



Funding Growth for Staffing Firms | A Paychex® Company



# THE STAFFING OWNER'S GUIDE TO SALES

Strategies, Tips, and Tricks to Help Your Team  
Crush Sales Goals

# The Staffing Owner's Guide to Sales

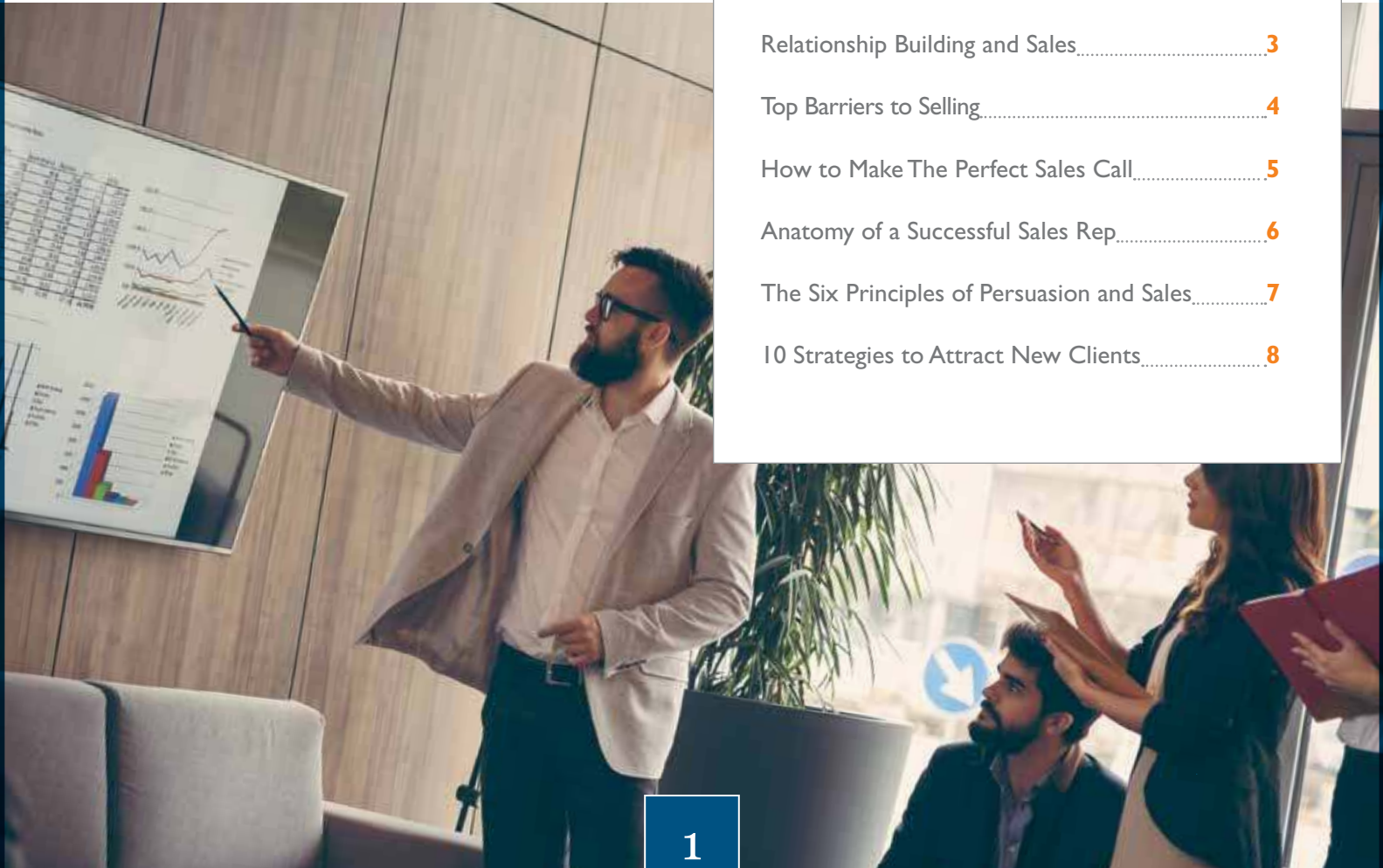
If you own your own staffing firm, chances are good that you have had experience on the sales side of things.

