



A PROFILE OF TEMPORARY AND CONTRACT EMPLOYEES

Who They Are and What They Do



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staffing employees have very positive views of their temporary or contract work experiences, according to the results of a comprehensive landmark survey conducted by the American Staffing Association in early 2006.

In the largest sample ever surveyed of staffing employees (which account for about 2% of the U.S. work force), 13,196 current and former temporary and contract employees from 186 ASA member companies completed a telephone or online questionnaire from Jan. 23 through Feb. 17. Seventy percent of the respondents were currently working on an assignment for a staffing firm; the balance had been employed by a staffing firm at some time since Jan. 1, 2005. Respondents were asked to think about their most recent assignment in answering questions; 79% said they had worked full time. Participants included employees from all staffing sectors: office-clerical and administrative; industrial; health care; technical, information technology, and scientific; and professional-managerial, such

as accounting, legal, and marketing. The median employment tenure with a staffing firm was 15 weeks.

ASA and its members often use the terms “temporary” and “contract” interchangeably with regard to staffing employees, and previous ASA research has shown that many staffing employees prefer contract to temporary. Accordingly, respondents were asked which they considered themselves; 57% said they were temporary employees and 43% said they were contract employees.

Nine of 10 staffing employees would refer a friend or relative to work as a temporary or contract employee, the survey shows. Similar proportions—around 90%—were satisfied overall as well as in various specific measures of their work experiences, far exceeding satisfaction ratios from surveys of the total U.S. work force. The staffing employee satisfaction ratings were remarkably strong. For example, the survey’s plurality was “extremely” satisfied overall. And those respondents

Getting a permanent job was by far the most important reason for choosing temporary or contract work; 49% of the surveyed employees said it was an extremely important factor in their decision.

who were “extremely” or “very” satisfied outnumbered those who said they were “somewhat” satisfied by nearly 4 to 1.

Most respondents viewed their temporary or contract jobs as a way to get a permanent job, earn additional income, and improve their skills. Getting a permanent job was by far the most important reason for choosing temporary or contract work; 49% of the surveyed employees said it was an extremely important factor in their decision. Many succeeded in securing permanent employment. Of the survey participants who remained in the work force but were not on a temporary or contract assignment at the time of the survey, 53% had taken a permanent job. Of that group, 43% became employed by their staffing firm’s customer. Nearly one-quarter of those who got permanent positions said that working as a temporary or contract employee helped them get a permanent job faster.

Although bridging to a permanent job was important to most staffing employees, it was of little or no interest to one in four. They worked with staffing firms for lifestyle reasons. One in five respondents said that flexible work time, choice of assignments, or having time for family were extremely important factors in their decisions to become a temporary or contract employee.

Employees in the industrial sector were the most satisfied and optimistic, even though they were the lowest paid. Employees in the technical and information technology sector provided the lowest satisfaction ratings (albeit at 87%, just three points lower than the total sample) even though they

were the highest paid. Employees in the health care sector rated lifestyle factors highest, were more likely to work part time, and were the most satisfied with their pay. Employees in the office–clerical sector were more likely to be seeking experience or training to improve their skills, whereas employees in the professional sector were more likely to be going back to school.

Long-term employees—those whose average assignment lasted for two years or more—accounted for 12% of the total sample. They perceived that the money is better and that they have more flexibility as contract employees. The evidence suggests that their perceptions were accurate: They received higher hourly wages, achieved higher household incomes, and were more likely to work part time than staffing employees with shorter-term assignments. Long-term staffing employees also were more highly educated and more likely to work in professional–managerial or technical/IT occupations than their shorter-term counterparts. They were more likely to participate in employee benefits programs offered by their staffing firms, too.

The survey revealed two unexpected key findings. One was the relatively small proportion of staffing employees who indicated their previous occupation as student (10%), homemaker (4%), or retiree (3%). The other was the relatively high importance assigned to the additional income provided by temporary or contract work. Although nearly equal numbers of surveyed employees cited income and flexibility as important, 35% said the additional income was extremely important whereas 23% said flexibility was extremely important.

Regardless of their reasons for working as temporary or contract employees, more than 88% of those surveyed said their experience made them more employable, mostly by developing new or improved skills and receiving on-the-job experience; 20% attributed their enhanced skill levels to specific training provided by their staffing firm. A majority said the work strengthened their résumés, and four in 10 said the experience helped them gain self-confidence and improve their work habits.

Overall, the survey results shed light on the important role U.S. staffing companies play as labor market intermediaries—creating jobs, helping those who want permanent jobs to get them, offering flexibility and choice to those who prefer alternative work arrangements, and providing training and experience to improve skills and enhance the value of staffing employees in a growing and ever-demanding economy.

INTRODUCTION

An average of more than three million temporary and contract employees work for America's staffing companies every day, about one million more than a decade ago. The annual turnover rate of temporary and contract employees exceeds 300%. As a result, America's staffing companies hire more than 12 million temporary and contract employees over the course of a year.¹

While on any given day, the staffing industry employs just 2% of the U.S. work force, it has helped millions of families earn additional income. Approximately one in 11 nonfarm workers had a job with a staffing company at some point in 2005.² Those employees generated nearly \$70 billion in temporary and contract staffing sales in 2005, 70% more than a decade ago.

Despite the economic significance of America's temporary and contract work force—both its size and its growth—relatively little has been known about its employees.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics has counted workers in the “temporary help services” industry on a monthly basis since 1970, but because its definitions of the industry have changed over the decades (most recently in the adoption of the North American Industry Classification System in 2003), comparative data are available back only to 1990. Monthly data on employment, earnings, and hours are collected through a survey of nonfarm establishments and reported as Current Employment Statistics.³

The American Staffing Association (then operating as the National Association of Temporary and Staffing Services) initiated its own quarterly survey of industry employment, payroll, and sales because of changes in the monthly BLS survey in 1990 (temporary help services were combined with employee leasing, which has since been reversed and BLS has reconstructed estimates back to 1990 based on the new NAICS definitions).

The ASA quarterly survey is based on a model developed for the association by Standard & Poor's DRI in 1992. DRI conducted a census of ASA members as well as a survey of selected nonmember firms. Using this census and related government data, DRI prepared annual estimates for 1990 and 1991, and a stratified-panel, survey-based estimation model to be used quarterly from 1992 forward. Survey participants have included small, medium, and large staffing companies that together have covered approximately 10,000 establishments, about half the industry. The estimation model is rebenchmarked every five years using employment, payroll, and sales data from the U.S. Economic Census. The most recent rebenchmarking was conducted by the Lewin Group, an independent economic research firm, using 2002 census data that became available in late 2005.⁴

The results of the BLS and ASA surveys, although somewhat different, generally track in parallel over time. Their frequency and reliability provide a series of snapshots. The snapshots illuminate historical as well as relatively recent trends, but as pictures of staffing employment, they are quite limited in scope—principally they offer corresponding estimates of the number of employees.

To better understand the characteristics, motivations, and attitudes of temporary employees, ASA conducted a series of surveys of member-company employees in 1989, 1993, and 1997.⁵ The most recent one involved 102 randomly selected members, which were instructed to distribute a self-mailing questionnaire to employees in their payroll envelopes. A total of 15,000 questionnaires was distributed; 1,150 responses were received.⁶

In 1995, the association conducted a survey of former temporary employees to gain insight about their employment experiences and to ascertain what happened to them after their employment with a staffing firm ended. The survey involved 10-minute telephone interviews with 505 former temporary employees randomly selected from the rosters of 24 member companies (half independent and half national—defined then as companies with at least 20 offices in 10 or more states). The employees had worked temporary assignments for at least two weeks during a nine-month period (June 1994 through February 1995) prior to the survey.⁷

Also in 1995, BLS initiated a series of biennial surveys (except 2003) on contingent and alternative employment arrangements as a supplement to its monthly Current Population Survey, which collects information on employment, unemployment, earnings, demographics, and other characteristics of the civilian noninstitutionalized population age 16 and over in 60,000 households nationwide. BLS uses the CPS supplement to estimate the number of independent contractors, on-call workers, temporary help agency workers, and workers provided by contract firms engaged in contingent and alternative employment arrangements. The agency provides three wide-ranging estimates which, by the nature of the methodology and complex definitions used in the survey, differ markedly from the CES and ASA estimates. Nonetheless, the CPS supplement collects data on the demographics, occupations, preferences, and compensation of temporary and contract employees, which together account for 14% of the workers identified by BLS as being in contingent and alternative employment arrangements.⁸

Past ASA and CPS surveys of temporary and contract employees provide data that have been useful in expanding public understanding of this important segment of the work force. However, both have limitations in their application today.

Because ASA members account for 75% of staffing industry establishments and more than 85% of industry sales, they offer a large and comprehensive set of employees who constitute the vast majority of the target population.

The ASA data are dated, some by as much as 17 years. Moreover, ironically, the data from the CPS supplement—despite their limitations as discussed below—suggest that past ASA survey respondents significantly overrepresented the office-clerical sector: 52% in the 1995 survey of former employees and 59% in the 1997 survey of then-current employees. In an ASA analysis of unpublished data from the CPS supplement, occupations of the temporary and contract employees surveyed were categorized into the sectors commonly referred to in the staffing industry: office-clerical, industrial, professional-managerial, technical/IT, and health care. Temporary and contract employees in the office-clerical sector constituted 19.7% and 20.6% of the 1995 and 1997 CPS supplement respondents, respectively. The methodology of CPS supplement is less prone to nonsampling error than that of the ASA surveys, so estimated sector ratios based on the CPS supplement are probably more accurate.

Although the CPS supplement data allow for some useful analysis of the large occupational sectors used in the staffing industry, the relatively small number of temporary and contract employees surveyed by BLS limits detailed analysis of those sectors and the fixed-increment demographic ranges typically characterized by the agency. For example, 344 temporary help agency workers and 240 workers provided by contract firms⁹ (thus a total of 584 workers who could be considered staffing employees)—in 173 occupations¹⁰—were surveyed in the 2005 supplement. Also, the employment preference and compensation questions in the supplement are rather broad and preclude detection of important nuances that would permit a clearer understanding of staffing employee motivations and behaviors.

Scholars who have conducted research on the temporary and contract work force have concentrated on relatively narrow topics, such as the advantages of temporary jobs over unemployment for low-skilled workers¹¹ or how training provided by staffing firms helps candidates secure jobs.¹² Many have relied on the CPS supplement,¹³ despite the limitations of that data set. And frequently the published research available today is based on relatively old data.¹⁴ Other than the ongoing CPS supplement, no recent surveys have been conducted of the broader staffing industry work force. And no surveys have been conducted with a sufficiently large sample that allows simultaneous comparisons of the many types of employees in the staffing industry work force, particularly across occupational sectors.

Meanwhile, demand has increased for detailed information on the characteristics of temporary and contract employees, particularly within the staffing industry and among journalists, academics, and policy makers. The survey discussed in this report was designed to meet that demand by updating and improving upon ASA's previous work and providing more detail than the ongoing BLS CPS supplement.

The principal objective of the survey was to obtain sufficient data on current and former temporary and contract employees (including those who had moved on to permanent jobs) to allow cross-tabulation and statistical tests across numerous, wide-ranging dimensions:

- Personal characteristics, such as age, sex, education, income, and family status
- Employment characteristics, such as wages, benefits, and pre-employment as well as full- or part-time status
- Regional and state differences
- Motivations, expectations, and attitudes
- The staffing industry's five occupational sectors

Such a survey would require several thousand participants to yield sufficient power in the descriptive and analytic statistics.

Although a large number of people work as temporary or contract employees—three million per day and 12 million over the course of a year—they account for only 2% of the nonfarm work force and 1% of the working age population (ages 16–65) on any given day.¹⁵ Therefore, the incidence rate is so low as to make traditional random sample telephone or mail surveys of households costly and impractical, particularly given the low response rates of such surveys and the large number of respondents required.

Because ASA members account for 75% of staffing industry establishments and more than 85% of industry sales,¹⁶ they offer a large and comprehensive set of employees who constitute the vast majority of the target population. However, staffing companies today are reluctant to release their employee

rosters out of concern for employee privacy and because those rosters are viewed as proprietary, competitive information.

The lack of direct access to employees significantly complicated the 2006 ASA survey design—the methodology required reaching employees through their employers.

METHODOLOGY

In consideration of the ambitious goals of the survey objective and the logistical and financial constraints on sampling, the association decided upon the following methodological framework:

- A two-stage recruiting process to invite employee participation
 - ASA first would invite and encourage its members to participate.
 - ASA members then would invite and encourage their current and former temporary and contract employees to participate.
- Automated data collection with two ways for employees to participate
 - Via the Internet on a secure Web site
 - Via telephone, using a toll-free number and interactive voice response (IVR)

Because this methodology involved self-selection by respondents, attractive incentives were offered to maximize the breadth of participation by member companies and by employees. At the same time, various checks were also in place and available to validate and, if necessary, weight the data to ensure balanced representation.

Internet and IVR data collection methods are now commonly used in marketing research to solicit consumer opinions. Both methods have been successfully used since the mid-1990s, and research confirms that data obtained through these methods, as well as through the more traditional outbound phone and mail surveys, lead to similar findings and conclusions. Indeed, with the growing use of mobile phones and call-screening technologies, researchers are becoming increasingly frustrated in their attempts to achieve valid response rates through traditional telephony methods. Traditional mail surveys, meanwhile, have long suffered from low, potentially biasing response rates.

