

STAFFING INDUSTRY WHITE PAPER:

THE FORCES PROMPTING AND DELAYING TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE





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CHANGE IS A CONSTANT IN EVERY INDUSTRY, BUT STAFFING HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN MORE RESERVED THAN OTHERS IN BOTH RECOGNIZING AND DOING SOMETHING ABOUT THAT FACT.

THIS CAN BE SEEN IN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INTENT AND ACTION IN ADOPTING TECHNOLOGY:

55%

Of Staffing Firms

rank digital transformation as their top operational objective.

18%

Of Staffing Firms

feel they have [full adoption](#) of their technology.

Indeed a quietly shocking amount of firms are still paper-based.

The overwhelming majority of staffing firms describe their unique selling point as the relationships they bring to the table (which means that it isn't a particularly unique selling point, by the way.) This leads many firms to believe that success is a simple matter of shaking hands and making fans. Secure and maintain the relationships and the rest takes care of itself, they say to themselves.

But this attitude blinds many to the truth. The staffing firms that are best placed to realize true success in a challenging market are those that are willing to increasingly lean on technology; not to replace their team of staffing professionals, but to help them work better.

Another statistic: [just one in every 20 staffing firms](#) is currently making use of automation. Let's take a look at why that is such a surprising fact, and why it opens up a wealth of opportunity to those brave enough to change.



1.

**CANDIDATE
EXPERIENCE
IMPACT.**

IMAGINE YOU **NEED A JOB**

Close your eyes — admittedly difficult while reading — and imagine finding yourself in the following situation.

You're one of the many workers currently between jobs. A COVID-induced redundancy has seen you leave a stable job of five years through no fault of your own. The bills are piling up, so the pressure is building to find your next position.

In search of help, you complete online applications with a number of different staffing firms. In response you get generic reply after generic reply, each offering a similarly bland thank you, and none offering assurance that you'll ever hear back.

At some point in your search you stumble upon a website that promises same-day job offers. Intrigued and hopeful though understandably skeptical, you begin the application process. You're greeted by a chatbot, who asks for some basic info, learns about your skills, and pre-qualifies you for a number of job matches.

Given your experience and skill set, one of the jobs seems like a great fit. You see an option to interview immediately with a live recruiter, and it works. Within 25 minutes the interview is complete and you've been offered a job. Great work!

When you close the interview, a link to the job offer and a guide to the onboarding process appears. You review the offer and fill out the onboarding paperwork on the spot, which takes just minutes.

In little to no time, you've found your next job and are ready to go to work. What a dream experience. But something like this seldom, if ever, happens.

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE MATTERS.

Create a good candidate experience and you'll both attract and secure the very best talent on the market whenever you need it. Offer a bad experience, and you'll deny yourself access to that top talent. In fact, you could deny yourself talent altogether.

“If you're not buying based on your front-line individuals, you're doing them a disservice,” says Lauren Jones, a leader, influencer, and innovator in the staffing industry for more than 22 years. **And if you listen to candidates, here's what they are saying:**

69%

want to see employer response time improved.

63%

say most employers do not communicate adequately

38%

more likely to accept a job offer with a positive candidate experience

69%

will never work for your company again after having a negative experience

25%

say the hiring process takes too long

around 35%

drop-off in onboarding



The situation described above might seem like a vision of the distant future to some; great in theory, but unattainable in practice. Others might feel that this is a direction in which they'd rather not head — one where the hiring process is tech-driven rather than recruiter-driven.

The truth is that this is neither of those things.

It's not the future. The technology is available right now.

It's also not a case of removing the humanity from staffing. If anything, it's a way to help the recruiter better concentrate on the more human aspects of their job.

And aiming for such an automated and seamless process is fast becoming less a plus and more a must for staffing firms who want to compete, both now and into the future.



2.

**THE FORCES
PROMPTING
CHANGE.**

PUSH AND PULL.

