
BUSINESS

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SECTION D

Hiring Help

InterSource Personnel Analytics screens applicants for other companies.

By Gregory Karp
Of The Morning Call

Tina Hamilton started her business after running a temporary staffing agency franchise in South Whitehall Township for 11 years.



Photo by Frank Wiese, The Morning Call

Even though unemployment was on the rise locally in late 2001, Andrew Budick was having no success recruiting good applicants for office manager.

And he needed to hire someone quickly to run the office of Action Rental, a South Whitehall Township company that rents out construction equipment.

So he turned to InterSource Personnel Analytics, which owner Tina Hamilton describes as a prehire service.

Operating from her home office in Upper Macungie Township, Hamilton and one employee recruit applicants, screen them and pare down a list to just a few. That way, their clients only need to conduct interviews with final candidates.

The service, started in March, can help owners of small- and medium-sized businesses who don't have time to hire properly. And it helps businesses that are inundated with resumes today because so many people are looking for work.

It worked for Action Rental.

"We were having no luck," said Budick, president of Action Rental. "We needed to do something different, so we basically outsourced the entire hiring process.

"It worked."

In starting the business, Hamilton, 39, figured that small businesses outsource their accounting and legal work, even payroll processing, so why not hiring?

"Employees are really going to make or break your business," she said. "But companies were always hesitant to let go of [hiring] because they want control. We allow that. They're still deciding who they want to hire."

So far so good for InterSource, which has garnered many clients, including some local Subway sandwich shops, Hamilton said.

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“People are just embracing being able to outsource it. Progressive-thinking companies grasp it immediately,” she said. “They see the value in it.”

The field is relatively new in this area. Hamilton even had trouble fitting her business into a yellow-pages advertising category, she said.

With nearly 20 years in the human resources field, Hamilton most recently owned and operated a South Whitehall temporary staffing service franchise, now called Spherion, for 11 years. After the parent company of the franchise merged, Hamilton decided to get out, and she sold the regional franchise.

“The decision wasn’t that hard, once I decided I could move forward and get into something on my own,” she said. “Franchises are great, but I’m more of an entrepreneurial spirit.”

InterSource stemmed from a need Hamilton recognized while owning the temp agency, she said. Companies were hiring temporary workers simply because they weren’t successful hiring employees on their own.

“They don’t have the time, and they don’t necessarily have the expertise,” Hamilton said. “They might be excellent at what they do, but they make the wrong decisions in hiring.”

“And typically, with unemployment as high as it is right now, they’re getting slammed with resumes.”

One such company was Newstech, a pulp recycler in Northampton.

InterSource placed an advertisement for hiring maintenance mechanics.

“It was right after Agere [Systems of Allentown] had a big layoff, and we had over 400 resumes,” Hamilton said. “Even I was like, ‘Wow, that’s a lot of resumes.’”

The challenge for InterSource was that many applicants were qualified for the job. But in the end, InterSource identified 16 that were ideal. Newstech ended up hiring eight.

“You can imagine all the work we saved them,” she said.

Hamilton does more than simply sift through resumes.

First, she examines the company, often visiting the offices or locations. Sometimes, she even works the required job to get an idea of the tasks involved and to experience the company culture.

“Culture is something created by the owners, and it’s what allows a person to function comfortably and be successful,” Hamilton said.

Sometimes she interviews current employees to find out what they like and dislike about their workplace, because even ideal hires won’t stay in a bad work environment, she said.

That research helps her devise a strategy for attracting good applicants.

Responses to recruitment ads come into InterSource’s office. There, resumes and phone callers are screened using the client’s criteria to whittle the list of potential candidates.

Then Hamilton turns over the list of finalists, an evaluation of each one and suggested interview questions.

Clients are charged a rate of about \$50 an hour, plus a setup fee that varies depending on the type of job the company is hiring for, Hamilton said.

All work is done specifically for the client company. InterSource has no database of applicants or pool of available workers. Instead, advertising is done specifically for the job opening available, and the resumes and all the information on the candidates belong to the client.

InterSource keeps nothing for itself.

“It’s incredibly targeted,” Hamilton said. “And the beauty is, if there are 10 qualified candidates, they can hire all 10 for the same price. They can do whatever they want with them.”

After growing the business locally, Hamilton envisions a much larger company, eventually with an office closer to Philadelphia to serve the city and its suburbs.

Of course, that would mean hiring more employees for her own business.

“I’m probably one of the few people in the Lehigh Valley excited about hiring employees,” Hamilton said.

“Everybody says there are no good people out there. There are good people out there, it’s just a matter of finding them.”



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