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## Human Resources

### Getting the job done

#### *Solidarity and workouts at all-female staffing outfit*

By MARY SUE IAROCCI



From left, Betsy Burbank, staffing specialist; Lisa Bart, staffing specialist; and Lauren Kardish, staffing specialist.

Hire Choice Staffing in White Plains has a slogan: "... for people you can count on.

That isn't limited to the boutique agency's clients: the small, all-female staff credits the 25-year-old company's success to the ability to count on each other.

"We have been through it all together: marriages, divorces, babies, illnesses, everything," said Lauren Kardish, a staffing specialist who has worked for the company for 15 years. "We are supportive to each other through thick and thin."

That kind of work environment is unusual in the recruiting business, said Valerie Anne Swatz, director of sales and marketing.

The 15-person staff works as a team, using their close bond to help human resource (HR) professionals and hiring managers for corporations fill positions based on the client's needs. The only male in the office is owner Robert Miller.

"Our audience is mostly HR people," said Lisa Bart, a Hire Choice staffing specialist. "We provide our services to them to make their lives easier."

And their services are thorough; all applicants are pre-screened and tested on professional skills at the agency's office before being sent out to fill a position.



Valerie Anne Swatz and Sherry Winter at Hire Choice in White Plains.

Once their skills are assessed, applicants are placed in temporary or direct hire (a term meaning permanent) positions in various fields from light industrial work to executive assistants through executive-level management positions.

A growing trend is a temp-to-hire, a situation where an employer can hire an applicant on a temporary basis before deciding to put that employee on the payroll.

Hire Choice's "try before you hire" program allows employers to hire employees on a contingency basis.

"It's become a lot more popular in the past six months, I think because people want to make sure they're making the right decision and we're offering them that opportunity to kind of try before you buy."

The company also does payrolling "so that if a company has a person they want to work on their office, but they don't want the responsibility of doing the payroll we do it on the premises," Swatz said

Also on the premises is a small gym, complete with a personal trainer who comes in a few times a week – a real morale booster for the staff, said Sherry Winter, director of temporary services.

"I think that really helps everybody to feel better about themselves," Winter said. "They work harder, and they're happier."

Since many of the women on staff are working mothers, the company makes use of job-sharing positions, a situation in which two people share one job on alternate days

"Most of us started out full time and as we had kids we kind of paired up and started job sharing and it's really worked," said Kardish.

Winter hired Gabrielle Pranzo, a newlywed in 1995, when she came to the agency as an applicant looking for work and found out about an opening in the temp division at Hire Choice

For eight years, she worked full time, then switched to part time when she had her first child. Last summer, she took over the role of payroll manager. Emergency child care has never been an issue at Hire Choice, which is good for Pranzo, who now has two children ages 4 and 15 months

"I've been married to Hire Choice as long as I've been married to my husband, and they are both happy relationships," Pranzo said.

Last year, Hire Choice Staffing changed its name from Career Blazers of White Plains. The Web site is [www.hirechoicestaffing.com](http://www.hirechoicestaffing.com).