



## The New Language of Staffing

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maslansky  
+partners | Catherine Farr, Director

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October 2018

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it's not what you say,  
it's what **they hear.**<sup>®</sup>

our philosophy.

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Become a valued first choice  
for job seekers and be perceived  
as a source of good jobs by the  
general public.

our objective.

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**handbook**



**online resources**



Visit [americanstaffing.net/new-language](http://americanstaffing.net/new-language) for...

- ✓ the online certificate course
- ✓ graphics and talking points
- ✓ link to order additional handbook copies

**"The New Language" resources.**

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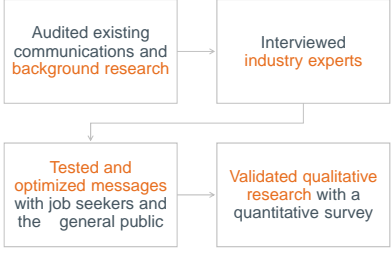
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**what informed these recommendations.**

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+ Time and again, you've heard: *"nobody wants to be a temp," "the jobs aren't good"*—so you've rightfully been demonstrating that your jobs are, in fact, good ones

**Transition to a Permanent Job**

AIA research shows that temporary employment is a bridge to permanent jobs. Staffing agencies have some motivation for showing temporary or contract work. The most common reason cited is one half (50%) of the respondents to the 2016 AIA Staffing Employee Survey. In fact, it's a way to get a permanent job. Nearly 90% of temporary and contract employees agree that their staffing work could lead to a permanent job. About half (50%) of staffing work leading to a permanent job. And one third (33%) of temporary and contract employees seek head-to-head offers.

**Flexibility: Have a Life!**

Temporary employment allows you to work when and where you choose. You can work full-time or part-time. Take a vacation. Work just three or four days a week. Fit your schedule around college classes.

Working for a staffing firm also allows you to experience a variety of industries, companies, and careers you might never have thought of trying—without a long-term commitment. You can find an assignment, job ending, or business that suits your current needs. Some businesses always need temporary help, much work is seasonal.

**Nearly 90% of temporary and contract employees say that staffing work makes them more employable.**

**With a staffing firm, you can gain exposure to a variety of companies, jobs, and opportunities.**

**where the industry is today.**

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- + We framed staffing and recruiting industry jobs as "bridges to permanent employment"



so we tried that.

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- + Many we spoke to have worked with a staffing agency, or know someone who has; they see transitioning to "permanent employment" as the exception, not the norm

*"It makes it seem like majority of temp placements go to permanent jobs, and that's an oversell."*  
- Chicago

*"Companies use staffing firms to abuse the system. They hire and fire people when they get to the point where it's time to bring them on permanently."*  
- Baltimore

why it didn't work: there's a credibility gap.

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- + We leaned further into the theme of "good jobs" with messages focusing on flexibility, thinking that perceived goodwill toward the gig economy may have a halo effect



what we also tried.

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- + "Flexibility" isn't what draws them to the industry
- + And the idea of flexible employment contradicts their traditional idea of a "good job"

*"They'll **pay you less money** to make up for the flexibility."*  
 — Baltimore

*"20 hours a week **won't feed a family.**"*  
 — Baltimore

why it didn't work: flexibility isn't a draw for most. maslansky +partners | 13

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so what do job seekers want?

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- + Job seekers have different—and more foundational—needs

industry truth	job seeker truth
The industry needs to show job seekers that these jobs are good.	We need a job. Period.

what we realized. maslansky +partners | 15

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+ They're frustrated with how hard it is to find a job; that's their biggest hurdle



why that is.

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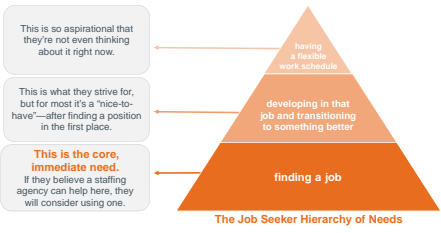
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what this means.

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+ Today, they don't see the industry as a solution to their core need

*"It's just a conveyor belt."*  
— Baltimore

*"They're unnecessary middlemen."*  
— Baltimore

there's just one problem.

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- + The industry has benefits that address what job seekers want
- + You need to elevate the benefits that most align with their core, immediate needs

they think the job search process is...	so you need to...
A blackbox	<b>1</b> Help job seekers get noticed by the right people
A drain of time and energy	<b>2</b> Make the job search process easier for job seekers
Automated and impersonal	<b>3</b> Provide personal support for job seekers

but, there's good news.

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the key shift in what you talk about.

