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## Q&A

with Jason Lander, founder and VP of business development, ShiftWise

*Online Workforce Solutions Streamline Healthcare Staffing and Increase Efficiency*

Staffing professionals handling clinical healthcare workers are all too familiar with the many challenges in procuring supplemental staff. While a very profitable market, the layers of necessary regulatory documentation require extra effort, industry knowledge, and exponentially more paperwork than placing staff in most other industries. Fortunately, help is available to make this process manageable. Hundreds of staffing suppliers around the country are using online workforce solutions to simplify healthcare staff management and its required regulatory documentation processes, resulting in quick, easy staff placement and excellent ROI.

We spoke with Jason Lander, founder and vice president of product and business development at ShiftWise ([www.ShiftWise.net](http://www.ShiftWise.net)), to learn more about these solutions. ShiftWise has helped hundreds of staffing suppliers connect with nearly 800 hospitals through its workforce management solutions. Jason offers the following insight.

**Q:** How is healthcare supplemental staffing different from staffing in other industries?

**A:** In a word: Complexity. When it comes to staffing for healthcare, the hiring process is significantly more challenging. Healthcare staff must meet a number of verification and licensing requirements, and this is compounded by the shortage of healthcare professionals in the country. Also, unlike most non-clinical sectors that deal

exclusively with local employees, the healthcare industry employs a number of traveling professionals, which adds additional logistical complexity to the procurement process.

**Q:** How do online workforce management solutions help staffing suppliers better communicate with contingent workers and hospitals?

**A:** Online workforce management solutions allow staffing suppliers to communicate instantly with all of their employees and hospital clients. Suppliers can now provide instant responses to hospitals, allowing the staffing coordinator at the facility to go online, review each candidate's profile and select the best person available for each position. Through proactive credentialing, these systems ensure that each candidate listed meets all of the hospital and licensing requirements for each unit. Online workforce management solutions also make it just as easy for a hospital to work with 100 staffing suppliers as it is to work with one because the administrative time is exponentially reduced.

**Q:** How do these systems help the hospitals better place the right staff for their open positions?

**A:** Hospitals are now able to tap into the largest possible pool of qualified, fully credentialed staff and choose those best suited candidate for each position based on criteria such as skill set, price, previous performance scores, previous visits, position

conditions and overtime hours. They can use a single system to consolidate and streamline the booking of not only nurses and other clinical staff, but also of non-clinical workers from a broad range of disciplines such as IT, finance and accounting, administrative support and dietary services. This ensures a lower vacancy rate for the hospital and also that open positions will be filled with the best qualified and most cost-effective candidates possible.

In addition to locating staff and filling open positions, hospitals can also better approve and reconcile time slips and invoices online, and pull valuable reporting data from the system, allowing them to improve their management of supplemental staff.

**Q:** How do contingent staff benefit when a system like this is used?

**A:** Contingent employees working with a staffing supplier enjoy the benefit of better visibility into their upcoming schedules. Online workforce solutions help hospitals more accurately forecast their staffing needs, allowing staffing firms to place staff with more notice and dramatically reduce the number of positions that are cancelled at the last moment. For workers who are hospital employees, these systems offer the benefit of self-scheduling.

**Q:** What are the benefits to staffing suppliers using these systems and how many suppliers have adopted them?

**A:** Hundreds of staffing suppliers

nationwide are embracing online workforce management and have realized its benefits. These staffing suppliers are seeing their time and labor costs drop as their revenue increases because they are able to focus more on filling open positions, with less effort. Further, by utilizing direct interfaces to these systems, suppliers are eliminating the duplication of entry with their internal system. Online workforce solutions also allow for management of government-mandated licenses and documentation through one, consolidated medium and provide detailed reporting data, including cost and trend analysis.

**Q:** What benefits do facilities gain by switching from a paper/phone/fax system to an online workforce solution?

**A:** The key gains come in four areas: Reduced spending, time savings, simplified compliance and improved staffing levels. Online workforce solutions provide visibility into every area of the staffing process, offering the consolidation of everything from booking and billing to proactive regulatory compliance in a single system. The process of locating and scheduling supplemental staff is transformed from a labor and time-intensive series of calls and faxes to a process that is as easy as booking a flight online, and hundreds of invoices are reduced to one.

**Q:** Managing compliance documents and licenses presents headaches for staffing suppliers, healthcare professionals and hospitals. How do technology solutions help in this area?

**A:** Online workforce management solutions serve as a central repository for all the required

licenses and qualifying documents, so staffing suppliers and contingent staff do not need to provide numerous paper documents for every new work engagement. Instead, the system standardizes the compliance requirements for everyone involved in the staffing process. This empowers both staffing suppliers and healthcare professionals to understand the credentials required to fill each position, and lets them fill these positions with a simple click of a mouse.

These Web-based solutions also deliver an additional layer of compliance assurance by requiring the healthcare facility to validate the documents on the initial hiring, further ensuring that the healthcare professional is qualified for the position. Employees, suppliers and hospitals are also notified proactively about licenses and certifications that are close to expiration, adding an additional failsafe measure to ensure that the healthcare worker remains eligible for further assignments.

**Q:** Is there a significant amount of time, money and training involved in getting started with a technology-based system?

**A:** No, quite the opposite in most cases. The leading online workforce management solutions are delivered via a Software as a Service (SaaS) model, and are accessed through Internet browsers. There are zero IT requirements, no hardware purchases required and offer a low-cost/no-cost model. Implementations are accomplished in a fraction of the time that may be required by client server-based software systems, and training sessions generally run ten to twenty

minutes, rather than entire days or longer.

**Q:** Can automated staffing solutions assist in billing and payments between the staffing supplier and the hospital?

**A:** Absolutely. This is a core benefit of using an automated system. Online workforce management solutions essentially eliminate the manual invoicing process for staffing firms and hospitals alike. These systems can create a "reverse invoicing situation," where the actual hours worked, as tracked and maintained by the system, are used to create an invoice immediately.

**Q:** What kind of reporting is available with online workforce management solutions?

**A:** These systems enable healthcare facilities to review past staffing needs, and gain immediate visibility into staffing costs across all departments. This provides the ability to better manage budgets and estimate future staffing needs based on a variety of factors.



Editor's note: Jason Lander is the founder, vice president of product & business development for ShiftWise ([www.shiftwise.net](http://www.shiftwise.net)). Mr. Lander spent several years in the healthcare staffing industry working for both regional and national companies including Medical Staffing Network and STAT Medical Services. As the company's founder, Jason applied his industry knowledge to create ShiftWise's End-to-End Workforce Management service. Prior to this, he worked with the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Senator, Ron Wyden working extensively on labor and veterans issues. Jason served as a Sergeant and Infantry Section Leader in the United States Marine Corps from 1994 - 1998.