

How to Take Your Firm from Chaos to Calm AND Hit Your Goals

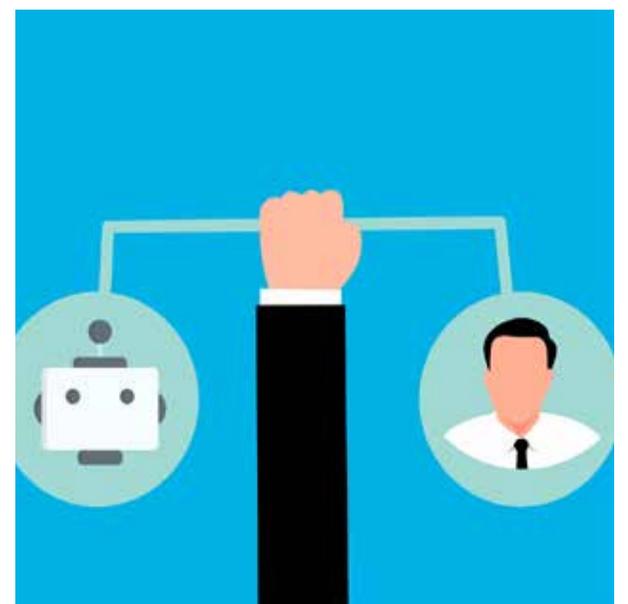
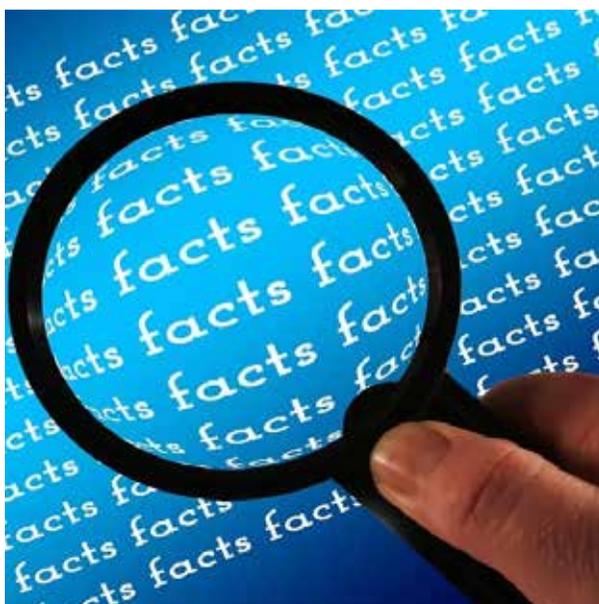
How to Choose a Staffing Software Partner, Not Just a Solution



Closing the Candidate! Fact versus Fiction

Starfish Partners & Dimensional Search

The Good, Bad, & Ugly of How AI Has Changed the Job Search!



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DID YOU KNOW?

* Always ask what resources are available besides day to day support and a customer success team. Regular webinars, on-demand videos, and more are all helpful tools that will help you be successful software users for continued education and also when you need to look up something quick. pg 6

* Our primary worth to the client is not at the beginning; rather, it is at the end. Through proper debriefing and closing skills, we can help to secure the talents of the candidates he needs. pg 9

* With so many resumes going out, HR departments and hiring managers are bogging down trying to deal with the volume. To some degree the positive effects of AI on resumes have offset the rising volume by offering improved formatting, keyword alignment, and use of professional language. pg 10

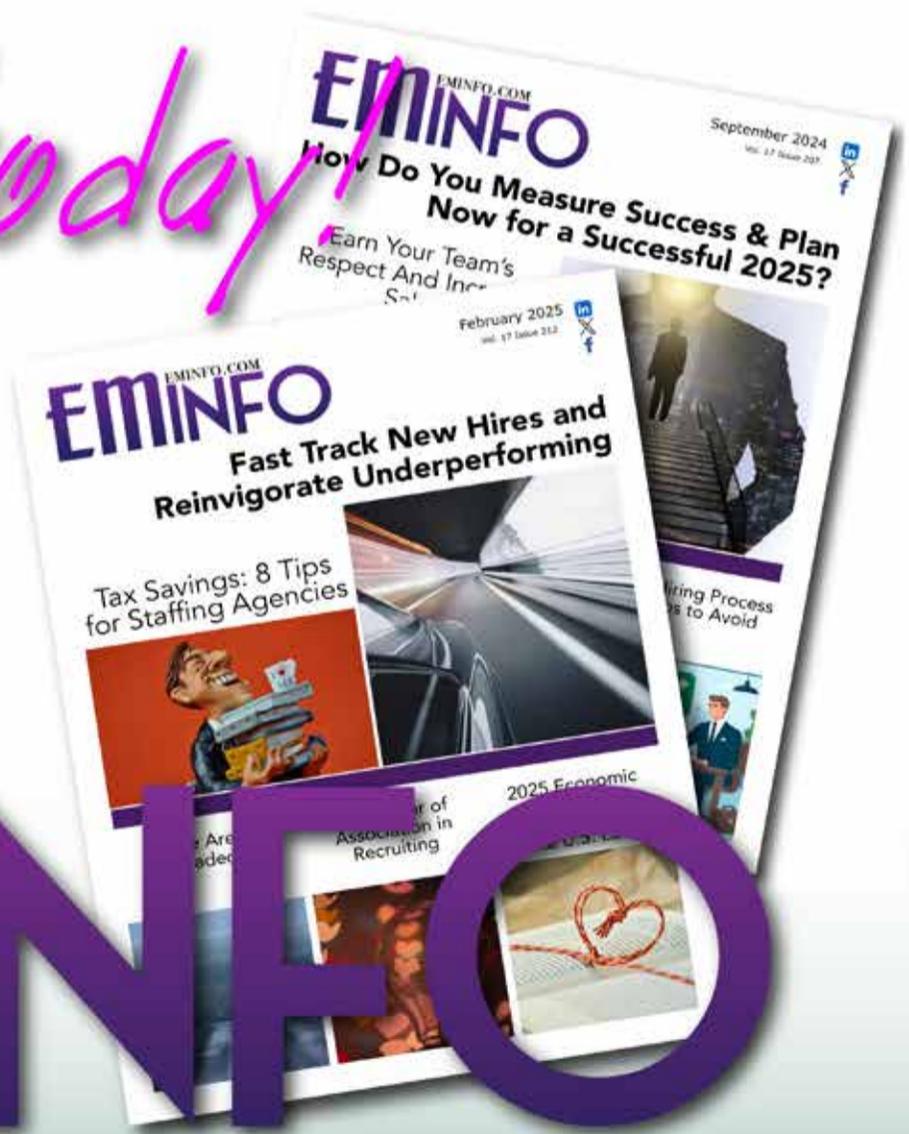
* How we feel about people is often a reflection of how they make us feel about ourselves pg 14

* Our organization consists of two major organizations. Starfish Partners, which is an investment platform where we have purchased 11 recruiting firms, and continued to grow, build and scale them. Next Level (NLE) is our organization that offers services search firm owners. pg 15



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How to Choose a Staffing Software Partner, Not Just a Solution

By Jennifer Roeslmeier Mikels

The age old question that is so often talked about in staffing is **what staffing software should I use?** Should I go with one that has a lot of bells and whistles? Should I go with an all-in-one solution? Should I go with a well known solution in the industry? These are all valid questions to ask yourself when assessing staffing software solutions. What is often not *asked though* is, "How do I choose a staffing software **partner?**" Partner being the key word in that question.

Your staffing software provider should be more than just a software for you, it should be a long-term partnership. When you decide to make a software switch, it's a process that is going to cost time and money. It's not something you want to do every couple of years, so when assessing software solutions, it's important to go into it with a long-term mindset. What solution can I see long-term growth with and what software provider is a company I want to work closely with?

At the end of the day we are **all** in the people business! In staffing, you form relationships with your candidates and customers. You try to provide value to them and not just a transactional relationship. Similarly, as you search for [staffing software solutions](#), you want to find a partner that is going to help you grow and a partner that understands your business. In a perfect world, you will never have to look for software again once you find the *right solution and partnership*.

In this article, we will look at key traits to look for in a staffing software provider that helps you form a long-term partnership and sets your company up for future growth.

Your Customer Experience with Support

If you experienced bad customer support in the past, you might have chuckled at the heading of this section. Good customer support is essential to your staffing software experience. If you have a question or are experiencing an issue, it's important to be able to reach someone in a timely manner. When assessing software some key questions to ask about support include:

- What is the average response time for a Support Ticket?
- Where is the Support Team located?
- Are you able to easily reach someone on the phone?
- Is there a cost per support ticket? You don't want to be in a situation where you are nickel and dimed!

These basic questions can help you understand what your future customer experience may be like. At the end of the day, the Support Team are the people you will likely be talking to most frequently, so it's important these questions aren't overlooked.

Additionally, when thinking about a staffing software partnership, you want there to be an actual relationship and not just a transactional support question and answer relationship. If that is the extent of your partnership with your staffing software, there is much more to be desired. A good customer support team will be there to answer your questions, but will also go beyond basic customer support to help you succeed in your business.

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Customer Growth Beyond Support

A couple of questions to think about when assessing staffing software solutions is "Are you going to grow using this solution and is it scalable?" Will you need to get another solution in a couple of years because you outgrew it? Part of this growth goes beyond the solution and also beyond support.

Avoid a Transactional Question and Answer Relationship

Above we talked about the transactional question and answer relationship with Support. A true customer experience goes beyond the Support tickets and helps you grow. Leading staffing software solutions are constantly changing and are constantly adding new features based on industry needs. As a user, it can be hard to keep up with the latest features in the software and ensure you are using the software to its fullest capability. This is where training, meetings, webinars, and videos come into play.

Are you able to easily schedule training or a meeting with a customer success representative? One on one meetings and training sessions can help ensure you are using the software to its fullest potential. Often users may not even be aware of certain features that would be beneficial to them. Instead of assuming the software doesn't have a feature you would like to have, ask if they have it or perhaps there is a workaround. Working closely with your software provider will help you stay successful as a software user and will maximize your output from it.

On Demand Webinars and Continued Education

On-Demand webinars and videos are also important for user success as these are ongoing support resources that you can take advantage of. Always ask what resources are available besides day to day support and a customer success team. Regular webinars, on-demand videos, and more are all helpful tools that will help you be successful software users for continued education and also when you need to look up something quick.

Investment in Research and Development

An important factor in any staffing software solution is the **research and development**. Are new features and products consistently being released? How often are there new developments? You want to partner with a software provider that invests in their software. If investment and new developments aren't being made, then you aren't going to grow either.

It's also important to be cautious of shiny new objects being released quickly and at a rapid pace. Quick development and releases can often be glitchy, unreliable, and unfinished. A software solution that is constantly innovating and producing quality products is a solution you want to partner with.

