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# Strategies Agency Managers Use to Retain Recruiting Staff

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Andrew Borg

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2016

Abstract

Strategies Agency Managers Use to Retain Recruiting Staff

by

Andrew E. Borg

MBA, Saint John's University, 1996

BS, SUNY Stony Brook University, 1986

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

September 2016

## Abstract

The high rate of employee turnover in the staffing industry is costly and impedes sustainability of employment agencies. The focus of this qualitative single case study explored strategies that 10 human resource managers (HRMs) and 5 HR directors used to retain recruiting staff at one regional recruiting agency in the southeastern region of the United States. The target population and research site were selected because of prior success in employee retention strategies. The conceptual framework grounding this study was sustainability theory. Methodological triangulation was achieved with semistructured interviews and focus group data. Data were thematically analyzed using Atlas.ti7, and all interpretations from the data were member checked to ensure the trustworthiness of findings. Emergent themes from the analysis revealed that these HRMs and HR directors increased employee job training, improved transparency in strategic planning and business practices, and enhanced communication of their employees' roles and responsibilities. The application of the findings may contribute to social change by providing HRMs and directors with insights that could improve employee retention and organizational sustainability. Stakeholders may benefit from an increased understanding of employee retention strategies and potentially reduce employee turnover for the local community.

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## Dedication

Everything I undertake is for Joyce Borg, Zachary Garrett Borg, and Jake Tyler Borg. All of my family members and close friends have each influenced me beyond words. Gwen, we did *this*. Joyce, you are the only person who truly knows the perseverance taken to accomplish this goal. I love you.

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## Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Human resource managers' (HRMs) and directors staffing strategies may affect sustainability and organizational effectiveness (Nelson & Daniels, 2014). Breaugh (2013) stated that to maintain competitive advantage; HRMs and directors should incorporate employee retention procedures (ERP). However, many HRMs and directors do not evaluate ERP (Cromheecke, Van Hoyer, & Lievens, 2013). Nelson and Daniels (2014) posited that ERP are pivotal for an organization's survival.

Managers could re-engineer business practices to create competitive advantage (Jensen, Poufelt, & Kraus, 2010). Managers choose practices in business to develop, follow, and maintain strategies to increase competitive advantage. However, executive recruitment processes may need adjustments (Sinow & Kyei-Blankson, 2012) because of high employee turnover rates within the staffing industry (Poole & Berchem, 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore strategies business HRMs and directors use to retain employees.

The unit of analysis for this study is HRMs' and directors' employee retention strategies within a staffing agency. I explored HRMs' and directors' candidate selection policies to understand strategies used to recruit applicants and retain employees. In the qualitative case study, 10 HRMs and 5 directors from a regional staffing firm located in the southeast region of the United States (U.S.) received an invitation to participate. For triangulation purposes, the five regional directors in the U.S. were invited to give their perspectives on the topic of study. I asked participants to volunteer by electronic mail. My intent was to use the Atlanta branch of a regional employment staffing agency (REA)

to illustrate the effect policy may have on processes to improve executive recruiter retention. In this section are the background of the problem, problem statement, and the purpose of the study. In the following sections, I provided the justification for the research method, design, and rationale for conducting the study at this time.

### **Background of the Problem**

Human resource managers identify and recruit potential applicants whose work experience match job requirements and personality fit within the organizational culture of the firm (Cepin, 2012). Experienced HRMs' and directors view resumes as a tool embedded with disqualifying rather than qualifying attributes (Lei & Gupta, 2010). Human resource managers gather market intelligence of staffing opportunities and trends in the regional employment agency's (REA) local market (Malaval, Bénaroya, & Aflalo, 2014). Mohr, Young, and Burgess, (2012) wrote recruiting agencies to have sustainability challenges because of high employee turnover.

