

# Temp Talk

## HOW TEMPORARY LABOR CAN BOOST YOUR BUSINESS

Recruiting full-time, permanent employees is difficult enough; for many employers, the prospect of bringing temps into the fold may seem like too much work for little result. The nature of the systems integration business, however, often lends itself well to bringing temporary labor into the fold—especially when it comes to crunch time.

"In my opinion, a company that never hires temporary labor is missing opportunities for business growth," said Tom Stimson, CTS, president of The Stimson Group, an AV-centric consultancy based in Dallas, TX. For systems integration companies, this is especially true, he added: If your ability to conduct and complete projects is compromised by a sparse team, a number of side effects occur, including overworked employees, delayed delivery times, or shoddy work.

Stimson noted that one of the biggest

challenges integrators face is closing projects. "Typically the job gets 90 percent finished and then the install team gets pulled away to meet the start time on the next project," he observed. "If an installation manager can project the workload, he or she can then augment teams as necessary or assign an outside team to appropriate projects." However, temporary labor shouldn't just be limited to installers; there are a number of positions that may also be included in the mix.

Many employers are reticent to hire temps because they feel they can't trust employees who aren't going to be around for very long. In many cases, they may not possess, or be willing to implement, the

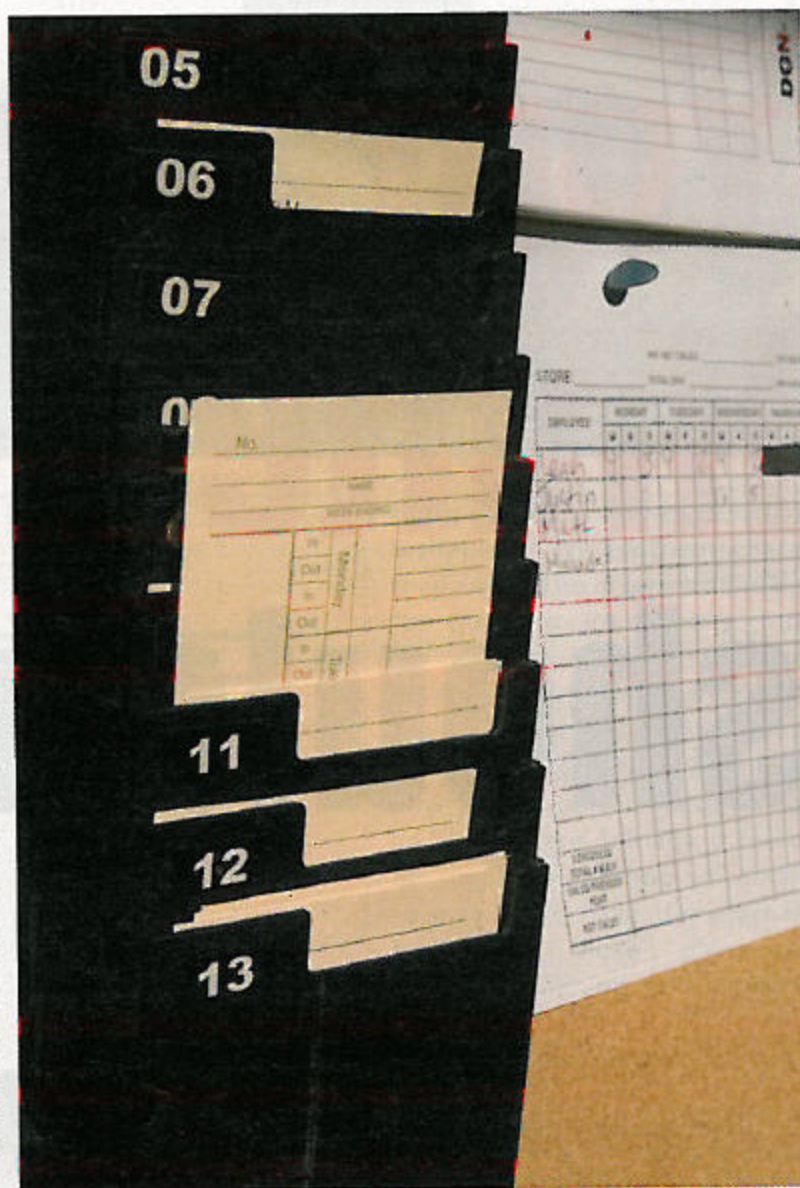
internal resources required to manage temporary help. Stimson argues that these attitudes place

significant barriers to carrying out projects more smoothly. "In general I find that integrators need to update their overall project delivery systems in order to meet the demands of today's low-margin work and tighter timelines," he said. Developing a strategy on how to utilize temps properly, and judiciously, could translate into more profitable projects.

Tom Maricle, operations manager at CCS Presentations Systems in Scottsdale, AZ, explained that in many cases, the temporary labor that his company employs is recruited via referrals from permanent staff. "This helps with the issue of trust, because the person that referred the temp is accountable both to us and the temporary employee," he said. "And, it costs less because we don't have to advertise." He added that while companies must invest the time in training temps, this can be achieved by strategically dividing up crews to produce a combination of temporary labor and seasoned help.

At CCS, many temporary workers become "regulars"—individuals who accept seasonal work as it becomes available. Maricle believes that when recruiting temps, companies should keep the long-term in mind: "We have found a lot of permanent employees through temporary labor, so it's been very beneficial to us," he said.

Carolyn Heinze is a freelance writer/editor.



### more online

If hiring temporary labor isn't an option, maybe you want to look into a strategic alliance. The Stimson Group predicts that 2011-15 will be an era of partnerships and alliances. Find out more at [systemscontractor.com/jan11](http://systemscontractor.com/jan11).



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