Track Record as a Company

Another essential factor to consider when assessing a staffing software partner is their track record as a company. How long have they been in business? Are they a new kid on the block or do they have longevity in the industry? Staffing software solutions that have been in the industry, know the industry, have experience, and are most likely not going anywhere. If you are a risk averse person, then going with a software solution that is stable and has been in the industry might be a better option for your software partnership and long-term growth.

Additionally, check software review sites like [G2](#) and ask for references as you are getting close to making your selection. A company's history and number of years in business speaks for itself, but customer experience can only be heard through the words of the customer. It can also be helpful to ask how many long-term customers they have. Customers that have been using the software for a long time is your end goal remember. Your staffing software investment is not just a software, it's a long-term partnership to set yourself up for growth.

Staffing Industry Involvement

Lastly, you will want to partner with a software solution that is active in the industry. Does the software provider frequently attend local and national staffing conferences? How involved are they with staffing associations? Do they conduct industry webinars and presentations with staffing associations as leaders in the industry? **Industry involvement is key.** You are in the staffing business, so your staffing software provider needs to understand the business. As you know, the needs and landscape of the staffing industry are constantly changing and your software provider needs to understand the needs to equip you with technology that helps you stay at the forefront.

The Only Recruiting and Staffing Software You Will *EVER* Need

Hopefully this article can help give you a new perspective on staffing software partnerships. Your staffing software is more than just a solution, it's a partnership. When assessing staffing software solutions, remember to look for a long-term partnership that will *help you grow*. While features and needs you have are also important when assessing software solutions, you also need to think of the important non feature side of the business: Support, your customer experience, research and development for the solution, industry involvement, and their experience and track record in the industry. You are making a big investment in the staffing software solution, you want to ensure you are getting the experience back that you invested in to have a competitive edge in the industry.

As you assess staffing software solutions, hope this article helps you find the *only* recruiting and staffing software you will ever need.

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Closing the Candidate!

Fact versus Fiction

By Steve Finkel

How much time have you spent concentrating on subjects such as identifying and recruiting new candidates? Probably a great deal. Now ask yourself this. How much time have you spent thinking about and learning advanced level closing principles and techniques? Much less, right?

This isn't your fault. There is a serious deficiency of the knowledge of how to close in our industry. And along with that, there are serious misunderstandings. These will cause any recruiter – no matter how experienced – to lose a significant number of fees that should be yours. Why? Because the facts are that you are not paid for recruiting candidates; you are paid to get the best candidates to accept the offer! And that means closing.

Let's take a moment and address some of the things you'll hear when the subject is brought up.

"If you do everything right up front, the close becomes automatic."

This is a common phrase which we have all heard. Because we hear it so often, we tend to believe it without thinking. But is it true? Not really. Sometimes a wonderful hypothesis is destroyed by some ugly facts. Here they are.

First, doing everything "right up front" on a consistent basis is a near impossibility. It presumes that first, you know exactly what's right and how to do it and secondly, that you can implement it every time.

A good analogy would be to assume that if a baseball pitcher had control of every pitch, he would throw a perfect game. In theory, that's true. In practice, we all know it isn't.

This is an amazingly complex business. Some years ago, an industry trainer– Phil Ross – developed an audio series called The 27 Steps of the Placement Process. Regardless of whether there are the number of steps Mr. Ross claimed, the point is that there are a lot of them. A single mistake can cost you the fee; the same mistake made over and over will cost you many fees. Most of us will admit that we are not perfect. If that's you, you can assume that the sweet sounding "doing everything right up front" breaks down in reality.

"If you build in a series of trial closes along the way, you won't have to close."

This is another statement we have all heard, but which breaks down in practice. Most people acknowledge that we are in a sales field. Yet, believing that, they do not pay attention to a foundational truth of selling – that decisions are hard, and that indecision at the close is to be expected. This was addressed by one of the great sales trainers in his field, John Lawhon, in his book The Selling Bible.

"The longer you are in sales, the more you will become convinced that a few moments before the customer says yes, a mild form of insanity takes over. Usually this final resistance is voiced as an unreasonable objection or simply an unwillingness to proceed."

Mr. Lawhon's background was in furniture sales, but you'll see the same thing from sales trainers with a background in real estate, insurance, or any other field. Do they teach trial or "minor point" closes? Of course. But that alone is not enough. Nor will it be enough for you. At the end, it takes more. It takes serious closing skills.

"I get 75% of my offers accepted. No matter what I do, that's what I get."

Some recruiters simply give up on the concept of improvement, and adjust to the fact that they can only achieve a certain offer-to-acceptance ratio. Unfortunately, that adjustment prevents them from learning additional specific techniques or strategies which would yield increased production.

Equally to the point, a client whose offer is declined is unlikely to become a repeat client. He too is frustrated – and the recruiter is likely to be blamed. Repeat clients are developed not just by submitting candidates, but by acceptance of the offer. Our worth to the client is not solely at the beginning; let's face it, there are other ways the client can find candidates. Rather, our

worth is at the end – assisting the client in getting the offer accepted. Those who do not continue to improve their skills in this area are paying a high price in not just short-term production but in repeat clients.

“I never lose one. I haven’t had a turndown in years.”

Let’s put aside the possibility that people who say this are either fibbing or have unconsciously suppressed the memory of candidate turndowns. The latter, by the way, is understandable; who likes to dwell on a painful negative? But let’s presume this is true.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, one of our great Supreme Court justices, once observed that “a moment’s insight can sometimes supersede decades of experience.” Here’s an insight that you ought to consider.

When you hear someone say “I haven’t had a turndown in years,” it is frequently an indication that they are not as good at follow-up after first interview as they should be. What they are doing is the equivalent of standing in the batter’s box in baseball and only trying to hit home runs.

You are not there just to hit home runs! You are there to score runs! And that means getting men on base. It means, presuming there is interest on the part of the client, motivating a not-thoroughly-convinced candidate to go out on a second interview. Doing so will not always result in a home run. But it will result in far more runs scored. That means – in our business – far more fees.

There is an easy way to measure this. Compare your sendout-to-placement-ratio with your second-interview-to-placement ratio. You will see that the latter will be at least twice that of the former. By moving the candidate to a second interview, you will **double** the chances of an offer and an acceptance.

Those who claim they “never lose one” are in fact losing out on many fees that should be theirs. Concentrating on improved debriefing will lead to many more second interviews and offers, This will in turn result in greatly increased production when closing skills are added to the mix.

The Cost of Closing

Many think of closing as a single call, and presume that increased results are limited to that individual call. But in fact, everything that happens up to that point will also be far more productive.

For example, presume that a recruiter gets two offers per month. He actually has two full weeks of effort invested in every closing call. Two weeks of doing everything leading up to that moment are now on the line. One offer a month means four weeks of effort invested. Improving closing skills improves the results of everything he has done for that entire time.

Our Worth To The Client

Accept reality. In today’s market, there are other ways of obtaining candidates other than through you. We all know them. So what do we offer the client that cannot be provided through those alternative options?

Acceptances! Our primary worth to the client is not at the beginning; rather, it is at the end. Through proper debriefing and closing skills, we can help to secure the talents of the candidates he needs. But that means separating ourselves from these false understandings and concentrating on what no one else can do – debriefing and closing.

How complex is this? Consider that my brand-new book, Closing for Recruiters!, contains 300+ pages of material that has never been broadly offered to the industry. But only in this way – mastering these critical but overlooked portions of the search process – can we maximize our worth to the client. Moreover, it will insulate us from the techno-tools which clients may believe will enable them to avoid us. And it will dramatically increase your production.

Consider and act. You now have the opportunity to obtain many more offers – and to close the close ones! Read [about Steve here](#)>

JUST ASK Judy



By Judy Collins

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of How AI Has Changed the Job Search Process!

AI has touched all of us, whether we like it or not, including the job search process. We see changes in how to rewrite a resume, candidate commitment, and the role recruiters are playing in the job market. AI is a good tool for the applicant, the recruiter, and the hiring manager, but human

judgement will always play an important role when companies are looking for the best talent.

AI has not changed what candidates want from a good job but how quickly and easily they can pursue job opportunities. What this means for recruiters is more applications, smarter screening, and faster engagement. Candidates can rewrite their resume to improve formatting, keyword alignment, and professional language but it can also mask gaps in experience, inflate responsibilities, and can reduce differentiation of the good from the bad. Applications can be customized in seconds, cover letters and outreach messages are auto generated, and the mass application volume has skyrocketed. More applications do not always correlate to better candidates.

For the recruiter, AI can assist with sorting and analyzing the increasing volume of resumes which are flooding in. Beyond that function the recruiter's experience and judgement will play a decisive role in assessing the true capabilities of a candidate and their suitability for a specific placement.

This article will address these ideas and hopefully make the recruiter aware of the benefits, and the pitfalls, of AI.

AI has lowered the barriers to applying for a job.

To get some insights on this I spoke with my long-time friend, Henry Glickel, executive recruiter and president of Sales Recruiters, Inc. Henry noted that AI has fundamentally lowered the barriers to applying for a job, making it easy for applicants to prepare a resume. AI allows the job seeker to immediately do detailed research on the hiring company as well as on the specific requirements of the role they are seeking. An applicant's resume can be custom tailored in seconds to fit the stated job requirements of the position and appropriate key words can be included to ensure the applicant is not culled out too soon by an ATS. Cover letters and outreach messages can be auto generated and quickly prepared for mass application. AI has changed how quickly and easily applicants can pursue opportunities. All this is great for the applicant but does not necessarily lead to a better hire.

Impacts on recruiters and HR.

With so many resumes going out, HR departments and hiring managers are bogging down trying to deal with the volume. To some degree the positive effects of AI on resumes have offset the rising volume by offering improved formatting, keyword alignment, and use of professional language. On the downside, AI effects tend to mask gaps in experience, inflate responsibilities, and have made many resumes look just the same. This means that HR and recruiters can no longer rely on resumes alone to assess capabilities.