ASA engaged Synovate (formerly Market Facts), an independent research firm with expertise in consumer product market research, employee surveys, and new survey technologies, such as Web-based and IVR systems. Synovate provid-

ed counsel in the development of the survey questionnaire; designed, constructed, and managed the survey instruments (e.g., provided a secure Web site and the IVR system); executed the survey; collected, tabulated, and statistically analyzed the data; and handled the fulfillment of the participant incentives.

Because of the unique nature of the four-party engagement—ASA, Synovate, participating companies, and participating employees—a special business agreement was crafted to ensure the confidential disposition of all employee data collected on behalf of participating companies: Only Synovate would have access to individual employee responses. Only aggregated data from the sample would be provided to ASA. And only aggregated data from their own employees would be provided to participating companies that met specific incentive criteria (described later in this section). Any other disclosures were prohibited. Responses from individual employees needed to be guarded to protect their privacy, to ensure against employer influence, and to honor the promise of confidentiality made to employees during solicitation of their participation. Aggregated data from company employees could have potential proprietary value advantageous to competitors. Therefore, as with employees, confidentiality was promised to companies as part of the solicitation of their participation. Hence aggregated data from company employees were guarded as carefully as individual employee responses. ASA was prohibited access to individual employee responses and aggregated company employee data to prevent any compromise of the integrity and objectivity of the association, its employees, and its volunteer leadership.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

In November 2005, an initial survey questionnaire was developed based on the 1995 and 1997 ASA surveys of former and current (respectively) temporary employees, the BLS CPS supplement on contingent and alternative employment arrangements, and recommendations from the association's industry information, public relations, and executive committees. The intent was to produce a comprehensive survey that would answer key questions about current and former temporary and contract employees, and be as comparable as possible to the association's previous surveys and BLS's biennial survey to identify changes that had occurred over time and identify trends that could be important to the industry, particularly with regard to recruiting and retaining staffing employees.

The first draft of the survey questionnaire proved to be too long and unwieldy to reasonably expect employees to complete. It was distributed to the association's industry information, public relations, and executive committees with a request for guidance on what could be trimmed. Suggestions included narrowing and clarifying the objectives, which were revised as follows:

- Build a profile of the American staffing work force.
- Explore how the staffing work force squares with public perception, industry perception, and the industry's public policy positions.
- Show participating members how their own staffing employees compare with the millions of others who work for staffing firms.

Synovate streamlined the draft survey questionnaire so that it would take most participating employees less than 15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire was reviewed by ASA staff—including several current and former temporary and contract employees—and revised. The revised draft, along with the narrowed objectives, was distributed to the industry information and public relations committees and the board of directors (the executive committee, which had seen the earlier draft, is a subset of the board). Synovate and staff then fine-tuned the questionnaire, which was finalized Jan. 3. (See Appendix A for a list of reviewers and Appendix B for the questionnaire.)

After the finalization of the survey questionnaire, Synovate prepared a Spanish version, coded and programmed a secure Web site with both English and Spanish versions and instructions, and set up both English and Spanish versions of the IVR telephone-based data collection system.

SURVEY TIMING

ASA committee members advised that the best time to conduct the survey would be mid- to late January when staffing companies would be issuing federal W-2 tax withholding forms to employees. This time frame would facilitate outreach to former employees, such as those who had found permanent jobs, had gone to school, or who had withdrawn from the work force.

The timing of the survey needed to take into account time for ASA to promote the survey to its member companies and time for member companies to promote the survey to their employees. It was impractical to expect that much attention would be paid to the survey between Thanksgiving Day and

New Year's Day, so the effectiveness of promotion would be limited until January. Further constraining the timing, there were federal holidays on Jan. 16 (Martin Luther King's Birthday) and Feb. 20 (Presidents Day).

Given the limitations of the calendar, Monday, Jan. 23, was selected as the launch date for the survey. It would remain open through Friday, Feb. 17, allowing four full business weeks for participation.

Any temporary or contract employee who had worked for a staffing company at any time since January 2005 was eligible to participate. This greatly simplified promotion planning for member companies; they could easily use their entire 2005 W-2 list as well as their current employee roster without having to develop complicated sorting and exclusionary protocols.

PARTICIPATION INCENTIVES

To encourage company and employee participation, ASA established separate incentive programs for each.

Each member staffing firm that succeeded in getting 30 or more employees to complete the survey would receive a special report of aggregate data on the company's employee responses—free.

Individual employees who completed the survey would be invited to enter a sweepstakes to win one of 100 \$50 cash prizes.

Synovate handled all of the incentive administration, from keeping track of which staffing firms were eligible for free reports and delivering those reports to establishing the sweepstakes rules, ensuring legal compliance, handling entries (including ensuring that the entries could not be linked to individual survey responses), selecting and notifying winners, and arranging for prize fulfillment.

PARTICIPATION PROMOTION

ASA heavily promoted the survey to members through multiple means.

After the survey questionnaire was finalized, ASA staff contacted the association's volunteer leadership—members of the board and key committees—to secure commitments that their companies would participate.

The first official announcement that ASA would be conducting the survey was mailed to the key contact at all member

staffing firm headquarters (1,166) on Dec. 16, 2005. It included a letter that alerted members to the dates of the survey, briefly explained the incentive for them to participate, suggested ways to start preparing to promote the survey to employees (including using W-2 distribution as a way to reach former employees), and urged recipients to watch for a survey promotion package that would arrive in early January to help them recruit employees to participate. A one-page fact sheet outlining the basic details of the survey program accompanied the letter. The fact sheet was also posted on the ASA Web site.

A similar announcement was published Jan. 2 in *Staffing Week*, the association's weekly newsletter, which is faxed to key contacts at member firms and e-mailed to about 9,500 subscribers (member company personnel) every Monday morning.

Because Jan. 2 was the federal New Year's holiday (and most staffing companies would be closed), a special HTML-graphic "flier," specifically about the survey, was e-mailed Tuesday, Jan. 3, to the same member company key contacts who received the Dec. 16 announcement letter.

Meanwhile, a comprehensive survey promotion package was prepared. It included the following materials:

- Attention-getting 9-by-12-inch envelope
- Cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey, the incentives for both the member and the employee, and how to participate
- Employer number—a sheet with the company name and number, with instructions to provide the number to staffing employees as the "key" to enter the survey and thus ensure participation of ASA member employees only
- Promotion package overview—an outline of enclosed samples and how to use the materials
- Poster—sample 11-by-17-inch color poster (English on one side and Spanish on the other) to display in an office to promote survey to staffing employees
- Flier—sample 8½-by-11-inch color flier (English on one side and Spanish on the other) to distribute to staffing employees
- Envelope stuffers—sample 8-by-3-inch color slips (English on one side and Spanish on the other) sized to fit in business (No. 10), W-2, or payroll envelopes
- Stickers—sample sheet of 2-by-4-inch stickers, black and white and in English (color and Spanish versions were available), to be placed on the outside of payroll or W-2 envelopes
- Phone scripts—sample scripts for automated, outgoing phone blasts, including initial invitation and follow-up reminder
- E-mail copy—sample copy for broadcast e-mails, including initial invitation and follow-up reminder

ASA staff began calling member company key contacts to alert them that the survey was open, to outline how it worked, and to remind them that, if they participated, they could get a special report on their employees.

- Newsletter copy—sample copy for company newsletters, in short (150 words) and long (250 words) versions

Most of the materials featured the headline "Your opinion could be worth \$50." All of the material included space for inclusion of the employer number. And all materials were made available for downloading (and customizing) from the ASA Web site. The package was mailed to member company key contacts to arrive the week of Jan. 16. Sample materials are included in Appendix C.

The lead story in the Jan. 16 issue of *Staffing Week* was about the survey that would open the following Monday. It described the promotion package that would be arriving that week and directed members to the ASA Web site for immediate access to the promotional materials.

The survey opened as scheduled Jan. 23. That day's issue of *Staffing Week* contained a prominent reminder. Later that week, on Jan. 26, ASA e-mailed an HTML-graphic flier to member key contacts, reminding them that the survey was open, noting that companies were already participating, and directing them to the promotional materials available on the ASA Web site.

Also that week, ASA staff began calling member company key contacts to alert them that the survey was open, to outline how it worked, and to remind them that, if they participated, they could get a special report on their employees. Every staffing firm member received a phone call about the survey by the end of January.

Articles promoting the survey were published in the next two issues of *Staffing Week*, Jan. 30 and Feb. 6. The latter featured member testimonials on the marketing, recruiting, and retention benefits of participating in the survey. Similar con-

Employee participation started out strong—more than 2,000 in the first week—and maintained momentum throughout the survey period.

tent was included in a final HTML-graphic flier e-mailed to member key contacts Feb. 8.

About that time, ASA staff began calling companies that had succeeded in getting staffing employees to complete the survey but not yet the 30 required to receive a report on how the company's results compared with the national sample; the calls provided a status report and encouragement to continue promoting the survey to employees.

A final promotional article was published in the Feb. 13 issue of *Staffing Week*, reminding members that the survey would close Friday of that week.

ASA mailed an evaluation questionnaire to participating companies to solicit feedback on the utility of the promotional materials; 37% responded. The envelope stuffers were the most popular; 80% of the respondents said they used them, and 40% said they were the most valuable tool provided by ASA. Most respondents used multiple tools multiple times, with about one-third saying they used the posters, fliers, stickers, or e-mail copy at some point. Few used the phone scripts or newsletter copy. Only half reported downloading materials from the ASA Web site. One in five said they used Spanish versions of the materials.

Participating members deployed their own means of promotion, including

- Distributing information during new employee orientations
- Mailing postcards to former temporary and contract employees
- Developing customized phone scripts
- Promoting the survey in daily conversations with staffing employees

- Providing a computer station at the staffing firm for employee participation in the survey
- Posting survey details and participation invitations on company Web sites for their staffing employees

The promotion yielded a strong response. Hence the survey closed as planned on Friday, Feb. 17, at 12 midnight CST.

RESULTS

The ASA staffing employee survey produced a high level of participation: 186 member companies (listed in Appendix D) and 13,196 temporary and contract employees—far exceeding expectations and the few thousand required for limited sector analysis.

Companies of all sizes participated, from one-office independent firms to multinational corporations with more than 1,000 U.S. offices. Broadly diversified companies as well as specialty-niche firms in each of the five major staffing sectors participated, covering virtually the entire spectrum of skills and occupations offered by the industry.

Employee participation started out strong—more than 2,000 in the first week—and maintained momentum throughout the survey period, demonstrating the effectiveness and success of the timing, volume, and methods of promotion to members.

Of the 13,196 employee participants, 13,021 (99%) responded in English and 175 (1%) in Spanish; 10,050 (76%) used the Internet, and 3,146 (24%) used the IVR.

Nearly 70% (9,223) of the respondents were temporary or contract employees currently working on an assignment at the time they completed the survey. The balance (3,973) were individuals who had worked as a temporary or contract employee at some time since Jan. 1, 2005, but who were not working on an assignment at the time they completed the survey.

After the survey closed, respondent data were evaluated to ensure that the ratio of participating employees from companies of various sizes appropriately reflected market reality—in other words, to ensure that the sample did not over- or under-represent small or large companies. ASA reviewed the list of participating companies and identified those with annual sales of \$100 million or more (ASA membership dues are based on annual staffing sales that companies report to the association). The \$100 million threshold is the largest company size category in the economic census conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau every five years. The economic census is a fundamental benchmark used in calibrating the ASA quarterly employ-

ment and sales survey.¹⁷ The 2002 economic census (the most recent) indicated that staffing companies with sales of \$100 million or more employed 43% of the nation’s temporary and contract employees. In the ASA staffing employee survey, 63% of the participants had been employed by \$100-million-plus companies, clearly showing an overrepresentation of employees from large companies. Hence, in the analysis of the results, responses were weighted so that employees from large companies effectively represented 43% of the sample.

Respondent data were also initially evaluated to ensure appropriate representation of the five major staffing sectors. Unweighted, the data showed that 21% of the respondents reported that they worked in the industrial sector. This percentage was far lower than would be expected (35% to 45%) given the previous sector analysis of unpublished occupational data from the BLS CPS supplement. The evaluation focused on the industrial sector because it was assumed that employees in that sector—particularly unskilled laborers—would be the most difficult to reach (to invite) and the least likely to respond. Because respondents in the industrial sector were significantly underrepresented in the ASA staffing employee survey, responses from the entire sample were weighted based on the sector ratios determined from the 2001 CPS supplement, with the industrial sector at 35%. (See *Figure 1*.)¹⁸

Half of the respondents (50%) said they had been previously employed prior to joining their staffing firm. One-third (33%) had been unemployed. Contrary to conventional thinking both within and outside of the staffing industry, only 10% of respondents had been students prior to joining their staffing

firm; only 4% had been homemakers and 3% had been retired. Interestingly, those who had been previously employed were less likely than those who had been previously unemployed to rate “between permanent jobs” as an important factor in their decision to become a temporary or contract employee.