Eliminating barriers in retention and hiring is a primary objective of sustainability theory (Calvasina, G., Calvasina, R. & Calvasina, E., 2014; Hahn & Kuhnen, 2013). Stakeholders require HRMs and directors to maintain their performance while maintaining the focus on the short and long-term perspectives of an organization. The efficiency wage theory is the presumption that it may benefit employers to pay workers a higher wage than their marginal revenue to reduce employee turnover (Rivera, 2012).

There is a high level of employee turnover in the U.S., and more research may benefit HRMs and directors in the staffing industry to retain employees (Poole & Berchem, 2014). In viewing the competency-based relationships between HRMs,

directors, and recruiters, staffing HRMs and directors lack knowledge of how to retain recruiting staff (McPhail, Fisher, Harvey, & Moeller, 2012). In this study, I explored strategies managers can use to retain staff.

### **Problem Statement**

The employee turnover rate in the staffing industry exceeds 100% annually (Wren, Berkowitz, & Grant, 2014). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported the average overall employee turnover rate for the U.S. as 15%. Sustainability factors are at risk, because the high employee turnover of recruiting staff has a loss of over 550,000 placements since 2009, with no chance of recovery until 2019 (Marsh, Fischer, & Montondon, 2013). The general business problem is the underrepresentation of job applicants because of high employee turnover in the staffing industry. The specific business problem is that some HRMs and directors lack strategies to retain recruiting staff.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this single qualitative case study was to explore the strategies HRMs and directors use to retain recruiting staff. The targeted population comprised of HRMs and directors from a REA located in the Southeast region of the U.S. Eligibility criteria for participant selection included HRMs and directors from a regional staffing agency with a two year record of high employee retention rate. An implication of positive social change is the potential for principal stakeholders to understand employee retention strategies. The community may be impacted by employee retention strategies because people working in the staffing industry invest their labor, knowledge, and skills in the

running of the company to ensure compliance with the targets set for them (Hunko, 2013).

### **Nature of the Study**

The selected method for the study is qualitative. Researchers use the qualitative method to identify themes and patterns from participant responses (Hamann, Schiemann, Bellora, & Gunther, 2013; Rowley, 2012; Cameron & Molina Azorin, 2011). Welford, Murphy, and Casey (2012) suggested that a qualitative method might provide the depth and rich data to understand a problem. The quantitative research method was not appropriate, as there are neither hypotheses nor need to correlate variables (Marshall & Rossman, 2010). However, Bazeley and Kemp (2011) determined that a mixed method approach might add to the complexity of the research, not necessarily the validity of the study, by having both qualitative and quantitative components. The quantitative component of a mixed method approach can limit in-depth analysis and is not appropriate for this study.

There are many research designs to choose from including narrative, and phenomenological (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Scape, 2013). Phenomenology is an investigation of lived experiences of a uniquely traumatic experience within the environment (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, the traumatic experience will not be the focus, and as such, a phenomenological design is inappropriate. A narrative design would capture stories retold from memories and perspectives, rather than revealing patterns of experiences and is not appropriate. A single-case study design enhances the discovery process by engaging participants in a manner of openness (Marais, 2012). I used a single-

case study design and collected data using semistructured interviews and focus groups to compare the cases. Simon (2010) indicated that case study designs are an opportunity to collect data from various sources. A case study design aligns with the problem under study. Case study researchers explore, describe, and illustrate the context of a setting, an entity, or a situation (Wynn & Williams, 2012). I used a case study design because this provides an opportunity to garner feedback from business leaders to identify areas to innovate and improve retention strategies.

### **Research Question**

How can HRMs and directors in the staffing industry improve managerial strategies to retain recruiting staff?

### **HR Managers Interview Questions**

1. What is the tenure of your recruiting staff?
2. How have employee job satisfaction survey data informed your strategies for recruiting staff employee retention?
3. What employment assessment tools do you use to determine the right employee fit with the organization?
4. What factors, positively or negatively, have influenced recruiting staff turnover?
5. What managerial strategies do you use to retain recruiting staff?
6. What additional information can you share about the retention strategies for recruiting staff that I have not asked you?

