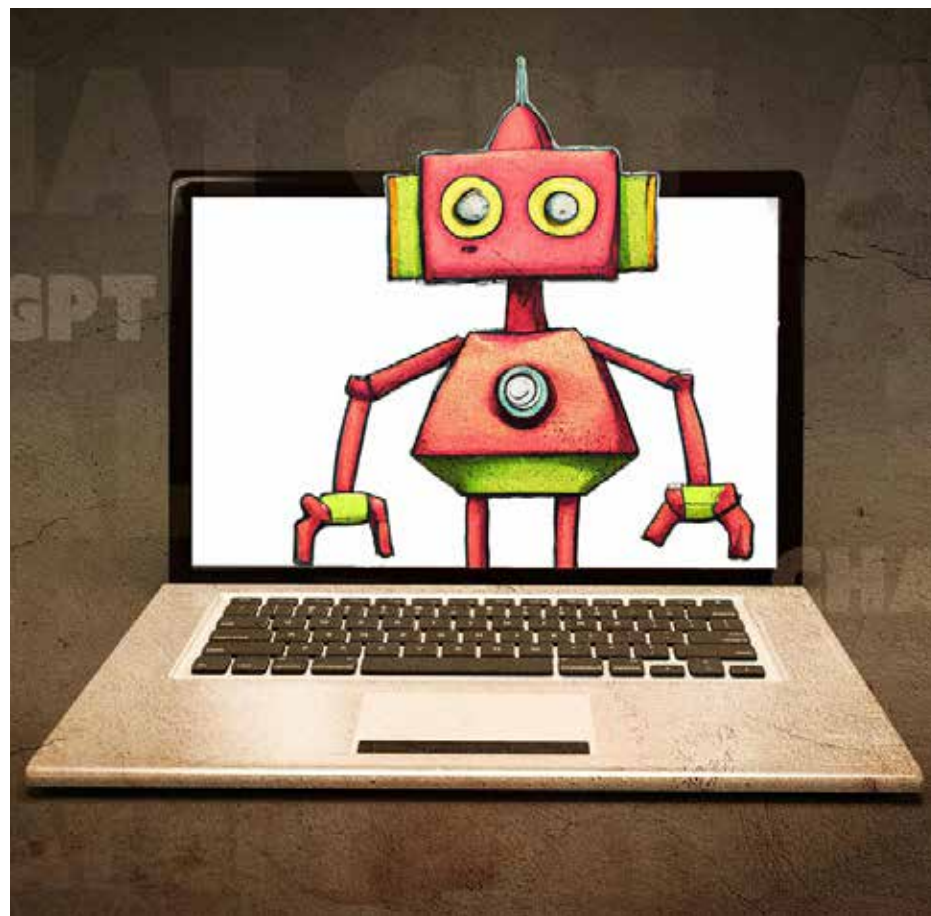


AI and the Human Touch: How to Find Balance in Staffing

The Enduring Value of Human Touch in Staffing



Get On Board The Coming Wave Of Small Business Hiring



Leaving Money on the Table with Your Recruitment Fees



A Glimpse at the Future (I'm not buying yet)



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DID YOU KNOW?

* The right balance between AI and the human touch is what will set staffing agencies apart from the competition. AI can be used as an enhancement to improve and quicken the recruiting process. pg 5

* High-impact teams often run short, energizing contests that focus on leading indicators: client touches like send-outs (first interview only). Keep it simple: one-day or weekly sprints with clear, visible metrics. Make them inclusive and fair. Use tiers or team formats so experienced team members and rookies can both engage and win. pg 8

* Your recruiters need to take the time to listen – truly listen – to candidates, looking beyond their listed skills and experience. Understanding their career goals, their values, and what truly motivates them is key. pg 9

* Another interesting aspect of the “David vs Goliath” competition between small and large businesses is the trust factor. A Pew Research Center study⁴ “found that 86% of U.S. adults believe small businesses have a positive effect on the country’s direction, whereas only 29% feel the same about large corporations.” pg 11

* ChatGPT Operator CAN take busywork off your plate. It’s a glimpse into where AI recruiting is headed: tools that do. It is early for this technology, and you can be using it to do many recruiting tasks. pg 15



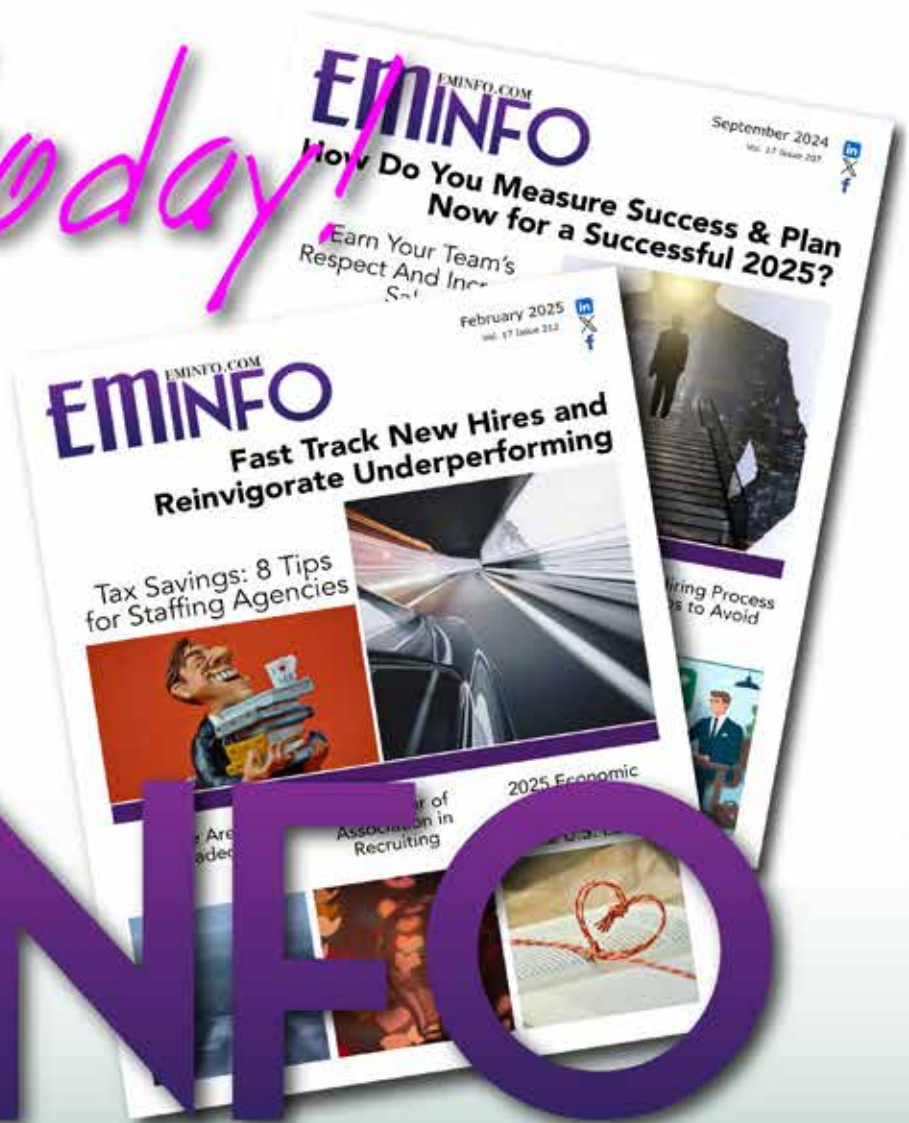
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The advertisement for Pinehurst, NC, features a large image of a golf course with a sand trap and a line of trees in the background. Below this, there are two smaller images: one of a sunset over a lake and another of a lake with trees reflected in the water. The text is overlaid on these images, promoting real estate investment in Pinehurst, NC, highlighting the area's golf courses, lakes, and breweries. It includes the Keller Williams Realty logo and contact information for Tiffany Turner.

