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STAFFING
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ASA American Staffing Association

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Staffing World Preview:

Setting Our Sights on Staffing's Future

By Adam Stone

WORKFORCE TRENDS. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS. RECRUITING TECHNOLOGY. BUSINESS STRATEGY. TEA LEAVES. How many of these have a place in your staffing company's prognostications and development tactics? Predicting the future and setting the best course is difficult at best—but put together some of the sharpest, most experienced minds in the industry at staffing's largest event and suddenly our sights gain strategic focus.



In just a matter of weeks, at Staffing World® 2022 in Las Vegas, a unique forum will deliver a rare opportunity—a meeting of innovators, staffing sages, and overall industry Jedis. “Straight Talk From Staffing CEOs” will not only be a fast-paced, lively exchange, it will yield the kind of insights and ideas that set staffing companies in the right direction—no matter the challenge.

ASA president and CEO Richard Wahlquist will moderate, or just try to stay out of the way, as these three industry leaders tackle what’s next for staffing and what companies need to succeed. This Staffing World super session will feature

- **Insight Global CEO Bert Bean**, a 17-year veteran of the staffing industry, who started his time with Insight Global as an entry-level recruiter and now oversees a budding organization of 4,000 employees across 63 offices in the U.S. and Canada.
- **Randstad North America CEO and executive board member Karen Fichuk**, who leads Randstad’s core business brands in the U.S. and Canada. With her expertise in data, analytics, and technology gained from more than 25 years of experience, she plays an integral role in positioning the company as a data-driven organization with a powerful human touch.
- **EmployBridge CEO Billy Milam**, who is at the helm of a multibrand company that puts more than 450,000 temporary associates to work annually across a network of 446 offices in 48 states. In 2021, EmployBridge provided more than 157 million work hours to 13,000 customers, generating more than \$3.8 billion in revenue.

Staffing Success magazine got exclusive preconvention interviews with this impressive panel ahead of Staffing World. Learn more about “Straight Talk From Staffing CEOs” at staffingworld.net—and reserve your spot at Staffing World, Oct. 25–27 at the MGM Grand Las Vegas.

SS: Where do you see new opportunities for growth in the staffing industry?

Bean: Everywhere. Not to be glib, but everywhere. Every industry is struggling to hire. They need strong recruiters and staffing companies to help them do it. Find an industry you’re comfortable with, and auger in.

Fichuk: Traditional models must continue to evolve to meet clients and candidates where and how they want to engage.

We need to constantly innovate and improve our operating models and offerings...think along the lines of custom talent pools, granular market intelligence, skilling partnerships, more dynamic pricing, and continued digital transformation to reach and engage even more of the U.S. workforce. Employers also need advisory services to help them attract and retain talent. They’re inviting firms to be part of the conversation—let’s rise to the occasion!

Milam: The new opportunities for growth will come from embracing technology, both client-facing and associate-facing. Most traditional staffing companies seem reluctant to make the commitment and subsequent investment. Yet, staffing is quickly moving toward a much broader omnichannel approach where clients and the workers that we place will demand less friction and greater engagement. There are more than 20,000 staffing companies in our country with limited differentiation outside of segment focus. We need to push one another to think differently, because it’s a different level of expectation that’s being demanded now.

Smart use of technology is one way staffing companies can bring a distinctive approach to accelerating growth. For example, to address the ongoing need for forklift operators, for certain clients we have launched a virtual reality training and testing module. It allows us to accelerate training of inexperienced applicants or associates.

I firmly believe transformation comes from being more open to what signals the market is giving you and to have the discipline to rethink how you approach challenges or situations, by not leaning into the age-old axioms that you might have used in the past.

SS: What could be the potential impact of a recession, and how should staffing firms be positioning themselves?

Bean: The potential impacts of a recession include reduced hiring budgets, reduced contractor headcount—even our customers finding themselves being laid off. The staffing industry should position [itself] by working harder to find areas of hiring demand.

This means more customer meetings. This means proactively presenting great candidates who have been recently laid off to customers whose business might be less impacted.