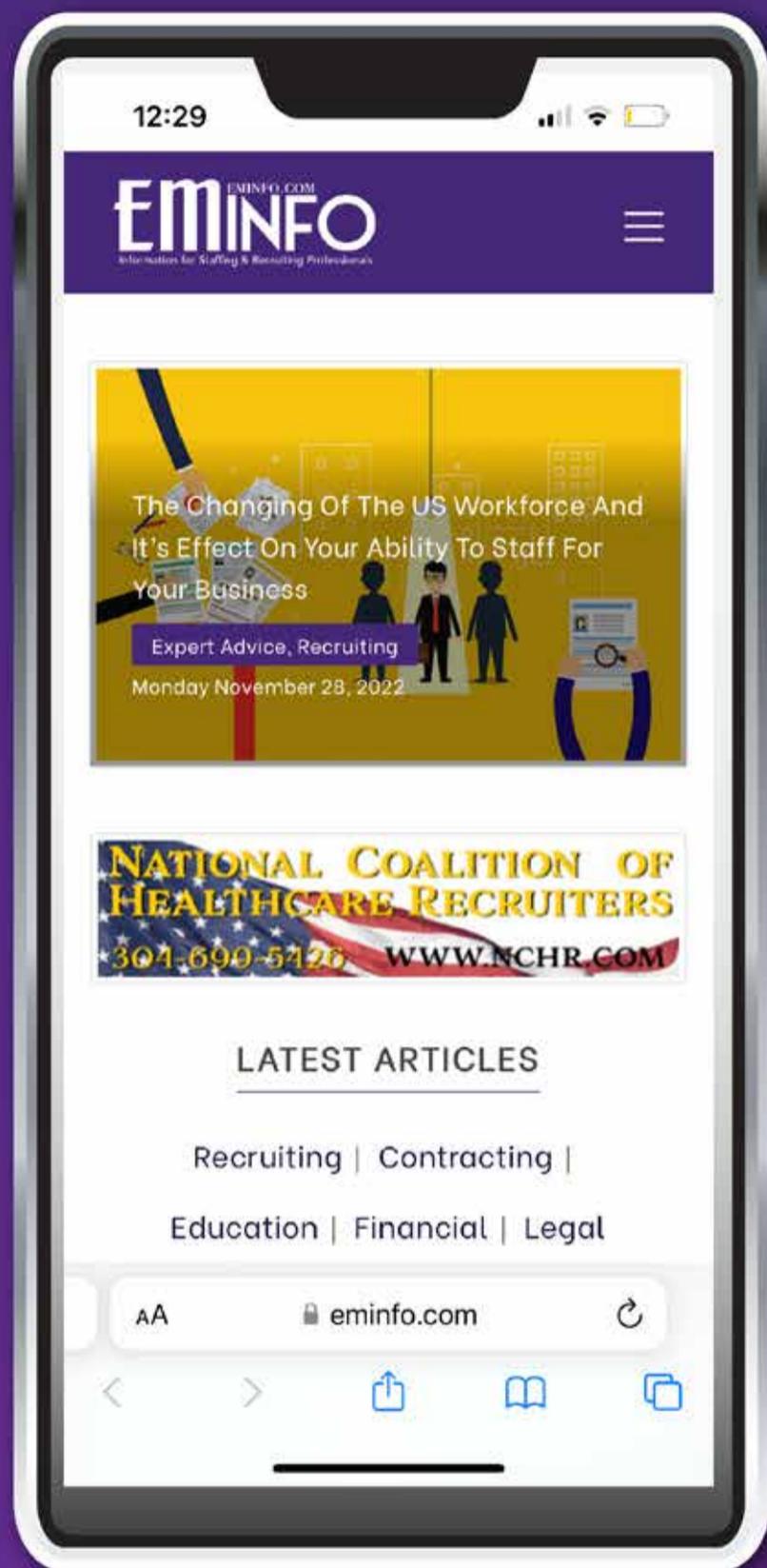
AI has affected candidate commitment.

I asked Henry about candidate commitment and how it has changed with the advent of AI in the job market. He noted that because applying is so easy, candidates apply more broadly with less real commitment to pursue a specific job. Henry says that "ghosting" has increased and interview no-shows have become more common. Another indicator is that offer-stage drop-offs happen more often. So, it seems that AI has reduced the friction of applying for a job but has also reduced the emotional investment on the part of the applicant.

Speed impacts of AI.

Speed has always played an important role in the hiring process in getting the best candidates

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in front of the hiring manager. AI has compressed hiring timelines by enabling candidates to apply even faster, reducing the time available for hiring managers and recruiters to evaluate and respond before a potentially good candidate disengages and looks elsewhere: slow processes lose talent. This requires recruiters to move faster than ever to compete.

Changing role of the recruiter.

Recruiters are no longer simply resume gatekeepers. They are now signal interpreters, motivation validators, and advisors to clients navigating a noisy pipeline! AI has not replaced the recruiter; it has raised the bar on the effort needed to find a good candidate. All this means is that recruiters are seeing a new demand for their services. With more and more resumes and applications to deal with and less differentiation among candidates there is a greater reliance on human judgement.

The good side of AI for the recruiter.

I asked Henry for his thoughts on the "good side" of AI. He noted that AI provides the recruiter with smarter screening of applicants by developing proof-based questions instead of just resume scanning, consistency checks between a written resume and conversations with the candidate, and early human touchpoints where short phone calls can outperform automation. Another benefit for the recruiter is faster engagement because of rapid follow-up, shorter screening cycles, and by establishing clear expectations early in the hiring process. Lastly, AI can help recruiters focus on outcomes, ownership, and decision-making to better validate the candidate's fit for the position: less emphasis on polish, more on substance.

What the industry is saying about AI impacts.

To learn about the real everyday effects of AI on the job search industry I asked Henry about what impacts are being seen. *Indeed* reports a significant increase in applications per role as AI tools become more widely used by job seekers. He cited *Harvard Business Review* reports that AI improves presentation but does not improve underlying competence. Similarly, LinkedIn highlights rising recruiter concern around application volume and candidate authenticity. A key insight from this is that AI accelerates job search activity but weakens differentiation – making recruiter judgement even more important – not less!

The bottom line for recruiters.

The upshot of all this is that AI doesn't make better candidates; it allows for faster applications, with recruiters seeing more resumes. AI handles speed and volume with recruiters adding value through judgement, validation, and trust. When applying takes seconds, commitment drops. Early human contact matters now more than ever! The role of the recruiter is changing – not going away!

