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## **Navigating COVID-19 Hiring Challenges with a Staffing Partner**

In Partnership with RGF Staffing and Hanover Research

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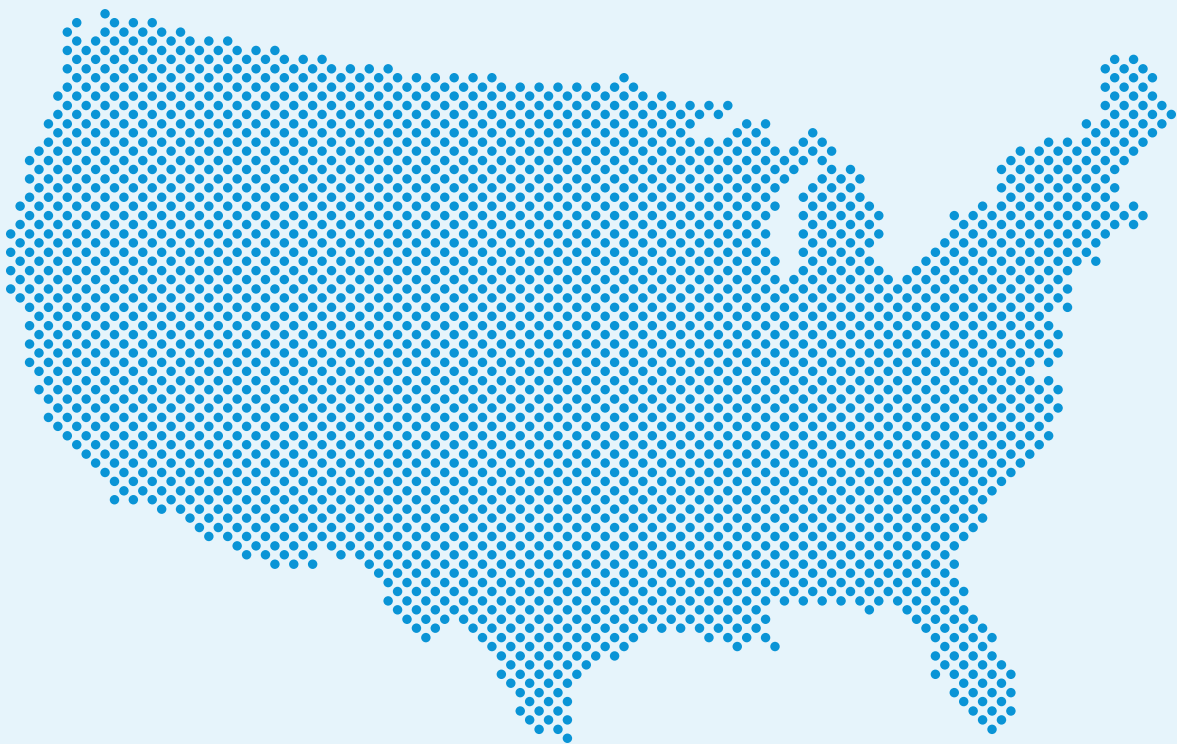
 **Staffmark**

## Economic Impact

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the unemployment rate reached 14.7% in April 2020, the highest since the Great Depression. Since then, it's gradually improved as businesses have attempted to reopen safely. In November 2020, the unemployment rate was 6.7%. While this is an improvement, it is close to double the 3.5% rate in February 2020.

Economists warn that the economy needs a widely distributed vaccine before unemployment returns to normal levels. Two vaccine manufacturers have applied for emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration.

The Federal Reserve estimates that the economy will return to a healthier 5.5% unemployment rate in 2021.



### Who is RGF Staffing?

Staffmark Group is part of RGF Staffing, the world's largest network of staffing companies, which stretches across four continents and provides work for around 300,000 people every single day.

RGF Staffing includes strong local brands such as Advantage Resourcing UK, Bright Plus, Chandler Macleod Group, Recruit Staffing, Secretary Plus, Solvus, Staffmark Group, Staff Service, Start People, The CSI Companies, Unique, and USG Professionals.