You understand sales, and you have a lot of incentive to keep them robust. After all, this is your business, your livelihood! You don't really go in to staffing unless you have a strong constitution and a will to succeed. The key is to surround yourself with a sales team just as motivated as you.

In this whitepaper, we will talk about many facets of staffing sales. We'll talk about defining staffing sales opportunities, relationship building, and the underlying psychological aspects to sales. We'll also provide practical tips on how to make a great sales call and 10 strategies for attracting new sales that you can put to use immediately.

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# Where Are the Opportunities?

Let's start by defining your potential customers. In staffing, there are essentially three types of buyers.

## THE 3 TYPES OF STAFFING BUYERS

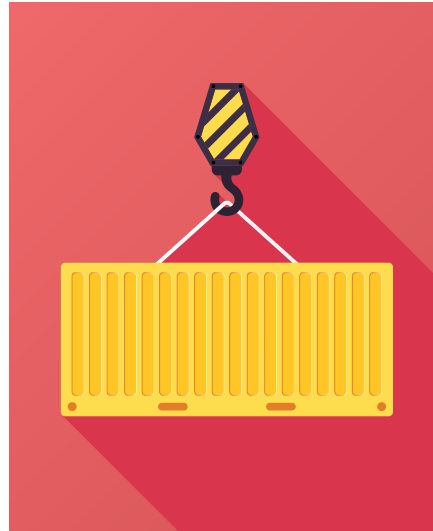


### THE VOLUME BUYER

In other words, the big guys. These are the companies who use staffing heavily and buy more than \$500,000 in staffing services each year.



Volume buyers buy on **price**



### THE BOUTIQUE BUYER

These are your companies with very specialized needs. Lots of technical and professional staffing fall in this category, because they need hard-to-find talent.



Boutique shoppers buy on **skills**



### THE MIDDLE MARKET

Basically, everyone else. These companies range from occasional needing staffing to needing it consistently. They run the gamut from small fries to big companies.



The Middle Market buys on **both price and skills**

It's up to your staffing firm to determine where you should be playing. Unless you can compete with the big staffing nationals or firms who sacrifice profit by offering low prices, chances are that volume is not where your opportunity lies. Most firms are either going to be playing in the Boutique or the Middle Market space, and there are lots of opportunities there to be profitable and successful.





# Relationship Building and Sales

The importance of relationship building in staffing – or in most sales organizations, for that matter – cannot be overstated.

At the end of the day, people do business with people and every sale is an emotional sale that then is justified rationally. It's important to build relationships in this space, so here are a few tips on how.

- **Focus on the right prospects.** Who are your most profitable customers? Where are the best opportunities? Focus on building relationships with those who will get you where you want to go.
- **Focus on the right people.** It's important to focus on those who make purchasing decisions, such as C-Suite folks or department heads, but it's also good strategy to be friendly with gatekeepers like secretaries or administrative assistants.
- **Be willing to adjust your strategy.** Depending on the size of your target, it may be necessary to develop unique marketing and sales strategies for different types of decision-makers. Smaller companies may require more time and attention, for instance.
- **Understand your customer's expectations.** You need to understand what each prospect needs, and be able to back up what you promise. Relationships are built on trust and empathy, so start by putting yourself in their shoes and understanding the things that matter to them.
- **Make their lives easier.** People want to do business with people that they like and that will make their lives easier. How can you convey that you will make their life easier? For starters, share useful information or resources. If you hear about an opportunity that will help them, share it. What can you do to go above and beyond?

Companies who use staffing services are most likely looking for staffing companies with knowledge and expertise, candidate pool depth, attention to detail, and a demonstrated desire for a continued partnership. In a tight labor market, building relationships is how you will differentiate your firm and prove your value when the time comes to buy.

# Top Barriers to Selling

One of the first step in setting up your team for staffing sales success is anticipating all the reasons that prospects say no. You'll hear similar excuses come up often, such as the classic "we handle hiring internally," or, "I'm happy with my current provider, thanks!" If you manage to get past these gatekeeper level objections, you might also face some common barriers.



## INTERNAL TURNOVER

If your sales force is constantly changing, it's hard to make inroads and build relationships with potential clients. You also run the risk of those same recruiters taking relationships with them when they go.



