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A S S O C I A T E S , I N C .

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## Agencies Audition Candidates

Just as companies audition temporary employees before offering permanent positions, good staffing agencies audition candidates before they choose to represent them. The livelihood of the agency depends on the quality of their candidates. When an agency receives a job order from a client, they may have numerous candidates with the required skills. In past columns we've talked about the importance of the cover letter, the resume, phone manners, etc. How else can you stack the deck in your favor so that you are the candidate that will be the agency's first choice? **How does the agency evaluate you?**

The process begins when you walk through the door. Smile at the receptionist and introduce yourself. Are you dressed and groomed appropriately? (It's not "just an agency" and casual attire is not okay). Did you bring two copies of your current resume? Do you have the correct name, address and phone number of your three former employers and of your references? Do you have the contact information for the educational institutions you attended? Did you bring your social security card and a picture I.D. (necessary for I-9 compliance)? Did you turn off your cell phone before you came in? Are you making eye contact with the staff you meet in the office?

In the increasingly complex and changing workplace, professionalism and attention to detail are highly valued. Skills alone are just not enough to put you in the spotlight when that order comes in.

If you've experienced a dismissal or have had a contentious parting with a former employer, discuss it with the agency representative. Be assured, every reputable agency will conduct a thorough pre-employment screening before they send you to their client. There are two sides to each dismissal, be upfront and tell yours before they call your employer. It will allow the agency to ask specific questions to evaluate the employer's version more objectively.

Don't hesitate to ask for feedback from agencies. Discuss your strengths and weaknesses and be open to their suggestions. Successful placements result from the combination of the right ingredients; first impressions and open and honest communications are a substantial part of the equation.

*Sandy Heath, is a Certified Temporary Staffing Specialist, with over 20 years in the employment industry. Her firm, Sandra Heath & Associates (SHA) specializes in the placement of office support personnel both on a permanent and temporary basis. Sandy has won numerous awards and accolades including Top 10 Women Business Owners in Northeast Ohio and has been invited to participate in various forums dealing with employment, diversity and certification issues.*