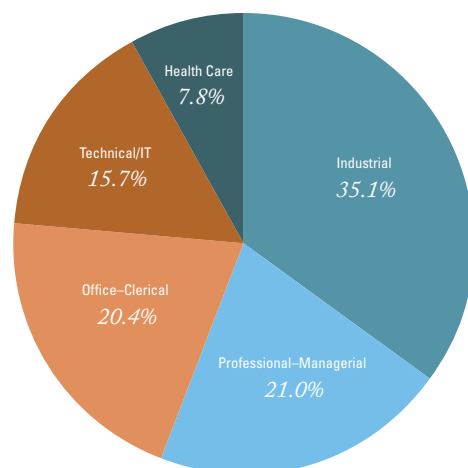
ASA and its members often use the terms “temporary” and “contract” interchangeably with regard to staffing employees, and previous ASA research has shown that many staffing employees prefer contract to temporary.¹⁹ Accordingly, after being asked a series of screening questions to ensure that all participants were qualified, respondents were asked Question 1 of the survey: Do you consider yourself a temporary or contract employee? Respondents were provided two options, “temporary” or “contract,” with no explanation or definition; 57% chose the former and 43% chose the latter. (See *Figure 2*.) Employees in higher skilled occupations were more likely to consider themselves contract employees. The majority in technical/IT (76%) and professional–managerial (52%) fields considered themselves contract employees. Although the majority of respondents in health care said they were temporary employees (63%), the proportion that said they were contract employees (37%) was significantly higher than those respondents in the office–clerical and industrial sectors. Seven of 10 respondents in the office–clerical (68%) and industrial (69%) sectors said they were temporary employees.

Self-described contract employees were significantly more likely to have some college education or a college degree, earn higher hourly wages, work longer assignments, and work longer for their staffing firms than self-described temporary

SECTOR DISTRIBUTION

Respondents selected the staffing sector of their most recent assignment. While all staffing sectors were well represented, 21% of the 13,196 staffing employees who participated in the ASA survey said they had worked in the industrial sector. ASA analysis of unpublished occupational data from the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (February 2001 supplement to the Current Population Survey) showed that temporary and contract employees in the industrial sector constituted 35% of the temporary and contract staffing work force, suggesting that the industrial sector was significantly underrepresented in the ASA staffing employee survey. Thus, the entire sample in the ASA staffing employee survey was weighted to reflect the sector distribution of the BLS data, as shown in *Figure 1*.

FIGURE 1: Percentage of Staffing Employees in Each Sector—Based on BLS Data



employees. They were also significantly more likely to cite “the money is better” as a reason for choosing contract work.

Eight of 10 (79%) staffing employees said they worked full time (35 or more hours per week). Among temporary employees, 76% worked full time, as did 84% of contract employees. These results are similar to those of the 2005 CPS supplement, in which 80% of temporary help agency workers and 85% of workers provided by contract firms reportedly worked full time. By comparison, 83% of U.S. workers in traditional arrangements are said to work full time. (See Figure 3.)²⁰

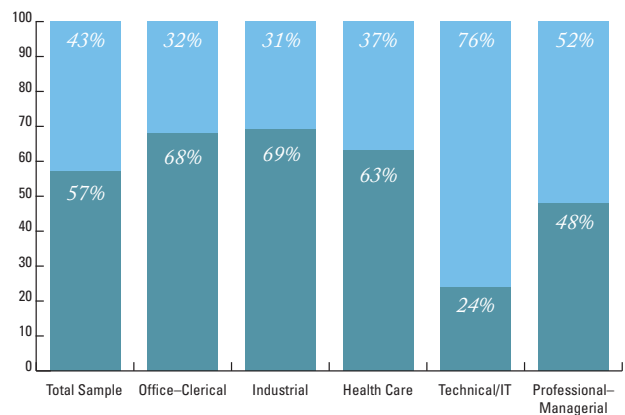
The tenure of the staffing employees who participated in the ASA survey ranged from less than a week (9%) to more than four years (4%). The median tenure was 15 weeks; 43% worked more than two months but less than a year. The median length of assignment was 12 weeks, suggesting that most respondents worked one assignment while they were employed with the staffing firm. Only 6% of respondents said their assignment lasted longer than a year. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of respondents said the length of assignments was “just right”; 27% said they were too short, and 8% said they were too long.

TEMPORARY OR CONTRACT

After being asked a series of screening questions to ensure that all participants were qualified for the survey, respondents were asked Question 1 of the survey: Do you consider yourself a temporary or contract employee? Respondents were provided two options, “temporary” or “contract,” with no explanation or definition; 57% chose temporary employee and 43% chose contract employee. Figure 2 shows that employees in technical/IT and professional–managerial occupations were more likely to consider themselves contract employees.

Contract
Temporary

FIGURE 2: Respondents Selected Whether They Considered Themselves Temporary or Contract Employees



FULL TIME AND PART TIME

Eight of 10 temporary and contract employees work full time, about the same proportion as the overall U.S. work force. Contract employees were more likely to work full time, whereas temporary employees were slightly more likely to work part time.

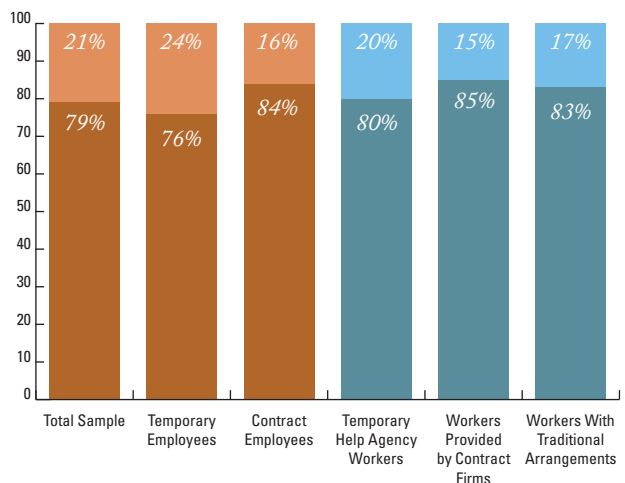
ASA Staffing Employee Survey, 2006

Part time
Full time

BLS Current Population Survey, 2005

Part time
Full time

FIGURE 3: ASA and BLS Surveys Produce Similar Results



Females accounted for 56% of the respondents. Although most were white (62%), respondents were disproportionately black (18%) relative to BLS measures of workers in traditional arrangements (11%). Asians were comparable in the two surveys (4% versus 4.5%). The proportion of Hispanic staffing employees (8%) was lower than among workers in traditional arrangements (13%). Even as the median age was 34 years, 46% of the respondents were under the age of 35, compared with 36% of workers in traditional arrangements.²¹

Considering that staffing employees tend to be younger than their traditional counterparts, it is no surprise that the data suggest many were in the process of earning a college degree; 42% of respondents had at least some college, compared with 28% of the traditional work force. Those with college degrees were comparable: 32% of staffing employee respondents and 33% of workers in traditional arrangements.²²

REASONS FOR CHOOSING STAFFING

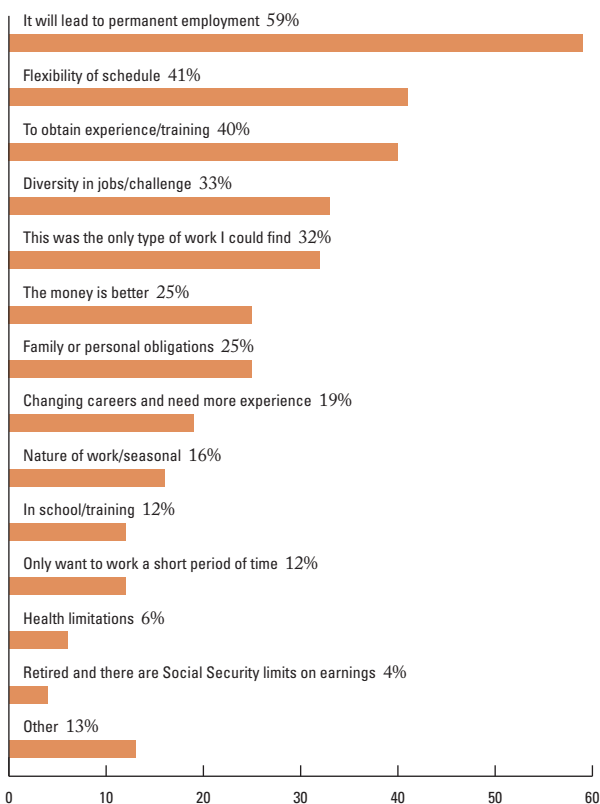
Respondents were presented a randomly ordered list of reasons for choosing temporary or contract work and could select all that applied. “Other (specify: _____)” anchored the list; more than 1,000 respondents selected this reason and provided comments. Figure 4 ranks the reasons by popularity. Illustrative verbatims are listed below:

- Access to jobs and companies that might not be in the local paper.
- Actor looking to supplement my acting income.
- Allow me to find perfect fit.
- Aspiring musician.
- Avoidance of office politics.
- Benefits.
- Chance to speak two languages.
- Changing careers and moving out of state soon.
- Connections to film and TV industry.
- Contracting for 10 years. Vacation. Benefits. And close to home.
- Convenience.
- Desire to leave previous full-time employer.
- Do not have the need for benefits.
- Fast job placement.
- Freedom!
- Get more respect and better leverage than a full-time employee.
- Got laid off and needed a job.
- Just graduated from college. Fast way to find work.
- My brother worked for the agency and told me it would be extremely helpful.
- Need income while seeking permanent job.
- Second job.
- Spouse in military.
- Supplemental income.
- Supports my freelance writing career.

REASONS

The survey explored why people become temporary or contract employees. Respondents were asked to select among common “reasons for choosing temporary or contract work”; they were also provided an open-ended option in which to specify “other.” After selecting their reason(s), respondents were then asked to indicate how important various factors were in their “decision to become a temporary or contract employee.” This line of questioning allowed respondents to pick one or more reasons that may have prompted them to become staffing employees, while it also helped to identify factors that may have contributed to their decisions. For example, a staffing employee may have chosen temporary or contract work as a way to get a permanent job, but having recently moved to town and the desire for additional income may have factored into the employee’s decision.

FIGURE 4: By Far the Top Reason for Choosing Temporary or Contract Work Was to Get a Permanent Job—Flexibility and Work Experience Also Ranked High



Staffing employees had many reasons for choosing temporary or contract work. (See Figure 4.) By far, the most popular reason was because “it will lead to permanent employment.” With six of 10 respondents selecting that reason, it was half again more popular than the next most frequently cited reasons—“flexibility of schedule” (41%) and “to obtain experience/training” (40%). Because one-third (32%) of the respondents said that “this was the only type of work I could find,” critics of the industry might argue that this survey provides evidence that temporary jobs are displacing permanent ones. However, it is important to note that respondents could select multiple reasons, including “other,” which allowed them to provide their own reason—more than 1,000 did—although many of the verbatims (i.e., actual remarks supplied by respondents) appear to be elaborations or explanations of reasons already selected. Respondents could have logically and reasonably selected “only type of work I could find” along with several of the other offered options, such as “family or personal obligations,” “changing careers and need more experience,” “nature of work/seasonal,” “in school or training,” “only want to work a short period of time,” or “health limitations.” When combined with “other,” the possibilities become

endless. For example, several of the “other” verbatims referred to having recently graduated from college. Such an individual may well have also selected “to obtain experience/training” and “this was the only type of work I could find.” Certainly the latter may have been the sole reason for some individuals (in the “other” verbatims, some respondents said it was the only way to get a job in their field—IT and computer programming were specifically mentioned), but given other survey results discussed later, it is clear that temporary and contract employees see great opportunities in their experience with a staffing firm.

Just as getting a permanent job was by far the most popular reason for choosing temporary or contract work, it was also by far the most important factor in the *decision* to become a temporary or contract employee.

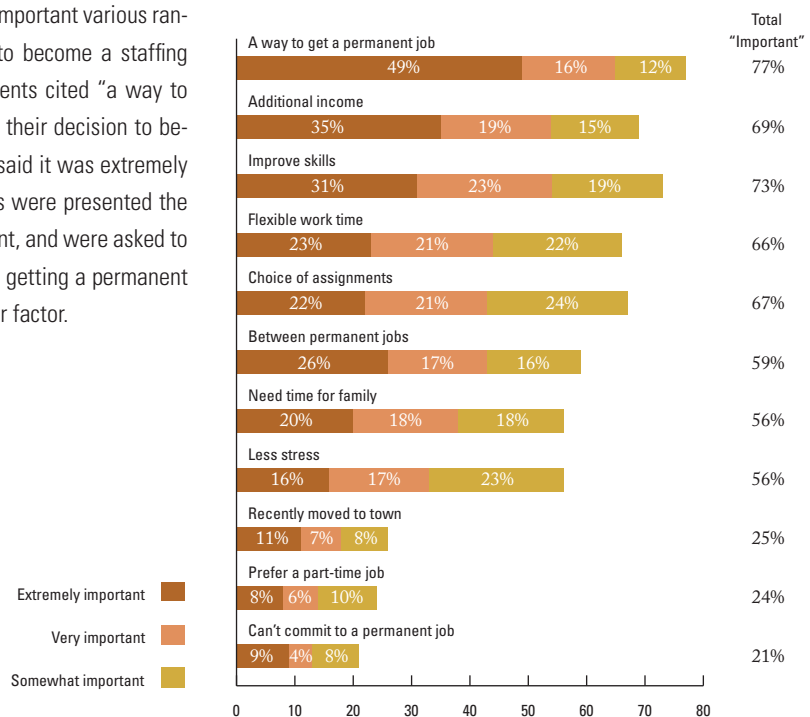
More than three-fourths of the respondents (77%) said “a way to get a permanent job” was an important factor. Half—49%—said it was extremely important, 14 points more than the “extremely” score on the next most important factor, “additional income.” Other highly rated factors included “improve skills,” “flexible work time,” and “choice of assignments.” (See Figure 5.)

