



Creative Recruiting, *SI Review* March 2008

By Julie Gordon

When it comes to recruiting temporary workers, Penmac Personnel has gotten creative. The Springfield MO-based staffing company features a picture on the back of its company Scion of CEO Patti Penny dressed up as Donald Trump accompanied by the words, "You're Hired."

Additionally, to not only attract more workers but also thank the local community for choosing the company in the "Best of the Ozarks" contest, Penmac featured a picture of Penny on the back of buses, dressed up as Elvis accompanied by the words, "Thank ya. Thank ya very much." She's also dressed up as Groucho Marx on the back of buses with the words, "We won't be Groucho when you need a job," and, as Uncle Sam, with the words "We want you."

It's hard these days for staffing companies to find people, but who says you can't at least have a little fun trying to do it? While staffing companies aren't going to stop advertising in newspapers and on job boards any time soon, many have put their thinking caps on and come up with some unique and innovative ways to recruit.

Paper Megaphones, T-Shirts a Hit

Penmac - which offers a \$50 referral bonus when someone refers a temporary worker to the company and that person works at least 160 hours - made a paper megaphone that people could use to yell at Missouri State Bears basketball games that had details about the company's referral bonus inside, according to Penny. In January, the company also gave out scarves that said "Let's Go Bears!" and included the Penmac logo.

Also, at a job fair that had hunting as a theme, Penmac Personnel passed out camouflage T-shirts that featured, in bright orange, the words "Penmac has" on the front and "trophy jobs" on the back. The back of the shirts also featured the company's logo, "We place people first."

"That was a huge hit," comments Penny. "A lot of people love the T-shirts. They're going to wear them and talk about them. It was a good recruitment tool from the standpoint that it got people talking about Penmac."

Visiting College Campuses

Westaff leaves flyers and other information in college career centers, says Stacy Strickland, training and development specialist. College students present a great recruiting opportunity for staffing companies because many of them need to work, but they can't do it full-time. Also, college students who are about to graduate but don't have a job lined up may be interested in doing temporary work until they find something more permanent.

In addition to colleges, Westaff also passes out flyers at fast-food restaurants, sub shops, churches, synagogues and small grocery stores that represent ethnic diversity, according to Strickland. The company also has made bookmarks with its information and left them at libraries.

Reaching Out to Mature Workers, Military Spouses and Athletes

Adecco reaches out to workers age 50 and older through its Renaissance program, explains Joyce Russell, president of Adecco General Staffing US. The program entails recruiting campaigns, job fairs and seminars geared toward this segment of the population.

Also, in partnership with the Department of Defense, Adecco has created a program to help military spouses find work. Called "Career Connections," the program has reached more than 10,000 military spouses. Athletes make great workers, too: Adecco provides Olympic and Para-Olympic athletes with educational, career planning and job placement services through its Athlete Career Program.

Tapping Into Non-English Speaking Populations

Manpower has found success in recruiting temporary workers from non-English-speaking populations, explains senior media-relations specialist Paul Holley. For example, by focusing on Spanish-speaking applicants, Manpower was able to fill 200 positions for a fast-growing Texas manufacturer in just 30 days.

When Manpower discovered that most of the positions it needed to fill had bilingual supervisors, the company began advertising the jobs (such as forklift operators, machine operators, shipping/receiving clerks and material handlers) in local Spanish-language newspapers and offered cash bonuses to workers for referring their friends and family members.

Two bilingual staffing specialists were hired to handle applicant interviews and screening. Tests for the positions were given in Spanish and the company created a special orientation in both Spanish and English.

Manpower also has recruited from the Vietnamese-speaking community for another client that has bilingual supervisors. The recruiting has been done via word of mouth and through ads in Vietnamese newspapers. Manpower added two bilingual staffing specialists to accept applications, help give verbal directions to a sorting and checking test and translate documents from English into Vietnamese.

Recruiting Workers from Puerto Rico

In 2007 Staff Management began recruiting workers from Puerto Rico, according to Jerry Wimer, VP of operations for Staff Management's Midwest region. "They'll provide their [own] transportation to get to the country and then we'll set up housing and everything for them," explains Wimer.

As of late 2007, Staff Management had recruited a couple of hundred workers for two of its two clients from the Caribbean island. "It's been a really good response from Puerto Rico," says Wimer, noting that the Puerto Rican workers are proving to be highly productive and have good attendance.

