

YOUR PATIENCE IS APPRECIATED...



... **LUNCH WITH HALEY** will be served shortly.



STAFFING WORLD RECAP

What we saw, heard, and learned from this year's conference.

Brad Smith
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Today's Agenda

Keynotes | Sessions | Lessons Learned



KEYNOTES



OPENING KEYNOTE PERFORMANCE BY OZ PEARLMAN

Reading Behavior, Not Minds

- **Influence drives behavior.**
How we communicate shapes decisions and actions.
- **Read the room.**
Pay attention to subtle signals, reactions, and communication styles.
- **Adapt your approach.**
The most effective message isn't always the same for every person.
- **Guide, don't dictate.**
Great leaders build trust and help people reach decisions.

Great leaders don't just communicate. They influence outcomes.



THE FAULT LINES SHAPING THE WORKFORCE: WHAT COMES NEXT FOR STAFFING LEADERS

The biggest challenge may not be about creating jobs...

- **Demographics are reshaping labor supply:**
Baby boomer retirements are shrinking the available workforce, while fewer young workers are entering the pipeline.
- **A divided labor market:**
Frontline, skilled trades, and healthcare workers remain scarce, while many professional and office-based roles face an oversupply of candidates.
- **Wage pressure isn't going away:**
Wages in construction, production, transportation, and related fields have risen approximately 50% since 2020.



THE FAULT LINES SHAPING THE WORKFORCE: WHAT COMES NEXT FOR STAFFING LEADERS

- **AI is changing workforce demand:**
Entry-level office jobs face greater automation exposure, while skilled trades and hands-on roles remain harder to replace.
- **Immigration and workforce participation matter:**
Policy shifts and declining participation among older workers could further constrain labor availability.
- **Staffing must evolve from supplier to advisor:**
Help clients understand labor availability, rethink job requirements, develop workforce strategies, and establish realistic compensation.

Bottom Line: The biggest challenge ahead may not be creating jobs. It will be finding, developing, and retaining the people needed to fill them.



SESSIONS



THE COLLABORATION CATALYST: IS YOUR NETWORK ACCELERATING OR DISTRACTING YOU?

Not all networking creates value:

A larger network doesn't necessarily mean more opportunity. Focus on meaningful relationships.

Be intentional about who you connect with:

Build relationships with people who challenge your thinking, expand your expertise, and open new doors.

Collaboration should be mutually beneficial:

The strongest partnerships create value for both sides through shared knowledge, resources, and opportunities.

Give before you ask:

Build trust by making introductions, sharing insights, and helping others solve problems.

Protect your time and energy:

Evaluate which groups, meetings, and relationships contribute to your goals (versus those that just keep you busy).

Turn connections into action:

Follow through, make introductions, share opportunities, and measure the business impact of your relationships.



IMPLEMENTING AI FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE RECRUITING AND STAFFING TEAMS

Start AI implementation with defined recruiting and staffing problems.

Don't start with tools or technology.

Prioritize administrative efficiency, candidate engagement, and recruiter productivity.

Where can you save time, eliminate low-value tasks, or improve the service experience?

Measure outcomes rather than technology adoption.

The ROI on AI comes from improving recruiter productivity, increasing placement rates, reducing time-to-fill, and increasing client and candidate satisfaction with your services.



THE AGENTIC RECRUITING EDGE: SCALING HIGH-VOLUME STAFFING WITH AUTONOMOUS AI

AI is moving from assistant to agent:

Agentic AI can execute multi-step recruiting workflows rather than simply responding to prompts or tasks.

Scale recruiting without scaling headcount:

Automate repetitive, high-volume activities to help recruiters manage larger candidate pipelines.

Accelerate candidate engagement:

AI agents can support screening, messaging, follow-up, and candidate communication throughout the process.

Improve speed and responsiveness:

Automated workflows can reduce delays and keep candidates moving through the recruiting funnel.

Keep humans in control:

Maintain oversight of candidate quality, hiring decisions, and interactions requiring judgment or empathy.

Measure more than efficiency:

Evaluate AI based on recruiting speed, candidate experience, placement quality, and overall business outcomes.

Bottom Line:

Agentic AI creates an opportunity to scale recruiting operations, allowing recruiters to spend less time managing processes and more time building relationships and making placements.



THE CURIOSITY GAP: ALIGNING YOUR BRAND WITH BUYER REALITY

Key Takeaways

- Test whether a contact is a true champion
- Protect time and avoid premature pricing
- Align your message with buyer reality
- Ask whether the work matters
- Let the buyer define a successful meeting
- Sell through customer proof
- Lead with humility, vulnerability, and curiosity
- Map accounts with relationship-based org charts
- Make outbound relationship-led, not pitch-led
- Turn role-play into deliberate practice



STATE OF THE LABOR MARKET: WHAT TO EXPECT FOR STAFFING IN 2027

The labor market remains tight: Despite slower hiring, historically limited available labor could constrain growth when employer demand rebounds.

