

ment efforts with universities cultivate relationships with faculty, with the hope of eventually luring them into private sector work. Many organizations establish folders or databases of high-potential individuals who are still receiving an education or who work for other companies and then regularly send materials to these individuals about potential career prospects within the organization. Intel has run a competition called "Cornell Cup" in which student teams from a number of universities compete to design the best engineering projects. Those who perform well are not only given cash prizes but also invited to take on summer jobs or internships.⁵⁸

Employment Agencies

One traditional source of nonexempt employees and lower-level exempt employees is employment agencies. These agencies contact, screen, and present applicants to employers for a fee. The fee is contingent on successful placement of a candidate with an employer and is usually a percentage of the candidate's starting pay. In a temp-to-hire arrangement, the employee has a trial period in which his or her contract will be contingent on performance, and then after a period of time the employee will be taken on as permanent employee of the organization. This gives both the applicant and the employer a chance to observe each other and assess the quality of the fit. Many jurisdictions have specific duration requirements for these arrangements, such as laws stating that employees may be classified as "temporary" for only 90 days.

Care must be exercised in selecting an employment agency. It is a good idea to check references, as allegations abound regarding the shoddy practices of some agencies. A poor agency may, for example, flood the organization with résumés of both qualified and unqualified applicants. A good agency will screen out unqualified applicants and not attempt to dazzle the organization with a large volume of résumés. Poor agencies may misrepresent the organization to the candidate and the candidate to the organization. Misrepresentation may take place when the agency is only concerned about a quick placement (and fee) and pays no regard to the costs of poor future relationships with clients. A good agency will be in business for the long run and not misrepresent information and invite turnover. A good agency will not pressure managers, make special deals, or avoid the HR staff. Finally, it is important to have a signed contract in place in which mutual rights and responsibilities are laid out.

Although employment agencies have traditionally focused on individuals with comparatively low skill levels, many agencies have expanded to include individuals with specialized or technical skills. There are even employment agencies that specialize in areas like health care or engineering, which require very high levels of expertise. Some of these agencies provide recruiting and screening services for potential employers, and then employees receive an offer of a permanent position like recruits from any other source. However, even for these technical fields, temp-to-hire arrangements are not unheard of.