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- + When you emphasize the right things, the industry becomes incredibly compelling:

Job placement agencies help candidates get noticed and land positions that match their qualifications at companies that are hiring.

your value proposition for job seekers.

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**"Job placement"** is specific and intentional, focusing more on the benefit to the job seekers than the hiring company.

**"Agencies"** is simple, straightforward and true to how they see staffing businesses.

**"Match their qualifications"** works because many job seekers feel like they're either underqualified or overqualified for every open position.

**"Getting noticed"** addresses job seekers' key pain point—that they feel like their resumes never get where they need to go.

**"Companies that are hiring"** may sound like it's stating the obvious, but is important: job seekers question whether a company is even hiring when they don't hear back.

**Job placement agencies help candidates get noticed and land positions that match their qualifications at companies that are hiring.**

a closer look.

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LEXICON SPOTLIGHT

**BEST LABEL FOR THE BUSINESS**

Job seeker (80%)  
Non-seeker (19%)

Label	Percentage
Agencies	82%
Companies	13%
Firms	5%

Base: All Qualified Respondents (Control Population n=1100)  
Q: Based on what you just read, which one best describes these businesses?

what do you call your individual businesses?

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LEXICON SPOTLIGHT

**BEST LABEL FOR THE INDUSTRY**

*"'Job placement' sounds more definitive, more positive. It's an action."*  
— Baltimore

*"'Job placement' is about your abilities — placing you in a job that you can do."*  
— Baltimore

Label	Percentage
Staffing and recruiting industry	37%
Employment services industry	26%
Job placement industry	26%
Staffing industry	20%
Recruiting and hiring industry	17%
Workforce solutions industry	15%
Job matching industry	10%
None of these	5%

Base: All Qualified Respondents (Control Population n=1100). Split only by industry for this chart.  
Q: Thinking about these companies as a whole, which of the following do you believe are the best description terms for the industry?

what should you call the industry?

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LEXICON SPOTLIGHT

if you say...	they respond...	instead say...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We help companies do business more effectively, whether it be:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seasonal labor</li> <li>Extra bandwidth</li> <li>Expert consultants</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>That makes me sound disposable.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We connect job seekers to jobs at companies that are hiring.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A buffer, smooth the ups and downs of workforce demands</li> </ul>	<p><i>Ok, but what are you doing for me?</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Companies can "try before they buy"</li> </ul>	<p><i>This doesn't make me feel valued.</i></p>	

explaining what the industry does for clients. maslansky +partners | 26

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how does the industry deliver on the value proposition?

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MESSAGE ARCHITECTURE FOR JOB SEEKERS: themes to elevate + talking points			
who we are	Job placement companies		
our value proposition	We help job seekers get noticed and land positions that match their qualifications at companies that are hiring.		
our core pillars	HELP THEM GET NOTICED	MAKE IT EASY FOR THEM	PROVIDE PERSONAL SUPPORT
job seekers' key pain points	<p><i>Job seekers think the process is a blackbox, and it's holding them back. With us, there's less guess work and more opportunities to get noticed by the right people.</i></p>	<p><i>Job seekers think finding a job is a drain of time and energy. We make the process easier, so they can get hired faster and start earning more quickly.</i></p>	<p><i>Job seekers think the process is impersonal. We provide personal support, partnering with them, so they can find the right job for their needs.</i></p>
key talking points that express how we deliver on their key concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We have access to positions that otherwise may not have been available.</li> <li>✓ We get their resumes in front of the right people.</li> <li>✓ We can't guarantee a candidate will get the position, but we can ensure they get noticed by the right people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We use deep relationships with companies from a variety of industries to match job seekers to positions they're qualified for.</li> <li>✓ That means job seekers don't have to spend as much time searching and sending resumes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We work one-on-one with job seekers.</li> <li>✓ We'll return phone calls and follow up on e-mails.</li> <li>✓ We make support services available, like resume revisions and interview prep workshops.</li> </ul>
<small>these are customizable and emphasize the actions and results that set your agency apart under these themes</small>			

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+ To change perceptions of the industry, use language that prioritizes job seekers' core needs—finding a job—and addresses their pain points

IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE REALLY TRYING TO WORK MORE WITH **PEOPLE AS PEOPLE.**

what it does.

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+ Benefits that don't align with their most pressing need are less relevant and credible  
+ Emphasize how you can add value while they're still searching

make it LESS about...	make it MORE about...
<p>The flexibility of the job or The bridge, i.e., what the job can help you achieve</p>	<p>Help job seekers get noticed by the right people</p>

why "getting noticed" matters.

