

# WANT TO ENGAGE TALENT?



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# MAKE THEIR JOB SEARCH PERSONAL



As employers continue to struggle with skills gap challenges in an ever-tightening labor market, the question of how best to engage with job seekers has become increasingly important—especially for staffing and recruiting companies that need any edge they can find in the battle for talent.

By Tim Hulley



## **ASA went straight to the source—**

the U.S. public—to pose questions focused on effectively engaging with job seekers. The ASA Workforce Monitor survey results yielded some interesting takeaways for staffing agencies to consider as they hone their recruiting strategies.

### **Job Search Feels ‘Faceless’**

A majority of Americans believe that the job search today is too impersonal, and that applying for a job feels like sending their résumé or job application into a “black box.” An effective recruiting strategy is one that includes steps to help job seekers feel personally engaged in the application process.

Consider this strategy in the context of the wide range of technologies and contact methods used by companies today. How do Americans feel about the specific tools and resources they have available to them for their job search? What are the best ways for recruiters to reach out to job seekers and form connections? The latest ASA Workforce Monitor shed light on those answers, as well. >>>

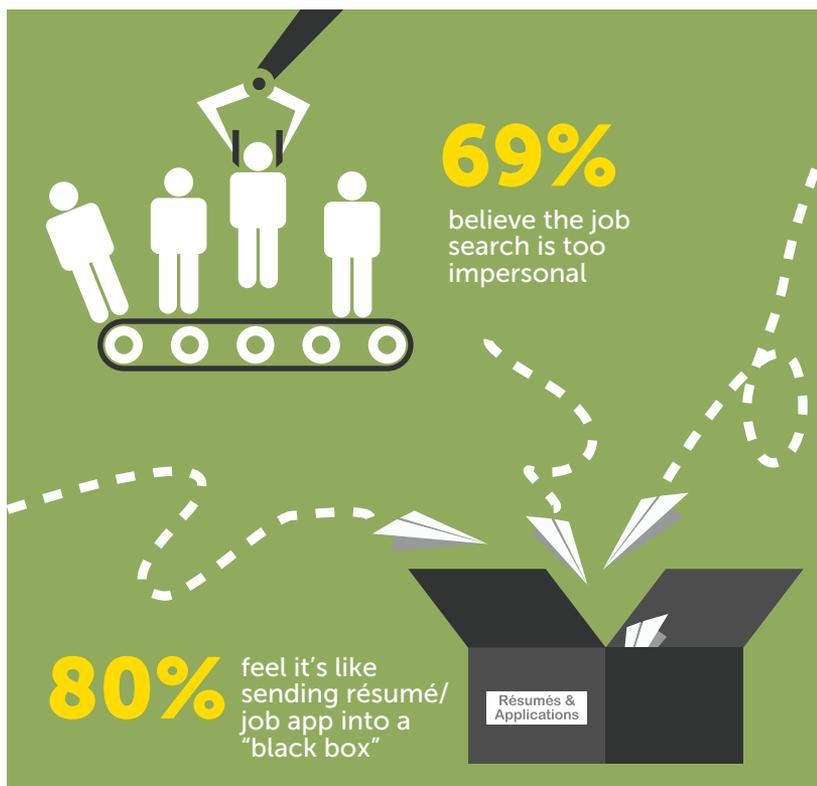


## **Exclusive Industry Research & Data**

This issue’s research-focused article summarizes findings from a recent ASA Workforce Monitor® survey, which explored Americans’ preferences and perspectives regarding the job search process. As the industry’s research and data leader, ASA reports on timely industry data in every issue of *Staffing Success*. Get up-to-the-minute data and research-related information when you follow @StaffingData on Twitter.

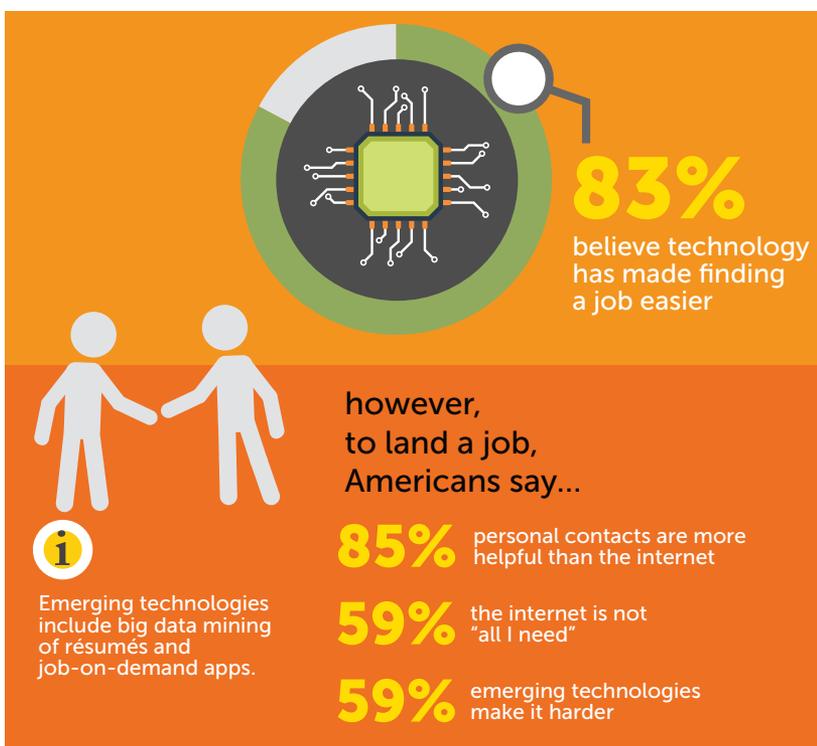
## JOB SEARCH FEELS 'FACELESS'