Offshoring Enables Recruiters to Fill Jobs 24/7

Some staffing companies are offshoring, or having recruiters overseas help fill jobs. While recruiters in the United States are sleeping, the overseas recruiters are up and working to fill positions. Boston-based Professional Staffing Group, for example, has recruiters working in the Philippines, according to founder Aaron Green. Ed Giannattasio, president of New York-based Asset Staffing, says his company is "seriously considering" offshoring in the Philippines as well, and plans to start doing so this year.

"While it is becoming less unique every day, I really believe hiring offshore recruiters is the way of the future," comments PSG's Green. "In many cases, overseas firms that specialize in recruiting are not only less expensive than doing it yourself but also more effective. The reason for this situation is that the overseas firms specialize. Recruiting is their only business; therefore, they have the management, technology and process infrastructure in place to enhance performance."

Launching an Outplacement Program

Burbank CA-based Workway launched an outplacement program through which the company visits clients that are laying off people, according to CEO Matt Johnston. Workway brings in applications as well as 401(k) and healthcare experts to help those who have just lost their jobs, and also sends them its newsletter, the Workway Bee.

Partnering with Industry Organizations

Sometimes, it can be helpful to partner with any industry organizations you're a member of, even if they're competition, says Cheryl Floyd, regional VP of The Reserves Network's Florida, North Carolina and South Carolina offices. She notes that her region has gotten workers through its involvement with the North Carolina Association of Staffing Professionals.

"If you build strong partnerships even within our own industry [you] can gain referral leads of one skill set they may not place in but get applicants applying for," she says. "We gladly foster those relationships as well as others to help us be successful."

Finding People in the Virtual World Manpower, Kelly Services and Randstad are tapping into Second Life, an online, 3D virtual world, as a way to recruit people. ZeroChaos also is considering piloting Second Life as a tool this year, according to Joan Moyer, who handles recruiting for the company.

On Second Life, people create avatars, a graphical representation of a person, to portray themselves. They can design their avatar to appear as whomever or whatever they want.

Residents on Second Life give themselves a virtual name. They can "fly" to different locations, such as "islands" that can be purchased by companies and individuals. Second Life also allows its residents to chat with one another.

Putting a Video on YouTube

Houston-based Talent Tree has just started doing a video on YouTube that explains to people some reasons why they should work for Talent Tree, says Ruth McCurdy, VP of corporate connections. "It's a whole new approach to recruiting," she says. "People are going to YouTube. You see all kinds of different things."

Talent Tree also is using professional networking sites, such as LinkedIn, as well as social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, to recruit workers.

Googling for Candidates

Workway is using Google to find candidates, explains Johnston. Google searches lead to people's home pages and MySpace pages, among other things. "You can find candidates down to a workable amount of

people, a workable list of 10-20 candidates in your target area," says Johnston. "A lot of people put their resumes on their home page, on their cable provider. We've never been able to tap into that [before]. Because of Google's spidering capabilities, we're tapping into a resource that we never even considered. It's a whole new entry into recruiting using a different technology. ...Everyone uses Google for everything except searching for resumes."

Blogging for Talent

In January, Stephen James Associates began putting blogs on the company's MySpace page, explains Bill Pisano, director of branch operations. The blogs, which change daily, are about specific jobs the company has available. "Most people are getting their information from blogs now," comments Pisano. "They're not subject to traditional sources of the media, as they've been in the past. So we're looking at ways people use the Internet and how they obtain information."

Getting on a Local Convention and Visitors Bureau's Web Site

This year Detroit-based Strategic Staffing will be listed as a place to work on the city's Convention and Visitors Bureau site, at www.visitdetroit.com, explains Wanda Brock, Strategic's director of communications. People go to the site when they're considering not only visiting Detroit but also moving there, according to Brock. "I think it's going to take off," she says. "I think this is a new way of doing it. People surf [the Internet] all the time on BlackBerries and home computers. If you're going to move somewhere, you're going to want to know what there is to do."

START Button Helps People Find Tech Jobs

Last September, TAC Worldwide launched a green "START" button on its Web site that provides temporary workers and employers with access to the company's database of "tens of thousands" of IT and engineering jobs in any industry, explains Clyde Hakim, senior director of marketing. "What we want to do is get engineers and IT professionals interested in us in their own way," he says.

