STRATEGIES FOR A RECORD-BREAKING 2014

Stand OUT | Stay TOP-of-mind | Sell MORE

haley MARKETING
In the past four years, staffing firms have added more than one million jobs.

And according to Staffing Industry Analysts, the penetration of temporary workers into the U.S. labor force reached an all-time high in December 2013.

So how will you turn all this good news into a record-breaking 2014?
Essential Strategies for Growth

They say that a rising tide raises all ships. But do you want to do more than go with the flow? If so, you need a strategy to accelerate your staffing firm’s growth.

What can you do?
When I was growing up, I had the benefit of being around two really smart entrepreneurs every day -- better known as “Mom and Dad.” My folks were in the staffing industry since the late 60s, and during the downturns in the mid-70s, early 80s and early 90s, my Dad often reminded everyone of this very simple lesson:

“Make the economy the other guy’s problem!”
Unless you’re General Motors (or a multinational staffing firm), your success is really not tied to the overall economy.

Your success is directly correlated with the results you achieve in your office. Whether the economy is booming or in a recession, the key to driving growth is to do four things...
1. Win the local battles.

- Be more responsive - speed wins.
- Be better at recruiting - your ability to find talent is your #1 value.
- Be more focused. It’s easier to stand out when you’re a specialist.
2. Outhustle the competition.

- Make more calls (to the right people).
- Improve your marketing - the better you market, the fewer calls you need to make!
3. Be more creative in your sales approach.

- Don’t be a lemming! Implement sales techniques that differentiate your firm.

For example, before you pick up the phone, connect with the people you want to reach on LinkedIn, follow local HR influencers on Twitter and build relationships with them, use content marketing to elevate your sales discussions, and create more proactive plans for leveraging job fairs and networking events.

- People hate to be sold, so stop selling...and start consulting!
4. Defend your turf.

- It costs more to get a new client than to retain an existing one.

- Strive to deepen client relationships:
  - Expand your network of contacts
  - Sell to more departments
  - Fill more kinds of staffing needs
  - Cross sell services
  - Move up the value chain (more on this later)
Core Strategies for Sales Growth

Besides outworking the competition, how else can you drive sales growth? To help you strengthen your plans for the new year, here’s an overview of 11 strategies for driving revenue growth.
1. Basic growth strategies.
   a. Increase market share.

   Win a larger percentage of local business by marketing more aggressively, developing a niche you can own, getting more strategic about your sales approach, and/or rethinking your product and pricing strategies.
b. Increase client share.

Get a larger percentage of each of your EXISTING client’s business by outperforming the competition, managing accounts more proactively, cross selling more diligently, and being more aggressive with your pricing and service.
c. Geographic expansion.

One of the most common ways staffing companies grow is by opening new offices. Strategies for geographic expansion include:

- Opening offices that are closer to clients and/or job seekers
- Splitting a large office into multiple offices to better serve clients
- Providing a key employee with the opportunity to open a new branch
- Franchising
d. Service line extension.

For the past four years, IT has been the fastest-growing segment of the staffing industry. In 2014, IT will probably continue to be hot. Other fast-growth areas are projected to include oil & gas, healthcare, construction (yes, it’s finally back), life sciences, engineering and marketing & creative.
e. Follow the client.

This is really a subset of geographic expansion that involves opening new offices around key clients with facilities in other geographic markets. You partner with your client to open a new office to support their staffing needs, and then you grow a “retail” staffing business around that location.

a. Strategic acquisition.

If you speak with someone in the M&A world, they will tell you that the fastest way to grow a company is to buy other firms. While acquisitions can be risky business (more than 75% of acquisitions fail), they can make a lot of sense when they allow you to: take out a strong competitor, acquire key clients, expand your recruiting capabilities, enter into a new service line (without the learning curve), gain access to better technology, and/or achieve greater economies of scale.
b. Strategic merger.

Sometimes a marriage makes more sense than a takeover. Think of this like a Reese’s peanut butter cup – you mix chocolate and peanut butter to get a better whole. Likewise with the right partner, you might be able to grow faster than by going it alone. And if a full merger of operations is too much, consider a strategic partnership where you work with other firms to accelerate sales growth or improve operating efficiency.
c. Roll-up.

