

## 2015 Conference Presentation

Friday, September 18, 2015

### Sell Smarter!

Presenter/Facilitator: David Searns, Haley Marketing

Member Panelists:

- Travis Pearson, CEO, DePaul Industries (9 offices in 5 states)
- Robin Carson, Senior Vice President, Employment Services, Goodwill Industries of the Southern Piedmont/GoodWork Staffing (4 offices in North and South Carolina)

### INTRO

### AUDIENCE INPUT

#### PANELIST Q&A:

1. Let's start with some sales and marketing fundamentals. *When it comes to selling, what are the most important things you do or tell your sales people to do?*

**DePaul:** Selling is a three-step process –prepare upfront (i.e., do your homework), organize your plan, and then execute. The target clients should be a good fit with what we do, and you have to be willing to get out there and execute.

**GoodWork:** Develop your plan and work your plan; biggest thing is maintain list of target customers and stay in front of them. Follow-up is key.

2. As a marketer, one of the things we try to train our staffing business clients to do is to be strategic about how they approach the market. What do we mean by being strategic?
  - Picking the right companies to target
  - Picking the right people in those companies to target
  - Understanding the value you are providing to that company and decision maker
  - Creating a great story to help you open doors and give people a reason to want to meet

*What types of companies (and decision makers) do you target?*

**DePaul:** Combination of clerical and light industrial customers. We try to get in at Operational level first, to get a good understanding of the issues there and build a relationship with the Ops managers because they're the direct consumers of the staffing service, *then* approach HR.

**GoodWork:** "Mid-market, high-volume" users in light industrial and admin. High volume for us means clients that use 25 or more temps per day. We currently don't do any "on-sites" but this is a priority for us (for users of 50+ temps). Re decision makers, we also prefer to deal directly with Ops managers.

*What processes do you use to determine which companies to target and collect information about them?*

**DePaul:** We use a Manufacturers guide that allows us to sort by size and zip codes and Hoover's (online business data source); we scout new business listings in Business Journals; and we network – a lot of referrals come from our existing customer base.

**GoodWork:** We try to leverage existing relationships of our Board members. We use Career Builder and Monster to monitor the jobs that employers in our market are posting.

We also get referrals from Business Relationship Managers at our Job Centers who use WANTED Analytics database. And we do some cold calling.

*What do you see as the most important values you deliver as an ASO staffing firm? What is your ASO "best at?"*

**DePaul:** We emphasize customer service and response time. Also, our direct experience in manufacturing and packaging gives us a deeper understanding of these businesses and enables us to "talk the talk."

**GoodWork:** We are best at customer service. We have to take good care of customers because we're putting Goodwill's reputation on the line.

*Mission versus Business Value – how does your mission factor into your sales process? When do you leverage your mission...and when don't you?*

**DePaul:** We don't talk about the mission because the mission doesn't close sales. Our view is that the better we perform, the better we achieve our mission.

**GoodWork:** We do highlight that we're a division of Goodwill Industries (and a non-profit) which piques peoples' interest. In fact, I wish our name was "Goodwill" Staffing instead of

“GoodWork.” We invite prospects on our “hot list” for a tour, which has been effective in engaging them.

*How do you communicate the economic benefits of staffing?*

**DePaul:** That’s part of the pitch, depending on the HR problem, e.g., we can help you save time/money by taking over recruitment process, reducing staff turnover, reducing admin burden (with ACA, e.g.).

**GoodWork:** We don’t target businesses who haven’t used temps, so for the most part our prospects already “get it.”

3. One of the biggest challenges for staffing sales professionals – in any staffing firm – is generating sales leads.

Let me share a few best practices from a marketing perspective.

- Discuss integrating marketing with sales process (mail, email, social media, drop offs)
- Discuss content marketing / inbound marketing

*What do you do to market your services?*

**DePaul:** Our brochures go hand-in-hand with our sales process. We don’t do email or direct mail campaigns. We have a blog with about 600 subscribers (although it features mix of content for all DePaul divisions – staffing plus packaging, export business, SourceAmerica contracting, etc.)