AI and the Human Touch: How to Find Balance in Staffing

By Jennifer Roeslmeier Mikels

Over the past few years, the word “AI” has been buzzing about the staffing world. At first, everyone wanted “AI” and in some cases they might not even have known *how* they wanted to use AI. It was the most talked about word and people wanted it implemented into their day to day processes somehow. Now fast forward to today and AI is still a word buzzing in the industry. Every staffing industry conference has sessions on AI and there are constantly new articles being published about using AI in staffing, including this one! What has changed though is that AI is no longer a shiny new object on the street that people want to experiment with. It has become an essential tool to stay competitive in the staffing industry.

As companies implement AI, one of the biggest concerns continues to be how to balance AI with the human touch, as we are in a “people business” industry. How can we use AI without harming the personal relationships between our candidates and customers?

One of the most important principles to keep in mind when implementing AI at your staffing agency is that **AI is an enhancement, not a replacement**. Use AI at your staffing agency to eliminate mundane tasks and the time it takes to find candidates. Use AI as a training tool and to brainstorm new ideas. Use *the human touch* to maintain strong relationships with your candidates and customers by calling them and checking in. Use *the human touch* to get to know your candidates and customers so it's less of a business transaction and more of a valued partnership.

The right balance between AI and the human touch is what will set staffing agencies apart from the competition. AI can be used as an enhancement to improve and quicken the recruiting process. This, coupled with maintaining genuine relationships, will give staffing agencies the ultimate competitive advantage.

Using AI as an Enhancement for Your Staffing Business

Let's remember the principle that AI is an enhancement, not a replacement. How can you use AI to enhance your business processes and even improve the experience for your candidates and customers? Let's take a look at some use cases.

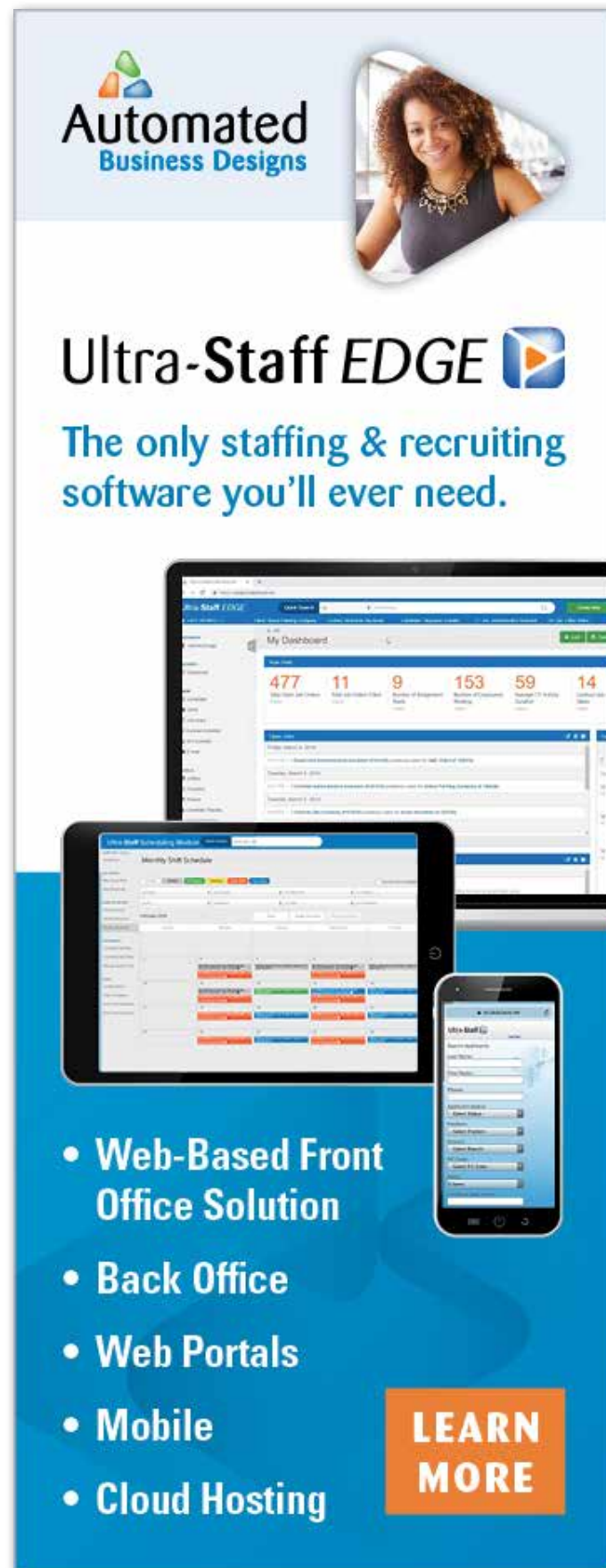
AI Tools to Decrease Your Time to Hire

With today's tools, AI can be used to help decrease your time to hire. Candidates want to be hired as fast as possible, and clients want candidates placed on their assignment as quickly as possible. Decreasing your time to hire is a win, win for both sides of the business.

Candidate Matching

Some [ATS systems](#) now have candidate matching and ranking. If you want to save your recruiters time from manually going through hundreds of resumes, AI staffing tools can sort through resumes, identify which candidates are a match for a position, and rank them.

AI-powered job invitations also match open positions with candidates. If a candidate matches the qualifications for a job, a job invitation can automatically be sent to the candidates to accept or decline it on the spot. This will place them onto an assignment and the assignment and candidate status codes will be updated in the ATS.



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Senior Digital Marketing and Brands Manager at Automated Business Designs E-Mail: Jennifer.Roeslmeier@abd.net Automated Business Designs develops the enterprise class staffing and recruiting software solution, Ultra-Staff EDGE. Designed for temporary, direct hire, and medical staffing, Ultra-Staff EDGE offers a full-featured business solution that includes front and back office, onboarding, web portals, mobile, data analytics, and scheduling. For more information on Ultra-Staff EDGE, visit www.abd.net or schedule a demo to see the difference an all-in-one staffing software solution could make for your business.

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Chatbots

If a recruiter isn't available to speak, such as during after hours, an AI powered chatbot can be set up on your website to field candidate or client questions. This way, you can continue to engage with candidates and customers outside of work hours and they can get their questions answered on the spot, which automatically helps improve candidate and customer service.

Chatbots can even be used to pre-screen candidates and schedule interviews. The technology is so advanced where candidates feel like they are having a one-on-one conversation with a recruiter. Before a candidate hits a recruiter's desk, all of the information needed can be collected and input into the ATS.

Voice AI

There are even Voice AI assistants that can help pre-screen candidates for positions, similar to the Chatbot function. This technology is also so advanced that it seems like you are talking to a real recruiter.

Writing Job Descriptions and Resumes

AI can also be used to write Job Descriptions. Whether you are using ChatGPT® or an AI tool built right within your ATS, you can use AI to write original job descriptions. Job descriptions take time to put together, so why not use an AI tool to write a job description in seconds or at least help with a first draft? AI Job Description Creators that are built into an ATS may even factor in the information

on the job profile, so the job description is automatically created based on AI and the information on the job profile.

Another helpful tool is an AI Resume Builder. Sometimes you may get a candidate that doesn't have a resume. Instead of needing to take time to build one from scratch, a Resume Builder will automatically build that resume for you. A resume builder that is built into your ATS may use AI and the information on the candidate profile.

All of the above AI tools can significantly decrease the time it takes to hire a candidate and improve efficiencies. Whether AI is pre-screening candidates or matching them to positions these are critical tasks in the recruiting cycle that can eliminate back and forth communication and the time it takes to find candidates. Not to mention, the ability to quickly create job descriptions and resumes is a huge time saver.

