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Maximizing Your Tax Department Through Strategic Flexible Staffing

When a manager within the corporate tax department of a Houston-based, diversified resources company wanted to take a 12-18 month tour in one of the company's European locations, there was no one internally who could cover such a significant need.

The company turned to a staffing agency with the unique capability of being able to fill such a specific, high-level, yet temporary position. TaxForce.com quickly found and brought in a seasoned professional who was able to successfully oversee the consolidated compliance function for the U.S. Tax operations, a multi-billion dollar entity, for 18 months until the permanent employee was ready to return.

That's a far cry from the "temp" staffing situations most people are familiar with from years past. But it's right on the money to show the smart success flex staffing can be today.

Why "Flex?" For Extraordinarily efficient staffing!

Companies today are strategically using flexible staffing to not only react to increased or unexpected workloads, but to also more closely monitor their staff size and costs. This new game plan results in greater levels of flexibility, productivity, and competitiveness.

Flexible staffing is most effectively used as a supplement to your permanent workforce, not as a reactive measure or replacement for employees due to downsizing or budget cuts. And the concept is now widely viewed as a beneficial strategy. A 1999 Report on the American Workforce included: "Flexible staffing arrangements undeniably increase business competitiveness."

Consider the frequency of changes in tax regulatory compliance and audit requirements. Meeting Sarbanes-Oxley's standards for "full and adequate" documentation has tax departments worriedly guessing as to just how "full and adequate" their efforts need to be. Schedule M requirements are also creating more recordkeeping demands on tax departments.

Fast-forward to an audit. The IRS representative you work with will undoubtedly be of a higher quality and be more aggressive than those you've encountered previously. And it's impossible to predict just how much more aggressive that rep will be or how aggressive the documentation demands will be.

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The solution to the workload ebbs and flows caused by all these predicaments (and more) is flex staffing.

Supply and demand: Dip into a high quality pool of talent.

The really good news with flex staffing is the quantity and quality of experienced and talented tax professionals available. Baby boomers are retiring and many are leaving full-time work and choosing early retirement. These individuals are successful, seasoned professionals.

Many other tax professionals are opting for the flexibility of contract work. In fact, 33% of contingent employees now prefer temporary work over permanent work, up from 26% four years ago.

The traditional "loaner" staff pool dwindles, yet comes with a higher price.

Until now, your traditional option was to turn to the supply side of staffing by utilizing "loaner staff" from a big outside accounting firm. Yes, you get the experience level big firms offer, but at a price that includes the big overhead and infrastructure costs those big firms carry. This option includes another possible obstacle today: There are only four big accounting firms (down from 10). And those big four firms, plus the national, regional and local CPA firms, all are understaffed at precisely the same senior level you need to draw from for your flexible staffing needs.

Independence issues between tax advice providers and auditing services subtract even more from the available pool of staff, since the individual who becomes the auditor for your company shouldn't be the same individual who handles your taxes.

Another option that's developed in an effort to avoid the independence issues has been the tax consulting firms. But drawing staff from these entities still carries an inflated price tag, since the consulting firms reflect similar overhead costs as the public accounting firms. What's more, you're not dealing with quite as high quality as offered by big public accounting firm. So although you're gaining the advantage of no independence issues, you're losing the "luxury" of full confidence.



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Flex staffing through TaxForce.com: A solution that makes strategic and financial sense.

The flex staffing evolutionary step takes you directly to TaxForce.com—the first to provide high-level contract staff at a national level. TaxForce.com can provide you with a seasoned contract tax professional, often with five to fifteen years of experience. Yet, this more experienced staffer is available to you at a price much less than you're used to paying the big CPA firms for a "loaner."

The TaxForce.com contract staffer brings all of the high-quality expertise you need, yet none of the legal, independence, or divided time commitment issues you must avoid. In addition, your contract staffer doesn't bring with them the high-price of the tax firm loaners, nor the high costs you would incur as the employer-of-record of a permanent staffer.

So by utilizing contract staff, you can stop trying to predict exactly how your staffing needs will be affected by quarterly and annual closing compliance issues and audits. Instead, TaxForce.com allows you to have your contract staffing plan already in place. You reap the benefits of having your contract tax professional provide the exact assistance required...exactly when and where you need it.

The benefits of this shift in workforce assessment and flexible staffing through trusted contractors such as TaxForce.com are significant cost savings, flexibility, the ability to take advantage of specific expertise on an as-needed basis, and even a valuable method of trying out employees before possibly hiring them on a fulltime, permanent basis.

Contact TaxForce.com today about making contract staffing a strategic part of your flexible staffing plan at 843-216-7444 or visit www.TaxForce.com.

About the Author: Tony Santiago is the founder and President/CEO of TaxForce.com, a targeted, career-oriented website offering its highly focused tax professional audience—both tax pros and employers, in both corporate and individual taxation—a most comprehensive set of tax career tools backed by solid, current industry data resulting in the Internet's largest tax specific audience. He is also the Senior Partner at TaxSearch, Inc., the premier boutique executive search firm for identifying senior level tax professionals. He has over 25 years experience assisting clients in building world class tax departments throughout the U.S. and globally. He can be reached at 843-216-7444 or tony@TaxTalent.com.

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