## BAD DATA

Bad data and recordkeeping makes it hard to establish potential client relationships. If the new rep doesn't know where the last one left off on an account, how are they supposed to make any meaningful progress?



## CAN'T BACKUP YOUR CLAIMS

If the sales force are promising things that you cannot actually deliver, that's a big issue. You do not want a reputation for empty promises, so be careful about the message you are putting out.



## COMPETITOR GOT THERE FIRST

Sometimes, you just get beat to the punch or your competitor offers a better deal. Not a whole lot you can do in that case other than be ready to pounce in case anything goes wrong.



## CAN'T MEET THE JOB REQUIREMENTS

A deal could look great on paper, but if you don't have the capabilities to meet the requirements, you won't be able to make the sale. If it's a matter of not having enough temporary workers available to meet the order, **payroll funding** or other financial options can help you hire more and accept bigger contracts.

While these are tough challenges, because they are so common it's likely that your competitors are facing similar ones. It's the ones who make actionable plans to address these issues that will come out on top.

# How to Perfect the Staffing Sales Call

In staffing, a lot of relationships start over the phone. The sales call is a tricky thing to master, especially for younger salespeople raised in the internet age. Here is a list of staffing sales call Dos and Donts, as well as 10 cold calling tips for your sales team:

## WHAT TO DO



- Start the call with a specific, intriguing question or a mutual pain point.
- Do your homework so you know what questions to ask. Visit their website and think about their specific challenges.
- Get to the point of your call - aka, how you can solve their pain points – quickly.
- Focus on calling batches of similar companies when cold calling. This will help you be efficient in your questions.
- Offer them something of value. Free knowledge, no strings attached, both parties benefit.

## WHAT NOT TO DO



- Start the call like a telemarketer: "How are you today?" Answer: hung up on.
- Be too vague.
- Ask them if they know what you do. The answer is probably no.
- Rattle off features and benefits
- Not send a follow up email. Always send a follow up email.
- Disparage other providers. It's not good form and you could be insulting the very prospect you are calling.



## COLD CALLING 101

1. Take the time to create a good list of high value prospects.
2. Profile prospects according to categories to increase efficiency. Similar firms have similar problems.
3. Maximize call time, minimize research time.
4. Don't sell the benefits of your product, sell solving their pain points.
5. Take no for an answer. Learn to recognize a hard no and move on.
6. Don't focus on individual prospects but instead on total appointments.
7. No call scripts – be situational, flexible, and conversational. Listen more than you talk.
8. Get to the point. No gimmicks, no unnecessary info.
9. Make multiple calls to your best prospects.
10. Practice through role playing.

# Anatomy of a Successful Sales Rep

The best sales people are the ones who inspire trust. Here are some of the qualities that they share, and that you should look out for when hiring.

## **EMPATHETIC.**

Discovers their prospects reason to buy. Asks questions.

## **PASSIONATE.**

Motivated by a sincere desire to help connect people to jobs.

## **DRIVEN.**

Wants to succeed. Scratch that - needs to succeed and fulfill their potential.

## **PEOPLE PERSON.**

Comfortable talking to people, presenting to people, people people people!

## **OPTIMISTIC.**

Takes a no and turns it into a not yet. Doesn't get discouraged, gets motivated.

## **ASSERTIVE.**

Tells it like it is and gives honest advice to prospects on how to solve problems.

## **ORGANIZED.**

Creates an organized and repeatable process, and documents it along the way.





# The Six Principles of Persuasion

In the book [\*\*Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion\*\*](#), Dr. Robert Cialdini describes the 6 universal “principles of persuasion.” Here’s how you and your staffing sales team can put these psychological principles into action to help persuade your prospects to say yes.

## 1 RECIPROCITY

People often feel obliged to give back to others what they have received. Give your prospects referrals, free knowledge or advice, and/or goodies like samples and rewards. Unexpected or personal gifts work especially well. If you do this, chances are your prospect is going to want to “give” something back.

## 2 COMMITMENT AND CONSISTENCY

People like to be consistent with the things they have previously said and done, so get your prospects to verbalize their priorities and goals. Additionally, small commitments now lead to bigger ones later.