Demographics are a long-term challenge: Baby boomer retirements and a shrinking pipeline of younger workers will continue putting pressure on labor availability.

Demand varies significantly by industry: Staffing firms must monitor regional and industry-specific trends rather than rely on national employment numbers.

AI is reshaping skill requirements: Technology is changing the types of jobs employers need filled and the skills candidates must possess.

Labor intelligence creates competitive advantage: Use employment trends, workforce availability, and compensation data to identify opportunities and guide clients.

Plan for demand before it arrives: Align recruiting resources, candidate pipelines, and sales strategies with where workforce demand is heading in 2027.

Bottom Line:
The staffing firms best positioned for 2027 will be those that anticipate workforce changes rather than simply react to open job orders.



SOLVING FOR TEAM DYNAMICS IN STAFFING— THE WAR BETWEEN SALES AND RECRUITING

- **Sales and recruiting must operate as one team:** Competing priorities and silos create friction, slow execution, and ultimately hurt the client experience.
- **Align expectations before making promises:** Sales needs to understand recruiting capacity, candidate availability, and realistic timelines before committing to clients.
- **Improve job-order quality:** Help ensure recruiters understand what clients actually need, reducing wasted time on unfillable orders.
- **Create shared accountability:** Both departments should be measured against common outcomes, including placements, client satisfaction, retention, and profitability.
- **Build consistent feedback loops:** Sales and recruiting need ongoing communication about job requirements, candidate availability, market conditions, and client feedback.
- **Reward collaboration, not individual wins:** Compensation, KPIs, and leadership practices should reinforce teamwork rather than competition between departments.



CLARITY BEATS CHAOS: HOW HIGH-PERFORMING STAFFING TEAMS STAY FOCUSED UNDER PRESSURE

- **Clarity starts with leadership:** Teams perform better when everyone understands the priorities, expectations, and outcomes they're working toward.
- **Prioritize what matters most:** Too many competing initiatives create confusion. Focus on the activities that have the greatest impact on results.
- **Alignment drives execution:** Sales, recruiting, and operations must work toward shared objectives rather than competing departmental priorities.
- **Communicate consistently:** Leaders need to reinforce priorities, clarify responsibilities, and ensure expectations reach frontline employees.
- **Maintain accountability under pressure:** Clear ownership, measurable goals, and regular progress reviews help teams stay focused when challenges arise.
- **Protect execution quality:** Don't let urgency, constant interruptions, or reactive decision-making distract teams from the work that produces results.



BUILDING ENTERPRISE VALUE IN STAFFING: MARKET TRENDS, VALUATION DRIVERS, AND TRANSACTION READINESS

Growth drives valuation: Buyers place a premium on staffing firms demonstrating sustainable revenue growth, expanding placement volume, and consistent profitability.

EBITDA is the foundation of value: Buyers focus on adjusted, sustainable EBITDA, with many middle-market technical and healthcare staffing firms valued around 6–8× EBITDA and exceptional firms potentially reaching 10×.

Customer concentration creates risk: Buyers prefer diversified revenue, ideally with no customer exceeding 10%. Heavy concentration can significantly reduce valuations or derail transactions.

Specialization commands a premium: Technical, healthcare, and other specialized staffing businesses often attract stronger valuations than more commoditized segments.

Build a business that operates without you: Strong management teams, documented processes, and succession planning increase buyer confidence and enterprise value.

Higher margins demonstrate differentiation: Above-average markups can signal pricing power and stronger client value, making the business more attractive to buyers.



ENGINEERING, IT, AND SCIENTIFIC SECTION: DIFFERENTIATING YOUR FIRM: FROM STAFFING PROVIDER TO STRATEGIC WORKFORCE PARTNER

Key Takeaways

- Go beyond filling roles: solve broader workforce challenges.
- Differentiate with market expertise, partnerships, and new services.
- Connect employers and talent through workforce development.
- Start with a real client need and build from there.



BE BETTER THAN YOUR COMPETITION: HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE DIRECT HIRE IN TODAY'S MARKET

Define a clear value proposition.

Not just about what makes you different. It's about the unique value you add.

Differentiate through consultative service, candidate relationships and specialization.

Expertise + Access + Advice = real differentiation!

Demonstrate recruiting performance beyond placement fees.

Focus on the value of the outcome you deliver.



NO ONE WANTS TO TALK TO YOU: HERE'S HOW TO GET THE SALE ANYWAY

Manage the sales funnel through controllable ratios

Coach salespeople through the chain from activity to revenue

Start with the relationships closest to revenue

Target retention and expansion opportunities first

Earn trust in networking communities before trying to sell

Don't show up and start handing out business cards and making sales pitches

Map and support the buyer's changing decision journey

Selling is no longer just winning over HR or one staffing buyer

Make compensation simple, motivating and aligned with strategy

Connect each salesperson's plan to the income they personally want to earn

Make your proposal easy to retell internally

The obstacle may be internal complexity

Build specialized authority buyers and AI can find

Help salespeople and recruiters become known for expertise relevant to their target clients or candidates.



