

# SI review

STAFFING INDUSTRY REVIEW

Tools & Techniques for Staffing & Recruiting

## winners of the First **SI review** Excellence Awards

**T**his year, for the first time ever, **SI Review** held its **Excellence Award for Most Effective Customer Acquisition and Retention Program**. The award was designed to highlight staffing firms that are going the extra mile with their customers – both their business clients and the candidates they place. Certainly the applicants and winners of this contest prove that staffing firms are forging deep relationships with their customer base and going far beyond the ‘commodity’ level that has been undeservedly applied to the industry.

We asked entrants to provide us with a description of their customer service program and any best practices or innovative approaches to this plan. We were inspired by the many applicants and their dedication to the customer base – which, of course, is truly the people business. Of the many applicants, our team of analysts picked

three runners-up and three winners, at the bronze, silver and gold levels.

The staffing firms represent the diversity of the industry: some IT, some legal, some light industrial; various business models, including vendor on premises; and various uses of technology. What they had in common was clear insight into the client rela-

tionship, on both sides of the equation, and the drive to deliver excellent, integrity-driven service.

Although there has to be one winner, in a very real sense all of these firms listed here and all who applied have already won – they have the respect and admiration of their clients – and they also have their business.

### goldwinner: PROFESSIONAL STAFFING GROUP



### goldwinner

#### PROFESSIONAL STAFFING GROUP

Boston MA

Creative, financial, technical, office clerical

**P**rofessional Staffing Group, our gold award winner, has built its customer loyalty program around the system espoused by Fred Reichheld, who spoke at this year's forum about his net promoter system.

This is a system that determines customer loyalty based on whether or not the client would recommend your services to others. We chose PSG as our overwhelming winner because not only does the company clearly “get” customer service, but also because it has a dedicated plan in place to ensure excellent service.

President Aaron Green explains: “In an effort to not only succeed, but also distinguish PSG in the industry, PSG follows Fred Reichheld’s method of gauging the quality and loyalty of our customer relationships. We measure loyalty with e-mail surveys. After each applicant interview and work assignment, we ask the respective applicants, temporary employees and client company hiring managers whether they would recommend PSG, based on their most recent experience.”

Green continues, “Rather than creating programs that may fall out of vogue, we use the measurement system, set a goal of world-class loyalty (75%) and encourage our internal employees to be creative in reaching this common goal. To create accountability, each completed survey is automatically routed to the client representative, temp representative and branch manager. The cumulative survey results are measured by service branch and presented at client meetings and at our weekly company-wide meetings. To foster the proper mindset, we provide training sessions and encourage employees to share the best practices they’ve developed. The training we offer temporary employees illustrates their role in our service model and their importance to the organization.”

Although the “net promoter” program may sound complex, it is actually quite simple and in PSG’s case comes down to one simple survey question: Would you recommend PSG to a friend or business colleague? PSG measures by the quarter and for the last quarter measured the company was at 69.9% total. However, in June the score was 74%. “It’s an amazing tool for us,” says Green.

Green says that PSG staffing specialists receive bonuses for reaching net promoter scores greater than 75%. Additionally, temporaries who receive detractor scores (six or below out of ten) cannot be reassigned without a manager’s approval.

The net promoter works both ways, too, as the professionals placed are also surveyed about the client. This data often becomes useful in client meetings, says Green, and helps many clients fine-tune their contingency programs.

Green stresses that most staffing firms are measuring the wrong things – bill rates, margins, and other financial statistics. “This can’t gauge what a client really thinks about your service,” he says. The Reichheld method was a way for him to figure out that key piece of data.

In addition, says Green, PSG’s benefits and services differentiate the company from other staffing agencies and help attain service-level goals. Also, “Our Guaranteed Work Program serves the dual purpose of guaranteeing work to qualified candidates and guaranteeing qualified employees to clients,” says Green.

And candidates are served well in other ways, including training programs, 50% subsidized HMO health insurance, tuition reimbursement, vacation and holiday pay, and a self-service Web site.

The clients we spoke with were unanimous in their praise of PSG. Massachusetts General Hospital has worked with Professional Staffing Group for about eight years, says administrative coordinator Suzanne Gautreau.

“You call them in the morning and get someone in literally 20 to 25 minutes,” Gautreau says. “They have people ready to go right away. I currently have two employees here now, and I would hire either of them. They’re great people.” Gautreau continues, “What I like [about PSG] is they keep in touch with you to see how you’re doing. They’ll send [people] to training. We don’t [have to] pay for that. That’s an agreement they have with the hospital. The quality of candidates is far superior to anything the hospital will give you. The people they send come in professionally dressed and ready to work.”

Speed of communication was also

cited by clients as a positive with PSG. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Public Safety, which handles building codes, building standards, elevator inspections and amusement park inspections, has found high-quality candidates through Professional Staffing Group, which is hard to come by in public service, says CFO Sean Nelson.

“They do a good job of following up once someone is in place,” Nelson says. “They usually don’t wait too long. They wait a couple of days. If I call today, they’ll have someone tomorrow.”

MASCO, a medical academic and scientific community organization, works with Professional Staffing Group to fill customer service and administrative positions, says Laura George, director of human resources. Over the course of the last six years, Professional Staffing Group has filled “hundreds” of positions for MASCO. “They’re very receptive to our needs,” George says. “We’ve had a good relationship. It’s great to work with them.”

Boston-based Project Bread turns to Professional Staffing Group when it needs help sending out mass mailings, says Rick Doane, assistant manager of operations and allocations.

“The people who come have always been very professional,” Doane says. “We’ve never had any problems. They’re very upbeat. We hesitate to go with other companies because PSG does donate so much time to us.”

*SI Review* and Staffing Industry Analysts would like to thank all participants, and we encourage all staffing firms to enter next year’s contest. This award confirms what we already knew – there are many firms out there delivering superior value, day in and day out. **SI**



**Professional Staffing Group**