A majority of Americans say searching for a job lacks a personal touch.



## TECH HELPS—BUT HURTS, TOO

Emerging technologies can be valuable resources when looking for a job, but also pose challenges.



**IN TODAY'S TIGHT LABOR MARKET, COMPANIES ARE LOOKING FOR ANYTHING TO GIVE THEM AN EDGE AS THEY COMPETE FOR TALENT.**

### Tech Helps—But Hurts, Too

Despite concerns about the impersonal nature of today's job search, Americans do consider less-personal technological resources to be valuable when looking for work. According to survey findings, most believe that technology (e.g., résumé-posting websites, personal websites, email, or online communities for networking) have made finding a job easier.

However, a majority also say emerging technologies, like big data mining of résumés or job-on-demand apps, actually make it more difficult to land a job, and that the internet is not "all I need" for a job search to be successful.

The fact remains—even in this age of technology, most U.S. adults think personal contacts are more helpful than the internet in finding a job. For staffing and recruiting companies, it is important to remember that the big data tools and apps that have streamlined the hiring process on the back end may lack transparency and make a poor impression on candidates.

### Old-School Strategies Resonate

A way to offset the feeling that the job search is too opaque or impersonal is to contact candidates more directly and engage with them. There are many modes for reaching out to potential candidates when filling a vacancy. For staffing companies weighing how best to initially reach out about job opportunities, which mode is best?

More traditional methods currently hold the advantage over newer approaches. Most U.S. adults consider in-person or face-to-face contact, phone calls, and email to be acceptable ways to initially contact them regarding job opportunities; fewer feel the same way about initial contact via text message.

### Speak the Right Language

All the discussion of the importance of engaging candidates personally and the best contact methods to do so leaves one question outstanding—what should communications say? ASA published a comprehensive collection of research and strategies on this topic in late 2017—*The New Language*

of Staffing: Handbook for Communicating Your Company's Value to Job Seekers. The association has since rolled out a new online course for staffing and recruiting professionals on the new language. (See this issue's cover story, "Do You Speak Staffing?" on page 20. Go to [americanstaffing.net/new-language](http://americanstaffing.net/new-language) to download talking points and graphics.)

The new language research has uncovered the right things to say—all the way from articulating the value of working with a staffing company to the core terms staffing professionals should use to address specific job seeker pain points and preferences.

### Incorporate the Intelligence

In today's tight labor market, companies are looking for anything to give them an edge as they compete for talent. Many are trying new things, and this is an exciting time for the staffing industry as innovative technologies and methods emerge.

Here are a few highlights and strategies to keep in mind:

- Americans feel the job search has become too impersonal. Find touch points during the hiring process to help candidates feel connected. Personal interactions can help differentiate a staffing company and help job seekers view it as a preferred option.
- Emerging technological tools, though essential for staffing companies, can contribute to job seekers feeling disconnected, like they are sending résumés and applications into a black box. Complement these systems with personal communication. It may not always be possible to call or speak face-to-face with a candidate, but personal emails and texts can be more effective than automated follow ups.
- Some staffing companies are using real-time tools like text messages or social media to follow up with applicants. And while ASA research shows these methods have not yet reached mainstream acceptance, it is still important to use language that resonates with job seekers.

"When recruiting talent, 'high touch' still wins the day," says Richard Wahlquist, ASA president and chief executive officer. "Businesses that rely too heavily on a 'high-tech' but largely 'faceless' process are sending the wrong messages to job seekers looking for connections with companies that value their employees." ■

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## 'TRADITIONAL' CONTACT METHODS PREFERRED

For initial contact regarding job opportunities, established communication methods still have an edge over emerging methods.



**72%**

In-person/  
face-to-face



**72%**

Phone call



**71%**

Email



Account on  
a website



**24%**

Text message



**20%**

Video conference



**15%**

Social media

### About the ASA Workforce Monitor Survey

The Harris Poll conducted this ASA Workforce Monitor survey online within the U.S. on behalf of ASA Dec. 27–29, 2017, among a total of 2,163 U.S. adults age 18 and older. Results were weighted on age, education, race/ethnicity, household income, and geographic region where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the U.S. population. For details about the survey series, visit [americanstaffing.net/workforcemonitor](http://americanstaffing.net/workforcemonitor).