## 3 SOCIAL PROOF

Look up any online review sites and it's clear that people look to the actions of others as a guide, especially when they are uncertain about how to proceed. Show your prospect case studies, testimonials, and referrals from trusted sources.

## 4 LIKEABILITY AND FAMILIARITY

People prefer to say yes to those they like. In your research, try to find out what you might have in common with your prospects before you reach out, or draw it out in conversation. Have a plan to stay in touch via phone and email with many touchpoints too so that they'll become familiar with you.

## 5 AUTHORITY

People tend to follow the leads of credible, knowledgeable experts. Cite experts to increase your credibility when talking to prospects, or become an expert yourself. It's most effective when other people can vouch for your authority. Make sure your staffing company has favorable online reviews as well by reaching out to satisfied partners.

## 6 SCARCITY

If there's less of it, people want more. Limited quantity, limited time, etc. – these are all concepts that can promote urgency with your prospects.



# 10 Strategies to Attract New Clients

Attracting new clients is extremely important in a cyclical industry like staffing. To help you generate new business, here are 10 tips for finding and getting new clients:



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## IDENTIFY YOUR WISH LIST

Do a little research and identify 25-50 companies within your wheelhouse to target. Look up relevant information on each company, checking websites and current press releases and news to identify pain points and problems that you could help solve. Set up a Google alert for each company and monitor them on an ongoing basis.

## PLAN YOUR FOLLOW UP STRATEGY

In sales, persistence is key. Plan your follow-up as a series of touchpoints including calls, emails, mailings and visits. Start with a select few target companies and contact them 6-8 times in the first eight weeks to gain name recognition. Make a plan for after that too, as not many sales reps follow up with prospects after the initial three months.

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## ASK YOUR FRIENDS

A warm introduction is always better than going in cold. Think about who in your "sphere of influence" might be able to get you an "in" with somebody in your target company. Could be someone you know through a previous work relationship, a LinkedIn connection, or an old college classmate who happens to know X at so and so company. Give them a call or go for coffee and ask for leads.



## SCOPE OUT NEW CANDIDATES

When a new candidate comes in, ask if they have worked with a recruiter before and if so, did a recruiter place them at their previous position. Not only does this set the expectation on how you can help the candidate, it tells you what businesses are working with staffing companies.



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## GET CLIENT REFERRALS

The majority of your business likely comes from referrals, and for good reason. If that's not the case, it might be time to take a step back and review your referral program. It might be worth holding a contest, or some sort of extra initiative to reward referrals. At the least, your program should have a theme, a person in charge and results that are monitored and adjusted.



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## COMB JOB BOARDS

Job boards don't just help candidates – they can help you find new business if you know how to look. Often, recruiting companies post position descriptions from their clients that aren't altered much. Copy and paste the description and Google it, because sometimes it leads right back to the end client and you just got a new lead.



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## STAY VISIBLE

In order for prospects to remember you among all the staffing companies, your sales team has to work hard at staying top of mind. If they are not calling potential and existing clients at least once a month to touch base, you will not be the one they think of when they have recruiting needs. If they are local, encourage face-to-face visits.

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## PICK UP THE PHONE

The telephone is still one of the most valuable resources in a sales arsenal. Even among all the helpful resources like social media and email, your sales team should still constantly be on the phone. Verbal conversations will go a lot further when building relationships versus other forms of communications.



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## GO AFTER FILLABLE JOBS

If your sales team is constantly receiving jobs that are never filled but take a lot of time and energy, it might be time to review the types of jobs and clientele your sales reps are going after. If you have a history of not being able to fill certain positions, that's a good sign that it's time for you to look at other options and steer your team in a different direction.



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## RESEARCH YOUR COMPETITORS

Scour your top competitors' websites for client testimonials or partnership logos. Not every company has an exclusive contract with one staffing firm only, so you have a chance to compete for their business as you already know they use staffing services.

We hope this guide was helpful. Questions about sales? Please direct any specific questions to [info@advancepartners.com](mailto:info@advancepartners.com).

You might also be interested in checking out the blog [4 Ways to Help Your Staffing Team Close The Year Strong](#), the [Year End Checklist for Your Staffing Firm](#), or the [Guide to Double Digit Staffing Firm Growth](#).



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