skills as well as their temperament. Most importantly, staffing firms should consider the pref-



erences candidates have with regard to the work, culture, environment and leadership of the organization they may go to work for. When all of these factors are consistently taken into account, the contingent workforce becomes the staffing firm’s best sales force. If the candidates are truly happy with the staffing firm they represent and feel like their efforts are recognized and appreciated, they will be the first ones to spread the word and become a strong brand advocate of the staffing company.

Villing + Company is a marketing communications firm providing recruitment marketing, branding, web development, advertising, design, social media planning and support to the staffing industry and other business sectors. Villing + Company is led by Jay Mattern, co-founder and former CEO of a large staffing firm, a three-time Staffing 100 recipient and a Certified Staffing Professional. He can be reached at jay@villing.com.