



# VIEW*S* & VISIONS

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## Workplace Partnerships: Solutions for Business and Industry

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Judy K. Sheppard is president and CEO of Professional Services of America, Inc., which provides a multitude of services to her clients, including 28 different agencies of the federal government.

Ms. Sheppard has received numerous honors and awards, including the Ernest & Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Minority Entrepreneur of the Year, Small Business of the Year, SBA Women in Business Champion, *The State Journal's* "Who's Who in West Virginia Business," the WBENC Southeast Division's Women's Business Enterprise of the Year for West Virginia, and the Women Impacting Public Policy "Member to Watch." She received an honorary degree from West Virginia University-Parkersburg in 2008.

Recently, she was honored as one of the "50 Most Powerful Minority Women in Business," and, in 2010, American Express OPEN named her as the Teaming Contractor of the Year. In 2011, Ms. Sheppard was named by the Small Business Administration as the Small Business Person of the Year and, in 2012, she was named the Region 3 Minority Person of the Year.

Ms. Sheppard is a noted business leader in her community, industry and state and has served on the board of directors of numerous organizations including the Polymer Alliance Zone, Mid-Ohio Valley Chamber of Commerce, American Marketing Association, Parkersburg Area Roundtable and Parkersburg Area Community Foundation.

Businesses, both large and small, have seen dramatic changes during the past few years and there will be continuous massive changes for business and industry during the next five years. This is a result of the constant ups and downs of the economy as we recover from one of the worst recessions any of us have ever known. This is being fueled by the changes that will be placed upon all businesses with the new health care mandates.

Many of these impending changes have caused today's businesses to begin to operate with an "avoidant mindset." This avoidant mindset is recognized by the delay of making hiring decisions, owners and company officers stockpiling cash, managers being afraid of adding any overhead and stockholders desperately wanting to mitigate risk as much as possible. This avoidance mentality is not going to change any time soon.

However, businesses need to have work completed, and that requires people. As the economy continues to improve, businesses will need to add new products, new services and, of course, new employees to meet growing demands.

In the future, it will become necessary to create a sense of urgency around forecasting staffing needs and to proactively be sourcing for specialized talent.

The use of staffing services or managed staffing can provide great benefits to companies by providing faster access to workers with hard-to-find skillsets. Human resource staffing companies of the future will function as true partners to employers by helping them develop a proactive staffing plan to meet talent needs. The HR companies will assist companies to overcome workforce challenges and capitalize on

opportunities. They will work as true partners with business and industry by identifying safer, more cost-effective ways to complete work.

One of the big changes we are seeing today is that HR firms are changing from "providing people" to becoming partners of industry. With all the new technology available, virtual teams are becoming more common across geography, specialization and job classifications. Virtual teams can be formed to work on projects and assignments from all over the globe.

For many, the use of managed staffing services will be the most cost-effective way to move forward. In most cases, it is more cost-effective for companies to outsource a percentage of their workforce to help reduce onboarding and off-boarding costs, as well as unemployment and health care expenses. Certainly, it is much quicker to staff up and staff down a workforce by using an outsourcing provider.

Managed staffing is a good idea for most any type of business. Using a nationwide recruiting program allows a greater likelihood of providing the right person for the right job, especially if the company is looking for top-level executives or a specialty-skilled employee. Drawing from a larger pool of candidates allows for the recruitment and placement of top-notch employees in any industry.

One good thing about all the changes that we have been experiencing is that right now, there are many talented people who want to work. We are finding that employers are able to hire well-qualified talent for their companies much faster and much easier than ever before. In the future, we will see as much as 25 to 35 percent of the workforce comprised of retirees who have gone back to work. In fact, this is true in several industries in West Virginia right now.



*Judy Sheppard stood between President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden in the White House Rose Garden on September 12, 2011, during a news conference where Obama unveiled his new American Jobs Act*

In addition to human resource services, outsourcing companies provide a host of services that can allow any business to save time and money on many of the day-to-day administrative costs of running a business/corporation. Implementation of electronic medical records, project management of specialized programs, IT services, small business compliance and certifications, marketing surveys, business development, administrative functions such as A/R and A/P, audit compliance, compliance training of labor law, and affirmative action plans are just a few of the services that are being outsourced.

There are many challenges and opportunities for employers in today's business environment. Massive health care reform, talent scarcity in some fields and the increasing need for excellent customer service at all levels of the organization are concerns on every business leader's mind

right now. As we move forward, businesses need to develop relationships with workforce partners to enable them to find more creative, on-demand solutions.

As I work with businesses in all sectors – small, large, profit, nonprofit, corporate and government – I am listening and I am developing programs and services that can help clients with all these new requirements and regulations, which will allow each business to concentrate on their core business. By making “Workforce Partnerships” a strategy for the future, business and industry will become more efficient and effective. ▽