

How To Use Temporary Work To Uncover Your Career Direction

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Are you a recent high school or college graduate trying to decide on your career direction? Returning to work after taking time off to raise children or taking care of elderly parents, but not sure about the kind of work that would make you happy? Then you might find it helpful to seek work at a temp agency – because it could help you determine your career direction.

Temporary work agencies, also known as temp agencies or temp staffing firms, hire workers and then place them in assignments at other companies. Companies approach these temp agencies, define their worker needs, and then sign contracts for the agencies to supply the workers. These are usually full-time positions and can range from short-term, such as several weeks, to longer periods of time, such as six months or more. Company placements can be in small start-ups all the way to multi-billion dollar global corporations.

In the past, temp agencies were known for supplying lower-skilled workers for entry-level type jobs. Today, most temp agencies provide highly skilled workers in a wide variety of industries and within many different job categories, such as: accounting and finance, call center and customer service, hospitality, marketing and communications, creative/graphic design, engineering, industrial and manufacturing, information technology, project management, process improvement, science, medical, transportation and warehousing, office and administrative.

If you're unsure about your career direction, working for a temp agency can provide you with an opportunity to try out different industries, companies, and jobs. By "trying on" different jobs, it makes it easier to figure out the jobs and companies you like and those you don't. That is what has happened with several of my clients.

Allie (name changed) had recently graduated from college with a business degree, but couldn't decide on a company where she wanted to work. So she went to work for a temp agency and specifically asked to be placed in different sized companies and in different industries. What Allie realized is that she enjoyed working at large companies with traditional office environments. Even better, one of the companies was so impressed with Allie's skills and work ethic that they offered her a permanent position. *The result?* After only one year working for a temp agency, Allie turned her temp position into a permanent job.

Susan (name changed) had taken time out from her career to raise their children, but once her kids were in elementary school, she struggled to figure out the type of work that would make her happy. Working for a temp agency gave her the chance to try different jobs at a variety of companies and in several industries. Opposite of Allie, Susan felt uncomfortable working in large companies with traditional office environments where she had to wear suits to work. That is how she came realize her skills, personality, and work style were a better fit at smaller companies with casual and creative work environments. This realization helped Susan narrow her career direction. *The result?* She found several small, local companies where she targeted her job search – and eventually found a job she really enjoyed.

If you're trying to decide on your career direction or next career move, consider working for a temporary employment agency. Benefits:

- It gives you the opportunity to work for different sized companies with different cultural environments.
- It gives you the opportunity to work in different industries.
- It can help you update skills you haven't used in a while.
- It provides job experience you can add to your resume.
- It helps get your foot in the door at your target companies.
- It often includes other benefits, such as medical insurance, sick pay, holiday pay, etc.
- Temporary work often leads to a full-time position.

~ Lisa Quast, author of award-winning book, [YOUR CAREER, YOUR WAY!](#). Join me on Twitter @careerwomaninc

