

USING EMPLOYMENT/TEMPORARY AGENCIES

How can employment agencies help job seekers?

- ❑ An employment agency is only one of many ways available to identify prospective employers, but one that should not be overlooked, especially in a difficult job market.
- ❑ Agencies refer applicants to employers who have listed vacancies with them. Sometimes they even send applicants' resumes to those employer contacts who do not have an appropriate position currently listed with the agency (a blind inquiry).
- ❑ Agencies collect a fee when their referral results in a job offer being accepted.
- ❑ "Fee paid" positions: The employer rather than the applicant pays the placement fee.
- ❑ "Non-fee paid" positions: The applicant pays the fee – usually 10% to 25% of the job's annual gross salary (before taxes).

How helpful are agencies?

- ❑ Employment agencies are most helpful to applicants in a field in which the demand for individuals with those skills exceeds the available supply of candidates having those skills. For example, fields in which demand exceeds supply includes engineering, computer science, and to some extent, accounting. Humanities and social science majors will probably find employment agencies less helpful to them unless they are interested in sales jobs.

How should a job seeker locate an agency?

- ❑ One way is to follow the classified ads for a while to see which agencies seem to specialize in the type of job you are seeking.
- ❑ Another is the recommendation of someone you know who has been pleased with the services of the agency, which may include "temps" or client companies. Ask them if they will receive a commission from their referral.
- ❑ Remember the size of the agency and how long it has been in business are not necessarily related to the quality of the agency's services.
- ❑ Locate an agency by looking in the Yellow Pages under "Temporary Agencies," "Employment Agencies," or "Personnel Consultants."
- ❑ Always check with the Better Business Bureau and/or the local government consumer protection agency to determine if there have been any complaints registered against the agency.
- ❑ If you are seeking a position in another city or state, be sure to use the office of an agency located there. Even though many agencies advertise that they are national ones, you will generally get better service if you register with the branch located in the area to which you wish to move.

How can job-seekers best use agencies?

- ❑ Visit the agency in person by making an appointment in advance.
- ❑ Respond to the agency “counselor” as if s/he is an employer. Go for the appointment dressed as you would for a job interview. Convince the “counselor” you are a “marketable” applicant so s/he will spend time trying to place you. Do not attempt to share with the “counselor” your fears, self-doubts, etc.
- ❑ Work with only several agencies at a time to be sure that employers are not being flooded with your resume.
- ❑ Ask the following questions:
 1. What services are they offering?
 2. Who will be doing the work? (Do you get the feeling it is you?)
 3. What guarantee of success are they offering? Beware if they guarantee perfect success with all clients.
 4. How many limits will they place on you?
 5. Who is the person with whom you will be working? If it is not the same one who interviews you initially, ask to meet him/her.
 6. What is the cost of the services? Are there additional costs for additional services e.g., printing and sending out resumes?
 7. What does the contract state? What provision, if any, is there for rebate of part of the fee if you become unhappy with their help? After what point will no rebates be given?
 8. Ask about training opportunities.
- ❑ Find out as much as possible about the position before you go for an interview with the employer. Be wary of being pushed into jobs for which you are over-qualified or have no qualifications for whatsoever.
- ❑ Call the “counselor” periodically just to let him/her know your employment status.
- ❑ Be wary of jobs for which you must pay the fee. By the time you pay it, you may not be making enough money to live on.
- ❑ Read any contracts carefully. Ask for explanations of points you do not understand. Be careful what you sign. Be sure you get a copy of the contract.

How do you find the right temp firm?

If you are looking for a temporary agency that will give you individual attention, you should ask the following questions:

1. Does the firm offer individualized training programs?
2. What types of screening tests are given to determine whether your skill set is required by the temporary assignment?
3. Will the personnel coordinator be accessible to me?
4. Will I be placed in jobs that meet my needs as it relates to the length of the assignment?
5. Does the temporary firm treat applicants with respect?
6. Do “temps” feel valued or do they feel like just another number?

OTHER JOB PLACEMENT AGENCIES

Temporary Agencies – these agencies are hired by companies to fill both short-term and longer-term positions. Many of these positions are secretarial or administrative in nature, yet students may find temporary agencies an excellent way to break into a company and gain some varied, hands-on experience. Temporary work can also be an excellent way to demonstrate your talents and energy, especially in very competitive fields like television and advertising, where you must often “prove” yourself before being hired. When considering temporary agencies, inquire about “temporary-to-permanent” positions.

Executive Search Firms – these agencies are hired by companies to locate middle and senior level managers.

Resources and websites:

CSD 163 Directory of Temporary Placement Firms

CSD 166 Executive Recruiters

CSD 165 The Directory of Executive Recruiters

www.therecruitenetwork.com

www.lucascareers.com

www.thetalentbank.com