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**Staffing software
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Top Five Ways Staffing Software Optimizes Your Business

Automating business processes is just part of the solution -- staffing software plays an increasingly important role in building strong internal teams and customer relationships.

By Steve Taylor, President, VCG, Inc.

What is the most effective way to build your business in the increasingly diversified and competitive staffing industry?

You can focus your efforts on marketing, sales, recruiting, cost of service and myriad other aspects of your business. Yet your growth and profitability may still be only marginally better than you think you can achieve. There is a little used key that more and more staffing firms are using to open the door to greater success.

That key is your staffing software. Staffing and recruiting software have made great advances in recent years, enabling staffing firms to increase their productivity and bottom line results. With the right software, your firm can increase its billable hours by 40 percent. Or reduce your billing/payroll processing time by 30 percent or greater. So how can you optimize your business practices with your staffing software? The answers might not be as obvious as you would think.

Staffing software has evolved from basic search and retrieval, payroll/billing and content management systems. The basic business automation tasks so necessary to a staffing and recruiting firm are today something of a commodity among staffing software vendors. But business task automation is only part of what staffing software can and should be able to do for your business.

In our recent work with industry professionals -- as well as our industry experience over the past 30 years -- we've determined the top five best business-oriented software practices that illustrate just how staffing software can enable and empower your business to new heights.

1. Build Client Relationships and Respond to Client Feedback

How does your staffing software improve client relations? Do you have reminders for phone calls, marketing gifts, so forth? Do you make sure all your associates complete quality assurance calls to ensure that the assignment/order was done to their customer's expectations?





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The concept of Client Relationship Management (CRM) has gained strong endorsements from businesses of all sizes. Technology is a critical component of its power. One of the most important aspects of building client relationships is constant communication. For example, your staffing software should provide you a complete communications history between your firm and your customers, candidates and employees.

Here is how that helps. With a complete record of client communications, you can properly respond to a client if an issue should arise. Has one of your associates completed a quality assurance call and been told by the client that the service was sub par? It is imperative that you have a software system that can keep records of this feedback and immediately notify a senior management team member to address the issue. Being able to generate or create reports based on these records of activity can help you better manage all of your customer relationships.

2. Enable Your Management Team for Greater Success

How can you enable your management team to make more educated decisions based on your current business processes? Today's staffing software contains easily-accessed databases that managers can pull valuable knowledge from about your business' efficiencies. There's a difference here between knowledge and information and how it impacts control.

Lori Williams, CTS, CPC, of The Staffing Doctors, states, "One of the most common problems I see is ineffective management. Management must hold themselves and their associates accountable for their work and actions. It is management's job to keep their associates on task." Williams also notes that many managers are not in control of the sales process, often allowing clients to dictate what is agreed upon. Managers need to take control of the sales process and ensure that their sales staff is following their firm's practices.

So, how do you get control of those processes? If you are in a leadership position within your staffing firm -- are you getting accurate information to make valid business decisions -- from both your clients and from your contingent employees? From your internal staff? Can you transform all this information into knowledge -- through analysis and experience -- to help your decision-making? Can you build a knowledge base with your software? Can you run benchmarking and internal reports to see business trends and take corrective action?

Your staffing software should enable you to run specific company reports -- from checking on individual associates and recruiters' productivity to clients that are the most profitable. You should also be able to track this information on a daily weekly, monthly and annual basis to make future management decisions based on what is working best for your company. In fact, recent technology advances make it possible for you to have a 'dashboard' portal that gives you a real-time graphical view from your desktop of all -- or any portion -- of your business operations.

Donna Mallard, CSP, of Mallard & Associates, a training and consulting firm, states that, "An effective leadership team must recruit, hire and coach good employees, set employee expectations and recognize accomplishments." Your staffing software, with a strong, customizable reporting component, can help you achieve these goals.



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3. Implement an Integrated Marketing Plan With Your Staffing Software

Does your staffing firm have a marketing plan? Probably. Does your staffing firm have an integrated marketing plan? Maybe not. There is a big difference, as an integrated plan takes into account the entire life-cycle experience of your customers, candidates, employees and internal staff.

Surprisingly, your staffing software plays a stronger role here than you might imagine. For example, does your Web site mirror the 'look and feel' of your marketing materials? Great. But it should do a lot more. Your Web site should be functional, not just what is referred to as 'brochure-ware.' It should include a Web portal that enables your contingent employees or prospective candidates to easily register and apply for jobs online and your clients to fill out job orders that your associates can act upon in real-time. Essentially, your Web site should function as a job board for both your contingent employees and your clients.

In a similar vein, your software should enable you to send out email mass marketing campaigns simply and effectively -- within the constraints of current legal requirements. Naturally, your staffing software should track your marketing, recruiting and sales efforts as reportable activities, so that you can measure their results. If you do not have any of this functionality, you need to look at the software and think about whether it's time for a change.

4. Competitive Differentiation

What does your staffing software enable you to do that your competitors can't? To your prospective customers your sales calls may come off sounding a little 'me too.' But what happens when you show proof that you can and do deliver what you promise?

Your staffing software can document and report on specifically how your services benefit your customers. Custom reporting can fill the gaps in your customers' own knowledge base, and 'make them a hero.' Further, the changes in your business are available to you through benchmarking reports that offer compelling reasons to your customers to decide on your services.

Users can respond faster to contingent employee and client requests through automated searches and quick look-up capabilities. With a simple click, users can access client and contingent employee information including their profile, preferences, history and more.

This improved productivity enables your firm the ability to operate at a higher level of business without sacrificing quality service. Saving you overhead costs and increasing your bottom line, not to mention your reputation with your clients and potential clients.

5. Train Your Internal Staff on Your Staffing Software and Reap the Rewards

Get a big payoff with a small investment. Improve office productivity and billable hours by training your staff on the software. The payoff can be huge – both in terms of productivity and in staff retention. Make sure they go through a thorough training session, so that they know what the software can do...increase their productivity and make their jobs easier.



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A staff that is thoroughly trained is less likely to leave your firm. The lower turnover rate you have, the more of a knowledge base you have within your organization, the more efficient and profitable. You are giving your associates incentives to continue their career with your staffing firm.

Amy Munroe, CSP, of Staffing E-Trainer, states, "Effective training is critical. For the most effective training use a blended learning environment, instead of a new employee just 'shadowing' one of your associates." Munroe goes on to point out, "Using different forms of methodology: training books, training classes, Webinars, computer-based training etc. has been proven to increase employees' retention rates of course content."

Conclusion

Taking a closer look at what your staffing software does for your business and your staff is the first step in optimizing its capabilities and understanding if it is the right fit for your firm. While the staffing industry will always be a 'people' business, technological advances have made it imperative to have a robust software solution in place. It is clear that future staffing success will depend on a strong internal knowledgebase and software that enables you to retain and use that knowledge effectively.

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About VCG

Our focus is your success. Since 1976 staffing firms have counted on VCG, Inc. for staffing software solutions that help them improve the productivity and profitability of their operations. Founded by staffing professionals and technologists intimately familiar with the business of staffing, VCG is the staffing industry's largest and most experienced dedicated staffing software development firm. VCG solutions today power hundreds of successful staffing companies and 12,000-plus staffing professionals throughout the U.S., Canada, Europe, Southeast Asia, and Australia. VCG, C-PAS, StaffSuite, TempWare-V, WebPAS, StaffSuite WorldLink, and WebPAS WorldLink are registered trademarks of VCG Inc.

About the author

Steve Taylor joined the VCG team in 1996 as Vice President. He has over 19 years experience in the software industry, with 14 years in various management positions. Previously Taylor worked with Sales Technologies (a Dun and Bradstreet Company) in implementation and customer services roles, and HBOC. He is a graduate of Georgia State University with a B.B.A. in management and a minor in computer science.

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