FACTORS IMPORTANT IN DECISION

After selecting their reason(s) for choosing temporary or contract work, respondents were asked to indicate how important various randomly ordered factors were in their decision to become a staffing employee. More than three-fourths of respondents cited “a way to get a permanent job” as an important factor in their decision to become a temporary or contract employee—half said it was extremely important. In a follow-up question, respondents were presented the factors they cited as at least somewhat important, and were asked to select the single most important one; 36% said getting a permanent job was most important, far more than any other factor.

FIGURE 5: Respondents Rated the Importance of Various Factors in Their Decisions to Become Temporary or Contract Employees

(Ranked by Sum of Extremely and Very Important)



“Additional income” and “improve skills” were rated next in importance, though substantially less so than “a way to get a permanent job.” Seven in 10 respondents said these factors were important. The principal difference between these two factors and the permanent job factor was in the strength of feelings, specifically those who said the factor was extremely important: 49% for the permanent job factor versus 35% for the income factor. Similarly, the percentage who rated the “improve skills” factor as extremely important was four points lower than for the income factor.

After indicating the importance of various factors, respondents who rated at least one of them as extremely or very important (95% of the total sample) were again presented all factors that received those two high ratings and asked to choose which one was most important. “A way to get a permanent job” was ranked most important by 36% of the subsample (12,556), three times more than each of the next three most highly ranked reasons: “between permanent jobs” (12%), “additional income” (11%), and “flexible work time” (11%).

Flexibility also was an important reason *and* factor. Some staffing employees sought both a permanent job and flexibility, whereas a sizable contingent cared little about the former and a lot about the latter.

Perhaps perceiving a permanent job and flexibility as mutually exclusive, 72% of respondents picked one or the other when asked about their reasons for choosing temporary or contract work, even when instructed to pick any and all of the 13 offered reasons that applied to them, or to provide their own. Or perhaps most staffing employees interested in one option were simply not interested in the other. Nonetheless, nearly three in 10 respondents (28%) selected both “it will lead to permanent employment” *and* “flexibility of schedule.” Significantly, half (51%) of respondents in the industrial sector selected both, a far greater proportion than any other sector (19% office-clerical, 14% professional-managerial, and 8% each health care and technical/IT).

Meanwhile, for many staffing employees, flexibility trumped job permanence in importance. Nearly one-quarter (23%) of respondents had little or no interest in a permanent job—they said that “a way to get a permanent job” was not very or (mostly) not at all important to them as a factor in their decision to become a temporary or contract employee. It appears that they worked with staffing firms for lifestyle reasons. One in five respondents said “flexible work time” (23%), “choice of assignments” (22%), or “need time for family” (20%) were extremely important. They were more likely to have at least a bachelor’s degree and, like contract employees, were more likely to earn higher hourly wages and work longer for their staffing firm, even as they were evenly split in characterizing themselves as temporary or as contract employees. Respon-

dents disinterested in a permanent job were also significantly more likely to work in the health care sector.

This dichotomy is underscored in an analysis comparing two groups of staffing employees: those who took a permanent job or planned to work as a staffing employee until they got one (7,388) versus all others (5,334)—excluding those who stopped working. Flexibility was a prime motivator for the “all others” group. More than half (54%) said flexibility of schedule was a reason for choosing temporary or contract work, compared with less than a third (30%) among those employees keen on permanent employment. The “all others” group was also significantly more likely to cite diversity of jobs, better wages, family or personal obligations, or the desire to work a short period of time as reasons for choosing temporary or contract work. Similarly, they were twice as likely as those keen on permanent employment to say flexible work time was an extremely important factor in their decision to become a temporary or contract employee (32% versus 16%). And they were nearly four times more likely to say flexible work time was the most important reason (18% versus 5%).

Returning to the total sample, “less stress” was not offered in the questionnaire as a reason for choosing temporary or contract work, and it did not come up even once in the 1,000-plus verbatim comments entered in “other,” yet a majority (56%) of respondents selected it as a factor in their decision to become a temporary or contract employee. One-third (33%) of the total sample said that “less stress” was an extremely or very important factor; 3% ranked it as the most important factor. Respondents working in the health care sector were significantly more likely to cite “less stress” as extremely or very important. Conversely, respondents working in the technical/IT sector were significantly more likely to say that “less stress” was not important.

In summary, the staffing employees surveyed offered many reasons for choosing temporary or contract work, but clearly getting a permanent job was paramount, and many were looking to gain experience or training, presumably to make them more employable. Nearly one in four, however, had little or no interest in a permanent job; those employees chose temporary or contract work because it offered them flexibility suitable for their lifestyle needs. Also, many chose temporary or contract work for additional income regardless of whether they wanted flexibility or a permanent job.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Once they became staffing employees, did the experience meet their expectations?

Survey respondents were asked how well certain statements expressing common factors involved in their decisions to become temporary or contract employees described their current work situation (those who were not currently working on a staffing assignment were asked to refer to their last assignment). (See Figure 6.)

The work situation question alone elicited a useful measure of staffing employee perceptions and attitudes about their temporary or contract work experience. About three-quarters of respondents agreed that their work situation “offers a way to get a permanent job,” “provides additional income,” and “improves skills,” which was consistent with the most important factors respondents cited for becoming temporary or contract employees in the first place. Similarly, nearly two-thirds agreed that their work situation “offers flexible work time,” “allows me time for family,” and “is less stressful”—also consistent with principal factors cited earlier.

When the work situation question is paired with the decision factors question, however, together they provide additional—and important—insights. Assuming that the responses to the decision factors question serve as proxies for respondent expectations and the responses to the work situation question were proxies for the reality of their experiences, the differences between the proxies become, in effect, measures of how the actual work experience delivers against the expectations. For example, if a staffing employee took a temporary job because

he thought it would lead him to a permanent one, did he still think that the temporary job would provide a bridge to a permanent job *after* he actually was working in the temporary job for a while? Likewise, if a staffing employee took a contract assignment because she thought it would offer flexible work time, did she still think—*after* working on the assignment for some time—that indeed she had flexible work time?

The results are unequivocal. (See Figure 7.) On almost every factor, respondents said the experience matched or exceeded expectations, even within the intensity-rating categories (i.e., extremely, very, and somewhat). Reality most exceeded expectations in “allows me time for family” and “is less stressful”; for these two factors, the work experience ratings were markedly higher in each of the three intensity categories than in the expectation ratings. Agreement totals for two other factors—“provides additional income” and “improves skills”—were modestly higher in the work experience responses than in the expectation responses.

The total percentage of respondents who agreed that their current work situation “offers flexible work time” was slightly less than the total percentage of those who cited it as an important reason to become a temporary or contract employee. However, the percentage who “extremely” agreed (reality proxy) was three points higher than those who said it was an extremely important factor (expectations proxy), whereas the percentages in the “very” and “somewhat” categories were slightly lower in the current work situation responses, resulting in a nominal net decline. On balance, it would seem that staffing employees were generally finding the flexibility they were looking for in temporary or contract work.

WORK SITUATION RATINGS

Staffing employees have strongly positive views about their job experience engaged in temporary or contract work. When respondents were presented affirmative statements about an array of factors they had previously rated for degree of importance in their decisions to become temporary or contract employees, about two-thirds said the statements described their current (or most recent) work situation somewhat to extremely well.

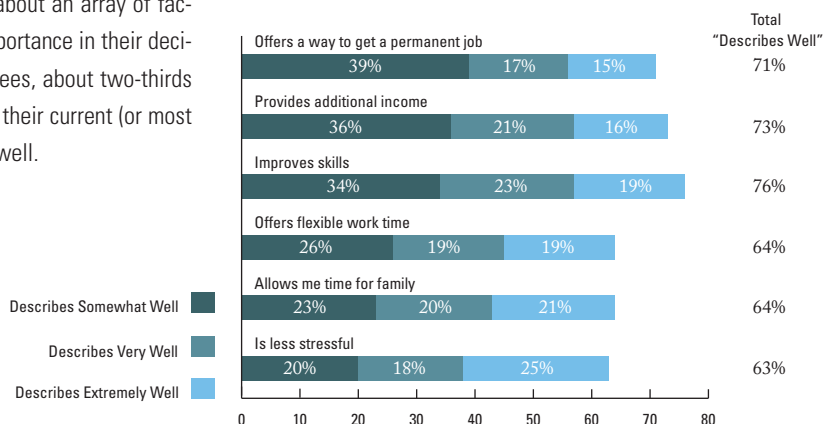


FIGURE 6: Respondents Were Asked to Indicate How Well Each Statement Described Their Current (or Most Recent) Work Experience as a Staffing Employee

The greatest difference between reality and expectation appears to be among a subset of respondents—those for whom “a way to get a permanent job” was an extremely important factor in their decision to become a temporary or contract employee. The percentage of respondents who said that “offers a way to get a permanent job” described their current work situation extremely well was 10 points lower than those who said it was an extremely important factor in their decision to become a temporary or contract employee. At the same time, the percentage of those who very much agreed was one point higher and the percentage of those who somewhat agreed was three points higher than in the comparable expectations measure. Altogether, the percentage of those in agreement was six points lower than the total percentage of respondents who said that getting a permanent job was an important factor to them. Some of the increases in the “very” and “somewhat” categories in the work situation responses may represent shifts in attitudes by those

who said it was an extremely important factor in their decision but who, as they worked on the job for a while, found that getting a permanent job was going to be harder than expected. Regardless of the possible reasons for variations within the categories of agreement, expectations about the ease of getting a permanent job through temporary or contract employment appear to slightly exceed the reality of the work experience.

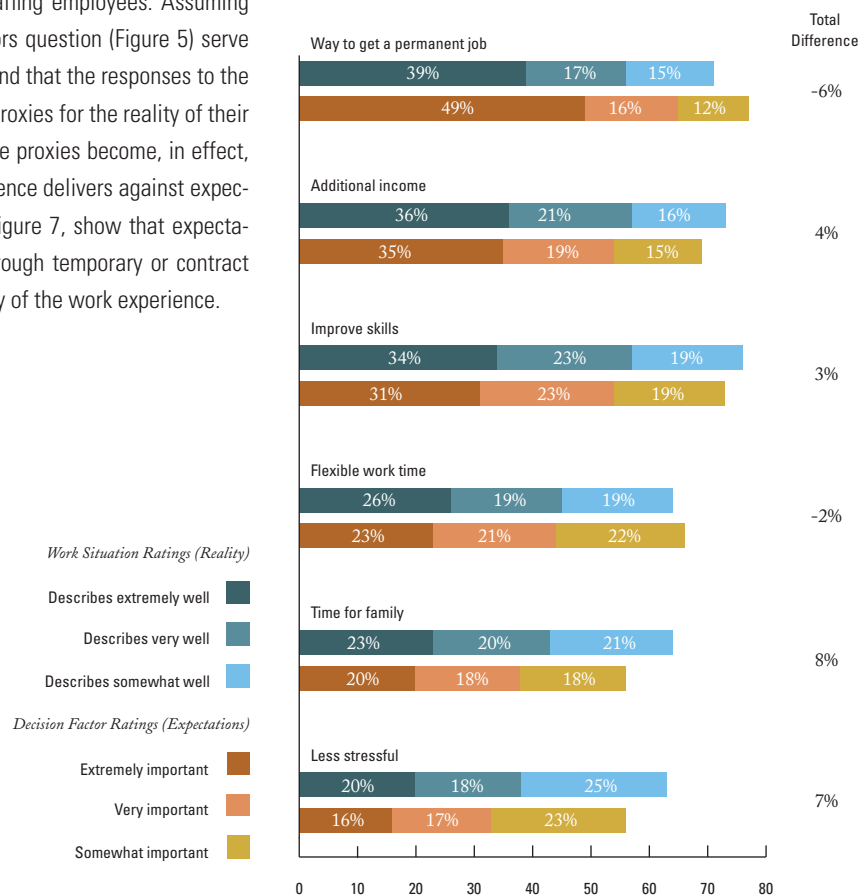
The high degree of match between reality and expectations may help explain the high degree of satisfaction that staffing employees expressed regarding their work situations. (See Figure 8.)

In the ASA staffing employee survey, nine of 10 respondents said that they were satisfied with their staffing firm, their work, and their work circumstances. In an overall rating and in all specific aspects measured—including treatment from supervisors and co-workers as well as amount and kind of work—staffing employees who were “extremely” or “very”

REALITY VERSUS EXPECTATIONS

The reality of temporary or contract work generally met or exceeded the expectations of respondents on the factors most important to them in their decision to become staffing employees. Assuming that the responses to the decision factors question (Figure 5) serve as proxies for respondent expectations and that the responses to the work situation question (Figure 6) were proxies for the reality of their experiences, the differences between the proxies become, in effect, measures of how the actual work experience delivers against expectations. The differences, illustrated in Figure 7, show that expectations about getting a permanent job through temporary or contract work appear to slightly exceed the reality of the work experience.

FIGURE 7: Differences Between Work Situation Ratings (Reality) and Decision Factor Ratings (Expectations) Show That Reality Exceeds Expectations in Most Cases



satisfied outnumbered those who said they were “somewhat” satisfied by more than 3 to 1. As further testament to their high level of satisfaction, 88% of respondents said they would refer a friend or relative to work as a temporary or contract employee.

