

## Staffing Industry Status Report

Traditionally, changes in the staffing industry serve as a harbinger of the direction in which the overall economy is moving. In other words, our industry is slightly ahead of others in terms of growth or decline. When the bottom falls out of the economy, we usually feel it first, but we're also among the first industries to experience recovery.

In this year's economic downturn, the staffing industry was taken by surprise. Along with other sectors, our numbers were relatively strong right up to the collapse. A recent uptick in temporary and contract employment, however, may indicate that the economy is moving in the right direction.

According to the American Staffing Association (ASA), in the second half of 2009, staffing industry employment was up 15.7 percent from a record decline in January of the same year. The trend was also noted by the national media following the release of unemployment figures by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In a roundup of coverage, ASA highlighted the following quotes:

- "A possible encouraging sign...Employers are expected to hire temporary workers as a first step toward ratcheting up employment." — *USA Today*
- "One ray of hope in the unemployment number was temporary employment... Changes in temporary help usually precede changes in the overall job picture, and hopefully, that will be true this time as well." —CNBC.com



As we move into the new year, we in the staffing industry are focused on that "ray of hope" and look forward to fulfilling our role as one of the leaders in economic recovery. ■

(Sources: American Staffing Association, *ASA Staffing Week*, Alexandra Karaer, "Data Show Industry Employment Edging Up," and Reem El-Khatib, "Media Note 'Encouraging' Temporary Employment Trends," October 12, 2009.)

The American Staffing Association recently reported a key research finding:

Temporary help employment is a leading indicator for nonfarm employment—Staffing job trends lead nonfarm employment by three months when the economy is emerging from a recession.

The upturn in September 2009, then, could signal better prospects for the economy as a whole in 2010.

(Source: ASA, "Staffing Jobs as Economic and Employment Indicators," June 2009.)



Rose, still wanted for questioning in connection with an "incident" at the clearance rack in Bloomingdale's, requested that we conceal her identity.

## Q&A with Rose: Everyone's Favorite Editech Staffer

Temps and clients alike know Rose Reisig as the one who's really in charge at Editech, but who's behind the wise-cracking, fast-talking New Yorker façade, and what's her real role in the office? As it turns out, behind the façade is a wise-cracking, fast-talking New Yorker; here's what else we found out about Rose:

**Q:** Rose, we know you do a little bit of everything at Editech, from helping clients figure out what kind of personnel they need to lending an ear to troubled temps, but what's your real job description?

**A:** My main responsibilities are client and employee liaison, administrative operations, and marketing. Basically, I spend most of my time on the phone, trying to match up temps with job openings and trying to show prospective clients how using temps can be an asset to their companies. "Administrative operations" means that when we run out of something or something breaks in the office, I get blamed.

**Q:** What's the best part of your job?

**A:** I'm a very sociable person, so I like meeting new people, both clients and potential employees. If someone works with Editech long enough, I'll tell them about my sons, my granddaughter, my last trip—you name it.

**Q:** What's the worst part?

**A:** The worst part of my job is when an assignment doesn't work out for the client, the temp, or both. We try really hard to make a good match between the job and the candidate, but once in a while, the job requirements are different once you've got somebody in place. Then, we have to work quickly to find a replacement for the client, and I have to try to break the news gently to the temp that he or she isn't right for the job. As you pointed out, I'm from New York; we don't do breaking news gently.

**Q:** If you could give one piece of advice to temps, what would it be?

**A:** For people who are really looking to work, I'd say be as open, flexible, and accommodating as possible. Especially in the economic environment we're in now, don't put yourself in a box in terms of what kinds of work you do.

**Q:** If you could give one piece of advice to clients, what would it be?

**A:** Don't be afraid to use a staffing agency—it's really easier and cheaper than you might think. We do the time-consuming part—like interviewing and testing people, setting up the assignments, handling any problems—and we've had many, many instances where the client liked the temp so much that the temp was hired as a full-time, regular employee. That's the best kind of feedback we can get. ■



Questions, comments, suggestions? We'd love to hear from you. Send an e-mail to [etc@editech1.com](mailto:etc@editech1.com) or call 703-925-9100 and ask to speak with Debby Nolan.

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