

TMJ WEEKLY STAFFING INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

Volume 1 - Issue 12

Industry Trends. Market Intelligence. Communication Insights.

October 13, 2026

STAFFING TECH TIP OF THE WEEK

TIP 9: IF A JOB IS NOT ON PAGE ONE, CANDIDATES WILL NOT FIND IT

Fewer than 1% of Google searchers click on a result from the second page. For a candidate searching "data engineer Austin" or "accounting jobs near me", page one is effectively the whole internet. If your client's posting lands on page two, most candidates will never know it exists.

Page-one ranking comes down to details you can check and fix, and three of last week's tips help:

- **Tip 1** - Clear job titles
- **Tip 2** - Structured data on every posting
- **Tip 3** - And taking expired jobs down so they do not compete with live ones

Pages also need to load quickly on a phone.

What you can do: Pick three of your client's live roles and search for them the way a candidate would, with a general term and a city such as "HR jobs Denver", rather than the exact job title. If they are not on page one, send the URLs to info@themarketingjunction.com for our insights on why.

Contact Us

DAVID & GOLIATH: WHY SMALL STAFFING FIRMS MAY MATTER MORE THAN EVER

The competitive advantage is not always having the biggest budget. Sometimes it is knowing how to compete more effectively with a smaller one.

THE LEAD STORY

Small staffing firms often possess advantages their larger competitors cannot easily replicate: local market knowledge, established relationships and specialized expertise. Yet those strengths have limited commercial value when prospective clients and candidates cannot find the agency.

David may know where the jobs are. Goliath owns the megaphone.

The solution is not necessarily more marketing expenditure. It is making existing expertise visible, maintaining valuable relationships and building processes that support consistent engagement.

Four priorities can help smaller agencies compete.

1. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE THE NEXT PLACEMENT

Candidate communication often intensifies around an active vacancy, then fades when the immediate opportunity disappears. That leaves recruiters repeatedly rebuilding relationships.

What to do: Review the candidate journey from registration through placement and beyond. Identify where communication stops, then establish useful follow-up through updates, career guidance and relevant opportunities.

The objective is not more messages. It is remaining valuable between placements.

2. MAKE LOCAL EXPERTISE VISIBLE

A smaller agency may understand its market better than a national competitor, but prospective clients need evidence of that knowledge.

What to do: Share focused hiring insights, local market commentary and practical advice through the channels your employers and candidates actually use.

A firm does not need recognition everywhere. It needs recognition where it competes.

3. DEMONSTRATE EXPERTISE BEFORE THE SALES CONVERSATION

Recruiters regularly answer questions about compensation, candidate availability and hiring challenges. That knowledge can establish credibility before a prospective client makes contact.

What to do: Turn frequently asked questions into short articles, guides or market updates that help employers make informed decisions.

Useful expertise is more persuasive than another announcement about the agency's services.

4. MAKE THE AGENCY EASIER TO FIND

Search engines, job platforms and AI-assisted tools increasingly influence how employers and candidates discover information.

What to do: Ensure the website clearly communicates specialties, locations and services. Review job listings for accuracy and make it easy for visitors to contact a recruiter or request assistance.

Visibility matters only when it leads to a meaningful next step.

THE REAL COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE: CONSISTENCY

These capabilities work together. Search creates visibility, useful content establishes credibility and ongoing communication strengthens relationships.

For smaller agencies, the obstacle is often capacity. Recruiters have placements to make and clients to serve, leaving limited time for sustained marketing.

The Marketing Junction helps staffing firms assess their market position, existing systems and communication processes to identify where focused support can make the greatest difference.

David does not need to become Goliath. He needs a better way to compete.

Executive Snapshot

The U.S. added just 29,000 jobs in September, with unemployment at 4.2%. Yet the October 6 SIA/Bullhorn Staffing Indicator showed staffing hours for the week ending September 26 running 9% above the same week a year earlier, including an 11% increase in commercial staffing.

In the UK, the KPMG/REC permanent-placement index reached 50.9 in September, its highest since September 2022, although overall staff demand continued to contract. Euro-area unemployment remained at 6.4% in August, while the EU rate held at 6.1%.

The takeaway: National labor-market conditions remain uneven. Staffing firms need to identify where demand exists rather than assume broad economic trends apply equally to their markets.