Our local experts are backed by a global network of industry experts and benefit from family connections with leading pioneers such as Indeed and Glassdoor. RGF Staffing is part of Recruit Holdings Co., Ltd. For further information please visit [rgfstaffing.com](https://rgfstaffing.com).

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## COVID-19 Employment Impact

Staffing issues have been prevalent throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently, RGF Staffing conducted a study with Hanover Research to gather information about the impact on employers and their relationship with staffing agencies.

For some companies, demand dropped significantly at the start of the pandemic but has returned to normal levels. For others, demand and supply chain fluctuations have proven difficult, such as situations where they have had to lay off staff and then rehire to meet changing needs. For hiring managers, this means that a great level of flexibility is required.



*"The hardest thing for me and all of the management staff has been trying to negotiate our orders - when they're coming in, when they're dropping. One week we'll have full orders, and we bring everybody back. And then two weeks later they may be having problems from other suppliers, so then they're not making parts. It's been a real roller coaster."*

– HR Manager, Automotive Parts

The pandemic has affected job roles in different ways. In the short term, employers expect to see transportation and information technology roles have the highest net increase, while sales, management, and accounting roles are expected to see the highest net decline.

Staffing agencies are playing a significant role in helping clients become more agile, as employers still need employees to meet business goals. The current environment simply means that hiring managers must be creative and strategic in finding them.

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## 6 Ways a Staffing Agency Can Help Your Organization During and After the Pandemic

### 1) Agility.

Employers are depending on staffing agencies to quickly meet their staffing needs and deliver quality service during this ever-changing time. Throughout the pandemic, hiring managers continue to use staffing agencies to fill temporary positions. This allows companies to seize opportunities now and avoid a costly, long-term commitment. Contractors can alleviate extra work from full-time employees and/or fill in the gaps caused by unforeseen layoffs.



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**48%** expect to use a staffing agency to fill temp-to-hire roles after the pandemic (up from before the pandemic)

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## 2) Quality and speed.

The research demonstrates that the pandemic has not changed the fact that employers place a high value on quality from the staffing agencies they work with—both the quality of candidates and the quality of services.



*"Quality of talent is very, very important at a competitive rate. That's one of the major things that we look for from an agency."*

– Category Manager, Tools Manufacturer

While quality is always a priority for staffing companies, there is a fine balance between cost, quality, speed, and flexibility. They are all considered and interrelated during the hiring process. However, where only one of these factors is considered a high priority, other factors may dwindle. For example, a fast hire, may not always bring the highest quality candidate. Staffing agencies' role is to manage expectations and deliver a service that meets clients' quality, speed, and flexibility needs.

## 3) Diversity.

While the pandemic has caused many disruptions and it is easy to switch focus in times of great challenge, it is encouraging that diversity and inclusion remains a key focus for organizations.



**97%** cite diversity, inclusion, and social responsibility is important, with 41% saying it is extremely important

Staffing agencies can play a significant role in building a diverse workforce.



**53%** say that they expect their staffing agency to help find diverse candidates to meet their goals

### Diversity & Inclusion Within Staffmark Group

Our goal is to create an inclusive and diverse organization that actively embraces the uniqueness of our worksite employees, clients, and community to drive growth and support our core values. We view diversity broadly and include gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, generation, military status, working and thinking styles, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ability, and technical skills.

Our diversity and inclusion best practices include supporting our goals to remove bias from recruiting by creating a blind selection process, partnering with multicultural professional associations, attending and utilizing career fairs and job boards for targeted minority groups, and using metrics to monitor our diversity efforts.



## 4) Cost and time savings.

Hiring pre-pandemic was hard enough. Hiring during COVID-19 presents another set of challenges. When companies partner with a staffing agency, they can avoid making the wrong hire, delays in hiring, and long-term commitments of adding staff to their payroll – all of which cost money and time.



*"[Staffing agencies are] an extremely important partner for us. I send an email to my contacts and I tell them, 'Hey, I need one order picker, I need one reach truck operator second shift.' I send a description of those four or five positions that we have, what types of equipment they'll be operating, and then how many people we need for that position. They provide all the recruiting, drug screen background, and prep for the associates to come out."*

– Distribution Manager, Electrical Supplies

## 5) Productivity.

The pandemic has resulted in longer workdays for many workers. This can result in errors, fatigue, work-related injuries, and lack of motivation – which means a loss of productivity. Staffing agencies can provide additional resources to restore productivity levels.