A roll-up is a form of strategic acquisition where one company attempts to purchase several other firms in order to grow the total business to be large enough to go public. The concept is that you purchase firms paying a smaller multiple on earnings in the private equity market and then flip the business with bigger multiples in the public market. This strategy is great when there is a hot IPO market for staffing firms, but it could put you out of business if the IPO fails.
d. Local market dominance.

Do you go after government contracts or other work where multiple winning bidders are selected? Rather than trying to win one slot, why not win them all? With this strategy, you would start or purchase multiple staffing firms in the same geographic or niche market. All the firms would operate independently (possibly with shared back office services), while attempting to win as much of the local market as possible.
3. Horizontal or vertical integration.

a. Move up the value chain.

Over the last few years, most of the biggest staffing firms have redefined themselves as workforce solutions firms. Why? Because as a solutions firm, they can offer a wider range of services, and provide more strategic services (i.e., less commoditized) that drive revenue growth by taking responsibility for outcomes and not just staffing. For your firm, you might consider on-site programs, MSP, VMS, RPO and other workforce consulting.
b. Sell other related services.

You’re a hiring expert. And a workforce management specialist. But do you make money off all of your expertise? One way staffing firms can drive growth is to offer other kinds of workforce-management-related services. On the low end, this can be as simple as payrolling. On the high end, it may be consulting on hiring process design, employee retention or other areas of HR. The idea is to offer new services that create new revenue opportunities, differentiate your firm from traditional staffing companies, and allow you to deepen relationships with your clients.
How the Most Successful Staffing Firms Survived 2009

Luckily, 2014 is NOTHING like 2009. Today, we’re at a peak period in the staffing business – and the forecasts are that the industry will only get stronger next year. But downturns, and especially painful ones like 2009, force us to be better managers.

If you look back at the staffing firms that were most successful over the past four years, you can find some great management lessons.
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Here’s what these firms did:

1. Batten down the hatches.

Minimize nonessential expenses. When business picks up, there’s a tendency to become a little lax about costs. However, top performing companies constantly strive to manage expenses, results, and people more closely.
2. Divest.

During 2009, a lot of staffing firms closed their weaker offices and business units. Often this was done out of necessity. During 2014, you should still look to cut non-producing people and expenses, and then reallocate those resources to your cash cows and rising stars.
3. More targeted and aggressive marketing.

Any marketing professional will tell you that you NEVER stop marketing. But in 2009, a lot of companies did stop. And those firms were the last to recover. The companies that continually invested in marketing – building their visibility and differentiation – recovered the fastest and strongest. Today, in a hot market, you should be looking to make a bigger impact with your marketing. Here are a few ideas to consider:

- Strengthen online marketing. This includes your website, SEO, PPC and social marketing. We have clients that bring in 50% of their business through online marketing!
- Increase involvement in your local community.
- Integrate low pressure, targeted direct marketing with your sales efforts.
- Do more local market branding.
4. Service line extension.

If you want to grow, go where the growth is, right? Maybe! During 2009, many companies attempted to pursue hot sectors and industries. And a large percentage of those firms received costly and painful lessons. Chasing a hot sector is highly risky, but if you can find the right employee or partner, it can be an effective way to grow. For your firm, consider looking at ways to become even more focused on industry niches (e.g., healthcare IT) where you can become the dominant player.
Where to Focus in 2014

You’ve just seen lots of ideas for growing a staffing firm, but what’s best for your company? Of course, that depends. It depends on your size, strengths, location, and depth of resources. But regardless of the strategies you decide to pursue, here are a few ideas that you can definitely implement.
1. **Build a moat**  
(make it harder for the competition to steal to your clients)

a. Deepen client relationships through more proactive account planning, regular contact, expanding your network of contacts and cross selling.

b. Increase switching costs. Make it harder to change to a new staffing vendor. For example, you could:

   - Manage workforce plans for your clients.
   - Build and maintain a database of their job descriptions.
   - Automate the job requisition process.
   - Further customize testing and orientation programs for each client.
   - Tie them in to your systems (online timekeeping, billing, reporting, etc.).
   - Create an app that helps your clients to more easily manage their staffing needs.
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2. Broaden your client roster.

