

Mastering Direct Hire Staffing: Five Best Practices for Success



A valuable resource for members of the American Staffing Association to enhance their business with direct hire staffing.



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Are you thinking about exploring direct hire staffing or taking your current services to the next level? Get ready to excel with these top five practical tips tailored just for you by members of the ASA direct hire section. These straightforward strategies will help you break into the direct hire staffing scene with confidence and efficiency.



1 To scale your business, know what you know and do it well.

- Have an identity on what you can fill. Know who you are and own your market.
- Specialize, don't generalize. Become an expert in all market sectors your firm supports. Get deep into the market to know where the players and talent are and engage with them.
- Set clear expectations for various contingencies and have a signed contract before engaging in a search.
- Commit to working with clients on requirements that are a fit for your wheelhouse and for the market sectors your firm supports. Customers will respect you more for saying no versus taking on a job order that you can't fill.
- Be prepared to have a referral organization in mind that may meet the customer's needs.



2 The sales process is completely different for direct hire than contract staffing.

- Time management is key. There is a fine balance between administrative work and making placements.
- Understand that this sector has a longer sales cycle that requires a different level of training and mindset to walk a client and candidate through the hiring process.
- Ensure new-to-direct hire recruiters have the soft skills required to maintain engaged candidate control and stay motivated through a four-to six-week interview process.
- Be adaptable to ever-changing market conditions.
- Be prepared for an extensive and collaborative interview process from clients because more people are coming to the table for direct than contract hire.
- Be transparent about your fee percentage, time expectations, guarantee, payment terms, and services provided for clients.
- Build out a customized sales process for direct hire and commit to continuous improvement.
- You may need to invest in more viable recruitment resources for direct hire engagements.



3 The Candidate Engagement Process

- Prepare for the appropriate time needed to screen and create a viable candidate profile.
- Proactively discuss counter offers, relocation, benefits, and timing required to leave a current role when beginning a new role.
- Create a profile presentation that highlights a candidate's background to effectively advocate for an interview and, ideally, an offer.
- Understand candidates' expectations early and reconfirm often. Educate them on client benefits.
- Coach recruiters on soft closing including identifying any roadblocks before an offer is made, including counter and negotiating offers.
- Make sure that you know what would make a candidate accept the job immediately versus what sticking points would have them keep their options open.
- Lean into red flags as they present themselves throughout the candidate engagement process.
- Prepare the candidate for their first touchpoint to be a virtual Teams or Zoom call.
- Stay engaged to keep the candidate motivated through the interview process, offer stage, onboarding, and the guarantee period.
- Remain in contact with "silver medalist" candidates you introduce to the client but aren't hired. They may eventually get placed or be suitable for other client engagements.



4 The Client Engagement Process

- Setting expectations during the intake call to ensure that the role is fillable.
- Invest time in relationship management. This includes alignment for the cadence of the candidate review and interview process.
- Make them aware of current market trends and build trust by acting as an advisor/consultant for their hiring needs.
- Be thorough in the candidate profile. Clearly outline candidate requirements whether they are availability, salary, benefits, bonuses, work location, relocation, timeline, and must-haves.
- Strive for prompt candidate feedback upon submittal and interviewing. Remain engaged with client and candidate to keep the process moving forward.
- Be forthcoming with any client or candidate developments. Be as transparent as possible. If a candidate is actively interviewing or has job offers, ensure that the client is aware. If the client has taken a different direction, be sure that the candidate is aware.
- Remain flexible whether the client requires reference checks by the staffing agency.
- Remain flexible regarding the offer process. Clients may wish to extend the offer themselves or require the staffing agency to manage the process. Either way, ensure that you receive a signed copy of the offer.
- Remain flexible to whether the client requires the staffing agency to conduct background checks and drug screens.
- Stay engaged with the client with routine check-ins before the start date and through the guarantee period.



5 KPIs for direct hire can be different than contract staffing.

- Think about designing your organization's key performance indicators (KPIs) around quality vs. quantity.
- Give importance to interviews as a component of the KPI. Interviews lead to placements.
- Think about tailoring a monetary incentive program that works for your organization. This could be a percentage of commission for each placement, bonuses, or other rewards to incentivize your team.

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