## 6) Forecasting assistance.

The pandemic has forced many employers to shift from a strategic hiring plan to a reactive state, and many organizations expect volatility to continue for the short-term future.



**43%** expect to see a continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for the next 6 to 12 months

A staffing partner can help forecast during the pandemic and beyond. With a plan in place, organizations will have the necessary staff – and if things change, the agency can quickly intervene to adjust as needed.

## How Staffmark Group Has Adapted

To relieve pressure from companies hiring during COVID-19, staffing agencies have also had to become more agile. The key adaptations Staffmark Group made include:



**Remote recruitment.** Because of our commitment to agility, investment in technology, and infrastructure, we were able to quickly transition to a remote environment that was virtually seamless for our clients. Many steps in our recruitment process, such as applications, interviews, and assessments, are able to be performed in a 100% digital manner.



**Emerging technology.** To improve the client and candidate experience and accessibility during this time, we have invested in technology enhancements, including:

- ▶ **New mobile app** that sends instant notifications to qualified talent about new job opportunities to expedite recruiting and filling orders
- ▶ **Conversational AI** to help vet qualified candidates, automate the recruiting process, and receive actionable insights through multi-channel engagement
- ▶ **Chatbox functionality** to guide candidates through the automated application process
- ▶ **Assessment platform** that provides job evaluation tools to evaluate skills, predict performance, and find the best fit for employees and clients
- ▶ **Cloud-based interviewing solution** that uses a test questionnaire with audio and video interviewing
- ▶ **Virtual onboarding process** with auto-populated fields from application and employee confirmation via a mobile app
- ▶ **A talent engagement and communication platform** that allows us to connect with our employees via email, SMS, or text on a predetermined timeline



**Expedited hiring processes.** To speed up interview-to-hire rates, we offer same-day and virtual hiring events. When approved by our clients, we also relax screening requirements, such as background checks.



**Creative compensation strategies.** We provide detailed market research that outlines effective compensation by market. We also offer performance-based workforce solutions.



**Flexible work options.** To help maintain social distancing and accommodate workers with scheduling conflicts, we help develop flexible staffing plans, such as staggered employee shifts and rotating schedules.

Staffmark Group CEO, Geno Cutolo, shares his thoughts on 2020 and the adaptations they've had to make as a result of the pandemic:

*"Through every challenge in 2020, the Staffmark Group team has demonstrated agility. When "safer at home" restrictions were announced, we quickly moved our employees to work from home and provided the technology and resources needed to remotely interview, screen, hire, and onboard employees. We found new ways to communicate and measure—and as a result, identified efficiencies to improve productivity and performance.*

*Through it all, our team has remained committed to supporting our communities, serving our clients, and connecting people to impactful work. We will continue to monitor the situation and adjust our operations to meet the needs of our clients and provide for the health and safety of our employees. We will all get through this together, and I believe that we will come out on the other side stronger."*





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## Conclusion

While the strength of many industries has been tested during this pandemic, the way in which we hire and service our clients has transformed – with increased service agility, ease of application and placement for job seekers, and creative workforce solutions. The adaptations that have been implemented, through technology and reinvigoration of services, have been a silver lining during this stressful time. You can count on Staffmark Group to continue to innovate and create flexible solutions that will be effective during any economic condition.

### About Staffmark Group

Staffmark Group is a family of staffing brands with a mission to align people and companies to create opportunity. We provide the expertise, connections, and technology to help people and companies succeed. If you need a job, we want to provide it. And if you need staff, we want to deliver the best candidates.

A proud member of RGF Staffing, Staffmark Group is organized into three operating units: Commercial Staffing Services (Administrative & Light Industrial), Technical & Professional Services, and Strategic Workforce Solutions. Our national network of 450+ branch and on-site service locations connects 250,000 talent annually.

Opportunity is everywhere, but it's not always easy to uncover. We partner with you to help you find it.

[www.staffmarkgroup.com](http://www.staffmarkgroup.com)

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