



Highlighting What Matters

An Award Staffing Case Study





Meet Our Client

Finding the right person to join your team is no small feat, let alone fifty or more. Many components make up a successful recruitment process, and many Twin Cities businesses are looking for partnerships to help them navigate these critical steps. Having the right recruiting partner can take the guesswork out of finding highly qualified candidates while streamlining any search by analyzing the organizational culture and implementing strategies to fulfill those specifications.

This is the case of one of Award Staffing's clients, a leading contract medical device manufacturer in the Twin Cities. Our client's mission is to produce complex medical devices and components that make people's lives healthier, happier, and longer. Our client came to us in the fall of 2021 after their incumbent staffing provider of 10 years sent them an email ending their partnership. They needed a new provider who could become part of their team to help them strategically and methodically hire 50-plus qualified individuals to perform various types of medical assembly and manufacturing roles.

While their need was dire, their approach to hiring contingent workers centered on creating a better experience for their contract employees. Our client understood that much of the success in hiring and retaining contingent labor depended on a robust and collaborative relationship between their internal recruiting team and Award Staffing's recruiters. Ultimately, our client was looking for a new partner who could come in and hit the ground running, provide exceptional customer service, and be a reliable partner in their growth.

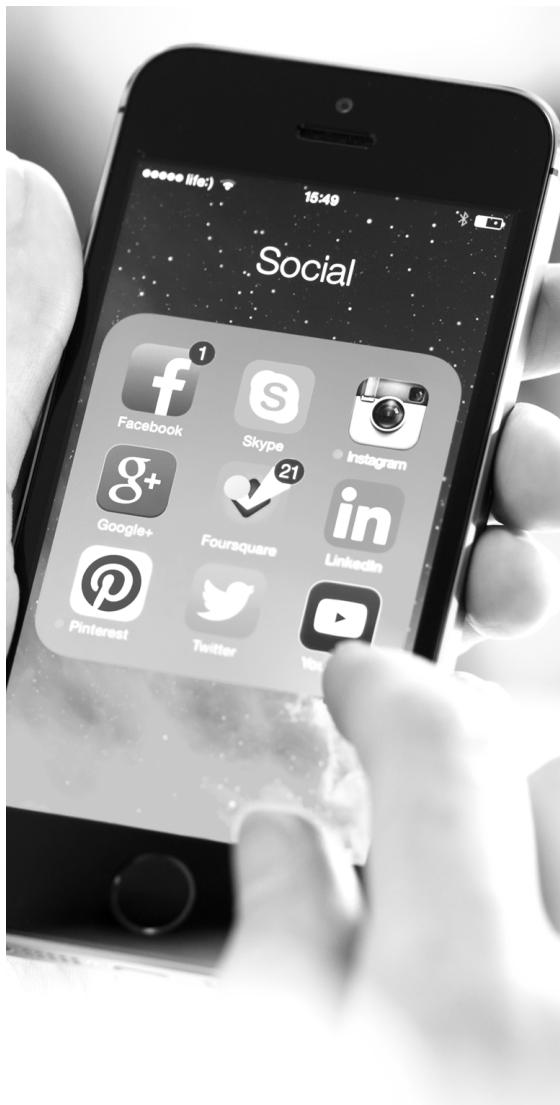
Award Staffing was more than up for the opportunity. Our clear understanding of their needs enabled us to show them exactly how we could help. Our recruiters dove into the client's culture, learning their values and goals as if they had been working there for years. This in-depth understanding enabled us to understand precisely what they were looking for in their candidates and craft a recruitment process to optimize our collaborative hiring efforts.

Our focus became clear and straightforward; connecting our client and candidates through a shared mission of making a real difference in the lives of others through a highly engaged and supportive work environment. With our approach, we firmly believed that we were not simply filling open positions. Instead, we felt that we were creating an environment where our clients could achieve business objectives while helping job seekers find meaningful work where they could grow both as people and professionals.