Fichuk: Despite recession fears, overall job market data shows that openings and applies remain high and worker confidence is strong. With that said, we must embrace that we are living in an uncertain world. As leaders, we should anticipate continued choppiness and the need to pivot as necessary.

One way we can do that is to proactively identify new breakthrough growth opportunities for our industry that are being created as a result of economic trends and government investments in areas like our country's infrastructure and workforce development.

Milam: There needs to be a proactive approach in place for a potential recession. You don't want to be dictated to by the market or be reactive. Make sure your team is ready and collectively helps build your plan for multiple scenarios, whether it's a slight downturn or a full-fledged, more pronounced recession.

Having a plan amid economic uncertainty will enable confidence in your leaders and your teams. In 2008 and again in 2020, I was surprised at how many leaders sat back in fear of what might happen to their businesses. We created a strategy that we believed would accelerate us out of the downturns, and while we can debate whether we chose the right strategies, our teams felt a sense of comfort because they saw that their leaders had a proactive plan and were playing offense.

SS: How are diversity and inclusion efforts changing corporate culture, and what does it mean to staffing?

Bean: DE&I efforts are bringing more diversity of thought to corporate culture. People from different backgrounds have different life experiences. This causes them to see the world in new and different ways. This is really good for business. This gives leaders the chance to attack problems in new ways, and speeds up innovation.

It also can broaden the talent pool, so long as companies really mean what they say when they want to be inclusive and bring people in with less experience from underrepresented groups.

Fichuk: Staffing is a people business, and with that I believe comes a great responsibility to create equitable opportunities for all. At Randstad, our commitment to and investment in equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility has had an incredibly positive impact on morale in recent years.

People want to feel like they belong, that they can bring their whole selves to work. In fact, our recent Work Monitor research shows that American workers are looking for three main things: purpose, belonging, and flexibility. They want their company's values to align with their personal ones, and 41% reported they would not accept a job if the organization wasn't making a proactive effort to improve its diversity and equity.

But it's not just leading from the top down, it's giving employees space to be themselves. Establishing a structure and a culture where employee resource groups can be formed and thrive in an organization can be game-changing, as our new global CEO Sander van 't Noordende recently discussed at Davos.

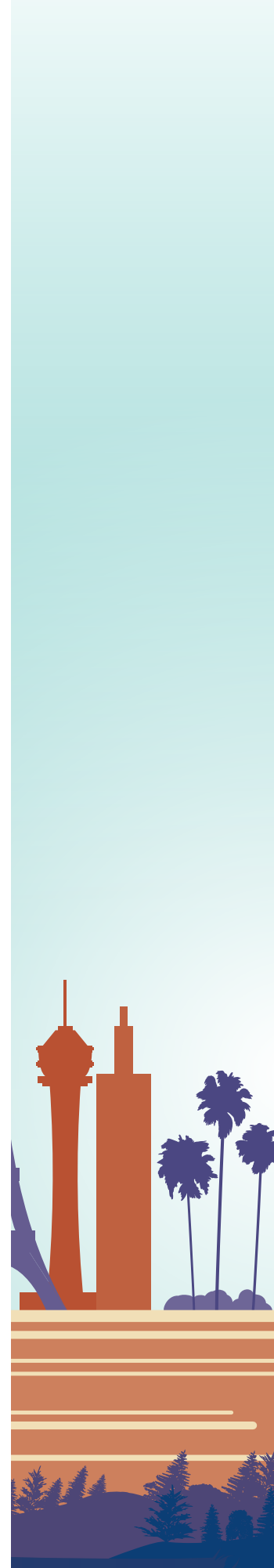
Milam: It's been proven that the most successful and impactful high-growth companies are those led by leaders who embrace disparate thinking, often coming from other leaders whose journeys are collectively diverse, but all working toward a clear and commonly defined company purpose. For staffing professionals, this is a purpose of creating opportunities, championing people, and unlocking their potential, built strongly on a bedrock of serving others—for us, our colleagues, our associates, and our customers.

To put this into practice, staffing professionals should build diversity goals into their hiring key performance indicators and track them over time. It is an ongoing process that goes beyond making a one-time diversity statement. It takes ongoing communication to ensure diverse positions and inclusive company cultures are modeled by the leaders.