THE FORCES OF CHANGE CAN BE NEATLY SUMMARIZED IN TWO WORDS: PUSH AND PULL. STAFFING FIRMS ARE BEING **PUSHED TOWARD CHANGE** BY TWO MAIN INTERNAL FACTORS:



Thin margins caused by slow, manual, and inefficient processes taken care of by expensive recruiters who would be better utilized on high-value work.



Slow time-to-fill caused by time-consuming, overwhelming, and poorly designed experiences, both for the candidate and for the recruiter. This also results in high churn.

BUT THE FORCES EXTEND BEYOND FIXING INTERNAL PROBLEMS. FIRMS ARE ALSO **BEING PULLED TOWARD CHANGE** BY EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY TECHNOLOGY:



Automation can all but eliminate slow, manual, repetitive, and expensive tasks, granting staffing professionals the opportunity to focus on the high-value (and far more interesting) parts of the job.



The candidate experience can be made simple and streamlined, utilizing mobile technology and deep integrations.



**COVID-19 CAUSED 34% OF
STAFFING FIRMS TO RAMP
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TRANSFORMATION EFFORTS,
AND 28% SAID THEY WERE MORE
LIKELY TO ADOPT A DIGITAL
TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY.**

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE MATTERS.

In many ways COVID-19 has served to highlight this push and pull, in turn accelerating the rate of change. It has forced previously hesitant firms to embrace technology, breaking down long-standing barriers. According to Bullhorn's GRID survey, COVID-19 caused 34% of staffing firms to ramp up their existing digital transformation efforts, and 28% said they were more likely to adopt a digital transformation strategy. COVID-19 has also flipped a previously candidate-driven job market to one that is decidedly employer-driven.

This means that there are far fewer companies currently looking to hire, and as a result competition has increased markedly. Usually an employer-driven market is one in which staffing firms enjoy greater access to talent resources, but during COVID-19 that hasn't translated into quicker or easier placements. A number of factors, from health concerns to travel restrictions, have in fact caused the opposite to be true.

CANDIDATE CHURN BEFORE COVID-19



CANDIDATE CHURN DURING COVID-19



Where light industrial-focused staffing firms previously screened 20 candidates and onboarded ten to make eight placements, they now need to screen 30 and onboard 20 to place the same number. **That's a 50% increase in screening workload, and a 100% increase in onboarding workload.**

In short, the market is currently an incredibly challenging one to stay afloat in, which is forcing firms to consider how to do better and be better.



3.
**THE FORCES
DELAYING
CHANGE.**

HABITS AND ANXIETIES.

While the push and pull is driving staffing firms in one direction, there are a number of factors that are at best putting the handbrake on this progress, and at worst sending firms backward.

Once again these forces can be neatly summarized in two words: **habits and anxieties.**

HABITS

Bad habits aren't easy to break, it's important that you do.



Deeply embedded legacy systems: Many staffing firms are sticking tough with their on-premise solutions for no other reason than they represent a large investment. Others are still making extensive use of paper. Upgrading to SaaS and other cloud-based systems does represent a significant task, but as soon as you make the switch you'll wonder how you ever got on without them.



Throwing people at problems: Staffing is the business of people, so it's unsurprising that many firms see humans as the solution to every problem. But people are an expensive resource, and the truth is that they're not always great at solving the problems presented in an increasingly digital world.



Limited IT budgets: A resistance to technology can see strict limitations being imposed on IT spend, preventing those who may want to drive change from doing so.



Resistance to change: Uncertainty demands adaptability. COVID-19 has clearly separated those willing to change from those who'd prefer to stay the same. To stand still is to go backwards in modern day staffing - adaptability isn't a plus, but a must.



A commitment to the physical: Is your physical presence actually required in-office, on-site, or for an interview? Certain staffing firms will argue yes, but many others have proven them wrong. Sure, there's no substitute for in-person communication, but when it adds hours of travel time to your day, a virtual equivalent becomes a more than worthwhile compromise.



ANXIETIES

The fear of the unknown has caused many a staffing firm to put off or entirely avoid change. Many are entirely understandable, arising less from obstinacy than genuine concern. But allaying these fears is a simple matter of taking the time to research and understand the solutions at hand.