While the current hiring market felt disheartening, we have identified five unique strengths and characteristics through our partnership with our client. We've determined that a successful recruiting partnership requires the following:

- Responsive Communication
- Candidate-Centric Approach
- Strong Work Culture
- Upskilling
- Strategic Wages

Improving The Quality of Candidates Through Responsiveness



Recruiting can be one of the most time-consuming tasks in any business. A recent study by Indeed found that filling an open position can take up to 23 days, which is too long in a market where supply is limited, and demand is high. In addition, this study found that it takes a business an average of five days to respond to a potential candidate.

The current hiring environment in the manufacturing sector is highly competitive, with qualified candidates often receiving a minimum of four job offers within a few days of their initial application. To be successful in a recruitment partnership, it is essential for both the client and recruiting partner to keep communication lines open.

Our client understood this better than most, which is why they worked hard with us to ensure they responded to our candidate submittals within 12 hours. By having a quick turnaround on applicant submittals, we achieved three outcomes; 1) we were able to keep high engagement with qualified candidates who may have sought other work opportunities, 2) we not only improved their success rate but also enhanced the candidate experience as they felt valued by our client's promptness, and 3) the quality of employee hire was drastically improved.

Through the development and refinement of our communication, we have been able to have an average time of 18 hours to fill an open job requisition to the associate starting their first shift. This quick response time has improved the hiring quality and enabled our client to remain competitive in their sector while also allowing them to retain top talent.

The historical hiring paradigm has focused on the company's needs and wants first, followed by the candidates. However, this approach has mainly become outdated in today's talent-driven market. Because of this, there has been a rise in candidate-centric hiring processes that focus on job seekers' individual needs and goals.

A study performed by Glassdoor found that job seekers are now 2.2 times more likely to accept a job offer from an employer with a strong candidate experience than one without. On average, organizations that adopt a candidate-centric approach reported a 71% reduction in time-to-hire. In comparison, 61% of candidates expressed improved satisfaction with their overall experience. Furthermore, organizations reported a 41% increase in employee retention when offering a seamless and personalized recruitment process.

In light of this data, our approach with our client was to ensure that all the candidates had the necessary information and resources to make an informed decision about the job requisition. We provided detailed job descriptions on our candidate-driven platform, including the duties, expectations, and job requirements. Additionally, we provided information about the company's culture, team dynamics, values, and growth opportunities to ensure the strongest alignment possible with our candidates.

By taking this approach with every candidate, we empowered them to make an informed decision regarding their potential new role. This resulted in two outcomes; 1) candidates were able self disqualify if the job was not a good fit, saving our client's time, and 2) candidates were more likely to accept, start, and get hired by our client because they felt confident and informed.

Putting The Candidate First

Selling Work Culture

A company's culture has traditionally been viewed as a nice-to-have for prospective candidates; however, it has become a make-or-break factor for many job seekers. Our recent surveys have found that 77% of Millennials and Gen Z said a company's culture was the number one factor when making a job decision. Because of this, the role of company culture in the success of a business should not be underestimated as an integral component of a successful business strategy.

In today's hiring market, work culture is increasingly becoming the cornerstone of businesses' competitiveness and resiliency as companies learn how to wield it to their advantage. By leveraging their unique corporate culture, organizations can create a stronger bond between themselves, the outside world, and prospective employees.