a. Target more small accounts to reduce your dependence on the big ones. Because smaller accounts yield less revenue, you may not be able to use the same “high-touch” direct sales techniques that you use for larger accounts. Consider direct and inbound marketing to reach smaller accounts more cost-effectively.

b. Target different kinds of businesses to reduce your exposure to economic changes.
3. Improve recruiting for hard-to-find talent.

a. Make sure every job order gets filled. You want to have a strong enough database (and recruiting skills) that your fill percentage is always at or near 100%.

b. Enable your firm to be more responsive and fill orders faster. The better your recruiting, the better you can serve your clients. Remember, speed wins.

c. Become known as a top local specialist for specific kinds of talent.
4. Leverage ACA to your advantage.

a. Become a top local expert. First, educate yourself by taking advantage of resources from ASA, SIA, Assurance and Essential Staffcare.

b. Share ACA updates. This can be done via blog posts, email, handouts and social media. Make your website a resource center for ACA information. And direct mail the most vital information to local HR execs and business owners. You might even consider conducting webinars that show employers how to navigate ACA more effectively.
4. Leverage ACA to your advantage.

(continued)

c. When selling, focus on the healthcare cost savings of using temporary workers. For example, you could:

- Remind people that you are the employer of record for temporary employees.
- Show how your costs per hour for healthcare are likely lower than theirs (because you are able to spread the insurance costs over a larger number of hours since many temporary workers are not eligible for coverage).
- Remind people that flexible staffing is always less expensive than fixed overhead.

d. Continue to sell the value of staffing. This includes:

- Cost savings.
- Risk management (employment risk, economic risk, legal exposure).
- Productivity improvement (eliminate capacity constraints, reduce learning curves).
- Improved access to talent (easier, faster and better hires).
Lessons from the Team at Haley Marketing

If I haven’t already given you enough to think about, here are more ideas!

I asked our team to share their strategies for success in 2014. And they came through BIG TIME! Here a few invaluable bits of wisdom and advice from the people at Haley Marketing.
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Brad, Director of SEO & Social Media

• Plan an appropriate budget.
  Historically, staffing firms spend just 0.4% of sales on marketing. Industry leaders spend 1.2%! If you want to be a leader in your market, budget appropriately.

• Develop a better tracking plan.
  Smart business decisions are not made by guessing. Invest in marketing, and track your results. Use the data to adjust your strategy and then invest more in things that work.

• Integrate sales and marketing.
  Neither works best in isolation. To make sure you get the highest return, plan how sales will leverage your marketing. Know when to call. Train reps how to call and how to use materials. And reinforce the training to ensure buy-in.

• Profile your audience.
  Understand your clients and candidates. Know how they work. How they communicate. And how they are measured in their jobs. Learn the needs, interests and challenges. Thanks to social media, this information has never been easier to find out!

• Surround your audience.
  One marketing tactic rarely works. You want a range of marketing tactics and platforms to surround your audience and stay top-of-mind.
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Matt, Director of Marketing & Marketing Advisor

• Forecast demand, and recruit accordingly.
  Study employment projections to determine local hiring needs. Consider a service like WANTED Analytics. Then
develop a recruiting plan to engage in-demand talent.

• Skill market hard-to-find talent to employers.
  Skill marketing talent has been a proven technique for as long as there have been staffing firms. Why? Because it
works! If you’re not marketing your most placeable candidates via calls, email and your website, you’re missing
business!

• Focus.
  Identify your top 3 to 5 objectives for 2014 and focus your time and money on strategies to achieve those goals.
  And like Brad said, set realistic budgets to achieve your goals.
Linda, Graphic Designer

• **Proactively differentiate.**
  Determine what really sets your firm apart. Communicate your differentiation and core value effectively by making a plan. And communicate your message consistently across mediums. (Of course, that’s 101 stuff, but we see lots of people that may have skipped that course!)

