

Test you employment lingo

Communicating with government agencies requires an “acronym decoder” or you’ll get lost between DOD, DOL, EPA, GSA, etc. Granted, it’s an extreme example to show the disadvantage of not knowing industry specific terminology, but it makes our point.

Communicating with a staffing agency is also easier if you’re familiar with the terms. The length of “temporary” or “temp” assignments can vary widely, most are several weeks in duration, some may last for several months. Rarely will a company replace an employee during a brief absence, or hire a temp if a project can be completed with extra effort by their employees. Temp staffing is considered by businesses primarily as a vital, flexible tool to meet product and service demands.

The “Temp-to-Perm”, a.k.a. “Temp-to-Hire”, method is gaining increasing popularity. No guarantees of permanent employment are made, but after the initial “temp” period - from 90 -180 days (look for an agency that offers 90 days), the employer has the option of offering employment and the temp has the option to accept. Until that time, the candidate is an employee of the agency. Some agencies will charge the company an additional buy-out fee at the end of the trial period (look for one that does not). Occasionally the company is so impressed with a candidate that they will negotiate an earlier hiring date with the agency.

“Direct Hire” means a company turns to an agency to recruit and pre-qualify one or more candidates for a specific position and agrees to pay the agency a placement fee if a satisfactory candidate is employed. Since recruiting is the agency’s core business, the agency has established the best and most efficient processes to recruit, evaluate and pre-screen potential candidates. They will make recommendations to the hiring manager(s) and supply them with confidential resume, evaluation and pre-screening results and coordinate in-person interviews. The employment offer is also made through the agency. The process is usually outlined in a letter of agreement (some agencies insist on a more formal contractual document).

“Boomerang employees” are active retirees who re-enter the job market as temps. We included this term just because it’s so clever. There are also “permanent and professional temps” and “contingency/contract employees” but we’re out of space.

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.