

With a new Web site, a staffing firm garners awards and new clients

Best in Show' honors are nice, but wait until you see the spike in their traffic

By Lindsey Miller

With its Web site lagging its clients' needs, the staffing company QPS knew it had better get to work.

Even without relying on customer feedback, QPS Companies' director of marketing, Jill Wellskopf, knew the site was "static." Simply adding social media wouldn't deliver the requisite improvements.



The old "Web site told about the company but it didn't pertain to both audiences," people looking for work, and companies looking for people. "We felt it was really important to cater to both sets of customers and provide exactly what they were looking for."

By 2007, the company, which serves Wisconsin and Illinois, had grown significantly and was outpacing its Web site, last redesigned in 2005. So it set its sights on its site.

In June 2008 it had a completely [redesigned site](#) with a more than 450 percent increase in overall traffic, a 250 percent increase in candidate applications, and an average of 4.39 minutes spent on the site. QPS also went on to win the "Best Corporate Web site" and "Best in Show" awards from the American Staffing Association.

Follow QPS' lead and you could be on your way to winning your own Web site awards or at least reaching your customers better.

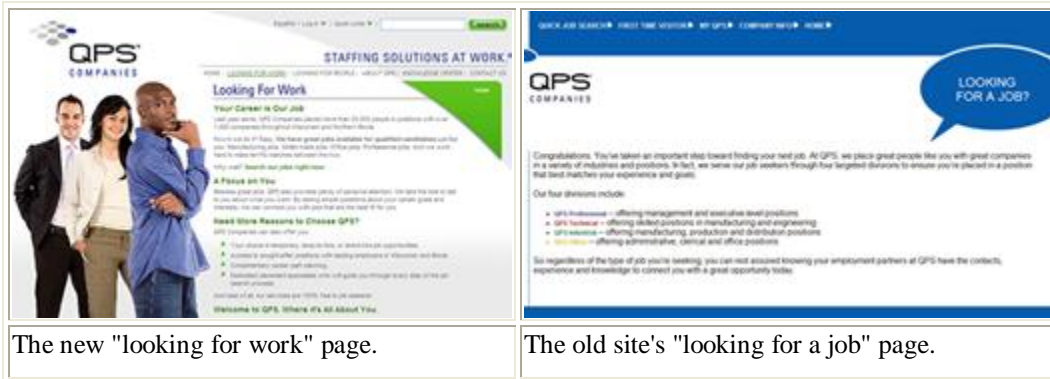
Create a diverse team

Instead of asking only the marketing team or only the IT team to overhaul the site, QPS formed a Web development group of employees from a variety of departments. This way, everyone had a chance to provide input on specific aspects of the site that were important to them—and no one had to spend too much time doing it.

For example, Wellskopf says: "Someone from IT's point of view may look at the underlying functionality, whereas in marketing, we look at the look and feel of it. It really helps to have all those opinions together to make sure everyone is represented."

Included in the Web team were two programmers, a strategic developer, a recruiter, several people from marketing, and a graphic designer. The executive team also supported the change.

At the beginning, in summer 2007, the team met weekly, if not daily, to designate objectives and a wish list of features for the site. They used other staffing industry Web sites as guides, and once everything was set, they interviewed and researched interactive agencies methodically to ensure they achieved the right fit.



Have a goal

Overall, QPS's object was to create a Web site that would serve as a foundation, as a hub, for all its new social media efforts. By focusing on specific goals, Wellskopf said, the team was better able to decide which features—and ultimately which agency—would help it reach those goals. Team members did most of the work at the beginning, which made it easier to make decisions when the agency they chose, Buffalo-based Haley Marketing, was developing the Web site.

The company focused more on photos and video through YouTube, and it wanted to create a blog, as well as link to other social media tools, none of which its old Web site could handle. As a result, the new Web site features [photos](#), [videos](#), a [blog](#) and a link to the company [Twitter](#) account.

“We really changed our marketing and communications, so our Web site is basically the foundation of all of our marketing and communications activities,” Wellskopf says. “If we’re doing press releases or a direct-marketing campaign, everything is going to link back to the Web site to cross-promote or to measure. It’s really given us a launch pad.”

Formally, however, Wellskopf says the company’s strict goals were to create a completely interactive Web site with all the latest bells and whistles. Team members wanted it to be easy to update so members of the marketing department could upload content without having to ask IT. Ultimately, they wanted to win the industry award for the best Web site.

“I think with us setting forth the goals and being clear about communication [helped us to] achieve the goals to get where we are today.”

Make a wish list

Next, referring to the Web sites they liked the best, QPS created a wish list of features that would also help further their goals. QPS staffers wanted the overhauled site to cater to both customers: job seekers and companies looking to hire.

For job seekers, they wanted the new site to have an interactive job board where people could find and apply for postings. They also wanted a batch of resources, such as tips on resume writing or interviewing skills, to attract people and to drive traffic even if the slow economy translated to slow updating of the job board.

“We always want to stay fresh and make sure we’re maintaining the Web site,” Wellskopf says. “One of our biggest goals is that whatever section it is, everything is up to date.” Also important are “resources, so people don’t get frustrated with the fact that there are no job postings, but there’s some new tips so they can hopefully get that job.”

The companies get a search engine for available workers, along with resources about unemployment or general statistics about employment. One clickable feature allows companies to request an employee directly through the site.

Also on the wish list were an interactive press room, a blog, and better video and photo capabilities. Additionally, QPS wanted the Web site to be easy to navigate and search, and to include a page in Spanish.

“A must was that we would be able to update the Web site whenever we needed to, up to the minute if we had to,” Wellskopf says. “Now we use a system where anyone can make changes up to the minute so everything is fresh, current, and up to date.”

Pick a firm carefully

Not everyone can afford to hire an outside firm, but doing so lets a company consult an expert opinion, add more features to the Web site, and spend a lot less time doing it. QPS spent about \$25,000 on its revisions, but it was able to create a site that would last a lot longer than its previous self-made sites and would accomplish most of their goals.

“The capabilities were a lot greater,” Wellskopf says. Haley had “experience working with cutting-edge tools and social media stuff. They’re experts on building sites for the staffing industry, which gave us an edge because they’d worked with companies like us in the past. It freed up our time, because we were overseeing and we were not bogged down in the trenches working on the build-out ourselves.”

The QPS Web development team reviewed its options carefully and came up with questions for each firm to answer and a proposal to complete before it would be considered. The team interviewed three companies before choosing Haley.

QPS’s Web development team worked closely with Haley to create the site. The graphic designer worked with Haley’s graphic design team to ensure that the site’s look was

compatible with the sales materials it was using already. The IT team at QPS made sure the code for the new site was understandable on both sides, and Wellskopfs marketing team talked with Haley weekly to check up on the overall progress.

Now QPS is adding roughly a client per week and that has translated into billing at least three new clients since January, all because of orders the clients placed through the refurbished Web site.