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if you say	they respond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× A bridge to permanent employment</li> </ul>	<p>"Sounds like an empty promise. There's no guarantee." - Baltimore</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× An opportunity to gain experience</li> </ul>	<p>"That could work for some, but others need to be employed RIGHT now." - Chicago</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× A stepping stone to the job you really want</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× A chance to get on the career ladder</li> </ul>	<p>"It made it sound like you've never had a job before." - Chicago</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× More employable or more hireable</li> </ul>	<p>"That makes it sound like you're not good enough today." - Baltimore</p>

language that's less effective: bridge.

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if you say	they respond
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Flexible work</li> </ul>	<p>"It sounds flexible for the employer, not the employee." - Baltimore</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Choose when, where and how you work</li> </ul>	<p>"It seems like it's all about choice and I don't think that's reality." - Baltimore</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Consultant</li> </ul>	<p>"That's not me. That's not the people I know." - Baltimore</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>× Freelancer</li> </ul>	

language that's less effective: flexibility.

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their mindset	key talking points	why it works
<p>Job seekers think the process is a black box, and it's holding them back.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We have access to positions that otherwise may not have been available.</li> </ul>	<p>Shows that you provide something they can't achieve on their own.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We get résumés in front of the right people.</li> </ul>	<p>Addresses a key concern: that their résumés aren't being read at all.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We can't guarantee candidates will get positions, but we can ensure they get noticed by the right people.</li> </ul>	<p>Saying you can get them the opportunity to get themselves a job is empowering (and more credible than saying you'll do it for them).</p>

key talking points: help them get noticed.

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+ Job seekers think finding a job is difficult and time-consuming

make it LESS about...

Making the transition to a new job easier

➔

make it MORE about...

Making the job search itself easier

why "making it easy" matters. maslansky +partners | 34

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it's less about what you do after hiring. maslansky +partners | 35

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their mindset	key talking points	why it works
<p>Job seekers think finding a job is a drain of time and energy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We use our deep relationships with companies from a variety of industries to match job seekers to positions they're qualified for.</li> <li>✓ That means job seekers don't have to spend as much time searching and sending résumés.</li> </ul>	<p>They know jobs are out there, but they think they're wasting a lot of time applying to ones that won't amount to anything.</p> <p>Words like "match" and "qualified for" make it sound more concrete and purposeful.</p>

key talking points: make it easy for them. maslansky +partners | 36

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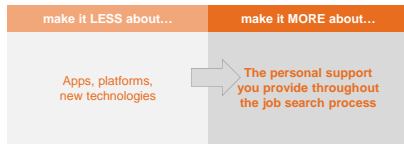
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- + Job seekers aren't wowed by "new technologies"—in fact, they're looking for relief from the impersonal, automated nature of the job application process
- + In being authentic, you differentiate yourself in a way newer, "gig economy" companies can't



why "providing personal support" matters.

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their mindset	key talking points	what it does
Job seekers think the process is impersonal.	✓ We work one-on-one with job seekers.	<i>"They get to know you as a person...there's more of a chance it'll be a good fit."</i> - Chicago
	✓ We'll return phone calls and follow up on e-mails.	<i>"You're not talking to a machine. You're not just a number."</i> - Chicago
	✓ We make support services available, like résumé revisions and interview prep workshops.	<i>"It shows that they're trying to help."</i> - Chicago

key talking points: provide personal support.

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questions? comments?

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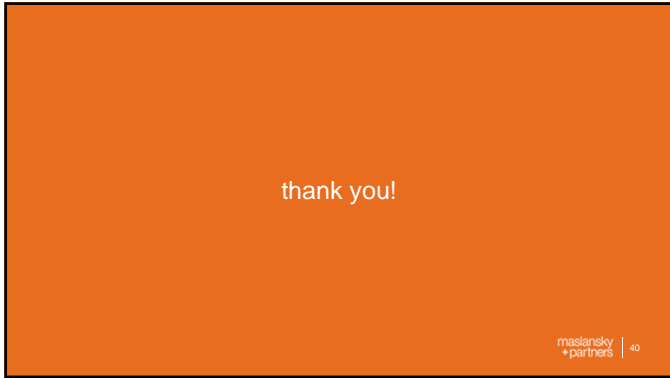
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**Free Online Course for ASA Members**  
**New Language of Staffing Course**  
*Here's what you'll discover in the New Language of Staffing course:*

- Research findings about the job seekers mindset
- A new value proposition for today's job seeker
- Strategies to fill the talent pipeline

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This course qualifies for .5 passive CE toward maintaining your ASA credential  
[americanstaffing.net/new-language](http://americanstaffing.net/new-language)




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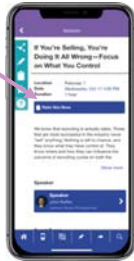
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