

Organization Description

smartdept. is a nationwide creative, digital, and marketing staffing resource headquartered in Chicago, IL. We are certified with the WBENC as a Women's Business Enterprise. We provide companies with remote, hybrid, and on-site freelance, contract, direct hire, contract-to-hire candidates.

PRINT – Graphic Designers, Art Directors, Creative Directors, Production Artists, Illustrators, Retouchers, Copywriters, Proofreaders/Editors, Traffic Coordinators, Project & Product Managers, Editor/Proofreaders

WEB & MULTIMEDIA – Web Designers, UI/UX Designers, UX Researchers, Video Designers & Editors, 3D Animators, Digital Art Directors, Digital Project Managers, Front End Developers, Mobile Designers, Digital Asset Managers, Web Content Writers, Web Content Administrators, Content Writers, App Developers

MARKETING – Marketing Coordinators, Marketing Managers, Brand Managers, Product Managers, Account Managers, Data Analysts, CRM Managers, Marketing Managers, Digital Marketing Managers, Content Strategist, SEO/SEM Managers

Internal Structure/Staffing Model

Once we engage with a client on an open job request, we assign a Creative Account Manager to be the single point of contact for the day-to-day communication with the client, including submittals, coordinating interviews and onboarding candidates. Our entire team sources and vets talent on behalf of the client, not just the assigned CAM. smartdept. strives to treat every client with the same sense of urgency. As a niche firm, this philosophy has allowed us to grow long-lasting relationships through our commitment to customer service.

Competitive Position

We treat our clients, candidates, and internal staff with respect. Our recruiting philosophy is based on quality over quantity. When recruiters are expected to meet certain volume levels of activity each week, it can lead to forced submittals and less qualified talent. We take the time to get to know our clients and determine how we're a good fit to work together. We can then build staffing plans specific to

our clients to meet the needs that fit their organizations.

Being privately held, we are also a very flexible organization. We don't work off of fixed mark-ups dictated by corporate headquarters. Instead, we talk with our clients to understand their budgets and need to come up with a mutually agreed-upon rate. Our executive team can also make business decisions in real-time, which is helpful when negotiating contracts or any related service questions. We offer the service that only a "niche" vendor can provide, yet we have a seasoned team that also has the knowledge and experience to work in a managed staffing program.

Although we are a "niche" vendor, we compete with larger, national staffing organizations. We've entered into several managed programs while developing relationships to take on a larger volume of job requests. We've been able to thrive in these relationships because we don't build our business model solely around MSP clients. We treat each client with the same complete dedication.

smartdept. Recruitment Process

Our recruitment strategy is based upon updating our talent on open positions and driving referrals. We use LinkedIn, several social media outlets, and email blasts to recruit. We keep in communication with our networked talent which provides referrals to us. We provide valuable resume & portfolio tips, career coaching, and industry information to our talent. Using a grassroots approach has been very successful in helping to continue the development of a consistent talent pool. It also allows us to post every job request that we receive in real-time to every candidate that follows smartdept. for quicker responses.

Staffing is a very reactive business, but we take a more proactive approach to recruiting so that we have talent ready to present when needs arise. Our recruiting team works closely with business development efforts from an account management approach, which enables us to forecast future needs better, trends in the market, and peaks or consistent business cycles with our clients. For more volume-based roles that tend to be general in skill set, we'll utilize job boards and postings to draw new talent as well as drive referrals consistently. For more complex searches, we'll identify niche job boards, social media resources, meet up/professional groups, our internal website, and blog to source active and passive talent.

A successful smartdept. recruiting effort then starts with an emailed resume and online portfolio review. If the person's skills look like a match for our consistent needs, we perform a thorough interview that also includes a written questionnaire which we use to help identify work style, as well as, good and bad work habits. Several of our clients have homegrown testing applications that they require us to use on our talent if they want to be considered for future employment with them. If the candidate in the interview process is qualified and interested in pursuing future opportunities with one of those clients, then we'll administer the skill test. Post-interview, we check the candidate's references, and conduct background checks upon request.

Approach to Account Management

Our approach to account management is to engage with every client in a mutually respectful relationship, meaning we value establishing lasting relationships, rather than building transactional business. Respect stems from a straightforward and honest approach. For example, when we work with VMS clients, we follow the rules, we don't try and short cut the system or reach out directly to hiring managers. If we decide a business relationship is mutually beneficial, then we take the time to communicate and identify how our support best suits each client.

We also pride ourselves on our ability to be approachable and accessible. Our phones are forwarded to a smartdept. team member every night after business hours so that clients can have 24-hour contact, which is very helpful for needs that surface into the evening that require immediate attention. Also, every member of the team is educated on the history of our clients, and typical skill sets that they look for, established rate, etc. so many of our team members can assist a client at any time.

Who We Work With

Unlike the majority of our competitors that focus heavily on advertising agency clients, smartdept. prioritizes corporate clients. 80% of our business is made up of corporate clients, and advertising agencies and non-profits make up the rest.

Some of our most cherished relationships have spanned nearly our entire 20+ years in existence. Among them are Alight, CDW, Walgreens, Discover Financial, and Costco. Other relationships that we have developed in recent years (and are very proud of) include Spectrum Health, Amway, Advanced Central Services, Watermark Retirement Communities and Spark.

Our two largest agency relationships have been in place for over 10 years with DDB Worldwide, which is a marketing communications network owned by Omnicom Group and Blue Chip Worldwide, which is a global marketing firm that focuses on retail and healthcare clients.

Many of our non-profit clients have also been relationships lasting several years, including the ADA, American Academy of Dermatology, AHIMA, APICS, HFMA, UHC, American College of Chest Physicians and American Academy of Pediatrics.



smartdept. is
WBENC Certified

Partnering with a WBENC-certified business gives you the added benefit of building relationships with other certified alliances. By working with a women-owned business, you show your company's commitment to working in diverse markets and furthering economic growth. That's good for everyone! And, when corporations and federal agencies include smaller businesses for their requirement of products and services, they are helping the economy to be stable. Working with a WBENC-certified business also provides tax incentives for your organization.

Our current MSP/VMS Clients include:

Alight
Amway
Discover Financial Services
CDW
Walgreens
Bread Financial
OutFront
Sidley Austin
Spectrum Health

We have utilized the following VMS tools:

Beeline
Tapfin
Fieldglass
WorkNexus
Econometrix
IQNavigator
Nextsource
Virtual Edge
Smart Track
Coupa