AI as a Writing Assistant

In addition to using AI to write job descriptions and build resumes, it can also be used for writing emails, text messages, social media posts, internal documentation, and more. Often times, AI may even write better than a human! This can save time and can help generate ideas for copy. While you may not always need to lean on AI to write for you (hopefully not!), it is a nice tool if you need ideas or assistance in writing something. It can also help expedite the time it takes to write copy from scratch.

AI as Brainstorming and Training Tool

AI can also be used to brainstorm ideas. Do you need help coming up with a campaign idea? Are you looking for new strategies to attract travel nurses? Are you looking for guidance on creating a new onboarding program for recruiters? AI can be used like Google. It probably won't have all of your answers, but it can help generate a foundation for what you are looking to do.

AI can also be used as a training and role playing tool for recruiters and sales associates. They can practice different scenarios to improve their skill set.

Maintaining Genuine Relationships in the Mix of AI and Automation

I would be remiss if I didn't mention automation in this article as well. While AI and Automation are often used interchangeably, they are different. AI simulates human intelligence to continuously learn from data, while automation executes pre-defined tasks. Many staffing agencies use

automation to send out text messages and emails based on certain triggers. For example, using automation to trigger a text to someone the morning of their first day of work or sending an email to candidates that meet the criteria for certain positions that are open. Perhaps you are using automation to reach out to clients to check in to see how candidates are doing on an assignment. Automating tasks is a way to save time, engage with candidates and clients, and improve the overall recruiting process.

Coupling AI and automation together can be a game changer for staffing companies, but at the same time it can also make staffing agencies lose their personality and identity. Without the right mix of AI, automation, and human interaction, your business can feel more like a transactional relationship.

Staffing is a People Business – Don't Lose Your Identity

At the end of the day, staffing is a people business. AI and automation tools are fantastic and are paving the way for greater success, but it's important not to lose your identity in the process. That is why phone calls are still critical. Candidates and customers should know who they are working with and feel comfortable reaching out to you at any time. If most communication is through AI and automation, candidates and clients will never get to know you.

At the end of the day, people like to do business with people they like and trust. If they are never communicating with you, why would they feel loyal to keep working with you? They can easily go to another staffing agency.

Have Genuine Interest

In one of our recent podcast episodes on [The Staffing Buzz Network](#), Robert Reid noted the importance of genuine interest. When you are talking with candidates and customers, are you asking how their weekend was? Do you know about their hobbies and their family? People enjoy talking about their life and being asked questions. In your ATS, you can note under their record their hobbies, information about their families, etc., so when you are speaking with them, they feel like you have genuine interest. Doing this will automatically help you build a greater connection with candidates and customers.

Find the Balance

So, how do we find balance between AI, Automation, and the Human Touch? This is something that could be worked into your policies and procedures. Guidelines should be outlined on using AI and Automation, but why not also outline guidelines on calling candidates and customers? Calls should be interspersed in the recruiting process to maintain that human and genuine connection.

If candidates and customers are local, you can invite them into your office from time to time. Why always have phone meetings when you can meet in person? For candidates and customers that aren't local, you can also schedule video check-in calls so you still can see them face-to-face.

Let's also not forget about client visits. This can seem like a thing of the past, but why not visit prospective clients and current clients in-person, especially if they are local? They will appreciate you stopping in and it builds a credible *relationship*.

You may also consider in-person events and parties for your candidates and customers. This could be held yearly or every other year. It's a way to show appreciation to both your candidates and your customers.

Back to the Basics with New Innovation

Phone calls and in-person meetings can sound "dated." Why call when you can send a quick text? Why bother to meet in-person when you can schedule a quick Zoom® call? Relationships are the core of what staffing is, which is why we can't forget to sometimes go back to the basics: The basics of what a relationship and a partnership are.

As we make our human connections though, AI and automation do also have a place in staffing. It is the *now* and the *future* of staffing. Today's technology can give your staffing company a competitive edge and improve the candidate and client experience. What will launch staffing companies ahead of the competition though is finding the right balance between AI, Automation, **and** the Human Touch because we can't forget we are still in the people business.

Questions about the AI tools discussed in this article? [Schedule a demo](#) of Ultra-Staff EDGE Staffing Software to learn about the tools available to you.

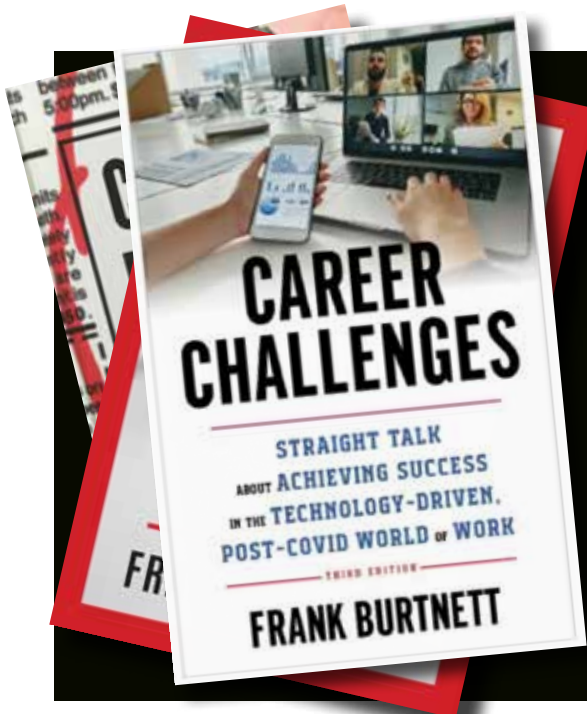
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Owner's Outlook



Motivation Handbook

by Barbara Bruno

Barb is recognized internationally as one of the top experts in the Staffing and Recruiting Profession.

She has addressed audiences in North America, Asia, Africa and Europe. Barb has developed web based training programs that are distributed in several countries, she writes for numerous publications & authors one of the most widely read online publications, The No BS Newsletter. She has authored several books, created mobile apps & is often quoted as an industry expert.

Barb became a trainer to promote responsible recruiting & to allow owners, managers & recruiters to make more money. 100% of Barb's Top Producer Tutor clients have increased their sales & profits.

Barb also developed Happy Candidates to allow Staffing & Recruiting Firms to focus on the 5% of candidate flow they place, but also provide an amazing resource for the other 95%. The resource has provided many benefits for owners which include: increased referrals, elimination of the greatest time waster (time spent on candidates you won't place) increased sales and dramatically improved word-of-mouth advertising. Barb has been, is & always will be defined by making a difference in the lives of others including the candidates we can't place on an assignment, contract or job.

Most recently Barb created & launched an easy to use Metric Tool called The Sales Performance Indicator which includes the proven 140 point system. This tool alleviates inconsistent production, helps prioritize activities & predicts trends.

Barb speaks at conferences, conducts webinars & provides in-house training & offers consulting. Her ideas are easy to implement and participants realize a strong return on their investment of time & money.

Bottom Line: Her enthusiasm and passion for this Profession are contagious!

Motivated teams aren't just more productive, they're more engaged, collaborative, and committed to hitting goals that drive growth. In the fast-paced world of Staffing and Recruiting, motivation can't be a once-a-quarter push. It needs to be built into your culture, your KPIs, and your leadership rhythm.

As a Firm owner or manager, your ability to fuel drive and focus across your team especially during unpredictable markets or seasonal slowdowns, can make the difference between surviving and scaling. Motivation doesn't have to mean money. It starts with understanding what truly drives people, then creating daily habits that tie personal purpose to team performance.

First, tap into the psychology. Motivation theory tells us that employees thrive when they experience three key things 1) autonomy (the ability to own their work), 2) competence (the feeling they're good at it), and 3) relatedness (a sense of connection and purpose). Combine that with meaningful recognition, growth opportunities, and clear expectations, and you've got the foundation of a high-performing team.

So how do you apply that practically? Start with mini contests. High-impact teams often run short, energizing contests that focus on leading indicators: client touches like send-outs (first interview only). Keep it simple: one-day or weekly sprints with clear, visible metrics. Make them inclusive and fair. Use tiers or team formats so experienced team members and rookies can both engage and win.

Need ideas? Try a "Pipeline Power Hour" where everyone hits the phones at once, a "Send-out Showdown" for first interviews, or "Fast Start Friday" to boost early-day energy. Publicly celebrate wins, not just the top producers but anyone who improves, contributes, or helps others succeed. These small contests do more than move numbers. They create a buzz, a rhythm, and a sense of momentum.

Recognition doesn't need to be elaborate. Often, the most powerful motivators are personal and unexpected. Try "On Fire Fridays" where one person is spotlighted for effort, attitude, or results. Create traveling trophies like "The Closer." Give winners a chance to lead a meeting, leave early, or set the office playlist. In short, make it meaningful, fun, and tied to behavior you want to see more of.

And don't forget your remote or hybrid teams. Motivation fades fast without visibility and connection. Use "KPI Bingo," virtual "pop-up" challenges, or quick end-of-day huddles with shout-outs. Let team members take turns as "Recognition Ambassadors" to highlight each other. That peer-driven praise is a culture booster.

Finally, make motivation sustainable. Rotate your contests. Ask your team what motivates them and adapt accordingly. Celebrate wins, then build in recovery. Motivation isn't constant, it's a rhythm.

When you lead with purpose, recognition, and energy, you won't just hit or surpass goals, you'll build a team that shows up motivated and ready to win, every single quarter.

Learn more about [Barb Bruno](#)



The Enduring Value of Human Touch in Staffing

By Lynn Connor

In an era dominated by algorithms, automation, and the relentless pursuit of efficiency, it's easy to get lost in the promise of technological solutions. The staffing industry, with its inherent need to connect people with opportunities, is no exception. While sophisticated software and AI-powered tools offer advantages, recruiters cannot lose sight of the human touch in staffing. This is the essence of what makes an agency successful.

The truth is, the staffing industry isn't just about filling vacancies; it's about building relationships. It's about understanding the nuanced needs of both your clients seeking talent and job candidates looking for their next career step. This is where the power of human touch in staffing matters. It provides an important differentiator in an increasingly automated landscape.

Understanding Individual Need

A well-crafted algorithm can match keywords on a resume to job descriptions with impressive speed. However, it cannot understand a candidate's aspirations, the subtle cultural nuances of a workplace, or the true personality fit that can make or break a placement. As Greg Savage, the author of [The Savage Truth](#), shares '*Recruitment is a people business. Technology can enhance it, but it will never replace the human connection.*' The role of your recruiters is critical and so is their need to go beyond surface-level data.

Job Candidate Needs

Your recruiters need to take the time to listen – truly listen – to candidates, looking beyond their listed skills and experience. Understanding their career goals, their values, and what truly motivates them is key. When recruiters build rapport and foster trust, candidates feel comfortable and share their ambitions and concerns. This deeper understanding allows for more thoughtful and ultimately more successful placements.

Client Needs

Similarly, on the client side, the human touch in staffing and interaction is also needed. While data and analytics provide insight into talent availability, they cannot replace the nuanced conversations that reveal a client's true needs. Human interaction, including in-person sales, remains crucial even with advancements in AI. This is a recurring theme in discussions about the future of sales and artificial intelligence.

Company Culture

Understanding the company culture, the specific challenges the team is facing, and the intangible qualities they seek in a new hire requires genuine engagement. As [Liz Ryan](#), founder and CEO of *Human Workplace*, emphasizes, '*People aren't resources; they're*

human beings. Treat them that way. This is crucial for staffing agencies in building strong client partnerships. A recruiter who invests the time to understand their client's business on a deeper level can offer more tailored solutions, moving beyond just filling a role.

Personalized Service - Meaningful Connections

In a world of generic emails and automated responses, [personalized service stands out](#). Every couple of years it seems "back to the basics" always resonates, doesn't it? Candidates appreciate being treated as individuals and not just as a placement to advance your key metrics. They can feel the difference.

Receiving tailored feedback, relevant job recommendations, and real live support throughout the hiring process can significantly enhance their experience and build loyalty towards your agency. According to a report by [CareerBuilder](#), '75% of job seekers consider the candidate's experience to be a key factor in their decision to accept or reject a job offer.' Personalized attention on attracting and securing top talent really matters.

For clients, personalized service means knowing you have a good understanding of their unique requirements and are committed to finding the *right* fit, not just any available candidate. Regular communication and updates with an investment in their success builds strong, long-lasting partnerships.

The Differentiating Factor in a Crowded Market

In a competitive staffing market, agencies that prioritize the human touch gain a significant advantage. While technology can enhance efficiency, genuine connections and personalized service leave a lasting impression. Candidates are more likely to return to an agency where they feel valued and understood. As *Tony Restell, founder of Social-Hire*, notes, 'In a digital world, being human is the ultimate differentiator.'

Empowering Human Connection with COATS Staffing Software

COATS Staffing Software recognizes that the cornerstone of every successful placement is a genuine human connection. Our platform is crafted to *empower* your recruiters to cultivate and strengthen relationships, acting as a catalyst rather than a replacement for human interaction. While [COATS](#) provides a suite of robust automation tools and seamless communication, its fundamental purpose is to provide your team with more time to put the human touch back into staffing.

Our technology enables your recruiters to be more human, more understanding, and ultimately connect the right individuals with the right opportunities.



Ready to empower your team to build stronger relationships and achieve placement success? Visit coatssql.com or call 1-800-888-5894 for a [personalized demo](#) and take the first step towards a more connected and successful future.

A large advertisement for COATS Staffing Software. The background is dark with abstract green and blue light patterns. At the top, the text "ONE, AND DONE" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. On the left, there is a white square containing the COATS logo (a stylized flower) and the text "COATS Staffing Software" in blue. On the right, a white-bordered box contains a quote in all caps: "THANK GOODNESS WITH COATS I CAN DO IT ALL. YOU GUYS ARE THE ABSOLUTE BEST IN THE INDUSTRY." Below the quote, in smaller text, is "Theresa Morris, Claudia Employment Agency". To the right of the quote box, the phone number "1-800-888-5894" is written vertically in white. At the bottom, a white banner contains the text "SELL, ADVERTISE, RECRUIT, ONBOARD, VET, PLACE, PAY & INVOICE, AP & GL" in all caps.

JUST ASK Judy



Get On Board The Coming Wave Of Small Business Hiring

Recruiters need to keep in mind that small to mid-sized business (fewer than 500 employees) is vital to the health of the America economy. While placements with large firms are eagerly sought after, small business should not be neglected! According to an article in USAFacts.org¹ "Small businesses are 99.9% of all businesses in the US (and) as of July 2024, there are 34.8 million small businesses compared to 19,688 large businesses." The article goes on to point out that "small businesses make up the vast majority of businesses and the majority of job growth." A statistic from the Chamber of Commerce² noted that "in 2024, small businesses contributed about 43.5% to the U.S. GDP (and) consequently, large businesses were responsible for approximately 56.5% of GDP. So, we can see the large impact that small business has on the overall economy.

The pandemic spurred on the entrepreneurial spirit as demonstrated in the graphic below.

While not all the potential new startups will result in the need for direct-hire or contract workers, the sudden wave of entrepreneurial spirit is impressive. This wave is showing no signs of ebbing anytime soon.

