

# MONSTER

[Recruiting and Hiring Advice](#) > [Workforce Planning](#) > [Staffing Trends: How Will 2015 Close Out?](#)

## [Staffing Trends: How Will 2015 Close Out?](#)



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What staffing trends will define the rest of the year? With contingent labor demand up and supply down, with job [candidates](#) feeling their oats in an improving market and clients still expecting to hold the line on rates, staffing will negotiate many challenges in the second half of 2015.

The numbers show how much market conditions have changed for the staffing industry since the depths of the recession. The average length of job vacancies has nearly doubled, from a 21st-century low of 15 working days in early 2009 to a high of 27 days in May 2015, according to [DHI Group](#).

Meanwhile, [mobile recruiting](#) is pervasive, and the tasks of managing contingent labor and its procurement grow more complex. We spoke with a range of agencies to learn what obstacles staffing trends they expect to navigate in the coming months, and how.

**With millions of workers re-employed, contingent professionals are in high demand.** "Our growth is a direct result of a rising tide of employment," says Rob Biederman, co-CEO of [HourlyNerd](#). More than 7 million jobs have been created since January 2009, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. "We've done really well providing contract talent for companies that can't find the people they want."

**Mobile applies just keep growing.** "The rise in mobile job applications continues," says Matt Rivera, a spokesperson for staffing firm [Yoh](#). Staffing agencies are wise to recognize that any apply via mobile comes with expectations of a speedy acknowledgement and swift completion of the [hiring process](#). "These days, candidates on any device expect a smooth, quick process."

**ERP or ATS to manage contingent labor?** "Managing contingent labor has gotten more complex, between job boards, applicant tracking systems (ATSs) and enterprise resource planning (ERPs)," says Rivera. "There are many options, and it's often not clear which is the best way to go. Companies are trying to leverage investments they've already made." Meanwhile technology and contingent-work arrangements change faster and faster, and it's hard to keep up.

**Simple technologies are speeding sales.** Perhaps as much as complex and costly enterprise systems, it's the bedrock personal communications technologies of the 2000s that continue to speed up staffing processes - and clients' and candidates' expectations of them.

"Technology -- even just texting -- has enabled us to get to candidates more quickly, and often to get a response from a client within minutes when we present a candidate," says Sandy Mazur, division president for franchise and license operations at staffing firm [Spherion](#). "We don't want candidates to feel they've fallen in a big black hole."

**Technology jobs lead the run-up in time-to-fill.** [Software engineers](#) and other software roles are as hard to fill as ever, and getting harder. "We're still seeing long time-to-fill in highly-skilled technical areas," says Rivera.

"It's a bit of a candidates' market." Staffing firms are working to educate clients on the planning that's required in the 2015 labor market to [recruit tech talent](#) when it's needed.

**Clients are a weak link in candidate engagement.** Many managers of contingent workers are still mired in a 2010 mindset, believing that the employer calls all the shots in any staffing negotiation.

"It's frustrating for candidates as well as employers," says Rivera. "Candidates in high demand have many more people vying for their attention, and they have to vet which offers are real. But often clients don't feel the urgency, so it's a protracted process."

**Clients' internal resources are a bottleneck.** Even companies that have a realistic perspective on the 2015 labor market may not be making the human capital investment needed to bring on contingent labor efficiently

"Most companies are still constrained in internal resources -- their HR and procurement people are stretched -- so they haven't improved their process or the candidate experience," says Rivera. Staffing firms may gain an edge by doing all they can to present clients with candidate information in the most actionable form.

**Many companies won't budge on price.** Rifts over compensation have become much more common, often shattering promising matches. "The temporary help world has become much more price-sensitive," says Victoria Betancourt, president of [Coneybear Cleantech](#), a Santa Ana, Calif., recruitment firm specializing in sustainable technology.

"This year has been a lot more wobbly than I expected." As companies see losses of top candidates, some are learning that a higher offer or more flexibility is sometimes a wise investment in an improving economy.

**Tapping top Millennials who don't want to be tied down.** Niche opportunities abound for agencies with vision and the courage to bet on demographic trends and new staffing models. "We're having a lot of success with professionals who have chosen to step outside the full-time workforce," says Biederman.

HourlyNerd connects talented independent contractors who have fresh MBAs with companies seeking a high level of professional services on a project basis, billed at a rate lower than those of traditional consulting firms.