The START button, which can be downloaded onto any Windows computer desktop, received 9,000 downloads in the first three months it was up, according to Hakim. To let people know about it, TAC is advertising on buses and in subway stations. TAC also is passing out green START buttons at job fairs that direct recipients to the company's Web site.

Hakim says the START button is being rolled out in two versions. In the second, which will be out this spring, job seekers will be able to carry on a conversation with a live recruiter.

Offering Discounts on Products and Services

In late 2007, Philadelphia-based Yoh launched a program for its consultants called the Yoh Advantage, which provides its consultants with discounts and rebates on such things as cars, computers, training programs, cell phones and office supplies, according to Jim Lanzalotto, VP of strategy and marketing. The discounts, which range from 5% to 20%, are available from Chrysler, Ford, GM, Hertz Rental Car, Apple, Dell, Verizon and Office Depot.

"These guys are our employees," comments Lanzalotto. "Here is the chance to give them an opportunity to have the same kind of benefits our staff members get. We know, because of our relationship with our consultants, the kind of things they're looking for. The reaction we got to the test concepts and initial reaction has been favorable. It is very different. In a very competitive market like the one we're in, we need to be unique and different."

Advertising in Movie Theaters, on Grocery Store Receipts

Staff Management advertises in movie theaters with ads on the screen before the movie starts and on the back of local grocery store receipts, according to Wimer. The company also puts flyers on pizza boxes. Additionally, Staff Management passes out treats at community events, such as fairs and festivals. For example, in summer 2006, at a fair in Kentucky, the company passed out popcorn with the words, "Jobs are popping up at Staff Management." Staff Management also is advertising on bulletin boards and on TV. "Whatever we can do to make sure we get our name out in the community," says Wimer.

Tuning In to Prospective Workers via the Radio

Westaff is running radio advertisements in the Canyon City area of Colorado, according to Kathy Reeves, Southern Colorado area manager. The company purchased a one-year contract with a local station and found it to be very cost effective. Ads target both candidates and clients, and Westaff is able to change its message to meet the needs of the business cycle. Both candidates and clients have responded to the ads, with many knowing Westaff because of them, says Reeves.

Staffmark profiles a job of the day or job of the week on the radio in select markets, according to Andrea Edwards, VP of marketing, and Staff Management's Wimer says his company also is advertising on the radio.

Using Automated Telephone Messages

In August 2007, Manpower began using an automated telephone dialer system called FasCast throughout its U.S. field office network, according to Holley. FasCast makes it possible to deliver a pre-recorded message to a large number of registered candidates simultaneously. The recorded messages provide details about positions, and candidates can use touch-tone options to notify Manpower regarding their interest in the position.

Diane Weaver, director of business operations, says FasCast has "conservatively" saved Manpower staffing specialists 3,000 hours since implementation.

Making a List and Checking It Twice

When it comes to recruiting for seasonal work, Staffmark keeps a list of people who worked for them the year before, then calls and sends them letters inviting them to come to a barbecue or pizza party and find out what is available this year, according to Edwards. "Those folks know what the job expectations are," she says. "That's the absolutely best place to start. ... They know the environment. They know the customer, so they're ahead of the curve." At one event, Staffmark got 80 people to come back, and then those people referred another 80 people to Staffmark, Edwards points out.

"Recruiting needs to be a strategy, a process, not an event," she says. "Once you have your strategy, that's when you can start putting something creative together. The more you know, the more creative you're going to be. It should be a proactive strategy, not a reactive event."

Unique Ideas Staffing Companies Use to Recruit Temps

- Visiting college campuses
- Reaching out to select groups of people, such as mature workers, military spouses and athletes
- Tapping into non-English-speaking populations
- Getting workers from Puerto Rico
- Offshoring
- Launching an outplacement program
- Partnering with industry organizations
- Finding people in the virtual world
- Putting a video on YouTube
- Using professional networking sites such as LinkedIn, as well as social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook
- Using Google
- Blogging
- Getting on a local Convention and Visitors' Bureau Web site
- Offering discounts on products and services
- Advertising in movie theaters and on the back of grocery store receipts
- Tuning into prospective workers via the radio
- Using an automated dialing system to contact many people at once
- Making a list of people who have done seasonal work before and inviting them to do it again