Many existing small businesses which have survived through the pandemic and recent economic pressures will likely need recruiters to help them find employees, especially in the very tight labor market we are presently experiencing. With the advent of business-friendly initiatives by the new administration, competition for employees is likely to be fierce. Improved cash flow will enable existing and new small businesses to expand their operations to meet increasing consumer demand. Recruiters should consider their target markets and do research on small businesses which may be in a growth mode.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, today's workforce³ is made up of the following groups:

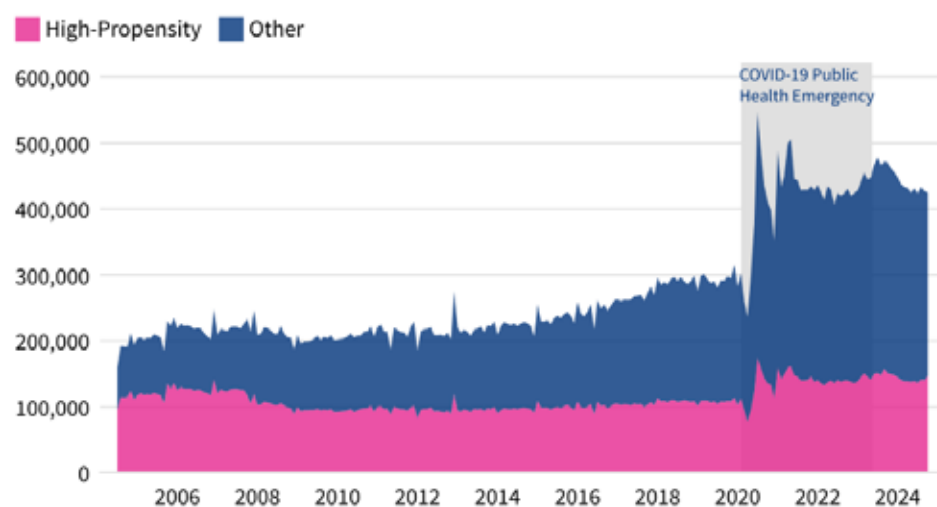
- *Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1964): 15%
- * Generation X (born 1965 – 1980): 27%
- * Millennials (Gen Y, born 1981 – 1996): 34%
- * Generation Z (born 1997 – 2012): 18%

Further statistics from the DOL indicate that the trends for the proportions noted above are flat for the GEN X and Millennials and rapidly growing for the Gen Z group. Recruiters should be aware of these demographic trends and how they may affect the labor market.

Another interesting aspect of the "David vs Goliath" competition between small and large businesses is the trust factor. A Pew Research Center study⁴ "found that 86% of U.S. adults believe small businesses have a positive effect on the country's direction, whereas only 29% feel the same about large corporations." Alex Panas and Axel Karlsson with McKinsey.com⁵ report that Gen Z "exhibits a

The number of business applications rose during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Monthly business applications, seasonally adjusted



The Census Bureau defines high-propensity business applications as having a higher likelihood of turning into businesses with payroll.

Source: [Census Bureau](#)

USA FACTS

broad distrust in most large corporate institutions.” So, we can conclude that a typical Gen Zer would be more likely to go to work for a small company which fits better with their belief system. Victoria Petrock of Emarketer⁶ cites that Millennials’ “trust ... in companies has declined over recent years, with only 50% expressing trust in businesses overall.”

So, what is the upshot of all this? The answer is that there is an ever-growing segment of the labor pool that has an aversion to larger companies. This pool of workers may well find more satisfying careers with smaller enterprises. The smaller firms are more likely to be flexible in their work hours and in-office vs remote work.

Recruiters should try to identify small businesses that are likely to prosper in today’s dynamic marketplace and develop a pool of candidates who would be prone to prefer small vs large firms. Since many smaller firms may still be somewhat risk averse, you should be prepared to offer candidates on a contract basis to allay their fears. Get set up in advance with an EOR to handle these contract placements since contract hires can fill an employer’s immediate need until direct hires are found.

If you would like to discuss any of these ideas or would like help defining a business strategy, please feel free to give me a call or contact me at judy@jcsrllc.com, or visit my new website at <https://www.jcsrllc.com> for more information.

¹ USAFacts Team, “What role do small businesses play in the economy?” USAFacts, November 24, 2024.

² Stephanie Melhorn, Makinzi Hoover, and Isabella Lucy, “Small Business Data Center.” U.S. Chamber of Commerce, May 20, 2024.

³ U.S. DOL, “Changes in the U.S. Labor Supply.” August 2024.

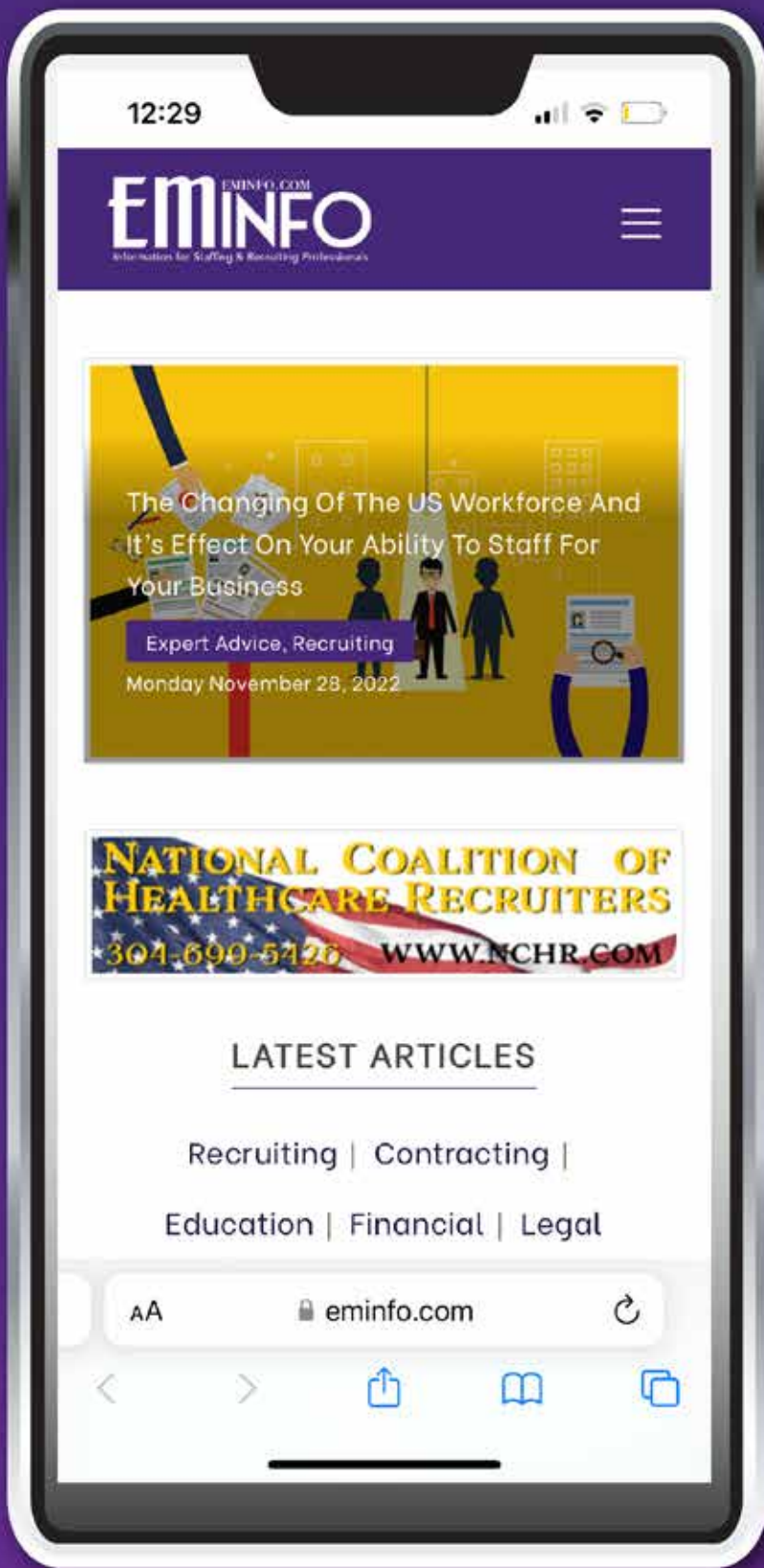
⁴ Cindy D. Cam, “Nobody Roots for Goliath: Why Americans Trust Small Business.” Pew: Trend Magazine, October 17, 2024.