All of this takes leadership. If our hearts and minds are in the right place, our differences can act to unify, teach, and enhance our culture. Diversity and inclusion efforts benefit companies by breaking down barriers, helping to build respect for one another and each of our rights to be who we are and to believe and speak freely.

SS: What are some likely business disruptions on the horizon and how should staffing firms be preparing?

Bean: Degradation of services and inability to deliver for the customer—because, in fear of the Great Resignation, leaders did not take a strong enough stance on getting their people back together and working in offices again. Training slipped, culture diluted, and new vulnerable





employees were unable to get off the ground and ramped up in their new careers.

Staffing leaders need to figure out a return-to-office objective strategy that works for them, based off the kind of company they want to be, and then clearly define it for their employees.

Fichuk: Costly cyberattacks are rising, and the tremendous amount of personal and financial data staffing firms are entrusted with makes the industry an attractive target. Add to that: The demand for hiring IT security professionals is more competitive than ever.

It's critical for firms to proactively implement a cybersecurity program, to have a breach response plan in place, and to conduct regular employee training. The security practices of all vendors that have access to the firm's systems or data should also be thoroughly reviewed. And, of course, have an insurance policy in place to cover this type of liability.

Milam: More and more people have tapped out of the workforce. While the unemployment rate is close to where it was pre-pandemic, the labor participation rate has decreased by almost four percentage points, as there are now more than 16 million people who aren't working that were before.

Now with inflation growth and a potential recession on the horizon, some of these millions are wanting to jump back on, but on their terms. Often this can mean part-time, flex, or gig roles. This underscores the need for companies to accommodate these workers by offering flexibility. ■

Adam Stone, a freelance writer based in Annapolis, MD, is a regular contributor to *Staffing Success*. Send feedback on this article to success@americanstaffing.net. Engage with ASA on social media—go to americanstaffing.net/social.

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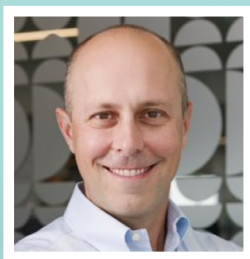
Staffing World is the largest, most content-rich event in the staffing and recruiting industry and this year it all happens **Oct. 25–27 at the MGM Grand Las Vegas**. Plus, the Staffing World expo hall has sold out, which means there's nowhere else you'll find a more comprehensive collection of the industry's best and newest products and services—designed to streamline and ramp up your staffing operations.

Not only will Staffing World 2022 open with a keynote presentation by **basketball legend and highly successful entrepreneur Earvin "Magic" Johnson**, the convention will also deliver dozens of focused sessions on what is impacting the staffing and recruiting industry right now and in the months ahead.

Among those is **"Straight Talk From Staffing CEOs,"** a fast-paced panel discussion facilitated by Richard Wahlquist, ASA president and CEO, and featuring Bert Bean, CEO of Insight Global; Karen Fichuk, CEO of Randstad North America and executive board member, Randstad N.V.; and Billy Milam, CEO of EmployBridge.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear from and query these three leading chief executives in the staffing and recruiting industry. Bean, Fichuk, and Milam will be prepared to speak on a broad breadth of topics, including new opportunities for growth, the potential for an impending economic recession, how diversity and inclusion efforts are changing corporate culture, business disruptions on the horizon, and much more.

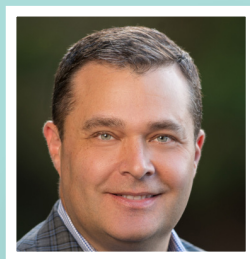
There's still time to **register at a discounted rate for Staffing World—until Sept. 23**. After that, the rate for a full registration package increases by \$300 per person. You don't want to miss Staffing World this year. Make sure your 2023 is as successful and strategic as possible. Get the information and make the connections you need when you join more than 1,000 of your industry peers at Staffing World in Las Vegas. Register today at staffingworld.net.



Bert Bean
Insight Global



Karen Fichuk
Randstad North America



Billy Milam
EmployBridge

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