These ratings contrast sharply with surveys of the U.S. work force as a whole. For example, in a late-2005 CareerBuilder.com survey of 2,050 workers randomly selected from an online panel, 62% were satisfied with their jobs.²³ In a survey of 2,600 U.S. working adults conducted by Mercer Human Resource Consulting in 2002 (with results weighted to be representative of the entire U.S. work force and industry sectors), 58% said they would recommend their organization to others as a good place to work.²⁴ In another Mercer survey, conducted in 2005 with 1,040 U.S. adult workers, 17% expressed dissatisfaction with their employer’s organization overall²⁵—only 10% of staffing employee respondents in the ASA survey said they were dissatisfied with their staffing firm employer.

PERMANENT JOB

The goal of bridging to a permanent job through temporary and contract work has long been recognized as important to staffing employees. Accordingly, the ASA staffing employee survey explored key aspects of the bridging process.

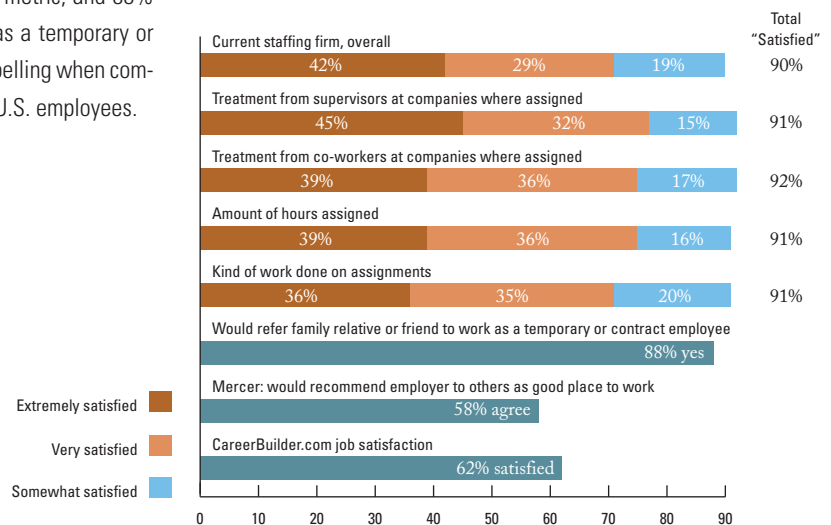
One obvious line of inquiry was whether the temporary or contract work led to a permanent job. What seems like a fairly straightforward question was complicated to answer because the sample included employees in various stages of engagement with their staffing firm. Of the 13,196 survey respondents, 3,973 (30%) were not currently on assignment. Of those, 474 (12%) decided to stop working. Of the 3,499 survey participants who remained in the work force but were not on a temporary or contract assignment at the time of the survey, 53% had taken a permanent job. (See Figure 9.)

As a group, 43% of those who had taken a permanent job became employed by their staffing firm’s customer; 29% found their permanent position while working as a staffing employee, but the job was unrelated to their assignment; and 25% found their permanent job some other way—a detailed review of the “other” verbatims failed to uncover any patterns that could be categorized beyond trivial percentages, underscoring the uniqueness of individual job searches.

SATISFACTION RATINGS

Staffing employees give high marks for their temporary or contract work experience. Nine of 10 survey respondents were satisfied—overall and on specific aspects of their jobs. More than 70% said they were extremely or very satisfied on each metric, and 88% said they would refer a friend or relative to work as a temporary or contract employee. The results are particularly compelling when compared with other surveys of satisfaction among all U.S. employees.

FIGURE 8: How Satisfied Are Staffing Employees With Various Aspects of Their Employment Arrangement and Would They Refer Others to Similar Employment? The Results Contrast Favorably to Comparable Surveys of All U.S. Employees



Among those who had taken permanent jobs, 86% were full time (compared with 83% of workers with traditional employment arrangements—see *Figure 3*). Self-described contract employees were more likely to have taken permanent full-time jobs. Permanent part-time jobs were more likely among those who considered themselves temporary employees. Staffing employees in the professional–managerial and technical/IT sectors were more likely to have taken permanent full-time jobs. Permanent part-time jobs were more likely among staffing employees in the industrial and health care sectors.

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of those who got permanent jobs said working as a temporary or contract employee helped them get a permanent job faster.

For respondents who indicated that “a way to get a permanent job” was an important factor in their decision to be-

come a temporary or contract employee, 51% achieved their objective.

All respondents, regardless of whether they had gotten permanent jobs, were asked a series of questions about their efforts to find other employment. Those who were not on a temporary or contract assignment at the time of the survey were told that, as they answered the survey questions, they should think about the last assignment they had with the staffing firm that invited them to participate in the survey.

Nearly six in 10 (59%) said that a past assignment had been described to them as a temporary or contract position that could lead to a permanent position. Of those, 48% had been offered a permanent position. Staffing employees in the office–clerical and industrial sectors were more likely than employees in other sectors to be told that their assignments could

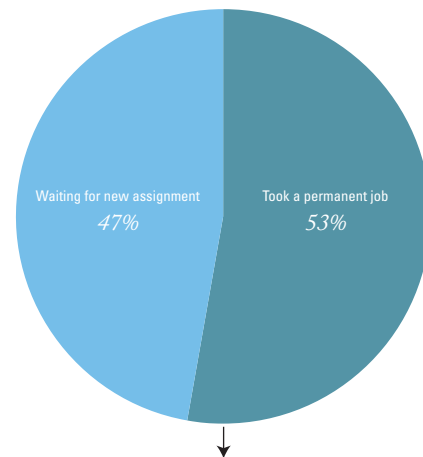
GETTING PERMANENT JOBS

Large numbers of staffing employees succeed in transitioning from temporary or contract work to permanent employment, but determining how many through the survey was complicated because respondents were in various stages of engagement with their staffing firm employer. Of the 13,196 staffing employees who responded to the ASA survey, 3,973 (30%) were not currently on assignment at the time they completed the questionnaire. Of those, 474 (12%) decided to stop working (withdrew from the work force). Of the remaining 3,499 survey respondents (still in the work force but not on a temporary or contract assignment), 53% had taken a permanent job—86% of those jobs were full time.

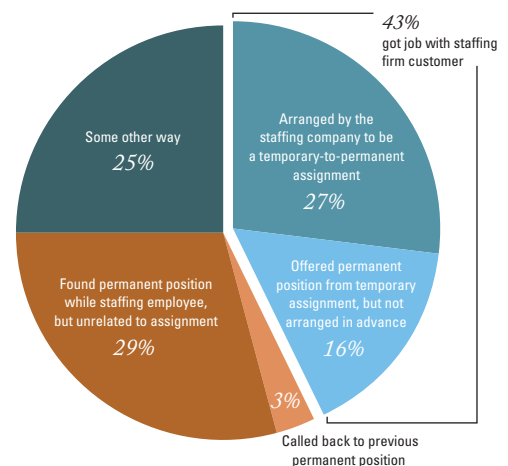
As a group, 43% of those respondents who had taken a permanent job became employed by their staffing firm’s customer; 29% found their permanent position while working as a staffing employee, but the job was unrelated to their assignment; and 25% found their permanent job some other way—a detailed review of the “other” verbatims failed to uncover any patterns that could be categorized beyond trivial percentages, underscoring the uniqueness of individual job searches.

Nearly one-quarter of those who got permanent positions said that working as a temporary or contract employee helped them get a permanent job faster.

FIGURE 9: Respondents Who Were Not Working on an Assignment for a Staffing Firm at the Time of the Survey (and Who Had Not Withdrawn From the Work Force) Were Asked What They Had Been Doing Since Their Last Assignment



How Did You Find the Permanent Job You Are Now In?



lead to permanent jobs. Contract employees, and staffing employees in the health care sector, were the most likely to receive offers of permanent employment.

Of those who had been offered a permanent position (after being told that their temporary or contract position could lead to a permanent one), only 17% took it. Those who declined offers of permanent positions cited several reasons for their decisions, principally dissatisfaction with the pay offer, wanting to remain a temporary or contract employee, lack of room for advancement, and not liking the work environment.

All respondents were asked (again, thinking about their most recent assignment), “How much longer do you expect to work as a temporary or contract employee for a staffing firm?” Nearly half (47%) replied, “Until I find a permanent position.” One-quarter (25%) said, “As long as I want.” This latter response was far more common (41%) among those in the health care sector. For 10% of all respondents, their expectations were bound by school plans: 7% said they would work as staffing employees until they went back to school (9% among those in both the professional–managerial and technical/IT sectors); 3% said until they finished school. Three percent said they

would work as staffing employees until they retired. The balance (14%) had other expectations.

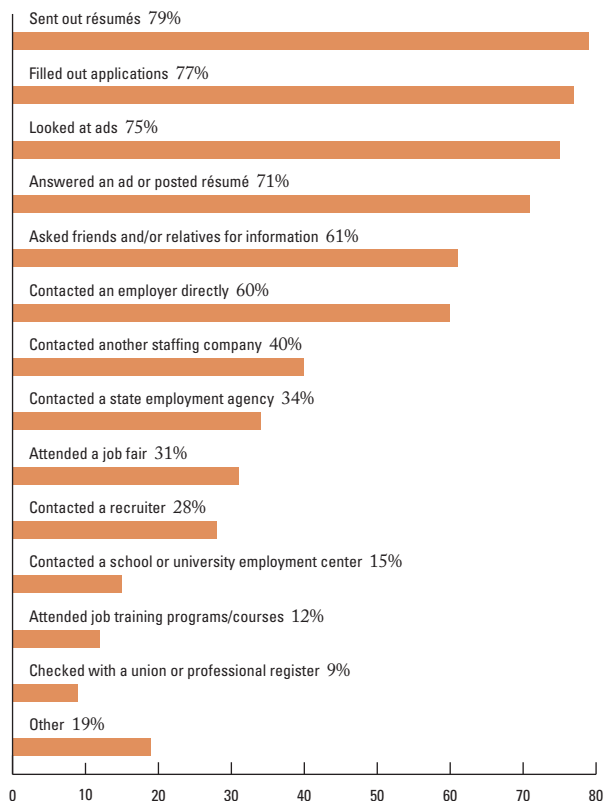
Although more than three-fourths of respondents said that getting a permanent job was an important factor in their decision to become a staffing employee, only half (48%) said they actively looked for a job while working for a staffing firm. (See Figure 10.) Of those, more than 70% said their job-search activities involved distributing résumés, looking at and responding to ads, or filling out applications. The majority sought job information from friends or relatives or contacted prospective employers directly. Many of those who looked for another job also contacted another staffing firm (40%) or a recruiter (28%) while they were working as a temporary or contract employee. However, less than one-third (34%) were actually registered with more than one staffing firm.

Self-described temporary employees were more likely to look for another job than contract employees, and they generally were more likely to use a wider range of job-hunting tactics. Similarly, employees in the industrial sector were likely to use a wider range of tactics than employees in other sectors. For example, employees in the office–clerical sector

JOB SEARCH ACTIVITIES

Although more than three-fourths of respondents said that getting a permanent job was an important factor in their decision to become a staffing employee, only half (48%) said they actively looked for another job while working for a staffing firm. Their most common job-search activities involved distributing résumés, looking at and responding to ads, and filling out applications. Many also contacted another staffing firm (40%) or a recruiter (28%) while they were working as a temporary or contract employee.

FIGURE 10: What Steps Have You Taken to Find Other Employment?



tended to focus on sending out résumés, responding to ads, and asking friends or relatives as their principal means of job hunting. Professional–managerial and technical/IT employees also relied on sending out résumés, but they were also more likely to have contacted another staffing firm or recruiter. Self-described contract employees were more likely to have contacted a recruiter.

Regardless of whether seeking a permanent job, more than 88% of the survey respondents said their temporary or contract work made them more employable. (See Figure 11.) Nearly two-thirds said they developed new or improved work skills (65%) and received on-the-job experience (64%). The majority said “it helped strengthen my résumé” (60%) and “helped me get my foot in the door for a permanent job” (56%). Four in 10 even said the work helped them gain self-confidence (43%) and improve their work habits (40%). When those who said they became more employable were presented all of the reasons they cited and asked to select the one that helped the most, 28% cited improving their work skills, and 25% cited getting their foot in the door for a permanent job. Among those who said they developed new or improved work skills, 85% said it was through on-the-job experience, and 20% said they learned new skills through specific training provided by their staffing firm; 35% of employees in the industrial sector said their staffing firm provided specific skills training.

PAY AND BENEFITS

The temporary and contract employees who responded to the survey were generally satisfied with their pay. But the results suggest that staffing employees have relatively low awareness of the benefits available to them.

Although respondents reported wages as high as \$200 per hour, the median pay rate was \$11.80 per hour for their most recent assignment. Only 1% reported earning wages under \$7 per hour; 18% said they earned more than \$20 per hour.

Eight of 10 respondents (82%) said they were satisfied with their pay. This high level of satisfaction is similar to the high level of satisfaction respondents reported with regard to their work experience (90%) and markedly greater than pay satisfaction reported in the CareerBuilder.com survey of the U.S. work force, in which only 53% expressed satisfaction with their pay.²⁶ Conversely, 23% of U.S. adult workers in the 2005 Mercer survey expressed dissatisfaction with their pay,²⁷ whereas only 18% of respondents to the staffing employee survey were dissatisfied.