⁵ Alex Panas and Axel Karlsson, “Mind the Gap – Curated Reads on Gen Z in the Workplace.” McKinsey & Company, October 2024.

⁶ Victoria Petrock, “Gen Z doesn’t trust big business.” EMarketer, November 12, 2021.

[Read More By Judy Collins](#)

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Leaving Money on the Table with Your Recruitment Fees

QUESTION: I have an excellent client who used my services for three searches last year. We agreed a fee of 25%. They pay me a down payment on the first search. They just informed me they want to use my services for six searches in 2024, with the last one wrapped up by August. This is about \$600,000 in total compensation for the six employees that they hire, which could be a lot in fees.

They asked me to send them a proposal. I am considering offering the same agreement we used last year and through this year, 2023, at 25% but also offering an option of them paying me on a retainer, thinking they could pay me one-third down, one-third in April, and one-third in August. How much should I charge? Any suggestions? From Michael Paulson. This is my best client. They run every part of recruiting through me. They are loyal and also fun to work with. I want to treat them right.

Enhancing Client Relationships and Trust in Recruitment

A great question. A couple of key things in there. You have got a pretty good fee. You have got a deposit. They are used to those terms of business. I would not compromise, nor would I make them a proposal yet – yet. A proposal is them interpreting what you are writing.

What I would do, whether this is an individual or a couple of individuals, I would express my gratitude. I was thinking about it, and before I make a proposal, I would really like to dial into what exactly you want to get done, and I know it is filling the openings.

Then, you go into a deeper diagnostic of the problems, whether they have identified the 6 roles, and the consequences of not filling them. You need to know the level of urgency to ensure you have the appropriate resources to do the job.

Leveraging Successful Recruiting Experiences for Better Negotiations

I was truly blessed. I had a client, my best client – maybe not even our best client, but one client, one year in revenue best ever was about \$800,000. They called us up and said we're giving you almost \$1 million, Mike; what can you do for us? There was another account manager. It was actually his account. I was helping him. They loved him. Everything that you wrote about here, they loved him. They used him. They ran everything by him. I'm like, they are not going anywhere.

Here is what I promise you, because you said one thing, just a quick sidebar, I wanted to treat them right. I love that, but remember, the first sign of a recession, they are going to ask you to cut your fee, they are going to not want to [pay retainers](#), maybe they will not, but I have just found they are not going to necessarily do right by you. I just want to make sure – I am not ever trying to screw anyone over – that I provide tremendous value for what I charge. Just keep that in mind.

[Click here to grab](#) your free copy of Retainers for Recruiters – the 7.5 Step Checklist that will allow you to Get Your Clients to Pay Money Upfront

Practical Retainer Strategies for Recruiting Services

Back to your proposal idea and this concept. What we had done was charge, I think, a \$7,000 retainer on every position. Very similar questions. Would we cut his fee? All these different options. What we said was, you know what, we have charged you \$7,000 per position upfront. What we are willing to do, and we did this on a phone call; by the way, what we are willing to do is when you give us a project, we will only charge you a retainer on half the project. A lot of times they would give us 3 or 4 openings at a time.

Here is what we are going to do: if you give us five openings – or six openings so I can do the math – we are going to charge you a retainer on 3, so \$7,000 each. We are going to invoice you for \$21,000 and then we will take the \$7,000 off the last 3. For the first 3 placements, we are going to bill you – I think we were charging 30% – we are going to charge you 30%. You will pay us the fee. On positions 4, 5, and 6, we will pay you the fee less the \$7,000.

Here was his response. I will never forget:

Oh my gosh, you will do that for me? We did not save them a dime other than the interest on the retainers. The reason I did that was on the last position if they were ever going to fill a position internally, we only got paid the balance if we filled the job. If they had an employee referral, we just kept the retainer. It is not tied to an individual position. It is tied to the project. That is all they needed.

When they are coming back asking for something, you want to give them something. But it does not mean you have to cut your fees. I know you charge them a retainer. Maybe you can charge them a retainer on half the position or another possibility. This is a really good one here if you know them. You know that pretty much every opening they give you, they are going to fill.

I had a concept I called a [reverse retainer](#), meaning I charged you nothing upfront. We did all the work that you are used to, Mr. Client, and if you cancel the position or fill it through alternate means, you pay us \$7,000 for a consulting fee. That might help them eliminate the upfront money, and that is a give when they are really looking for something.

But I would really go into them, and about the diagnostics, and at the very front end, resell what you did for them and feel out, without being too obvious – are they bringing in a bunch of recruiters? Are they going to risk the ebb and flow that you gave them, timely recruiting, great talent, to save a few percentage points?

P.S. Whenever you're ready... here are 4 ways I can help you grow your recruitment business:

1. Grab a free copy of my Retainer Blueprint

It's the exact, step-by-step process of getting clients to give you money upfront. <https://get.therecruiteru.com/lm>

2. **Join the Recruiter Think Tank** and connect with firm owners who are scaling, too. It's our Facebook community where smart recruiters learn to make more money and get more freedom. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/there...>

3. Join me at our next event

3x a year, I run a 3-day virtual intensive, sharing the 9 key areas that drive a 7-figure search firm. Click here to check out the dates of our upcoming event. <https://get.therecruiteru.com/live>

4. Work with me and my team privately

And if you ever want to get some 1:1 help, we can jump on the phone for a quick call and brainstorm how to get you more leads, more placements, and more time. <https://get.therecruiteru.com/scale-now>

[Read More by Mike Gionta](#)



Will your existing organization and/or personal style allow you to implement any resolutions or changes that you would like to make in 2021?

Mike Gionta & his company, The RecruiterU are sought out by solo recruiters and recruiting firm owners who want more revenues, better clients, great recruiters, etc. The RecruiterU has custom programs for any type of owner who has the strong desire to build their business, but simply lacks the best strategies to get them there.

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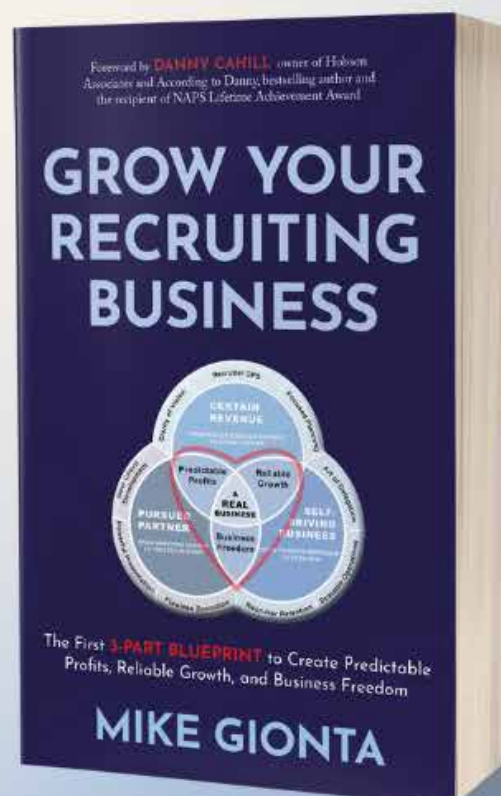
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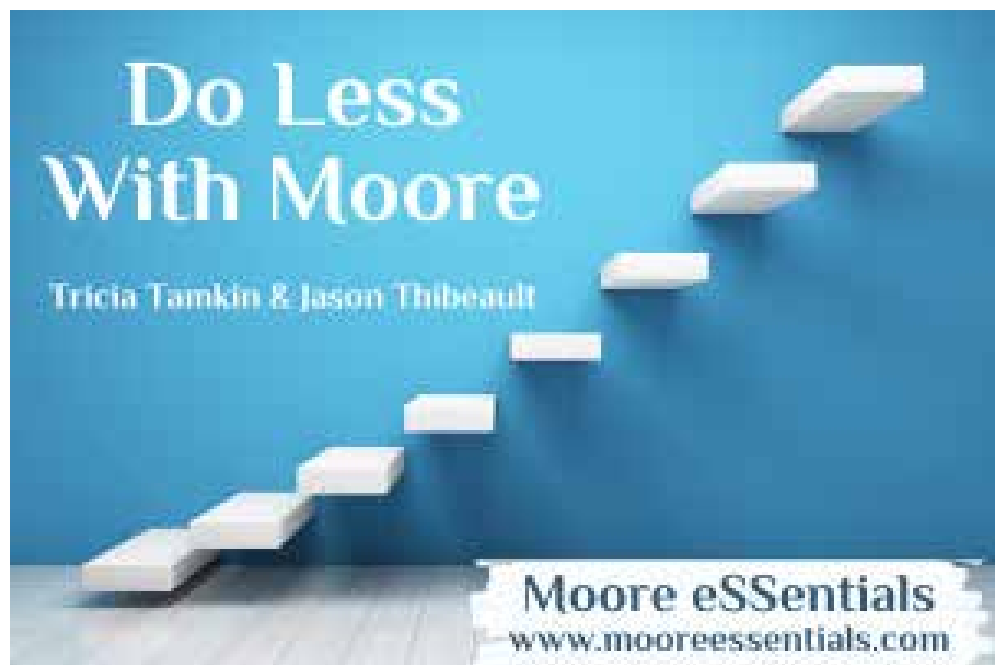
"I've read several books on recruiting and listened to a number of trainers over the years, but Mike is the one that has helped me the most in growing my recruiting practice. Mike and his team have a way of identifying and clarifying the key processes and mindsets to be successful in recruiting. They also present it in a way that breaks it down to help you identify your starting steps, and to keep you going." – Marts King