THE POWER OF THE OPERATIONAL FEEDBACK LOOP: UNLOCKING CLARITY, ALIGNMENT, AND RESULTS

Turn feedback into action with a clear owner and process

Use the six Cs: capture, connect, consider, commit, close, and check

Prioritize what matters—and keep progress visible

Review feedback across teams, weigh impact and effort, and communicate decisions and rationale

Fix the places where feedback gets stuck

Address unclear ownership, departmental silos, and root problems that keep resurfacing

Ask early, listen openly, and verify the outcome

Make it safe to speak honestly, act while input is useful, and check whether the solution worked



AI IN STAFFING: THE REAL BARRIER TO ROI AND HOW TO BREAK THROUGH IT

Technology isn't the barrier—adoption is:

Buying AI tools doesn't create value. Success depends on how teams incorporate AI into workflows.

Start with a business problem, not a tool:

Identify specific opportunities to improve recruiting efficiency, candidate engagement, or placement performance before investing.

Focus on augmentation, not replacement:

Use AI to improve recruiters' capabilities, automate clearly defined tasks, and free people to focus on relationships and judgment.

Build repeatable, scalable workflows:

Move beyond isolated AI experiments and embed successful use cases into consistent processes.

Measure outcomes, not activity:

More AI usage doesn't necessarily mean greater productivity. Track time saved, successful placements, revenue, and operational improvements.

Leadership must drive behavior change:

Train employees, reinforce expectations, and actively support adoption rather than assuming people will embrace new technology.



THE EXECUTIVE PLAYBOOK FOR THE NEXT ERA OF STAFFING

- **Focus on what you do best:** Staffing firms can't be everything to everyone. Identify two or three core strengths, ideal customers, and service channels where you can differentiate and win.
- **Evolve from staffing supplier to workforce partner:** Look beyond filling requisitions to understanding clients' business challenges and delivering broader workforce solutions.
- **Adapt to changing buying models:** Clients increasingly use direct staffing, MSP, master vendor, onsite, and SOW programs. Each requires a tailored sales and delivery approach.
- **Use data to demonstrate value:** Buyers increasingly evaluate suppliers based on performance, specialization, outcomes, and the ability to solve specific workforce challenges.
- **Adopt technology strategically:** Invest in AI and automation to solve operational problems, improve productivity, and free employees for higher-value work—not simply to keep up with competitors.
- **Protect profitability and manage risk:** Understand account economics, establish boundaries on unfavorable contract terms, and walk away from business that doesn't make financial sense.



POWERED BY PEOPLE: STORIES THAT MOVE STAFFING FORWARD

Network through purpose and value—not titles

Don't introduce yourself by title or resume

Rethink culture fit to keep problem-solvers

Technology should support—not replace—recruiters' judgment

Technology should provide decision support rather than make hiring decisions

Do the work without mistaking it for control

Outcomes are not fully yours to control



RECRUITING THE 95%: HOW AI CHANGES THE GAME FOR INDUSTRIAL HIRING

The biggest opportunity is passive talent: Only 11% of workers are actively applying on job boards, while another 40% are open to opportunities. Staffing firms need to reach beyond active applicants.

AI changes how we source candidates: Use AI to identify, engage, and qualify passive candidates at scale rather than relying solely on job postings.

Turn your database into a recruiting asset: AI can enrich candidate records, verify contact information, and reactivate qualified workers already in your system.

Automate outreach without losing the human touch: AI can personalize communication, screen for interest, pay expectations, and commute feasibility, while keeping recruiters accessible.

Use labor market intelligence to improve results: Leverage localized wage data, talent availability, and competitor job postings to help clients set realistic compensation and hiring expectations.

Make job advertising smarter: Monitor applicant quality and posting performance, then use AI to refine job titles, descriptions, and advertising strategies.

Turn recruiting intelligence into sales opportunities: Use AI to identify employers that need the skills of qualified, available candidates already in your pipeline.



STOP LEAVING MONEY ON THE TABLE: HOW TO ENGAGE WITH YOUR CURRENT CLIENTS

Existing clients may have untapped potential

- Don't wait for clients to ask for more help.
- Look for needs through regular conversations, job postings, and relationships across the client's organization.

Make account growth intentional and documented

- Use a shared, repeatable process—not just individual memory or occasional outreach.
- Make sure the process and tools show clear value to the people expected to use them.

Reframe the conversation around client value

- Explore challenges rather than simply asking for more business.
- Avoid assumptions about what clients know, need, or think of your services.