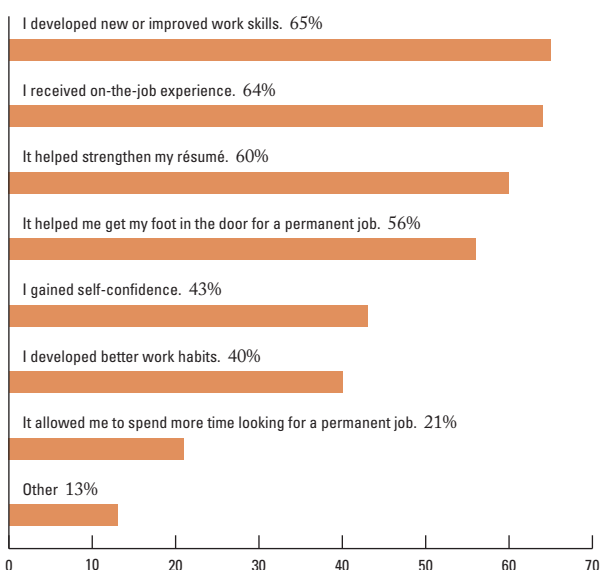
Although most staffing employees were satisfied with their pay, their views were not as strongly held as they were with regard to their work experience; 45% were extremely (18%) or very (27%) satisfied with their pay, compared with 71% who were extremely or very satisfied with their staffing firm overall. Nonetheless, the plurality of those with strongly

MADE MORE EMPLOYABLE

Regardless of whether seeking a permanent job, 88% of survey respondents said their temporary or contract work made them more employable. Respondents were presented a randomly ordered list of ways in which such work might make them more employable (with “other” as anchor). They were asked to select all that apply. Figure 11 ranks the “ways” by the popularity of their selections.

After selecting the ways that temporary or contract work made them more employable, respondents were presented a list of the ones they selected and asked to choose the one that helped the most: 28% cited developing new or improved work skills; 26% said it was getting their foot in the door for a permanent job. Among those who developed new skills, 20% said they obtained specific training provided by their staffing firm.

FIGURE 11: In What Ways Do You Feel Your Temporary or Contract Work Made You More Employable?



favorable views about their pay exceeded the proportion of those who were somewhat satisfied (37%).

Respondents expressed relatively lower levels of satisfaction with their benefits. About half (47%) of respondents said they were satisfied—11% extremely and 11% very, with the plurality of 26% somewhat satisfied. Some of this lower level of satisfaction may be explained by lack of awareness. For example, only 60% of respondents said that their staffing firm offered health insurance. Yet health insurance is offered by 77% of staffing companies with sales over \$50 million,²⁸ which employ the majority of staffing employees.²⁹ By comparison, 69% of all U.S. private sector employees have access to employer-sponsored medical health insurance.³⁰

Health insurance was the benefit most frequently cited by respondents as being offered by their staffing firm. The other most commonly offered benefits—as perceived by the respondents—were skills testing (49%), holiday pay (46%), and vacation pay (41%). One-third (33%) said they received skills testing and holiday pay, and one-quarter (26%) vacation pay.

Respondents who considered themselves temporary rather than contract employees were more likely to participate in skills testing. Nearly half (47%) of staffing employees in the office-clerical sector reported receiving skills testing benefits; they were also more likely to receive computer training benefits. Staffing employees in the health care sector were also more likely to participate in skills testing benefits.

Those who considered themselves temporary employees were also most likely to say they were unsure about benefits offerings. Staffing employees in the office-clerical and professional-managerial sectors were more likely to say they were not sure about whether specific benefits were offered. Those who said they were contract employees were more likely to participate in offered benefits. Paradoxically, this tendency was also true of staffing employees in the industrial sector. Respondents who worked in the technical/IT sector were more likely to receive health insurance and holiday pay benefits.

Although health insurance was the most commonly offered benefit, only 17% of respondents participated in their employer's plan. (*See Figure 12.*) By comparison, 51% of all U.S. private sector employees with access to medical health insurance reportedly participate in their employer's plan.³¹

When staffing employee respondents were asked to indicate their main reason for not enrolling in their staffing firm's health insurance program, more than half (52%) said they did not need insurance (23%) or had insurance from somewhere else (29%). Among those who said that they had health insurance from elsewhere, more than two-thirds (67%) got it through another employer (mostly through a spouse); one-fifth (21%) paid for it on their own, 6% had Medicare coverage, and 2% were Medicaid recipients. Staff-

ing employees who worked in the professional-managerial and technical/IT sectors were more likely to have insurance from somewhere else.

About a third (36%) gave economic reasons for nonparticipation: They said they could not afford the deductions or premiums (27%) or did not want deductions from their paycheck to pay for the premiums (9%). Economic reasons were cited most often among staffing employees who worked in the industrial sector.

One of 10 respondents (11%) said they were not yet eligible (had not worked for the staffing firm long enough to qualify) for health insurance coverage from their staffing firm, and 1% said pre-existing conditions prevented them from getting coverage.

SECTOR PROFILES

Data from survey respondents were analyzed by the sector in which staffing employees said they worked their last assignment. Summaries of the results by sector follow.

Industrial

Staffing employees in the industrial sector were the most optimistic and satisfied of the respondents. They were the most likely (69%) to consider themselves temporary employees. They were the most likely to be seeking a permanent job, the most likely to view their temporary work as a way to get a permanent job, and the most likely to continue working as a staffing employee until they found a permanent job. They were more likely to say their temporary work made them more employable by developing new or improved skills, and they were more likely to be receiving skills training than staffing employees in other sectors. They were also more likely to say their temporary work made them more employable because it gave them job experience, time to look for a permanent job, and a "foot in the door" to a permanent job. They were also more likely to say the work made them more employable because they developed self-confidence and better work habits.

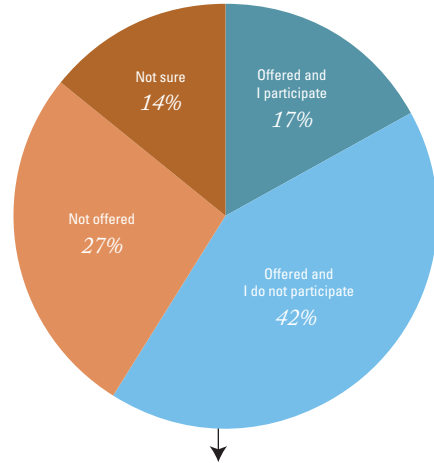
Likewise, industrial employees were the most satisfied among the sectors, particularly with regard to the hours assigned, kind of work, and pay and benefits. Their pay satisfaction was highest, even though they had the lowest hourly wage (mean \$10.82) among all of the sectors. Nonetheless, they were more likely to cite additional income as an important reason for working as a temporary employee. They were also more likely to say they became a staffing employee because they recently had moved to town.

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE

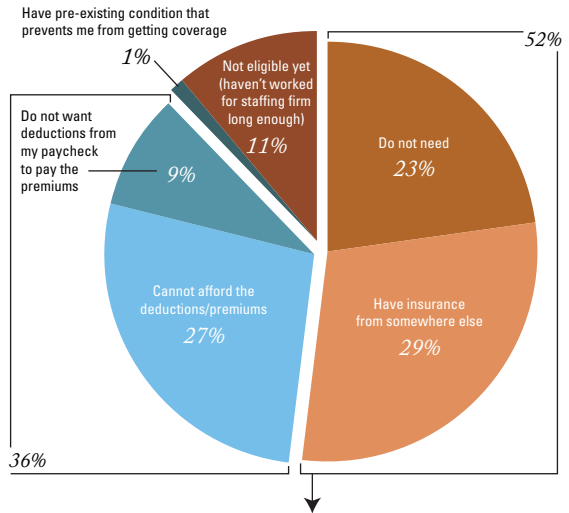
Even though health insurance is widely available to temporary and contract employees through their staffing firms, only 60% of respondents believed it was offered. Among those who declined coverage, more than half said they did not need it or had insurance from somewhere else. Two-thirds of those who had coverage from somewhere else received it from another employer.

FIGURE 12: Respondents Were Asked Whether Their Staffing Firm Offered Health Insurance and Whether They Participated in Their Employer's Plan

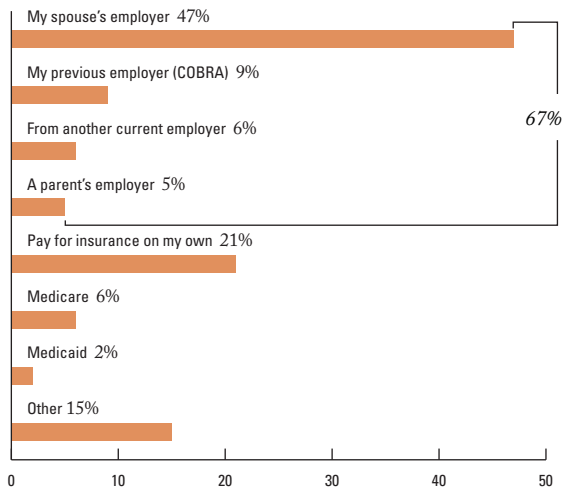
Whether Offered, Whether Participate



Why Not Enrolled?



Who Provides Coverage? (Multiple Responses Permitted)



More than half of the respondents in the industrial sector were male (62%) and had no college education (54%—more than three times the proportion of any other sector).

Office–Clerical

Presented as “office–clerical/administrative” in the survey questionnaire, the profile of respondents in this sector matched the general profile for all respondents. In many ways, those in this sector typified the “average” staffing employee, although office–clerical employees tended to work part time more than in general, and this sector constituted the greatest concentration by one sex: 83% of respondents were female.

Respondents considered themselves as temporary employees and, like most staffing employees, they chose to work for a staffing firm as a way to get a permanent job. They were more likely than respondents in other sectors to say they became staffing employees to obtain experience or training or because they were changing careers and needed more experience. They were also more likely to say they were between permanent jobs and they had moved to town recently.

Like most staffing employees, they were satisfied with their work experience. They indicated more satisfaction with the treatment they received from co-workers and with the amount of hours assigned to them than did employees in other sectors. They were more likely to have registered with more than one staffing firm than employees in other sectors.

Health Care

Work-life balance factors rated highly with staffing employees in the health care sector. Respondents were more likely to cite flexible work time, choice of assignments, the need of time for family, and reduced stress as important factors in their decision to become staffing employees. They were more likely to work part time and to cite additional income as an important consideration. They were more likely to be female and to have children at home. They were the most satisfied employees with regard to flexible work time, time for family, and pay. They tended to have been employed before joining a staffing firm and to have had longer tenure with their staffing firm. Even though 87% had completed some college education and 29% held at least a bachelor’s degree, respondents in this sector resembled their counterparts in the industrial and office–clerical sectors by being more likely to view themselves as temporary rather than contract employees.

Professional–Managerial

This sector is a roll-up of three categories presented in the survey questionnaire: professional/managerial, legal, and accounting. A slight majority of respondents in this sector considered themselves contract employees. Respondents were

more likely than employees in other sectors to be between permanent jobs and principally in search of another, although a significant proportion (9%) planned to work as staffing employees until they returned to school. Those in this sector were more likely than those in health care or technical/IT to view their staffing employment as a “foot in the door” and as a way to allow more time to look for a permanent job. Respondents in this sector were also more likely to have registered with more than one staffing firm. Professional–managerial respondents were the most highly educated; 56% had bachelor’s degrees and 21% had completed post-graduate course work.

Technical/IT

This sector is a roll-up of technical, IT, and scientific categories presented in the survey questionnaire. Respondents in this sector were notably different from those in other sectors in terms of factors important in their decisions to become staffing employees, in descriptions of their work situations, and in their satisfaction.

Despite having the highest average hourly wages (\$27.62), respondents in this sector expressed the lowest satisfaction ratings overall (albeit at 87%, it was only three points lower than the 90% overall satisfaction rating for the total sample) and for the kind of work done on assignments. They were the most likely to consider themselves contract employees and the most likely to say that such employment was the only type of work they could find. Otherwise, they had no strong reasons for becoming staffing employees and no strong feelings about their work situation. They were, however, the most likely to say they learned new skills on the job and that their staffing employment strengthened their résumés. Respondents in this sector performed the longest assignments and were more likely than respondents in other sectors to have registered with more than one firm.

Technical/IT respondents tended to be highly educated, married, white men.

LONG-TERM PROFILE

Critics of the staffing industry claim that temporary and contract jobs are displacing permanent ones, creating a two-tiered work force—employees with benefits and those without.³² In particular, they have focused on long-term assignments, so-called “perma-temps.” These assertions are not supported by survey research findings.

The Employment Policy Foundation looked at BLS data on long-term temporary employees, which it defined as those

with tenure of two years or more, and concluded that they are “a rare breed” and more likely than most temporary help employees to receive health and pension benefits.³³ A review of ASA survey data on long-term staffing employees, whose average assignment lasted for two years or more, is roughly comparable with the EPF analysis of BLS data.

Long-term staffing employees constituted 12% of the survey respondents—the exact same percentage EPF found in its analysis of 1995 and 1997 BLS data. Two-thirds (66%) considered themselves contract employees. They were more motivated by money and flexibility than employees whose assignments averaged less than two years. Long-term staffing employees were more likely than their shorter-term counterparts to cite “the money is better” as a reason for choosing temporary or contract work, and they were more likely to say “additional income” was the most important factor in their decision. They were also more likely to cite “flexible work time” as an important factor, and they were more likely to cite it as the most important factor.

