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Why I like my staffing firm

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Temps rate the firms that place them

By Craig Johnson and Katherine Alvarez

What do you think makes a company a great place to work?

Some of the benefits that employees will cite are fairly obvious. Fat pay checks, comprehensive and generous health coverage, stimulating assignments abroad, flexibility, etc.

Then there are those benefits that raise eyebrows — wedding leave, calling a service to collect dry-cleaning or even changing the oil in your car, getting time off to take care of a pet — can leave workers feeling coddled.

But temporary workers ask for none of that. Don't misunderstand. It's not as if they don't want these perks or work/ life balance. It's just that there is a whole different paradigm with these workers. For starters, they are hired by staffing firms and then placed in different assignments. Most of the time, they work on the client site. So when these workers rate the staffing firms that place them, the challenge is taken to a whole different level.

Staffing Industry Analysts has organized for the second time the Best Staffing Firm to Temp/Contract For contest. Quantum Workplace, an Omaha, Neb.-based firm, conducted the research and rankings. The results are based on a net promoter score, built on the fundamental perspective that every company's customers — or temps, in

this case — are promoters, passives, or detractors. Questions like “How likely is it that you would recommend [Company X] to a friend or colleague?” help get a measure of the company’s performance through its temp workers’ eyes. Temps responded on a 0-to-10 point rating scale.

The four winners all received a score of more than 60 percent. (In comparison, tech giants like Apple and Amazon each scored more than 60 percent.) We explore what these workers like about their staffing firms.

Staffing Industry Analysts is publishing the top firms for a second year in a row. And those companies this year are:

1. Akraya Inc., Sunnyvale, Calif.
2. Lead IT Corporation, Springfield, Ill.
3. Collabera Inc., Morristown, N.J.
4. Roth Staffing Companies, Orange, Calif.

Jeffrey A. Richardson

A Staff That One Could Count On

For IT consultant Jeffrey A. Richardson, it’s the staff at Akraya Inc. that makes it a great company to work with. It starts with the marketing rep and then goes deeper into the organization to the HR and payroll department.

Richardson credits his recruiter, Resource Manager Atul Bhardwaj, for his positive experience at Akraya. “A personal connection with the person representing you is very important,” he says. “That’s a big thing, right there.”

Richardson has worked in IT on a contract basis for more than 30 years, and spent the past year with Akraya on a Bank of America project. Bhardwaj helped him navigate myriad issues with the contract. But more than anything, the two built a level of trust that allowed Richardson to discuss concerns surrounding the stressful project, which had a hot deadline.

“I built a rapport with him,” explains Richardson. “There was a level of honesty and trust we built.”

Richardson has worked with many agencies and has seen the IT field change since the good old days of the 1980s and 1990s. “The whole climate has changed since 2002 with offshoring and things of that nature,” Richardson says.

Working with Akraya enables him to focus on the job at hand. “We know how to do the work. We come in there and do the work, no matter what it is,” says Richardson. And you get paid.

Although Richardson feels compensation for his BofA contract should have been higher, he found Akraya’s service excellent and its staff professional. “I’ve had no problems with them, none whatsoever,” he says.

Dwight Hearn **Treated Like a Person**

Imagine moving and starting a new job at the same time. But thanks to Lead IT, it all went off without a hitch for Dwight Hearn. Hearn’s current assignment is at the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in Springfield, Ill. He moved from Chicago.

Hearn had not gone through such a relocation before. The move was smooth with Lead IT helping him with the essential requirements like finding a place to live. But it was the attention to little details that won him over. An example, includes forwarding his salary when he first arrived to help him move into his own place as soon as possible.

“The biggest thing that I’m really appreciative of is they foresaw issues before they actually happened,” Hearn says. “That makes me feel more like an employee and that they’re concerned for my well-being, so I can be as professional as I need to be on the client site.”

Lead IT also continues working to keep lines of communication open; keeping in contact via email with employees when issues arise or just to check in. The company also takes external employees out to lunch every couple of months so everybody knows one another. Recently, all Lead IT workers at the department were taken out to lunch by LeRoy Singleton, director, resource delivery, at Lead IT, Hearn says.

Hearn also said he met with the owner of Lead IT within the first couple weeks of being employed, and they talked about the goals of the company moving forward. Other staffing firms he has worked for have not done that.

“I’m being treated like a person, I have a contract here now that matches my skills and abilities quite perfectly,” he says.

William Irwin **It’s the Associate**

William Irwin, a contract employee at Collabera, says what makes the staffing firm great is his liaison at Collabera.

“Really, to me it’s the associate that I deal with,” Irwin says. “She’s incredibly great.”

The associate will get back to him within an hour if he needs to get in touch, and he can contact her after hours to address questions, Irwin says. The associate is also very friendly and makes him feel like his opinion matters.

However, the company also doesn’t go overboard in maintaining contact. Irwin says he’s busy at the client site and needs to focus on his work there. Collabera’s associate respects that. “They don’t overkill me with wanting to know what’s going on,” he says.

In addition, there’s never a problem with compensation being later or incorrect.

Irwin presently works on assignment at Wells Fargo in Charlotte, N.C., and he is a quality assurance analyst. Wells Fargo is one of his favorite assignments, he says.

In addition to the associate, Collabera also works to treat its contract employees well by having a Christmas dinner and luncheons once every five or six weeks, Irwin says.

Rebeca Mata

Warm Welcome, Supportive Culture

It’s not what Rebeca Mata expected. When she started her assignment at a customer site, she was escorted to the office by a Roth Staffing representative, who also brought doughnuts. Gestures like these are what make Roth stand out for workers like Mata. But it’s not just about grand gestures. Even after a temporary worker is well into her assignment, Roth staff are always there for back-up support, available to answer questions and solve problems that crop up right away. The company works hard to make things seamless for its contract workers.

This friendly and supportive attitude permeates everything, and temporary workers like Mata sense it. “When I walked in, I could feel the environment right away,” Mata says of Roth’s offices. “They’re very nice people; they welcome you into the office.”

Beside the warm welcome, Roth also tries to get people the jobs they are actually looking for. They work hard to ensure that the job is the right fit and workers are being placed appropriately. Mata wanted to be placed in a finance position and that is what Roth found for her.

Her assignment is at the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences in North

Hollywood. And it's fitting that their culture mirrors that of Roth.

“They have a great culture just like the staffing company I work for,” she says. “It's very fun, I always learn new things every day.”

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