• **Don’t become part of the sludge.**
  If you don’t have consistent branding communication—especially in 2014, then you will just be part of the “me-too” sludge of staffing industry sales messages. And when you sound just like everyone else, you’re going to be seen as a commodity.
Ryan, Marketing Consultant

- **Educate.**
  Show your clients how to be better consumers of your services. Get them to see ways to use staffing more strategically. Help them to be more proactive about hiring. Teach them the financial benefit of your services, all the ways you save them money!

- **Create an “organizational voice.”**
  Of course you have to market yourself consistently and effectively through all channels (website, Soc. Media, email newsletter, direct marketing), but it’s hard to have a go-to-market strategy without everyone inside being on the same page. Make sure everyone in your firm knows how you want to be seen in the marketplace.
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Victoria, COO

• **Make your service shareworthy.**
  Every staffing firm wants to have great service. But does yours really differentiate you from the competition? Challenge your staff to create shareworthy service—service that’s so good your clients have to tell others about it. Evaluate every touch point with clients and candidates to find ways to make your service better, faster, easier and more enjoyable.

• **Streamline the candidate intake process.**
  Is it easy for the candidate? Is the process you use still correct? Is it mobile optimized? Are there elements of shareworthy service built in communication points to let the candidate know what to expect, thank yous, asking for referrals, etc.?
Maggie, Social Media Marketing Advisor

- **Invest in content, and specifically, blogging!**
  B2B companies that invest in content marketing generate 54% more sales leads than those that don’t. Staffing firms that invest in blogging will increase web traffic by more than 250%.

- **Win the battle for attention.**
  You are not competing for sales, you are competing for people’s attention and trust. Great content is the key to both.
Kelly, Senior Project Manager

- **HAVE A PLAN!**
  Most staffing firms don’t have an annual marketing plan. What are your marketing goals? What is your strategy for achieving your goals? What is your budget? If business slows down, plan to ramp up marketing – and be flexible – allow room in your marketing budget to respond to trends in employment/hiring or other unexpected events that may occur during the year. When business is great, invest in getting the help you need to accelerate your growth. That may mean sales, marketing, recruiting or even hiring your own temps to free key people to do more!

- **Be social.**
  Have some type of social presence and constantly work to make it stronger! This should be one of your most important communication channels in 2014!
Rob, Project Manager

• Make ACA your ally.
Leverage your employment law expertise to drive more conversations with employers.

• Get your website up to date.
If your site is more than a few years old, now is the time to upgrade. You’re losing business if you don’t have a website that effectively tells your story, is mobile optimized, and is designed to convert visitors into paying clients and placed candidates.

• Blogging always drives more traffic.
It’s a small cost with a big payoff.

• Redo SEO for new Google rules.
Content is now more important than keywords. Don’t buy the SEO scammers who promise to “get you to the top of page 1.” Our clients see traffic from thousands of different keywords. Your goal should be to drive more traffic, loads more traffic, and then get those people to convert.
Todd, Marketing Advisor and Director of Content Marketing

- **Make your email mobile friendly.**
  50% email opens are now on a mobile device. Your email marketing needs to be mobile friendly. Here’s how you do it:

  - **Subject lines.** Keep ‘em short, sweet (and catchy).
  - **Less is more.** In mobile devices, images are compressed. So, think simple headers, single columns, and simple imagery.
  - **Readability.** With a smaller device, you should use a larger font. An iPhone’s iOS will automatically adjust any font to its minimum 13-point standard. But some phones don’t do this for you. We would recommend using a 14-point minimum for body copy, and a 22-point minimum for headlines.
  - **Choose background colors wisely.** A bright background might be distracting. Use soothing neutrals instead.
  - **Call to action front and center.** Scrolling left, right or down to find out what the message is and what you want the reader to do won’t work here. You want your message and call to action up front and center. (Another thing to note is that image-based links might not appear or render well on a mobile device. Keep calls to action text based.)
  - **If all else fails — always include a “view as web” link.** Email services such as our own HaleyMail automatically include these on every email. This is a good way to ensure everyone can see your message the way you want it seen.
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Brad, Social Media Marketing Advisor

- **Embrace social dialog.**  
  Social media is about creating conversations with people. It’s about speaking to your “fans,” communicating information, and honestly addressing issues.