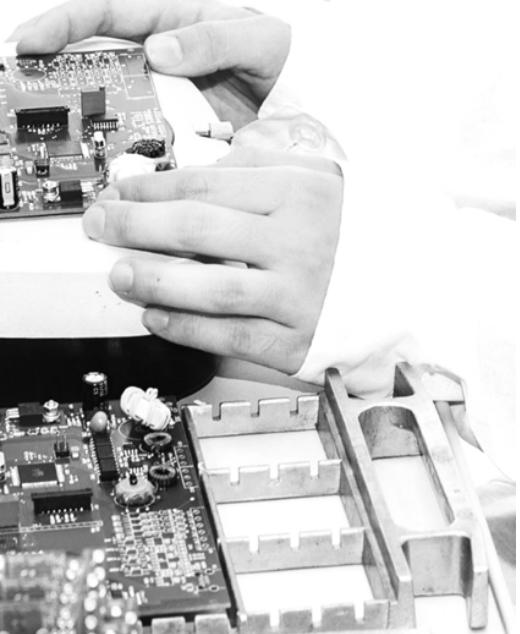
We held multiple calls and meetings with their Human Resources department to ensure we accurately represented our client's work culture. During this time, we better understood their company values, their team dynamics, and the type of environment they wanted to create. This was ultimately built around their purpose statement, *"We create possibilities to improve the quality of life for humankind, one person at a time."* This allowed us to portray their culture through our outbound recruiting effort accurately. In turn, this enabled our candidates to visualize what it would be like for them to work at this company.



To augment and personalize our client's culture, we continuously focus on the associate experience once a new employee starts work. This has manifested in the form of employee appreciation initiatives. This included small things like distributing treats on holidays, hosting raffles, and fantasy football leagues. Significant company events are also held where employees can celebrate successes together and enjoy a meal. For example, our client hosted a Holiday Party where box lunches were provided for employees. Employee successes, such as recent promotions, are also celebrated in their company newsletter. This shows that investing in the employee experience ensures loyalty and reliability. In addition, these initiatives support a cohesive team environment where everyone feels valued and appreciated.

To build upon this, we also created a proactive incentive program that rewarded current employees for referring new talent to the organization. The mindset of this approach was simple and strategic; good employees who love our client's culture know other like-minded employees who would also be a good culture fit. This program enabled us to tap into our candidate's social networks. It helped us create a steady pipeline of qualified and culture-matched candidates for the client.

By proactively selling their work culture to potential candidates, our client was able to attract top talent, reduce time-to-hire and increase employee retention by upwards of 80 to 90 percent. This saved them money in the long run and enabled them to create a positive and enjoyable environment for their employees.



Upskilling For The Future

As the global economy continues to evolve and worker shortages are a norm, upskilling and reskilling light industrial workers are becoming more vital than ever. According to a study by Gallup, more than 65 percent of executives said their organization had faced shortages in critical roles due to lacking particular skills. This highlights the importance of maintaining and continuing to develop employees' skill sets for today's evolving workforce.

Being in the medical space, our client saw a specific need to upskill their workforce to remain competitive. But the traditional thought process around upskilling focuses on providing a business's existing workforce with the skills they need for growth and success. To effectively upskill and reskill, we encouraged our client to look beyond their existing employee population and focus on upskilling and reskilling prospective employees.

We leveraged the same culture-focused recruiting tactics to fill open positions and began a pilot for proactive upskilling and reskilling of candidates who applied for entry-level positions. Our goal was to put candidates on a path of continued learning and development the moment they entered our client's workforce to become more valuable long-term assets.



As part of this pilot, we aimed not only to attract qualified applicants, but also to showcase the various skill and growth opportunities that would be available to them upon hire - enabling us to effectively sell the allure of future upskilling and reskilling along with each job opening. New candidates begin as entry-level Manufacturing Associates, where they gain various experiences in the medical manufacturing field. This presents a remarkable opportunity for them to gain exposure in the field and discover their true passions.

Within their first weeks of starting their assignments, associates would be robustly trained on various types of machine operation processes and an introduction to medical device manufacturing. As they progress, associates can gain additional responsibilities and opportunities for more extensive skill development like microscope assembly, soldering, and troubleshooting.

After four months of employment, our client will review their contract workers' reliability and work ethic. Extraordinary associates are then allowed to become full-time employees with significant advantages such as salary increases, comprehensive benefits plan access, and numerous career growth opportunities. They can then progress to higher skilled roles such as Quality Lab Technicians, Precision Components Manufacturers, and Clean Room Technicians.

