

TEMPORARY STAFFING SERVICES INDUSTRY

Language Used in the Field

Contingent Workforce—the word “contingent” means uncertain, accidental, chance, dependent, and unforeseen. Contingent work depends on the employer’s immediate needs. Some employers are now using contingent workers to fill 30–80% of their jobs. Contingent workers do not have a contract or commitment for ongoing employment—the work is time-limited. These are not “permanent” jobs, but they could last for days or years.

Related Terms—other words associated with contingent workers include temporary services, temporary staff, temps, employee leasing, flexible staffing, outsourcing, free-lancing, consultants, co-employees, on-call workers, independent contractors, flexible staff, supplementals, peripherals, OPS (other personnel services), or interns.

Temps—these are contingent workers who do not expect to stay with the current employer more than a year, who have a job with a specified ending date. An important distinction needs to be made regarding temporary employment and working for a temporary services company or temp agency. If one has continuing employment with a temporary services company, then the work is permanent, not temporary or contingent. This means that one can have permanent employment with a temp agency.

Temping—the person actually doing the work is known as an employee or a contractor, and the temporary help organization is known as the employer. The organization for whom temporary employment services are being provided is known as the client; the client pays any fees for the employment service. The services are provided at no charge to you (the employee), but the client pays the employer for these staffing services.

Private employment agency—it acts as your agent in helping you find employment; it does not hire you as a contingent employee; unlike a temp agency, an employment agency may charge you (the employee) a fee for its services.

Trends And Issues

- 2.5 million people are employed per day by staffing companies.

- About 20% of employers (clients) use temp jobs to screen for their permanent employees. This can lead to a “buyout” or “temp-to-hire” wherein an employee moves from temporary to permanent employment status.
- 79% of temporary employees work full-time.
- The typical contingent worker is younger (16–24), employed in the services industry (50%), and has health insurance (60%) provided by the employer.
- Many professional positions, e.g., lawyers, accountants, physicians, computer specialists, are becoming available through temporary staffing agencies.
- Almost every worker can expect to be unemployed at some time, and temporary staffing companies can help a job hunter fill these employment gaps.

Job Hunting Tips

In seeking employment with a temporary staffing services agency, here are some guidelines to follow for a successful job campaign.

1. Be clear and honest about the kind of work you want, because the temp agency will use your preferences to develop a successful match with a potential client. It is in the employer’s interest for you to succeed in the job.
2. Apply to and be on the roster with several different temp agencies rather than just one; in this way you have several employers pursuing your job interests. Different agencies have contracts with different clients.
3. Be aware that you might start in low level jobs with an employer, but keep negotiating and working collaboratively with the employer to get you into a higher level and/or permanent position.
4. Try to get all the networking, leadership, teamwork, and training experiences that you possibly can with a temporary employment agency.
5. Report the work experience on your resume, remembering that the temp agency is your employer and that your job description would describe your duties and name the client and location.
6. Research employing organizations to find out which temporary staffing agency has the hiring contract for that organization, e.g., Norrell has the staffing contract for MCI, Manpower with GM. Temping may provide an “insider’s view” of the organizational culture where you want to work.

Names Of Companies

The Yellow Pages of a phone book will have listings of temporary staffing organizations usually under the heading of Employment Contractors–Temporary Help. Their Web pages provide additional information. In the Career Resource Library, we have a listing of local organizations. Some of these organizations are national franchisees and others are locally owned. These organizations might be especially interested in hiring persons with technical and college training.

The American Staffing Association (ASA) www.natss.org, headquartered in Alexandria, VA, represents the U.S. staffing industry. ASA can provide information about this industry.

Summary

There is evidence that increasing numbers of college graduates will find their first jobs in this industry, ultimately working in many different public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

Temp Work Checklist

The list of factors shown below might be important for you to consider in seeking employment in the temporary staffing services industry. Checking more of these items might indicate you would be a good candidate for employment in this area.

----- You are willing to start at lower–level positions in an organization in order to develop insider information about permanent positions.

----- You are willing to work for different organizations (clients) in different locations in a short period of time.

----- You want to make yourself visible to employers who might be looking for someone with your skills.

----- You do not need a lot of permanent job security right now.

----- You are relocating to another city and don't want to accept "permanent" employment right away.

----- You want a decent income and secure health benefits.

----- You desire a more flexible lifestyle, e.g., work hours, days of work.

----- You would benefit from having an "agent" who can help you market your skills in the community.

----- You want to maintain a stable work history without getting stuck in jobs you don't like.

- You are interested in a more relaxed hiring process as a “temp.”
- You would like to get training in new job skills areas, e.g., word processing, database creation.
- You would like to try out new occupations or industries without making a commitment to the field.
- You have varied skills, e.g., consulting, information processing, technical, professional, that would enable you to function as an independent contractor.
- You do not want to make long-term commitments to a permanent employer.

Based on Job Hunting In The Temporary Staffing Services Industry
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