I enjoyed exploring the topic of AI with Henry and it was good to hear that the role of recruiters is evolving, going to the next level. The role of communicating, talking, reviewing, and helping in the decision-making process is key to a successful placement.

If anyone has any questions or would like to talk with Henry, he can be reached by phone at (603) 894-0007, by email at henry@salesrecruiters.com, or by visiting his website at: <https://www.salesrecruiters.com/>.

If you enjoyed this article, found it interesting, and would like to discuss any of the ideas talked about, please let me know by phone at (713) 858-2677 or by email at judy@jcsrllc.com. Please visit my website at <https://www.jcsrllc.com/> and feel free to check out my new YouTube channel: *Just Ask Judy!*

[Read More By Judy Collins](#)



How to Take Your Firm from Chaos to Calm AND Hit Your Billing Goals

What is the best way to keep organized as a recruiter?

The Importance of Specificity in Recruitment Metrics

I am giving you my general experience of people that are not clients of ours when they come to us and the help they need. They might have a billing goal, but if it's \$300,000 and I'm like, what do you have to do every day to hit that goal? I need to talk to candidates and clients. No, no, no. How many statistically do you need to talk to? How many interviews do you need to arrange, job orders, per month, per week? So, 95% of the people we get in contact with do not know the answer.

Crafting a Metrics-Centered Plan for Success

One, you get the answers. What are the exact, specific, and **precise metrics you need to hit your billing goals**? There are exact, specific, and precise metrics.

Two, you build your plan around those metrics. Let's use a conversation I had earlier. The person needed 4 marketing presentations and they needed 8 recruit presentations to hit their \$300,000 billing goal.

Do I need to hire a researcher?

Do I have a list prepared?

The Power of Daily Conversations: Getting Clarity On When Your Day is Done

Now once I hit my 12 conversations, Monday afternoon, 5:30, I'm like, I'm done for the day. I don't care if a deal blew up today, if I got a job order, or if I arrange an interview. I talked to 12 people. Because I know if I talk to 12 people every day, by the end of the week, I'm going to have a search assignment and I am going to have 2 interviews. If I do that every week, I am going to have \$300,000 to \$350,000 billed. That is the best way to get organized and keep organized.

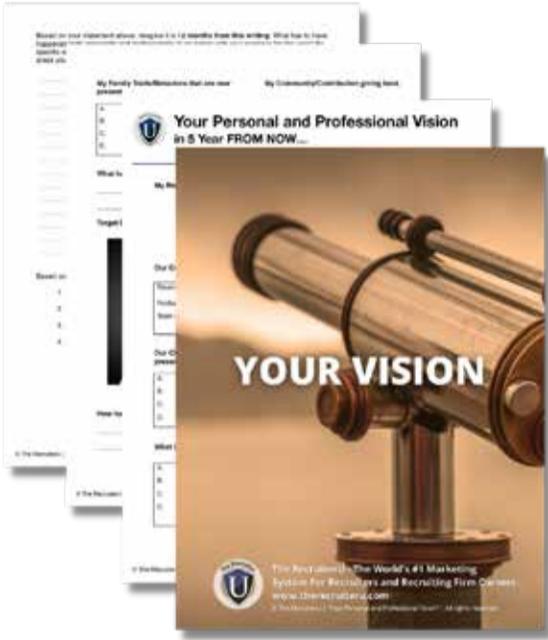
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Why Lack of Organization Often Signals Lack of Focus

When I see lack of organization, I generally see lack of focus. When I see a lack of focus, I see a lack of a clear outcome and with time, measured achievable goals, and that is where the metrics part is.

If that is something you want help with, that's one of the things I think we are most brilliant at. You want to reach out to us at mikeg@TheRecruiterU.com and go, hey, what does your program look like? I want to really get organized as a recruiter, and I want to put all these things in place. That is where you start. Clear desire, back that into a number, back that number into monthly and weekly and daily activities.



How to Identify Your Personal and Professional Vision to Ensure You're Always Moving Forward <https://get.therecruiteru.com/your-vision>

[Read More by Mike Gionta](#)



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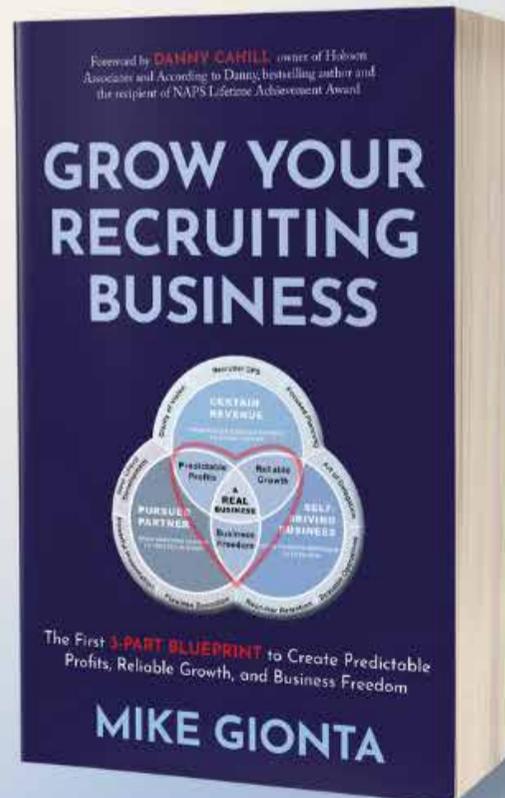
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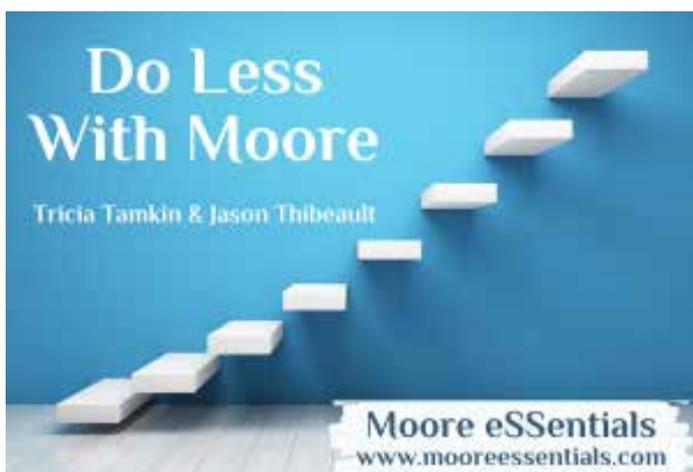
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Just Tell Us Where To Send It!