Long-term employees were more likely to work part time and to express less interest in looking for or getting a permanent job (only 36% had looked for another job), or gaining skills or experience that would make them more employable.

By most measures, and despite their longevity, they were slightly less satisfied with their work experience than their shorter-term counterparts.

They were more likely to be offered benefits and to participate in benefit programs. Three-quarters (76%) said they were offered health insurance (compared with 69% of all U.S. private sector employees³⁴). Paradoxically, they were more inclined to both enroll in (27%) and decline (50%) health insurance—half (46%) of those who declined coverage said that they had health insurance from somewhere else.

Survey respondents who were long-term staffing employees tended to work in the professional–managerial or technical/IT sectors. They tended to be white, to be more highly educated, and to earn higher wages than their shorter-term counterparts. Unlike the rest of the staffing work force, long-term employees were equally male and female.

WITHDRAWAL PROFILE

The survey sample included 474 employees (12%) who decided to stop working—presumably withdrawing from the work force. A review of the data to determine factors unique to this group showed that these former employees tended to be young, single women who had worked in industrial or office–

clerical jobs for a brief spell. Nearly one in five (18%) had been employed by their staffing firm for less than a week, twice the ratio of the entire sample. Nearly half (45%) said they wanted to work only a short period of time, four times the ratio of the entire sample. More than a third (37%) said they were in school or training, three times the ratio of the entire sample. More than a quarter (29%) said they chose temporary work because of the nature of the work or its seasonality. There is no indication of disproportionate dissatisfaction among these employees. The evidence suggests that the principal reason they stopped working was because they had planned to—not because they did not like the work or the employment arrangement.

DISCUSSION

Although this survey of staffing employees was the largest and most comprehensive ever, it failed to anticipate and fully account for the importance of temporary and contract work in providing additional personal income. “Additional income” was absent from the survey questionnaire as one of the reasons respondents could select to explain why they had chosen temporary or contract work. A large number of the respondent verbatims mentioned income as an “other” reason for choosing temporary or contract work—as a primary source, as additional or supplemental, or as a second job. The characterization of temporary or contract work as a second job showed up also in verbatims of “other” reasons why respondents did not accept offers of permanent employment. Further underscoring the importance of income to staffing employees, respondents rated “additional income” second to “way to get a permanent job”—above all other factors—as an extremely important factor in their decision to become a temporary or contract employee and as an extremely good description of their current work situation. Future survey research on staffing employees should take a detailed look at the role temporary and contract work plays in providing additional personal income, particularly as a second job.

As noted in the sector profile, office–clerical workers typified the “average” temporary and contract employee in many ways, notwithstanding their being predominately female and their tendency to work part time more often than the sample as a whole. This would suggest that previous ASA surveys of current and former temporary and contract employees, who were disproportionately in the office–clerical sector, might provide some insight on staffing employment trends since the mid- to late 1990s. However, data from those surveys should be carefully evaluated for sampling bias. Comparison with the

BLS contingent and alternative work force supplemental survey would be useful in that regard. It would also be instructive to comprehensively compare recent results from those BLS surveys with the results of this staffing employee survey.

CONCLUSION

The results of this landmark survey are unmistakable: Staffing employees are a diverse lot with one thing in common—optimism. Most view temporary or contract work as a means to an end—a permanent job. Large numbers achieve that end. Meanwhile, a significant proportion of staffing employees prefer the flexibility offered by temporary or contract work. Many want to spend more time with their families. Regardless of their long-term intentions, staffing employees value highly the additional income the work provides, as well as the on-the-job experience, training, and opportunity to improve their skills. Nine of 10 staffing employees express satisfaction with their jobs and would refer a friend or a relative to work as a temporary or contract employee—a testament of expectations met.

Overall, the survey results shed light on the important role U.S. staffing companies play as labor market intermediaries—creating jobs, helping those who want permanent jobs to get them, offering flexibility and choice to those who prefer alternative work arrangements, and providing training and experience to improve skills and enhance the value of staffing employees in a growing and ever-demanding economy.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE REVIEWERS

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APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

The following is the English version of the ASA staffing employee survey questionnaire that was posted on a secure Web site. A Spanish version was also available. The following also served as the script for both English and Spanish integrated voice response via telephone, modified as necessary to provide audio instructions as well as audio and numeric key-tone input.

[Introduction]

You have been invited by your staffing firm to participate in the American Staffing Association's staffing employee survey. Your staffing firm is a member of ASA, which promotes legal, ethical, and professional practices for the staffing industry.

Your participation in this survey is a valuable way for you to give feedback on your experience as a staffing employee. We will use the information from this survey to better understand how to serve temporary and contract employees. When you complete the survey, you may enter a sweepstakes to win one of 100 \$50 cash prizes.

This survey is strictly confidential. You will need to enter your employer number and your state of residence to complete the survey. After you have completed the survey, you will be asked for your contact information to be entered into the sweepstakes—this information will not be linked to your survey answers in any way.

[Survey questionnaire begins here]

Please enter the employer number that was provided to you in the invitation to take this survey. _____ [five digits]

Please select the state that you work in. [drop-down menu of state abbreviations]

Now we're going to ask you about temporary or contract work.

[Question A]

Do you have a current assignment?

- Yes *[go to Question 1]*
- No *[go to Question B]*

[Question B]

Have you had an assignment in 2005 or 2006?

- Yes
- No *[terminate]*

[Question C]

In what month did your most recent assignment end?

Please select one:

- January 2006
- December 2005
- November 2005
- October 2005
- September 2005
- August 2005
- July 2005
- June 2005
- May 2005
- April 2005
- March 2005
- February 2005
- January 2005

[Question D]

What have you been doing since your most recent assignment?

Please select one:

- I've been waiting for a new assignment.
- I took a permanent job.
- I decided to stop working.

[Question 1 introduction]

[If answered "yes" to Question A]

Next we're going to ask you some questions about temporary or contract work in general. Please think about your current assignment when answering these questions.

[If answered "yes" to Question B]

Next we're going to ask you some questions about temporary or contract work in general. Please think about the last assignment that you had with this staffing firm.

[Question 1]

Do you consider yourself a temporary or a contract employee?

- Temporary
- Contract

[Question 2]

Which of the following, if any, are your reasons for choosing temporary or contract work?

Select all that apply:

[present randomly with "other" as anchor]

- This was the only type of work I could find
- It will lead to permanent employment
- The money is better
- Flexibility of schedule
- To obtain experience/training
- Health limitations
- Retired and there are Social Security limits on earnings
- Nature of work/seasonal
- Only want to work a short period of time
- Family or personal obligations
- In school or training
- Diversity in jobs/challenge
- Changing careers and need more experience
- Other (specify: _____)

[Question 3]

How important were each of the following factors in your decision to become a temporary or contract employee?

[present as grid with importance ratings across the top and factors—randomized—down the side]

Please select one for each factor:

- Extremely important
- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Not very important
- Not at all important

Factors:

- Flexible work time
- Recently moved to town
- Less stress
- Need time for family
- Between permanent jobs
- A way to get a permanent job
- Additional income

- Improve skills
- Choice of assignments
- Can't commit to a permanent job
- Prefer a part-time job

[Question 4]

Of the factors in your decision to become a temporary or contract employee, which was the most important factor?

[present only factors above rated as "extremely" or "very" important]

[Question 5]

Please rate the following statements on how well they describe your current work situation. [present as grid with description ratings across the top and statements down the side]

Please select one for each statement:

- Describes extremely well
- Describes very well
- Somewhat describes
- Slightly describes
- Does not describe at all

Statements:

- Offers flexible work time
- Is less stressful
- Allows me time for family
- Offers way to get a permanent job
- Provides additional income
- Improves skills

[Question 6]

In what ways, if any, do you feel your temporary or contract work made you more employable? [present randomly with

"other" as anchor, and "don't know" and "I do not feel it made me more employable" as mutually exclusive]

Select all that apply:

- I developed new or improved work skills
[if selected, ask Questions 7, 8, and 9]
- I developed better work habits
[if selected, ask Questions 7 and 9]
- It helped strengthen my résumé
[if selected, ask Questions 7 and 9]
- It allowed me to spend more time looking for a permanent job
[if selected, ask Questions 7 and 9]

- It helped me get my foot in the door for a permanent job
[if selected, ask Questions 7 and 9]
- I received on-the-job experience
[if selected, ask Questions 7 and 9]
- I gained self-confidence
[if selected, ask Questions 7 and 9]
- Other (please specify: _____)
[if selected, ask Questions 7 and 9]
- Don't know
[if selected, skip to Question 9]
- I do not feel it made me more employable
[if selected, skip to Question 9]

[Question 7]

In what way did your temporary experience help you the most?

Please select one:

[present responses from Question 6]

[Question 8]

Did you learn the new skills through...

Select all that apply:

- On-the-job experience
- Specific training provided by my staffing firm
- Specific training provided by the company I was assigned to by the staffing firm

[Question 9]

Overall, how satisfied are you with your current staffing firm?

- Extremely satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

[Question 10]

How satisfied are you with the following... *[present as grid with satisfaction ratings across the top and statements—randomized—down the side]*

Please select one for each statement:

- Extremely satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not very satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

Statements:

- Pay
- Benefits
- Treatment I receive(d) from the staffing firm
- Treatment I receive(d) from co-workers at the companies I was assigned to
- The amount of hours I was assigned
- Kind of work done on assignments
- Treatment I receive(d) from my supervisors at the companies I was assigned to

[Question 11]

Some staffing firms offer their temporary and contract employees a wide range of benefits. Please select whether each benefit is offered and whether you participate in it or not. *[present as grid with choices across the top and benefits down the side]*

Please select one for each benefit:

- Offered and I participate
- Offered and I do not participate
- Not offered
- Not sure

Benefits:

- Career counseling
- Health insurance
[if selected as "offered and I do not participate," ask Question 12]
- Skills testing
- 401(k) plan
- Life insurance
- Disability insurance
- Vacation pay
- Holiday pay
- Sick pay
- Bonuses
- Computer training
- Other training

[except for the "health insurance" response noted above, all others proceed to Question 14]

[Question 12]

What is the main reason you did not enroll for health insurance from your current staffing firm?

Please select one:

- Do not need
- Do not want deductions from my paycheck to pay the premiums
- Cannot afford the deductions/premiums
- Have pre-existing condition that prevents me from getting coverage
- Not eligible yet (haven't worked for staffing firm long enough)
- Do not work enough hours to be eligible
- Have insurance from somewhere else
[if selected, ask Question 13]

[except for the "have insurance from somewhere else" response noted above, all others proceed to Question 14]

[Question 13]

Who provides the coverage?

Select all that apply:

- Pay for insurance on my own
- Insurance from my previous employer (COBRA)
- Insurance from another current employer
- My spouse's employer
- A parent's employer
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Other

[Question 14]

How much longer do you expect to work as a temporary or contract employee for a staffing firm?

Please select one:

- As long as I want
- Until I find a permanent position
- Until I retire
- Until I finish school
- Until I go back to school
- Until my current assignment is finished
- Other

[Question 15]

Have you actively looked for another job while working for the staffing firm?

- Yes
- No *[proceed to Question 17]*

[Question 16]

What steps have you taken to find other employment?

Select all that apply:

- Contacted a state employment agency
- Attended a job fair
- Filled out applications
- Contacted a recruiter
- Contacted another staffing company
- Sent out résumés
- Contacted an employer directly
- Answered an ad or posted résumé
- Contacted a school or university employment center
- Looked at ads
- Checked with a union or professional register
- Attended job training programs/courses
- Asked friends and/or relatives for information
- Other

[Question 17]

Have any of your past assignments been described to you as a temporary or contract position that could lead to a permanent position?

- Yes
- No

[Question 18]

Have you ever been offered a permanent position by any of the companies or organizations where you have been sent on assignment?

- Yes
- No

[ask Question 19]

[proceed to directive for Questions 20–22]

[Question 19]

What factors influenced your decision to not take the permanent position?

Please select all that apply:

- Dissatisfied with pay offer
- Did not like work environment
- Did not like potential supervisor

- No room for advancement
- Wanted to remain a temporary or contract employee
- Some other reason (please specify: _____)

[Directive for Questions 20–22—ask only if response to Question D was “took a permanent job”; otherwise skip to Question 23]

[Question 20]

Earlier you indicated that you are no longer working as a temporary or contract employee and now have a permanent position. Is that a full- or part-time position?

- Full time
- Part time

[Question 21]

How did you find the permanent position you are now in?

Please select one:

- My current position was arranged by the staffing company to be a temporary-to-permanent assignment
- I was offered a permanent position at one of my temporary assignments, although it was not arranged in advance
- I found a permanent position while I was working as a temporary or contract employee, but it was unrelated to my temporary assignments
- I was called back to a permanent position that I had held before becoming a temporary or contract employee
- Some other way (please specify: _____)

[Question 22]

Do you agree or disagree that working as a temporary or contract employee helped you get a permanent job faster?

Please select one:

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly

[Question 23]

Would you refer a family relative or friend to work as a temporary or contract employee?

Please select one:

- Yes
- No

[introduction to demographic questions]

Now, we have a few questions in order to group your responses with those of others.

[Question D1]

What sector of work was your last assignment in?

Please select one:

- Office–clerical/administrative
- Industrial
- Health care
- Technical
- IT
- Scientific
- Professional/managerial
- Legal
- Accounting

[Question D2]

How long have you worked with the staffing firm that your current assignment is with?