[Click here to get your FREE copy!](#)

A Glimpse at the Future (I'm not buying yet)

By Jason Thibeault



Operator is an AI tool which actually clicks, scrolls, types, and navigates the web like a digital assistant with initiative. Sounds like my sort of sci-fi? Maybe also like a horror film as you watch your cursor move on its own.

It's an agentic AI system, which basically means it can do things. It can use web apps, fill out forms, search sites, and help automate workflows. For independent recruiters and small teams, that could mean serious efficiency gains.

BUT

According to different measures, it is between 38% to 54% accurate with complex tasks. Filling out an online form is a simple task. Reviewing a resume for a match against a role and then parsing the right ones into your ATS is complex. Eek.

What Can Operator Do for You?

- **Candidate Sourcing:** Scouring LinkedIn, Indeed, Apollo, and Twitter for matching candidates can be an enormous part of our day. Operator can do that.

BUT- You will need to login, prompt, and do not expect it do more than one website at a time. You know our GPT where you give it the job description, your notes, and a candidate profile, and it helps decide if the person is a match? It does that for you by opening the profiles, deciding who is a match, and adding them to your ATS. Set it up at its own workstation and it can act as a low-level sourcer.

- **Resume Screening:** Operator can sort through resumes and even rank candidates based on how well they align with your role. Many of you have used GPTs which do the same, and Operator could automate the process of screening received resumes or scouring the ATS.

BUT- Only the speed of this is new. So far, an AI is deciding who is being added to your Applicant Tracking System, and tomorrow's call list. Are you okay with that?

- **Interview Scheduling:** While it won't make phone calls or send emails without your say-so, it can generate [Read More by Jason Thibeault](#)

links (Calendly-style), draft invites, and tee everything up so you just hit send.

BUT- Again, Calendly and free GPT can do this. Since it needs to be webmail, Gemini can do this inside of gmail products.

- **Market Research:** Want a pulse check on salaries, hot job titles, or what your competitors are hiring for? Operator can trawl through the data, synthesize it, and give you a high-level snapshot with sources.

BUT- Seriously, why not use Gemini Deep Research with better reach?

While it's promising, you'll still need to babysit the junior intern. The more complicated the task, the more likely you will reach a point of mistakes. This intern will not send messages until you okay each one and this person needs lots of approvals. (How needy!)

ChatGPT Operator CAN take busywork off your plate. It's a glimpse into where AI recruiting is headed: tools that do. It is early for this technology, and you can be using it to do many recruiting tasks.

BUUUUUUT- My background in lean manufacturing would be kicking me if I didn't point out the process flow. If these are the things that are holding up your business, then absolutely, pay \$200 a month for an assistant to source, compare candidates, fill your ATS, and draft messages (not all in one prompt, too complex!)

For most tech-savvy recruiters, getting people to respond takes more time than finding them and crafting emails. Phone tag takes more time. Deciding if a candidate is a fit? I bet you can do it faster than you can write a prompt.

NPAworldwide Unveils Bold Brand Evolution to Reflect Global Growth

Featuring a modern logo, vibrant colors, an inspiring mission, and the tagline "Placing People Together," this transformation reinforces NPAworldwide's commitment to connecting independent recruiting firms across the globe for collective success.

NPAworldwide, the world's leading recruitment community, is excited to announce a significant brand evolution that reflects the organization's growth and vision for the future. This new branding update aims to enhance the identity of NPAworldwide and reinforce its commitment to connecting independent recruitment firms around the world.

A Fresh Logo, A Renewed Commitment

The newly designed logo honors NPAworldwide's rich history while presenting a modern and inviting aesthetic. This visual transformation symbolizes the organization's role as a global "meeting point" for independent recruiting firms, emphasizing its dedication to bringing together people.



Modernized Brand Colors

The revitalized color palette incorporates a bold blue and vibrant orange, signaling friendliness, reliability, integrity, and professionalism—qualities that resonate with NPAworldwide's shared vision for success.

A Mission Tailored for Success: "To connect premier independent recruiting firms for success locally and worldwide."

The organization's new mission embraces its diversity and underscores its commitment to helping each member achieve their unique version of success.

A Powerful New Tagline: "Placing People Together"

This tagline succinctly captures NPAworldwide's core value proposition and reinforces their commitment to working cooperatively to achieve more. It is a concept that transcends simply matching candidates with job vacancies; it embodies the essence of building meaningful relationships—both between recruiters and clients, as well as among its diverse network of partners.

NPAworldwide President Kerry Crockett, MBA, CPC, CAE, CMP Fellow, DES remarked, "This brand evolution represents a pivotal moment for NPAworldwide as we honor our legacy while stepping confidently into the future. Our modernized identity symbolizes our unwavering commitment to connecting independent recruiting firms globally, fostering collaboration, and empowering our members to achieve unparalleled success together."

About: NPAworldwide, the world's leading recruitment community, helps independent recruitment firms confidently make more placements by connecting them with a trusted community of like-minded recruiting partners from around the world. Visit npaworldwide.com or npaworldwideworks.com.



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NEWS RELEASES

Top Frontline Industries by Demand and Wage Growth: Q1 2025 Report

Resume Now and Talroo partner to reveal which industries are most in need of essential workers—and where pay is rising fastest

In Q1 2025, trucking wages surged 16%, and job postings for frontline roles outpaced available candidates across nearly every major sector in the U.S. To provide a comprehensive analysis of the frontline labor market, Resume Now®, a simple and effective resume and cover letter building service, and Talroo, a leading provider of AI-driven job advertising for attracting frontline and skilled trades professionals, have partnered to deliver the Top Frontline Industries by Demand and Wage Growth: Q1 2025 Report, based on data between January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025.

Frontline workers are the backbone of the economy, and these essential roles are seeing both rising wages and hiring challenges. The report identifies the industries experiencing the biggest hiring gaps and the highest wage growth— providing valuable insight for both job seekers and employers navigating the current labor market.