"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





By Jason Thibeault

Your Shoes Are So Cute

I said this to a random woman while walking into a mall recently. She smiled, looked down at her shoes, and thanked me. It's not flirting, my wife told me as we walked away, "that was so nice of you, you probably made her day." She's seen me ask men where they got their backpacks, compliment strangers' cars, clothes, and hair for years. It's a life hack.

Here are the effects. First, it helps me keep a pleasant look on my face. It's hard to look around at people and think of a compliment for them, without at least a slight smile. Angry face plus height is an intimidating, unwanted combination.

Next, it gives me something to say if conversation with that person happens. Let's face it, most people we see we don't converse with. But if you do have a brief 5-second exchange, doesn't it go so much better when they compliment you?

Boom, you've also disarmed them. If they were aggressive, even if it was going to be aimed at you, it is hard for anyone's brain to shift gears like that. Them: I can't believe this guy took the last creampie! I was clearly in line first. Me: I like that jacket, where did you get it?

In fact, we're on the way to friendship. How we feel about people is often a reflection of how they make us feel about ourselves. When you identify a decision they made and comment on it positively, you're making them feel good about an action they chose.

(Side note: these aren't "genetic" compliments. Let's say someone compliments me for my height. It's nice, yet my impact on that was... eating. "Nice eyes" takes less work than "nice eye makeup," which requires taste, patience, and practice.)

Would you be more likely to perceive a person as approachable and friendly if you saw them routinely gassing others up? Every time we survey a class on whether they would pay more to work with people they like, the overwhelming answer is yes.

It's also the life you want to live in. A world where it is likely you will receive a genuine compliment whenever you're in public? The only caveat is we have to build that world one compliment at a time.

Read more from [Jason here>](#)

Starfish Partners & Dimensional Search

EMinfo talks with Jon Bartos: Tell us a little about what you do for Next Level (NLE) and Starfish Partners?

Jon: Currently I am the CEO of Dimensional Search, Chief Investment Advisor for Starfish Partners and as Partner of Sanford Rose Associates, I help existing owners grow, build and scale, by helping them get into Sanford Rose Associates. Here is a quick explanation of our organization. We simply help Search Firm owners grow, build and scale.

Our organization consists of two major organizations. Starfish Partners, which is an investment platform where we have purchased 11 recruiting firms, and continued to grow, build and scale them. Next Level (NLE) is our organization that offers services to search firm owners. Part of NLE is following organizations and services:

1. Sanford Rose Associates, for existing search firms looking to grow their firms. It's really a country club for search firm owners, saving them over 10K per seat per year on technology tools, world's best one-on-one coaching, training and development, marketing communications, tech support and a host of other services. The average existing search firm that joins SRA, not only saves a ton of money but has an average growth rate of 25-350% over a five-year period.
2. Dimensional Search, our organizations that allows people outside of the recruiting and staffing industry to start their own search firm. We help them with their vertical market, technology tools, training on how to do the business, a hiring team to help them hire, website, world class marketing communications, discounts on tech tools, etc.. Once the new search firm owner, gets over a certain dollar volume, they are invited to join the big leagues, Sanford Rose Associates. www.joindimensionalsearch.com. <https://dimensionalsearch.com/news/dimensional-search-attains-100-awarded-franchises-in-less-than-24-months/>
3. Next Level Exchange – The industries training platform that is helped thousand of new and existing recruiting and staffing professionals get better at their craft. Next Level Exchange has thousands of hours of video-based training from the best of the best in the industry over the last 15 years. Its Netflix for the recruiting professional.
4. Next Level Academy – like an online university, its courses for recruiting and staffing professional. The coursework is for all recruiting and staffing professionals including individual contributors, recruiters, Sales Development Reps, researchers and search firm owners and managers.

Starfish Partners , an international investment and ownership platform for niched professional and mid-to-upper management search specialists, provides capital for recruiting firms looking to scale as well as exit strategies for owners seeking to secure value for their firm in cash and/or stock. Starfish Partners also provides liquidity and the ability to monetize some value while simultaneously providing equity opportunities for key producers and leaders. We have also procured 11 search firms over the last 24 months to become part of the Starfish Partners portfolio companies.

Visit www.starfishpartners.com

TRENDS



4 Data-Driven Insights

Staffing Trends 2026



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AI-Resistant Careers Index 2026: The 20 Jobs Too Stressful for AI to Take Over

Resume Now ranks the top careers where adaptability, stress tolerance, and self-control keep paychecks high and automation at bay

While AI is transforming industries, some careers remain out of reach because they demand uniquely human strengths: resilience under pressure, adaptability in crisis, and emotional control. Resume Now®, a leading AI-powered resume platform, has unveiled its AI-Resistant Careers Index 2026, ranking the 20 high-paying jobs least likely to be replaced by automation.

