Hire Today and Gone Tomorrow



There are more temporary workers and temporary jobs in the workforce today. In Canada, the temporary workforce is growing at a fast pace. Permanent positions are not being added at the same rate. In 2012, Statistics Canada reported a record two million temporary workers. These two million workers represented 13.6% of the workforce. In the past 4 years, the temporary workforce has grown triple the size of the permanently employed workforce. The temporary workforce grew 14.2% while the permanent workforce grew by 3.8%.

Why Hire a Temp Worker?

There are many good reasons to hire a temp worker and there are many individuals who prefer temp jobs for their flexibility and opportunity. The most common reason employers choose temps is generally to address the ebb and flow of staffing during peak and non-peak times allowing them to save money when business is not as busy. Temporary employees are hired to fill short-term gaps in the workforce, to add certain specific skills to an organization and to respond to special projects. Temps generally cost less as they are rarely eligible for benefits and since the recession tend to make the same or fewer dollars per hour compared to permanent employees. Hiring a temporary worker can also be a great way to explore the person’s skills and potential fit in the workplace before making a longer-term commitment.

The Downside of Temp Jobs

While there can be great advantages there are also pitfalls to a temporary workforce.

Temporary workers are often working in what has been labeled as ‘precarious employment’. According to research from PEPSO (Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario) temp workers are disproportionately represented in the ‘precarious’ workforce.These workers were often more socially isolated as their marginal incomes, lack of stability, income and schedules correlate with having few friends, delayed in marriage and having no children, they also experience stress and health concerns. Because of the precarious nature of their jobs they are also less likely to report workplace mistreatment for fear of losing their jobs.

For a business employing temporary workers having more stressed out employees with few social supports can make the employee more vulnerable and unstable. Additionally, by the nature of temporary jobs there is a high rate of turnover as a result of a lack of loyalty from employees who feel no commitment from the employer.

The other often-discussed challenge of temporary workers is the creation of an in-group and out-group dichotomy between the ‘real employees’ and the temporary ones. Temporary workers may find themselves struggling to work along side permanent employees who do not want to put a lot of time and effort into working with and getting to know the interlopers. There are many reasons for this but among them is the simple fact that it takes time and energy to get to know another person and also the fear of losing their own jobs. Within the world of temporary work there are often highly skilled and sought after ‘winners’ and a slate of less lucky ‘losers’ living from pay check to pay check waiting for an permanent offer to come inside.

Temporary workers can be a legitimate and effective way to manage the bumps in the economy and a great way to bring in highly skilled temporary workers to solve just-in-time problems.

Sources

Half of GTA and Hamilton Workers in ‘Precarious’ Jobs
It’s more than poverty report from PEPSO
Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey