

## Achieving Success with Legal Staffing Firms

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In a perfect world for the legal staffing industry, the standard business practice would be one client to one agency. The relationship between the two would be based on perfect teamwork and loyalty: the client would call the agency contact, share its staffing needs and dozens of flawless resumes would flood the client's inbox within the hour making it difficult to choose the best one.

Much to everyone's dismay, however, the world is not perfect nor is the professional staffing industry. Competitors are constantly inventing new ways to edge out rivals while maintaining current clients and hustling to gain new ones. It is undeniable that both clients and staffing companies have very similar goals, which are to fill job openings quickly and with the best candidate possible. However, achieving those goals is not always easy. Reasons for this can vary but, from the client's perspective, the failure is often attributed to the legal staffing agency's inadequate service or inability to truly understand their requirement. Although these instances may be accurate, there are times when the agency actually does its part to provide the best talent but is still unsuccessful. In order to achieve that "perfect world" of mutual success between law firms and legal staffing companies, it is therefore important for both parties to work together as a team to fulfill their common goals.

What factors are important to achieving success with legal staffing firms? Consider the following 3Fs: Follow-up, Feedback, and Flexibility. Not only is it important for staffing agencies to provide immediate follow-up to clients, but clients must give timely follow-up in return. In a competitive market where the talent pool is limited and candidates interview with as many prospective employers as possible, timely follow-up is necessary to nab the talent before another law firm or corporation does! Feedback is another important factor to achieving success with legal staffing firms. In order for agencies to provide clients with the right candidate for their needs, it is important to give agencies

feedback on candidates – especially those who make it to the interview stage. If the client finds that the candidate is not a good fit after interviewing them, the agency should be informed of any reasons that led to the decision to further assist and refine their searches.

Lastly, for those hard to fill positions, clients should be open to some level of flexibility if agencies suggest alternative search criteria to consider. Perhaps the position (whether contract or permanent) requires different credentials than originally requested; or the entire search criteria that may be in place yields no viable candidates and time is of the essence. A willingness to be flexible can go a long way and can lead to overall success.

It is clearly not a perfect world in the legal staffing industry, but remember the 3Fs when dealing with agencies and a "near" perfect process and relationship will feel like a win/win for everyone concerned.



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