Drawing on data from the U.S. Department of Labor's O*NET Work Styles, the Index identifies jobs where AI assists with routine tasks, but humans must step in when lives, reputations, or entire organizations are on the line.

How the Index Was Built

Data sources: U.S. Department of Labor's O*NET (work style scores) and Payscale (median salaries)

Human factors analyzed: Adaptability, Stress Tolerance, Self-Control

Index score: Average of the three factors

Eligibility: Only jobs scoring ≥ 74 in all three traits

"AI can make these jobs more efficient, but it can't take the heat of high-stakes decision-making," said Keith Spencer, career expert at Resume Now. "These roles thrive precisely because they demand human judgment, emotional regulation, and resilience under pressure, which are qualities machines simply can't replicate.

Top 20 AI-Resistant Careers (Ranked by AI-Resistant Index)

Index = average of Adaptability, Stress Tolerance, and Self-Control scores

Nurse Anesthetists:	Index 93.3 Annual Salary \$195,263
Emergency Physicians:	Index 92.3 Annual Salary \$302,047
Judges:	Index 91.3 Annual Salary \$115,325
General Surgeons:	Index 91.3 Annual Salary \$339,027
Commercial Pilots:	Index 91.0 Annual Salary \$101,876
Physician Assistants:	Index 90.0 Annual Salary \$112,942
Airline Pilot, Copilot, or Flight Engineer:	Index 88.0 Annual Salary \$120,510
Flight Test Engineers:	Index 88.0 Annual Salary \$100,703
Air Traffic Controllers:	Index 86.0 Annual Salary \$94,241
Veterinarians:	Index 85.0 Annual Salary \$106,323
Anesthesiologists:	Index 85.0 Annual Salary \$349,293
Chief Executive Officers (CEO):	Index 83.3 Annual Salary \$175,380
Chief Information Security Officers (CIO):	Index 83.3 Annual Salary \$181,751
Pharmacists:	Index 83.0 Annual Salary \$124,169
Attorney / Lawyers:	Index 80.7 Annual Salary \$106,065
Financial Managers:	Index 78.7 Annual Salary \$90,442
Dentists:	Index 78.7 Annual Salary \$159,970
Construction Managers:	Index 78.0 Annual Salary \$88,103
Nuclear Power Reactor Operators:	Index 77.7 Annual Salary \$74,580
Cybersecurity Analysts:	Index 76.7 Annual Salary \$83,244

Healthcare dominates: 8 of the top 20 jobs are medical roles, all requiring composure in life-or-death moments.

Aviation ranks high: Pilots, copilots, engineers, and controllers illustrate why flight safety is still human-led.

Leaders under fire: CEOs, CIOs, and judges combine accountability with emotional restraint, keeping them resistant to AI.

Stress pays: Many roles exceed \$150K+, with surgeons and anesthesiologists topping \$300K.

Methodology

The AI-Resistant Careers Index 2026 is based on an analysis of:

O*NET database (U.S. Department of Labor) — scores for work styles including Stress Tolerance, Adaptability/Flexibility, and Self-Control.

Payscale — median annual salaries.

Index calculation:

For each role, Resume Now collected three critical "human factors" comprising the overall Adjustment Work Style

Adaptability — the ability to adjust to new conditions.

Stress Tolerance — the ability to function effectively under pressure

Self-Control — the ability to regulate emotions and remain composed.

An AI-Resistant Index score was calculated by averaging these three dimensions.

Only jobs with scores ≥ 74 in all three factors and median salaries $\geq \$74,000$ were considered.

The 20 highest-ranking jobs formed the Index.

To view the full report with more information, please visit <https://www.resume-now.com/job-resources/careers/ai-resistant-careers-index> or contact Alexa Kalechofsky at

alexa.kalechofsky@bold.com.

About Resume Now

Resume Now is a powerful resource dedicated to helping job-seekers achieve their potential. Resume Now's AI resume builder is a cutting-edge tool that makes creating a resume fast, easy, and painless. Resume Now has been dedicated to serving job seekers since 2005. Alongside its powerful AI resume builder and stylish ready-to-use templates, it also features free advice for job seekers at every career stage, guides for every step of the hiring process, and free resources for writing cover letters. Resume Now is committed to supporting job seekers and workers alike and has conducted numerous surveys related to the experience, trends, and culture of the workplace. These surveys have been featured in Business Insider, CNBC, Fast Company, Yahoo!, Forbes, and more. Keep up with Resume Now on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, and Pinterest.

Key Insights

Letter From The Editor



Don't miss out!

The year ahead is shaping up to be dynamic, and we encourage focusing on progress and opportunity rather than negativity. Artificial intelligence continues to expand across industries, enhancing efficiency by streamlining repetitive tasks—not replacing people.

As with past advancements in manufacturing automation, AI complements human work and opens the door to new capabilities.

Manufacturing growth across the Midwest, particularly in Missouri, remains strong. These developments are the result of years of planning, investment, and coordination, and they continue to create significant job opportunities.

Finding qualified candidates—and motivating them to relocate—remains a key challenge.

Our authors offer a wealth of insights and practical strategies to help you strengthen your processes and position yourself as a leader in your niche.

Carpe diem

Happy Recruiting!

Pat Turner

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