**GoodWork:** We don’t use mailings or buy advertising, although our parent Goodwill does brand marketing. We once did a series of post card mailings [produced by Haley], but didn’t do the sales follow-up so it didn’t yield any benefit. Lesson learned ... if you’re going to invest the money in a campaign, be prepared to do the in-person follow-up. We find that food is an effective door opener. We often deliver cupcakes in a plain box with our label.

4. Most sales trainers teach people to be consultative in their approach to selling.

*Do you believe in a consultative approach to selling staffing?*

- If not, what’s your sales approach?
- If yes, what questions do you use in the sales process to diagnose problems?

**DePaul:** Yes! The main question to Operations people is “what is your biggest pain point? What is your biggest unfulfilled need, what’s your biggest area of turnover” and then go from there.

**GoodWork:** Yes, to an extent. In industrial work settings, we ask about their workers comparing [experience mod] and have made recommendations based on our safety walk-throughs. In our experience, people welcome this, and it signals to them that we’re a professional staffing business.

We also offer on-site forklift certification and OSHA certification training for companies that don’t have it. And we look for other opportunities to deliver services beyond staffing that are good value-adds.

- *How do you train your sales people to be staffing consultants?*

**DePaul:** We have a playbook that functions as a guide, and our salespeople learn from each other. Each week they share a highlight of the week and a lesson learned during the week (via Salesforce Chatter). We use monthly sales meetings and weekly calls for continuous coaching/learning.

**GoodWork:** Carol (GoodWork Staffing Director) has developed a good sales training manual and trains and coaches new salespeople until they’re ready to be on their own.

5. A recent (2015) Staffing Industry Analysts’ survey asked buyers of staffing services to name the top criteria and the “top three criteria” they use to select staffing firms. By both measures, worker quality dominated the responses. *How do you address the issue of worker quality in your sales process?*

**DePaul:** We work hard to understand customers’ needs and make good matches. That said, people are human and are bound to screw up, and the higher volume of people, the more likely not everyone will work out. The main message here is that if something goes wrong, we will fix it.

**GoodWork:** We use Provelt, especially for admin placements, to ensure people have appropriate skill levels. As mentioned earlier, we’re also able to do forklift certification and OSHA certification training in-house.

6. *What are the biggest objections you face in selling staffing...and how do you most effectively address them?*

**DePaul:** We minimize objections through doing sufficient prep up front.

**GoodWork:** Sometimes people are skeptical about doing business with a nonprofit staffing company.

7. *What metrics do you use to measure the effectiveness of your sales efforts?*

**DePaul:** Our salespeople have 90-day rolling forecasts and we compare performance to that. We measure things like new touches, number of appointments, number of placements per customer, but mainly it comes down to revenue and gross margin.

**GoodWork:** Revenue is the main measure, along with gross margin (we have “set” minimum mark-ups by position), and we calculate net profitability on customer accounts. We also track the number of weekly calls and follow-ups, number of employers, number of placements per employer.

8. *What metrics do you collect about customer solution outcomes? How have you used this data to build case studies? How effective have you found this as a selling tool?*

**DePaul:** Has published several single-page case studies to showcase staffing solutions.

**GoodWork:** We don’t, and I’d be interested to learn more.

9. *If you had to teach a new sales rep how to sell staffing, what would be the best advice you could offer?*

**DePaul:** Prepare to work. Also, this is a listening-based business. Remember you have two ears and one mouth for a reason. 😊

**GoodWork:** Persistence is key, and don’t take “no” personally.

10. *When it comes to selling staffing services, what are the biggest mistakes ASOs make?*

**DePaul:** Insufficient prep; insufficient listening.

**GoodWork:** ASOs tend to think that they’re “not good enough.” It’s important to project confidence. Also, ASOs tend to put mission-minded people in sales roles. That’s a big mistake. Hire sales talent; you can teach them the mission side.

Also, good ops goes hand-in-hand with selling. You can have a talented salesperson but if the operations side doesn’t do its part, you won’t succeed.