Is it compliant and secure? Will it not only allow me to do things by the book, but take care of large swathes of compliance for me? Will transitioning to a new solution bring any extra security concerns or vulnerabilities?



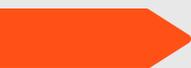
Is it flexible and configurable? Does it offer customizable workflows? Can we make it look like we want and work like we want? In short, can we control the experience?



Does it meet the challenges presented by COVID-19? Can it be used remotely by recruiters? Is it mobile-friendly?



Can we integrate it? Can we tie into it or build on top of it? Does the solution come with APIs?



Will we receive support? Will it be from a human, or through a series of help desk articles? Will it be quick, comprehensive, and customized advice, made available when and where I need it?



How do we manage change? Will we get setup and integration advice? And how do we ensure employee buy-in? Is the solution crafted with the recruiter or admin assistant in mind?





THERE ARE A LOT OF QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER, BUT A GOOD TECHNOLOGY PROVIDER WILL BE ABLE TO OFFER UP THE ANSWERS TO EACH, **HELPING TO MINIMIZE (AND IDEALLY REMOVE) ANY ANXIETIES THAT MIGHT SURROUND THE SWITCH TO A NEW SOLUTION.**



4.
**TECHNOLOGY
TO THE RESCUE.**



Let's return for a moment to the situation described in part one. Is it possible to create such a seamless candidate experience, right now, with readily available technology?

Yes it is, and you might be surprised at exactly how simple such a seemingly high-end and automated process is to create.

“I can't tell you how much urgency we're hearing from our current customers to accelerate their digital transformation journey and the adoption of mobile technology,” says Ericka Hyson, president of WorkN. **“Prospects are also starting to think about what they could or should have done faster, particularly in challenging pandemic times.”**

Able delivers a streamlined and fully automated onboarding solution. It removes barriers that might prevent a candidate from starting the job, and integrates with industry-leading technology to ensure that the quality of candidates remains high, and that open positions are only served up to the most relevant individuals.

“Great employees start with great first days,” as one client put it. **“If I was a jobseeker, I'd want to be able to onboard myself while standing in line at Starbucks.”** The hiring and onboarding experiences made possible by Able deliver exactly that. And the results that such a system can deliver are incredible.

ONE FORTUNE 1000 COMPANY SAW A 20% INCREASE IN RECRUITER PRODUCTIVITY, AND 15% FASTER TIME TO FILL.

“We also need to be extremely mindful of first impressions,” notes Jones. “It’s not easy being a jobseeker. You’re looking for acceptance, for someone to say ‘yes’ to you, and we need to be very cognizant of that feeling and put technology or a UI in front of them that acknowledges that. I get excited about any technology that creates human-to-human connections better and faster.”

GET THE FORCES WORKING FOR YOU

You’re being pushed forward by the realities of running a staffing business in a challenging market. You’re being pulled by the incredible potential of technology to make your firm more efficient, effective, and better at what you do.

The only things that are holding you back are hurdles that you yourself have created: long-formed habits that are proving difficult to shake, anxieties that are based more in fear than in fact. In short, these hurdles are there - straighten your back and bend your knees, and you can move them out of your path.

And doing so makes running (your business) so much easier.

“ WE NEED TO BE EXTREMELY MINDFUL OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS. ”





**TECHNOLOGICAL
ADVANCEMENT
MEANS
HAPPIER CLIENTS.**

CHANGE IS A GOOD THING.



EVERYONE DESERVES A GREAT FIRST DAY.

Able allows recruiters to simplify and automate the hiring and onboarding processes that prevent new employees from getting to work, so employees can start doing what they were hired to do sooner. We believe no matter who someone is, what job they do, whether they're temporary or permanent, every employee can and should be able to have a great first day.

We are trusted by some of the largest staffing agencies in the world, dealing with some of the most complex hiring workflows. In order to keep pace, we are continuously evolving ourself, and our product.

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READY.
WILLING.
ABLE.