By focusing on proactive upskilling and reskilling of prospective candidates, our client was able to increase employee retention and create a more engaged workforce dramatically. This helped them stay competitive in the market and foster a culture of continuous learning and development, helping their employees become more valuable assets in the long run.

Setting The Stage With Strategic Wages

The economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been significant. Many events occurred as a byproduct; 1) increased retirements, 2) more working-aged individuals opting out of the labor force, and 3) increased consumption of goods. This created an environment of high demand in light industrial positions. As a result, employees felt more empowered, which increased wages.

Subsequently, a study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that overall wage growth for light industrial positions experienced an approximate 18.1% increase from 2019 to 2022. For example, the average warehouse worker's wage in the Twin Cities by the end of 2019 was \$15 per hour. By the end of 2022, that same warehouse worker can expect to earn around \$19 per hour.

When rectifying our partnership, our client was significantly behind market wages with their current contract and full-time associates. They knew they had to make a change but were looking to balance their budget and keep existing and prospective employees engaged.



We proposed a strategic wage increase that would simultaneously achieve two outcomes; 1) enable our recruiting team to attract and retain top talent and 2) manage budget constraints.

The first step in our process of establishing a strategic wage for our client started with a comprehensive analysis using Award Staffing's proprietary data modeling. This data is a hybrid dataset derived from official government sources such as the US Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and our candidate database. Leveraging the unique strengths of each source, our data modeling team creates an authoritative dataset that captures more than 99% of all workers in the Twin Cities metro area. This core offering is then enriched with data from online social profiles, résumés, and job postings to give us a complete view of our client's desired workforce.

We proposed a series of incremental wage increases over time, which allowed our client to manage the budget and satisfy their potential employees. This has allowed them to maintain a steady influx of talent and motivate their existing associates to remain with the company.

Once the wage strategy was in place, we successfully increased wages by an average of 11.7% over 12 months in 6-month increments. The result has been fewer vacancies in their positions and, in effect, an increase in overall productivity. Moreover, this approach is proving to be a successful model for other companies struggling with wage inflation and staffing constraints.

Our wage recommendation focused on having our Client pay in the top 40 percent, comparable to other employers in the Twin Cities. Using this technique allows us to attract desirable candidates making a lower wage but also offers a combative pay rate for individuals working at other jobs at a slightly higher rate. In addition, we were able to leverage wages to get candidates to want to learn more about the job so our recruiters could then sell the workplace culture, upskilling opportunities, and other benefits our client offers.

Next, we partnered with our client's finance team to develop a tiered strategy where the client would be able to secure a budget while getting the client closer to being competitive with the market wages.

Bringing It Together Through Meaningfulness



Hiring requires more than simply filling open positions. To be successful in recruiting today's workforce, it is essential to take the time to understand their needs and goals as individuals, as well as build meaningful structures that aim to empower them. This can include job satisfaction, career growth opportunities, meaningful work, and other vital elements. That kind of personalized care with intent will attract the right candidates and ensure they remain with the organization for the long run. The ultimate goal of engaging in such practices is to help workers discover a meaningful purpose in their occupation and find meaningful fulfillment in their work.

At its core, this multifaceted strategy highlighted the importance of work culture in finding solutions, allowing our client to gain the trust and support of their employees. Through our collective focus on the needs and goals of candidates, we fostered a more profound understanding where we provide meaningful work opportunities that align with what employees genuinely seek to get out of their job.

Ultimately, as in our client's case, companies must consider their candidate's subjective criteria for success — their values, lifestyles, career ambitions, etc. — to ensure a proper fit within their organization. Success lies in being able to connect candidates with working arrangements that offer both personal satisfaction as well as company-wide contribution. Both employers and employees benefit when this plan is executed accordingly due to increased engagement from more motivated workers and less burden associated with desired turnover rates. Therefore, hiring strategies should be tailored to anticipate the needs of a dynamic workforce, drawing upon sound principles like those mentioned above to create a better work environment for all.