- **Don’t block people, talk with them.**  
  We’ve had a few clients ask us to turn off comments on their Facebook pages because they didn’t want people to be able to post negative things about their firms. That’s a bad idea. If people have something negative to say, they are going to say it. You’d rather have the conversation in a place where you can control the dialogue. And when you make a mistake, taking responsibility for it is an essential way to build trust. When you have someone who is unhappy, showing that you are honest, caring and open to feedback is critical.
Kyle, Social Media Marketing Advisor

- **Amplify your content**
  Many staffing firms have great content in their blog, but they do not amplify the content through social media. Your entire team should be sharing this valuable content with their networks. The more people “talking about” your content, the higher relevancy your firm will have in search engines (Google uses social queues to determine search rankings!).

- **Proactively plan how your marketing will help develop leads.**
  Most staffing firms do not realize the power of great content and marketing. Use content to answer your clients’ and candidates’ most critical questions. Intentionally drive people back to specific pages on your website. Use those pages to drive people to actions that lead to staffing sales (like requesting an employee, searching jobs, or submitting an application). Monitor Google Analytics to see how people are really using your site, and then make adjustments to make your site more effective in realizing your business goals.
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Cathy, Copywriter

• **Be consistent!**
  Make sure that your marketing materials display a consistent message reflecting who you are and what you do. This ensures that you attract the candidates and clients that you can serve best.

• **Focus on becoming a thought leader.**
  Whether it’s through speaking engagements, networking or blogs, you want your name and that of your company to be the first to come to mind when people need your services. (Oh, yeah, Bob Smith. He’s the legal staffing guy!)

• **Be concise, be mobile and be everywhere.**
  People are busy. Keep it short. Make your website easy to navigate for busy, goal-oriented people. But give them something of value to return to when they have time (e.g., blogs). Make sure they can find you on the fly with mobile websites they can speed through when they are multitasking. This means clear calls to action and “just the facts, ma’am” design.
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Jenny, Social Media Marketing Advisor

• Being proactive and embracing “local.”
  Blog for specific the markets and job disciplines you staff. Complete your profile on Google places and Google+.
  Be proactive about reputation management--actively monitor what’s being said about your firm. Then thank your
  supporters and address critics openly and honestly.

• Put PPC to work for your firm.
  Use Google Remarketing to increase brand awareness and stay top-of-mind with employers and job seekers who
  have visited your website. Use Google Adwords to target people who are actively looking for staffing agencies
  and/or hiring help in your marketing. Use social PPC (Facebook and LinkedIn) to more aggressively target specific
  individuals with your marketing.
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Mandy, Content Manager

• Master social recruiting.

• Start with a solid strategy.
  Clearly define your recruiting goals. Don’t just throw social stuff on the wall to see what sticks; proactively determine how each social channel will be used. Then allocate resources to each channel (whatever time and dollars you are willing to invest). Create a plan for building a social audience. Determine how you will try to appeal to job seekers – will you promote specific jobs, the employers you serve and/or the unique benefits of working for your firm? Assign ownership to social recruiting tasks.

• Broaden your thinking.
  Think beyond job postings and think about engaging talent.

• Train your staff.
  Being 20 something is not a qualification for social recruiting. Training is. Invest in teaching people how to master the social technologies and strategies. It’s an ongoing commitment because the technology and trends are always changing.
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Need more ideas? Or help putting these ideas into action?

If you need help creating or implementing your marketing strategy for 2014, don’t be shy, give us a call. Whether you just need to brainstorm ideas or you’re looking for professional marketing support, we’re here to help.

1.888.696.2900
www.haleymarketing.com
At Haley Marketing, we are staffing industry specialists. We offer a range of services to satisfy the marketing needs and fit the budgets of all kinds of staffing firms.

We founded our company with a simple mission: to make great marketing more affordable. Whether you’re looking for an effective way to stand out from the competition or you just need a new website or brochure, we can provide it.

Our services include:

- Blogging & Content Marketing
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- SEO & PPC Management
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- Newsletters & Email Marketing
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- Website Content
- Integrated Staffing Campaigns
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