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Best Practices in Training and Certification

Committed to legal, ethical, and professional practices for the staffing industry, nearly 700 staffing firms have provided professional development for their staff through the ASA Certified Staffing Professional™ and Technical Services Certified™ programs. Here, staffing professionals from six of these firms explain how they use professional development to retain employees, how they promote certification to their clients, and how certification protects their businesses. Read on for ideas to enhance your firm's training programs.

Elwood Staffing Services Inc.

“Certified employees are excited about their accomplishments,” says Deidra Reed, CSP, HR generalist and compliance officer for Elwood Staffing Services Inc., based in Columbus, IN. “The training program has boosted morale, teamwork, and retention.”

CSP™ materials are provided to new employees after three months and are an integral part of their training, Reed explains.

All staffing specialists and managers are required to take the CSP exam, and the company offers continuing education through ASA InterAction Webinars, Staffing World® sessions, and other resources.

The sales staff promote the company's ASA certification to clients, and certified staff showcase their designations on their business cards.

“As a result of ASA certification,” Reed says, “the staff have a greater understanding of employment law and its relationship to their day-to-day activities. Certification has helped reduce our company's risk of employment-related claims.”

Express Services Inc.

Because of the company's investment in professional development, the retention rate at Express Services Inc. has increased—to 73%, says online learning manager Diana Scott.

The company, headquartered in Oklahoma City, uses a learning management system with 4,000 active learners.

“We’re also very interested in incorporating new tools from ASA, such as the new ASA professional development center, *ASAPro*,” Scott says.

The company promotes its ASA certifications to clients and includes professional designations on business cards, giving them a “stamp of professionalism,” Scott says. “Clients view our staff as staffing specialists.”

Hire Dynamics LLC

“A core company value is to have the best trained, most talented staff—which can only be achieved by educating and training,” says Abigail Tremble, who directs the training program for Hire Dynamics LLC, based in Suwanee, GA.

Every year, the company budgets for 20 people to become certified by ASA, Tremble says. “Every six months, 10 more slots become available.”

Certification is linked to employees’ staff development goals, and successful completion of the CSP or TSC exam may qualify an employee for a bonus.

Hire Dynamics staff are required to complete 40 hours of training annually. “To complete the training requirement,” Tremble says, “most employees study independently, but they also form study groups.” Courses are offered internally, and staff also take advantage of ASA InterAction Webinars.

The company promotes its ASA certification by using the CSP designation on business cards, which gives sales staff the opportunity to discuss certification with clients as they explain how the company can help achieve clients’ business objectives.

“The knowledge of employment law that they get from ASA certification gives them a competitive advantage,” says Tremble.

JFC Staffing Associates

“Any education for our staff is an asset to them, and it is also an asset to our clients,” says Maralyn Kelly, CSP, corporate trainer for JFC Staffing Associates, based in Camp Hill, PA. “Training is an ongoing process and important to us to ensure the best service for our clients.”

Certification is a must for all JFC sales and operations staff. “Our goal is to have these employees certified within one year of employment, and all other

staff are considered once they have been employed for two years,” Kelly explains.

JFC provides a variety of training opportunities:

- The company purchases a package of five ASA InterAction Webinars every year.
- JFC University offers five two-hour programs throughout the year on workers’ compensation, unemployment insurance, I-9 compliance, and other topics.
- The JFC library and online workshops by ASA approved continuing education providers offer continuing education to help JFC staff maintain their certifications.
- Quick reference sheets, written by Kelly, recap seminars and workshops, and provide a tool for employees to have at their fingertips.
- The newest resource from ASA—the online professional development center *ASAPro*—will provide JFC staff with another convenient tool right at their desktops.

And the training isn’t just for JFC employees: JFC also conducts seminars on a variety of topics for clients.

“As a result of JFC’s training programs, employees are able to answer questions from clients and candidates immediately and accurately,” Kelly says. “And they’re able to handle potential employment law issues efficiently and correctly.”

“Our clients know they are dealing with a staffing firm that helps protect them from liability, and with recruiters who are knowledgeable in hiring practices and employment law.”

Joulé Inc.

“Joulé is a learning organization,” says vice president Steve Demanovich, TSC. “We are committed to the professional growth of each of our staff members. It’s a key part of our retention strategy.”

As part of that strategy, anyone who has been with the company for six months has the opportunity to become TSC certified. “For managers and senior staff, certification is required. The information gained through the certification process expands the legal knowledge base of our staff, which translates into better service to our clients and better service to our contract employees.” Demanovich says.

To prepare for the exam, Joulé sets up a 13-week training program that TSC candidates participate in. “You get the camaraderie and excitement of everyone becoming certified,” Demanovich says.

The company, based in Edison, NJ, showcases its certification on its Web site and business cards, as well as in news releases and client presentations. Demanovich says, “Certification enhances our integrity as an organization and gives us a competitive edge in the staffing marketplace, while also reducing the likelihood of employment-related legal exposure for our company.”

Professional Staffing Group Inc.

“What does CSP stand for?” clients ask when they see the designation on Professional Staffing Group business cards. It’s a perfect opportunity for PSG staff to let clients know about the training they receive—and how it helps protect clients’ businesses, says Aaron Green, CSP, president of the Boston-based firm.

All staff must graduate from the company’s rookie training program, which incorporates ASA certification. Successful completion of the program qualifies staff for a raise. Becoming certified is a requirement for all PSG staff. “Even the comptroller is certified,” Green says.

To prepare for the exam, employees study as a group, working with a facilitator who leads them through the textbooks chapter by chapter. Each employee has his or her own set of textbooks and workbooks to keep for future reference.

Because of the company’s investment in professional development, retention has increased. And, Green says, “I rest easier knowing that my staff have been trained and understand employment law.”

Learn more about certification and professional development opportunities by visiting the ASA Web site at www.americanstaffing.net, clicking on Education & Certification and then selecting Certification or ASAPro—Professional Development Center.