Labor Economist's Market Watch

United States

Initial unemployment claims fell by 2,000 to 197,000 in the week ending October 3, below economists' expectations of 200,000. Continuing claims rose by 17,000 to approximately 1.72 million in the preceding reporting week but remained close to their lowest level in more than three years. Together, the figures point to a labor market where layoffs remain limited, although workers who lose their jobs may face greater difficulty finding new employment.

Insurance illustrates how employment pressures vary by industry. Carriers and related businesses eliminated another 2,300 jobs in September, extending the sector's employment decline to 11 consecutive months. Research from the Jacobson Group and Aon identified automation as the most frequently cited reason for planned workforce reductions.

The Peterson Institute describes the wider U.S. labor market as relatively healthy, with unemployment near levels consistent with full employment. However, it also highlights the economy's exposure to equity-market volatility, particularly where household spending is supported by wealth gains associated with AI investment optimism. A significant market correction could weaken consumer spending and, in turn, reduce hiring demand across service industries.

United Kingdom

The September KPMG/REC Report on Jobs offered encouraging signs for UK recruitment. Permanent placements increased for a second consecutive month, with the index rising from 50.5 to 50.9, its highest since September 2022. Although overall staff demand continued to decline, private-sector permanent vacancies increased for the first time in more than two years. IT and engineering led demand, while retail and hospitality remained weaker.

Candidate availability continued to rise, and starting salary growth slowed, reinforcing employers' negotiating position. Barclays economists, writing in the Institute for Fiscal Studies' Green Budget, present a more difficult outlook, forecasting unemployment of 5.7% in 2027, broadly flat employment and falling real earnings in both 2026 and 2027. They also warn that sharper interest rate increases than they expect could weaken employment without substantially reducing energy-driven inflation.

Financial services illustrate the pressure on individual employers. Admiral is cutting approximately 500 UK positions, while Legal & General expects to cut around 1,000 roles, roughly 10% of its workforce[EJ], by mid-2027. ONS figures show UK payrolled employment falling by 145,000 in the year to August, while financial and insurance employee jobs were provisionally 1.2% lower in the year to June.

For staffing firms, the improving placement figures are encouraging, but the gains are concentrated in particular sectors and employers retain considerable bargaining power.

Europe

Europe's employment rate remains historically strong, although emerging research suggests AI may be beginning to constrain hiring in some businesses. Eurostat reported that the employment rate among EU residents aged 20 to 64 reached a record 76.1% in 2025, approaching the EU's 78% target for 2030. Regional disparities remain substantial, however, with parts of southern Italy recording employment rates close to 50%.

New Danish research published through VoxEU raises questions about AI's impact on recruitment. Firms adopting AI in 2023 were approximately 9% below their pre-adoption employment trend by September 2025, with the largest shortfalls among younger workers, university graduates and AI-exposed occupations. The decline reflected reduced hiring rather than increased layoffs and was concentrated in businesses with fewer than 100 full-time employees.

The findings do not establish an economy-wide employment decline attributable to AI. They do, however, suggest that its effects may emerge first through fewer new positions rather than rising unemployment. For staffing firms, monitoring recruitment activity, particularly among smaller employers and entry-level occupations, may provide an earlier indication of changing demand than headline employment figures.

Global

Global growth forecasts remain relatively resilient, although the benefits of AI-led investment may not be widely shared. The Peterson Institute projects global growth of 3.2% in 2026 and 3.1% in 2027, supported partly by AI investment despite higher energy costs and interest rates. UNCTAD offers a more cautious outlook, forecasting growth of 2.6% in 2026, down from 2.9% in 2025, with developing economies particularly exposed to rising energy costs.

UNCTAD also highlights the uneven distribution of gains from AI-related trade. Its analysis of an advanced AI server rack found that post-tax profits represented 68% of traced value added, while workers received less than 15%. The findings illustrate how expanding AI investment and trade may generate substantial economic value without producing comparable gains in employment or wages.

For staffing leaders, the more useful indicator is whether growth creates additional jobs, in which industries and for which workers.

U.S. Hiring Demand Tracker

National Hiring Demand

The Indeed U.S. Job Postings Index stood at 103.84 on October 2, approximately 3.8% above its February 2020 baseline. New job postings registered 99.40, approximately 0.6% below baseline.