Please select one:

- 1–2 weeks
- 3–6 weeks
- 7–13 weeks
- 14–26 weeks
- 27–52 weeks
- 53 weeks and over

[Question D3]

Do you usually work part time or full time?

- Part time (less than 35 hours)
- Full time (35 or more hours)

[Question D4]

On your most recent assignment, how many hours per week did you work?

- Less than 35 hours
- 35 or more hours

[Question D5]

During that week how many other staffing firms were you registered to work for?

- No other staffing firms
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- More than 5

[Question D6a]

What has been the *average* duration of your temporary or contract assignments?

- Less than one week
[proceed to Question D7]
- _____ weeks
[range 1–52—proceed to Question D7]
- More than one year *[ask Question D6b]*

[Question D6b]

How many years was the average duration of your temporary or contract assignments?

- _____ years
[range 1–99—proceed to Question D7]

[Question D7]

Do you consider your typical assignment to be...?

Please select one:

- Too short
- Too long
- Just right

[Question D8]

On your most recent assignment, what was your hourly pay rate?

\$ ____ . ____ *[range 5.00 to 200.00]*

[Question D9]

Prior to joining the staffing firm, which one of the following best describes your previous occupational status?

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Student
- Homemaker
- Retired

[Question D10]

Please select your gender:

- Male
- Female

[Question D11]

Please select your age:

- Under 18
- 18–20
- 21–24
- 25–29
- 30–34
- 35–39
- 40–44
- 45–49
- 50–54
- 55–59
- 60–64
- 65 and over

[Question D12]

Please select your race/ethnicity:

- White
- Black
- Asian
- American Indian
- Hispanic
- Other
- Prefer to not answer

[Question D13]

Please indicate the highest level of education you've completed.

Please select one:

- 1–7 years grade school
- 8 years grade school
- 1–3 years high school
- High school graduate
- Some college (no degree)
- Trade/technical/associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Post graduate

[Question D14]

Please indicate your marital status.

Please select one:

- Married
- Single

[Question D15]

How many people live in your household, including yourself?

Please select one:

- 1
[skip to Question D17]
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8 or more

[Question D16]

How many in your household are...

- Under 6 years old
- 6–12 years old
- 13–17 years old

[Question D17]

Please select your household income.

- Under \$15,000
- \$15,000 to less than \$20,000
- \$20,000 to less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to less than \$30,000
- \$30,000 to less than \$40,000
- \$40,000 to less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 to less than \$75,000
- \$75,000 to less than \$100,000
- \$100,000 or more

[conclusion]

Those are all the questions we have for you today.

Would you like to enter the sweepstakes drawing to win one of 100 \$50 cash prizes?

Please select one:

- Yes
[proceed to Sweepstakes Introduction and then to Thank You]
- No
[proceed to Thank You]

[Sweepstakes Introduction]

Hello, welcome to the American Staffing Association's staffing employee sweepstakes Web site. Thank you for completing the survey. In order to enter you in the prize drawing, we need to collect some contact information from you. This information will not be used for any other purpose and will be kept strictly confidential.

Please enter your first and last name:

Please enter your mailing address:

Please enter your daytime phone number:

--- - --- - ----

[Thank You]

Thank you for participating in the American Staffing Association's staffing employee survey.

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

8½ -by-11-inch flier



Your Opinion Could Be Worth \$50!

Complete a survey on your staffing experience and you are automatically entered to win one of 100 \$50 cash prizes.

Online:
SynovateStaffingSurvey.com

Toll-free:
800-495-7193

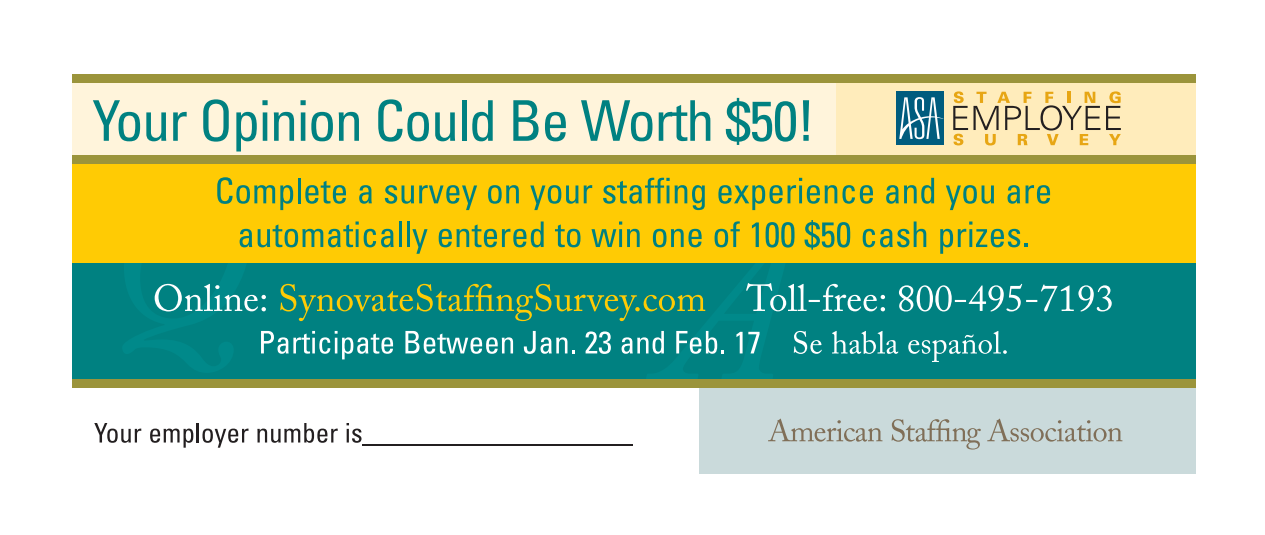
Participate Between Jan. 23 and Feb. 17
Se habla español.


Your employer number is _____



American Staffing Association

Envelope stuffer



Your Opinion Could Be Worth \$50! 

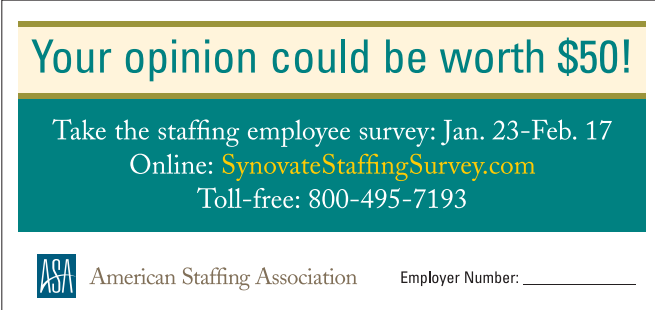
Complete a survey on your staffing experience and you are automatically entered to win one of 100 \$50 cash prizes.

Online: **SynovateStaffingSurvey.com** Toll-free: **800-495-7193**
Participate Between Jan. 23 and Feb. 17 Se habla español.

Your employer number is _____


American Staffing Association

Sticker



Your opinion could be worth \$50!

Take the staffing employee survey: Jan. 23-Feb. 17
Online: **SynovateStaffingSurvey.com**
Toll-free: **800-495-7193**

 American Staffing Association Employer Number: _____

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPATING STAFFING COMPANIES

A Personnel Commitment
AAA Employment
Able Associates
Ablest Inc.
ABR Employment Services
Accounting Temporary Staffing/ATS Search Group
ACT Personnel Service Inc.
Action Staffing Group Inc.
Adara Healthcare Staffing
Add-A-Tech Inc.
Adtec Staffing Services
Advanced Resources LLC
Advantage Staffing LLC
Allegiance Staffing LLC
Allegis Group Inc.
Allied Personnel Services Inc.
AllStaff
AllStates Technical Services Inc.
The Alpha Group
Alternative Solutions Inc.
Anderson & Associates Inc.
Anderson Staffing and Payroll LLC
Aquidneck Employment Services
Arbor Associates Inc.
Artizen
Arvon Staffing
The Ash Group
Associated Career Network
ATC Healthcare Services Inc.
Avant
Beacon Services Inc.
Bidwick Associates Inc.
BOS Temporaries Inc.
Burnett Staffing Specialists
C & S Business Services Inc.
C. Berger Group Inc.
C.R. Fletcher Temp Inc.
Caldwell Staffing Services
Calstaff
Capital Area Staffing Solutions Inc.
Capital City Staffing LLC
CEO Inc.
The Choice Inc.
Choice Personnel Staffing Inc.
CityStaff
Contemporaries Inc.
ConTemporary Nursing Solutions Inc.
CoreStaff Inc.
Corestaff Services
Custom Staffing
Delta Staffing Services
Diversified Medical Staffing LLC
Diversified Staffing Services Inc.
Don Richard Associates Inc.
EdgeLink LLC
Elite Personnel
Emerson Personnel Group
Employment Connections Inc.
Encadria Staffing Solutions Inc.
Enterprising Staffing Services
Event Temps
Excel Staffing
EXPRESS SERVICES Inc.
Faith Casler Associates Inc.
Flex-Staff Inc.
Forrest Solutions
Genie Staffing Services Inc.
Great Lakes Staffing
G-TECH Professional Staffing
Hartman Personnel Services Inc.
HCS Resource LLC
Health Care Specialists Medical Staffing Inc.
HealthPartners America
Helpmates Staffing Services
Hilde M. Lehmann and Associates Ltd.
Hire Dynamics LLC
Hiring Partners Inc.
hr Business Staffing
HRSolutions Inc
IMKO and Diversified Staffing
Integrity Personnel Inc.
JFC Staffing Associates
Job World Inc.
Joulé Inc.
JurisTemps Inc.
Kearney Boyle & Associates Inc.

Keenan Staffing
Kelly Services Inc.
Kerry's Referrals
Key Staffing
Labor Finders International Inc.
Landmark Legal Professionals
Lauren Staffing Services
The Lee Group
The Legal Registry Staffing Services
Link Staffing Services
Lodestar Enterprises LLC
Manpower Inc.
Mary K. Thomas Employment
Mary Kraft & Associates Inc.
McKinney Personnel Inc.
Metropolitan Personnel / Metro Temps / Metro Tech
MetStaff Inc.
NHO Staffing LLC
Nonprofit Staffing Solutions
NRI Staffing Resources
The Nurse Agency
Our Gang Staffing Services Inc.
Oxford Solutions Inc.
Pacific Labor Source Inc.
PAGEmployment
Peak Performers Inc.
People Plus Inc.
Personnel Partners Inc.
Personnel Services Inc.
Phillips Temps Inc.
The Plus Group Inc.
Point Staffing Services
Preference Personnel Inc.
Premier Personnel
Pro Tem Legal Services
Professional Alternatives LLC
Professional Services Network Inc.
Professional Staffing Group Inc.
The Professional Workforce LLC
Profiles Placement Services
ProServ Inc.
Proteam Resources
Provisional Services Inc.
QCI Technical Staffing
QPS Cos. Inc.
Quantum Staffing Solutions
Raize Solutions
Randstad North America
Reliable Nursing Services Inc.
Reliable Staffing Inc.

RemedyTemp
The Resource Connection Inc.
Rita Staffing
Rush Personnel Services Inc.
Sage Staffing
San Diego Insurance Staffing
Sargent & Blais Personnel Services
Savela Solutions
SEEK Careers/Staffing Inc.
Select Staffing Solutions Inc.
Sirius Technical Services
Smart Staffing Service Inc.
SOS Staffing Services
Southern Crescent Personnel Inc.
Sparks Personnel Services Inc.
Specialized Staffing Inc.
Spherion Corp.
Staff Force Inc.
Staff Management
Staff Masters Inc.
Staffco Inc.
Staffing Resources Inc.
Staffing Services Inc.
Staffmark
Stand-By Personnel Inc.
Star Staffers
Sullivan and Cogliano
Sunbelt Temporaries
Sundance Personnel Solutions
Supplemental Staffing
Talent Tree Crystal
Techlink Northwest
TempsPlus of Paducah Inc.
The TemPositions Group of Cos.
Thirty Three Temporaries Inc.
Time Services Inc.
TLC Staffing
TOSS Inc.
Total Personnel Inc.
The Training Associates
Triad Temporary Services Inc.
Valley Temps Inc.
Victoria & Associates Career Services
Walker Business and Staffing Services Inc.
Williams, Roberts, Young Inc.
Work Skills Corp.
Wright-K Technology Inc.
XL Staffing Service
Yoh
YRCI

NOTES

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17. Ibid 2. See Methodology sidebar.
18. Ibid 10. Although the overall results of the 2005 CPS supplement showed little or no change from the previous 2001 survey, the occupational distribution of the 2005 sample skewed contrary to trends evident from the first four surveys (perhaps a function of the small sample size— $n=584$ —relative to the 173 occupations projected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics over a population that it estimated at just over two million). Thus the distribution results of the 2001 survey were used in weighting the results of the American Staffing Association's staffing employee survey.
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The American Staffing Association promotes legal, ethical, and professional practices for the staffing industry. ASA members provide a wide range of employment-related services and solutions, including temporary and contract staffing, recruiting and permanent placement, outsourcing, training, and human

resource consulting. Member companies operate more than 15,000 offices across the nation and account for more than 85% of U.S. staffing industry sales. For additional research and statistical information, visit americanstaffing.net and click on Staffing Statistics.



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