Make business reviews a regular habit

- Set expectations early and schedule regular reviews.
- Cover: what's working, what could improve, where else you could help, and who else might benefit.

Strengthen relationships across the account

- Map the main contact, their peers, leaders, and team members.
- Rate relationship strength, identify gaps, and plan thoughtful next steps.



FROM INVISIBLE TO INFLUENTIAL: BUILDING YOUR UNIQUE SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND

The sales starts before YOU

- **94% of B2B buyers use AI to short-list vendors.**
Buyers research, evaluate, and form opinions long before engaging with a salesperson.
- **Your personal brand is your competitive advantage:**
People connect with people, not just company logos. Build visibility, credibility, and trust.
- **Define your audience and your expertise:**
Know who you want to influence, what problems they face, and what you want to be known for.
- **Turn your LinkedIn profile into a credibility engine:**
Focus on the value you deliver, the problems you solve, and what makes you different.



FROM INVISIBLE TO INFLUENTIAL: BUILDING YOUR UNIQUE SOCIAL MEDIA BRAND

- **Be authentic, not promotional:**
Share insights, experiences, industry perspectives, and personal stories that make you relatable.
- **Consistency builds influence:**
You don't need to post every day. Show up regularly, engage with others, and create content that demonstrates expertise.
- **Build relationships before you need them:**
Engage with prospects and industry connections so you're already familiar when a business need arises.

Bottom Line:

You don't need to be an influencer to be influential. You need to be visible, valuable, and consistently present with the people you want to reach.



LESSONS LEARNED



BRAD SMITH

Takeaways

- **Visibility, credibility, and relationships drive growth.**
Buyers increasingly research providers, consult AI, and form opinions before speaking with sales.
- **Operational excellence and leadership will separate the winners.**
In a margin-sensitive industry, profitable growth requires more than sales activity. High-performing firms align sales and recruiting, eliminate inefficiencies, develop leaders, establish accountability, and focus on measurable business outcomes.
- **Be different.**
A new offering, new approach, new look creates meaningful interest and different conversations.



SUSAN WURST

Takeaways

- Specialization is becoming a competitive necessity.
- The sales process has changed. Staffing firms need to change with it.
- Your next client may find you through AI before they find your website.
- Having a life-sized cardboard cutout in your booth is an asset!



RYAN MAHER

Takeaways

- **Be Memorable**
 - Oz set the bar high – can we do the same with how we serve others?
- **Repetition Works!**
 - Consistent visibility drives results!
- **Lead with Humility, Vulnerability and Curiosity**
 - In sales, curiosity is your superpower. As Casey Jacox shared, if you can lean into that and keep your ego out of the way, you can foster true understanding and relationships built on trust.



HAILEY BIRKNER

My biggest takeaway: Momentum

In client conversations, in how businesses are thinking about technology, and in my own professional growth.

- **A little wonder goes a long way.** Watching Oz perform reminded me how powerful it is to surprise people, challenge assumptions, and make them feel something. Also, I'm ready to believe in magic.
- **Relationships feel different across a dinner table.** Sharing meals with clients I usually see on a screen gave us space to connect beyond projects, updates, and the usual agenda.
- **Personal progress became tangible.** Participating in two podcasts—ASA Staffing World and *The Growth Game*—was a meaningful reminder that I'm not just preparing to put myself out there anymore. I'm doing it.
- **Cautious optimism kept coming up.** Many of the people I spoke with shared positive changes in their businesses—not an "everything is fixed" feeling, but encouraging signs of movement.
- **Technology is getting a closer look.** I heard more people questioning their tech stacks: what's working, what overlaps, and what actually deserves a place in the business.



KATHY BRUSH

Takeaways

- **AI is exciting, but the human element is still irreplaceable.**
Tech is changing how we work, but relationships, trust and personal connections remain essential.
- **A little creativity can spark some great conversations!**
Our RogIQ white lab coats got attention. Were we doctors or mad scientists – whatever people thought, they were great conversation starters and created curiosity.
- **Oz Pearlman, I loved his message about reading people.**
Listening to what someone says, noticing what they don't say and creating experiences people remember. Pretty relevant to an industry built around people!
- **Nothing beats face-to-face.**
The spontaneous conversations, laughs and connections are one of my favorite parts of the convention.



DAVID SEARNS

Takeaways

- **Marketing works...if you take some risks!**
We invested a lot this year. And despite pretty low attendance numbers, we had one of our best-ever Staffing World results.
- **Want to stand out? Have something new to share.**
RogIQ was a game changer. We had a new technology, new brand, and most importantly a new and highly relevant (and timely) way to deliver value.
- **Automate your outreach...intelligently.**
Having too much fun with Instinct and Grok Bots.





**Your next client is searching.
Your competitors are showing up.
Are you?**

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