These figures indicate that overall advertised vacancies remain above pre-pandemic levels, while newly advertised opportunities are closer to that benchmark. Against September 25, overall postings were broadly unchanged (103.80) and new postings slipped slightly (99.81). The bigger move came earlier. Last week's issue reported new postings about 6% below baseline on September 18, so they have closed most of that gap in two weeks.

Regional Hiring Demand

Comparable observations for the established three-state sample in each Census region remain incomplete. Regional week-over-week changes are therefore withheld rather than estimated.

Industry Hiring Demand

Bullhorn's October 6 research reported third-quarter light-industrial job openings **29.8% above the prior year**, led by transportation and warehousing (+41.45%), wholesale trade (+33.17%) and manufacturing (+23.44%).

These figures come from Bullhorn's proprietary data and are not directly comparable to the Indeed/FRED index.

What It Means

Hiring demand remains uneven. Industrial and operational sectors show areas of strength, but national posting figures alone cannot establish where new client opportunities are emerging.

For staffing leaders, the priority is identifying active demand within their own occupations, geographies and client markets.

Staffing Industry Implications

1. Specialization must be visible

A defined market focus helps employers recognize an agency's relevance, but the firm must demonstrate that expertise through credible market knowledge.

2. Candidate relationships require continuity

Registration, application updates and re-engagement should follow a consistent process rather than depend entirely on individual recruiter availability.

3. Marketing needs accountability

Someone must own the process, coordinate activity and measure outcomes such as qualified inquiries, returning candidates and client conversations.

4. Discoverability must lead to action

Being found is only useful if candidates and clients can act quickly. Fast replies and simple applications turn a search visit into a conversation.

What We're Seeing In The Market

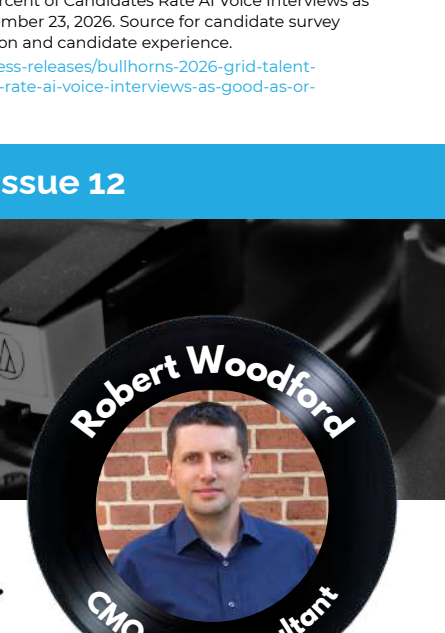
CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE IS INFLUENCING LOYALTY

Bullhorn's September 2026 GRID Talent Trends Report, based on nearly 2,300 respondents, found that:

- 92% of candidates who experienced AI voice interviews rated them as good as or better than human interviews.
- 93% of candidates reporting a positive AI experience said they would work with that staffing firm again.
- 91% of candidates contacted by their recruiter at least weekly said they would continue working with that recruiter.

These survey findings suggest that responsiveness and recruitment experience matter to candidate loyalty. They do not establish that AI or frequent contact alone causes stronger relationships.

For smaller agencies, the opportunity is to use technology to improve consistency without sacrificing personal attention.



MESSAGING TREND OF THE WEEK

FROM RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY TO RELATIONSHIP CONTINUITY

Posting vacancies, sending emails and publishing content are activities. Their value depends on whether they strengthen relationships.

The more useful questions are whether candidates return, clients re-engage and communication produces qualified opportunities.

EXECUTIVE INSIGHT

A staffing firm's most valuable relationship may be one that has not yet produced a placement.

Candidates and employers do not always need assistance immediately. Maintaining relevant contact gives them a reason to return when circumstances change.

For smaller agencies, consistency can be a competitive advantage that does not require matching the marketing budgets of national firms.

Diagnostic Question Of The Week

If a qualified candidate registers with your agency today but is not placed, what happens over the next 90 days?

Do they receive useful updates and relevant opportunities, or does the relationship disappear until another vacancy arises?

The answer reveals whether your agency is building a candidate community or simply processing applications.

THE MARKETING JUNCTION

Specialists in marketing for staffing, recruitment and workforce solutions firms.

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Let's Change The Record.

