

Working with Employment Agencies

The changing face of employment agencies The employment agency is one of the most frequently used job resources. Employment agencies go by many names: temp agency, staffing agency, human resource consulting firm, executive search firm and recruiting firm (just to name a few). Employment agencies match candidates with jobs and companies.

Some agencies focus on particular career fields such as medical personnel, skilled secretaries, or computer/high-tech specialists. Other agencies are more generalized to handle many types of listings and service many different types of employment needs.

Agencies may have any of the following employment opportunities:

- Temporary/Contract (interim jobs meant to fill a temporary need)
- Temp-to-hire (start out as a temporary employee, with the right fit may turn into a permanent position)
- Direct/Permanent Hire (immediately become a full employee of the company)

Extending your reach

An advantage of working with a reputable staffing agency is that they are well networked. If an agency works with successful companies, and its staffing professionals cultivate relationships within those companies, they will have connections you wouldn't on your own.

Questions you should ask in choosing an agency

- What types of business or career fields does the agency seek to service?
- What training services are available to supplement your skills?
- What is the size of the agency?
- How many years has the company or agency been in business?
- What is their policy for temporary employees accepting full-time positions?
- What fees are involved in accepting full-time employment and who pays these fees? (Never work with an agency that charges you!)
- Do you offer any benefits for temporary employees?

You may also wish to check on the Better Business Bureau, Glassdoor, or the American Staffing Association websites to see complaints, reviews, and other information. If you are asked to sign a contract, be sure you understand the terms before signing.

They work for you

Because staffing agencies have been contracted by organizations to supply candidates for existing positions, they have access to more job listings. That being said, they are being paid to fill a position so they may try to place you in a role for which you are not well suited. Do not allow an agency to talk you out of your own plan– ask them to add to it or work within it. Remember that an employment agency recruiter is paid when you get a job. He or she is not being paid to get you the job. You must protect your own interests by making sure that an employment agency is working to get you the job you want, not just one they have available and that you can fill.

Types of Placements

Before deciding to visit an employment agency, you should research the type of placements they specialize in.

Temp/contract positions are positions in which an employee is expected to remain in a position for a certain period of time, whereas a **temp/contract-to-hire position** is essentially the same, but with the possibility of being offered a position at the company after the designated temp time is finished. For either type, during the temporary/contract portion of the role, the employment agency typically manages the pay and benefits.

Pros

Excellent Networking
Learn new skills
Try out new employers
Get your foot in the door

Cons

Higher risk of unemployment
Lack of consistency between jobs
Little to no benefits
No guarantees/less stable

Direct placement/permanent positions are an employment situation where an employment agency is asked by a company to recruit an employee for a specific position.

Pros

Direct line to employers
Agency helps with job search
Typically expedites the interview process

Cons

More competition for positions
My not match your career goal
Potential for non-compete

Steps for working with an employment agency

- Determine the type of job you are seeking
Career & Leadership Development is happy to meet with students and alumni that are uncertain of career direction.
- Research
Use a search engine to find numerous agencies in your area that specialize in the field(s) you are interested in.
- Narrow down your search to three agencies
Once you are sure of what you want to do, call or visit five or six employment agencies and decide on three.