The 10 Frontline Industries with the Biggest Talent Gaps

These industries saw the largest mismatch between job postings (demand) and candidate supply (resumes) in Q1 2025. The top ten industries with the biggest talent gaps, in order from highest to lowest:

1. Trucking
2. Allied healthcare
3. Caregiving
4. Customer service
5. Manufacturing
6. Retail
7. Administrative
8. Sales
9. Food services
10. Warehousing

What the Data Tells Us About Frontline Hiring Demand

As measured by resumes per job post and comparing year over year, additional insight about the most in-demand frontline industries includes:

1. Trucking – High Demand, Fewer ApplicantsThe trucking industry continues to face a qualified labor shortage, resulting in fewer applicants per job and steady demand for new drivers. Job seekers with a CDL or logistics experience can find strong opportunities with competitive wages, although policy and economic changes in Q2 2025 may result in shifts.

2. Allied Healthcare & Caregiving – More Jobs, Fewer CandidatesHospitals, nursing homes, and home healthcare agencies are struggling to fill essential roles. Positions such as medical assistants, caregivers, and patient care technicians are seeing increased demand, creating more opportunities for job seekers with relevant skills or training.

3. Customer Service & Retail – Fewer Job Seekers, More Openings

These industries continue to experience hiring challenges, as the number of active and qualified job seekers has dropped significantly compared to 2024. With fewer qualified applicants, job seekers may find faster interview timelines and better leverage in negotiating flexibility or wages—especially in urban markets.

4. Manufacturing & Warehousing – Still Hiring, But Improving BalanceWhile these sectors remain in high demand, applicant availability has improved slightly compared to other industries. Despite being a particularly tumultuous policy time for this industry, job seekers with experience in logistics, production, or warehouse operations can still find ample opportunities.

5. Sales & Food Services – Shifting LandscapesInterest in sales and food service roles has declined, creating hiring difficulties for employers, although these trends will vary state-by-state. Job seekers considering these fields may have greater leverage in negotiating pay and schedules due to labor shortages or due to state regulations such as California's recent regulations of food service wages.

6. Administrative Roles – A Stable Job MarketThe admin sector maintains a steady balance of jobs and applicants. Data entry, scheduling, and support staff roles remain reliable.

"Despite continued uncertainty across sectors and broader economic concerns, the need for skilled frontline workers remains strong—and in many industries, it's growing," said Thad Price, CEO of Talroo. "From trucking to healthcare, employers are still struggling to fill essential roles that keep our communities running. This data provides a clear call to action: to invest in smarter recruiting strategies, support workforce development, and help more people connect with meaningful, high-demand jobs."

Where Wages Are Rising Fastest for Frontline WorkersThis ranking highlights the year-over-year hourly wage increases these in-demand industries experienced. Six of the top ten frontline industries saw above-average wage increases in Q1 2025. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national average total compensation increase in 2024 was 3.8%.

Industry	Q1 Wage Growth	2025 Q1 Avg Hourly Wage	2024 Q1 Avg Hourly Wage
Trucking	16%	\$25.49	\$22.05
Warehousing	15%	\$19.78	\$17.23
Administrative	10%	\$22.13	\$20.20
Customer Service	10%	\$19.15	\$17.42
Caregiving	8%	\$16.82	\$15.56
Retail	7%	\$17.44	\$16.27
Allied Healthcare	3%	\$33.80	\$32.78
Sales	3%	\$16.95	\$16.50
Food Services	3%	\$16.13	\$15.63
Manufacturing	-1%	\$22.75	\$23.06

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Ordered from highest to lowest, these are the top 10 most in-demand frontline industries by wage growth:

What's Driving Wage Increases in 2025

Trucking and Warehouse wages surged in Q1 2025 with double-digit wage spikes (16% and 15% growth), hitting new heights not seen since 2022. This followed a protracted softening of wages dating back to 2023. With these two industries anticipated to be impacted by tariffs and other social policies, it will be interesting to monitor how employers respond in Q2 2025.

Although trucking wages are challenging to analyze in aggregate—due to the industry's use of per-mile, per-diem, and other variable pay models—the wage increases reflected in the Frontline Worker Index align closely with recent industry data. These include the National Transportation Institute's report of the "strongest year-over-year gains in a year," the Driver Pay Index rising to 134, and TruckingDive's observation that pay in the 50-to-55 cent per mile range has become more prevalent for drivers with one to three years of experience.

Administrative roles saw a 10% rise, reaching \$22.13.

Customer Service, Caregiving, and Retail saw similar gains, growing 10%, 8% and 7% respectively.

Allied Healthcare remained the highest-paying industry for frontline workers in Q1 2025, with an average hourly wage of \$33.80, reflecting a modest 3% annual increase.

Sales and Food Services experienced modest growth of 3%, reaching \$16.95 and \$16.13, respectively.

Manufacturing was the only industry to see a (very) slight decline (-1%) in average frontline worker wages compared to Q1 2024, experiencing a turbulent start to 2025. It continues to grapple with the ripple effects of global tariffs and evolving social policies. Whether these measures will ultimately revitalize domestic manufacturing—and lift wages in the coming quarters—remains uncertain.

"With so many frontline industries experiencing labor shortages and rising wages, now is the perfect time for job seekers to position themselves for success," said Keith Spencer, career expert at Resume Now. "To stand out, workers should focus on crafting resumes that emphasize their most valuable skills. Truck drivers, for example, should highlight certifications like a CDL endorsement or experience with logistics software. Warehouse workers can showcase OSHA safety training and inventory management expertise. By tailoring resumes with industry-specific keywords and demonstrating problem-solving abilities, frontline workers can maximize their job opportunities and take advantage of the current hiring trends."

Methodology:

The rankings are based on Talroo's Frontline Worker Index, which tracks job posting demand, resume supply, wage trends, scheduling shifts, and the broader economic forces shaping the frontline labor market. Powered by Talroo's first-party data, the index processes 26 million job posts monthly, capturing 187 million data points across industries and regions.

Explore the full Q1 2025 Frontline Worker Index at <https://www.resume-now.com/job-resources/careers/frontline-index-report> or <https://www.talroo.com/talroo-frontline-worker-index/> or contact Joseph Santaella at joseph.santaella@bold.com.

Methodology

The findings presented were obtained by surveying 1,000 American respondents on February 11, 2025. Participants were queried about their experiences with the trustworthiness of their managers and how different generations view trust in the workplace. They answered different types of questions, including yes/no, open-ended, scale-based questions where respondents indicated their level of agreement with statements, and multiple-choice where they could select from a list of provided options.

About LiveCareer

LiveCareer is the premier career site empowering job seekers to find their path to professional success. Since 2005, LiveCareer has helped over 10 million workers worldwide by offering information, expert guidance, and support to boost their chances of finding a job in less time. This includes providing job seekers with resume templates that can help them build stronger resumes and cover letters. LiveCareer's extensive suite of career resources also includes interview prep tools and original content to help candidates navigate their job search and target their chosen career path.



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Letter From The Editor



Don't miss out!

Optimism still is the number one way to succeed in this industry. As a people business, clients and candidates will respond to a personal touch. Always look for opportunities and be present in the moment in conversations in this ever-changing environment.

Our authors address ways to look for new business. Small businesses are growing at a record pace. In her article, Judy Collins discusses the coming wave of Small Business Hiring. Across the country, areas are seeing growth in manufacturing, energy and construction.

Building and training your team is important to growing your firm. "Motivation is key to get your team onboard and making those connections," says Barb Bruno. Ask your team what motivates them. With summertime coming, does earning an early day off on Friday work? Take a poll on what excites your team members.

Keeping the HUMAN alive while using AI is important. As an editor my word of advice is proofread whatever you do write using AI before sending out that email! Grammatical errors abound especially when using voice activated AI.

Recharge your own batteries by attending events or virtual training. Networking with peers can inspire ideas. Spring is a time of renewal, so is embracing the new technologies.

Happy Recruiting...

Pat Turner

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