### **Director Focus Group Discussion Topics**

1. What managerial strategies do you use to retain recruiting staff?
2. What factors, positively or negatively, have influenced recruiting staff employee turnover?
3. What have been your experiences with retaining recruiting staff based on compensation?
4. How does increased job training affect the outcomes of employee turnover?
5. What additional information can you share about the retention strategies for recruiting staff?

### **Conceptual Framework**

Marriappanadar (2012) wrote an efficiency based agency evolves over a period and allows HRMs and directors to exercise increased control over employees' lives. Human resource managers and directors who use efficiency based human resource strategies can cause harm to stakeholders, including employees and communities (Mariappanadar, 2012). Ethical issues can cause HRMs and directors to use strategies for retention of staff. Therefore, it is necessary to identify strategies HRMs and directors use that relate to employee turnover, which in turn affect organizational sustainability. In 1987, members of the world commission on the environment (WCED) developed the theory of sustainability (Paul, 2008).

Sustainability is a three-dimensional model that includes stakeholder, environmental, and economic principles (Benson, Gupta, & Mateti, 2010). The

philosophy of sustainability theory is part of many management systems, which may affect stakeholders (Paul, 2008). Stakeholders have an influence on activities (Sachs & Riihli, 2011). Community citizenship is part of business management, communities, and business partners are key stakeholder groups in the staffing industry (Poole & Berchem, 2014).

Tome (2011) suggested that HRMs use the theory of sustainability as a framework for the continued development of organizational success. Development of corporate strategies and policy building is salient to HRMs (Escobar & Vredenburg, 2011). Leszczynska (2015) posited HRMs might measure the direct economic outcome through the pursuit of sustainability. Measured sustainability should include financial position and operational effectiveness in addition to social, ethical, and environmental performance (Ekwueme, Egbunike, & Onyali, 2013). Human resource managers practice sustainability when they design, analyze, and implement socioeconomic decisions and actions (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013).

I used theory of sustainability based on the description provided by Leszczynska (2012) who indicated that *sustainability* is a descriptive analysis of how sustainable strategies are measured and balanced against competing interests (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). Social change may occur when principal stakeholders including HRMs and executives understand policy modifications, which may assist in understanding strategies used to retain staff. Sloan, Klingenberg, and Rider (2013) used sustainability theory for their research on change processes in the staffing industry. Poole and Berchem (2014) utilized sustainability theory for research on the employee turnover rate of employees in

staffing positions in the U.S. Based on the research of Sloan et al. (2013), I used sustainability theory, to explore factors of high employee turnover rates. Results of the study may add to the theory of sustainability developed by members of the 1987 WCED because business leaders will have employee retention tools needed to influence organizational management systems.

### **Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations**

In this section, I addressed shortcomings, including errors in analysis, as well as the availability of resources to reduce bias in research. Assumptions are unverified facts assumed true, and limitations are potential weaknesses within the study that are beyond my control. Delimitations are the characteristics that defined the scope and boundaries of this proposal.

#### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are issues in a study that are out of a researcher's control; however, if there are no assumptions, a topic under study would be irrelevant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010; Borgström, 2012). Simon (2010) posited that assumptions are unverified facts, which are present in all studies. I assumed that all HRMs and directors had formal training. Human resource managers have experience with varying industries ERPs. Moreover, I assumed that the research participants would be forthcoming in sharing experiences, and views on how management retains recruiters to service clients. In this study, I assumed all participants were honest.

**Limitations**

Limitations are potential weaknesses associated with researcher decisions made in the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The research process and the related qualitative methodology are not without limitations. Data collected for this study pertain to the current attitudes of the recruiter interviewed, and attitudes may change. Other limitations include population, sample size, data collection methods, and generalization of results.

**Delimitations**

Delimitations are characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of a research study (Simon, 2010). Delimitations are controllable research features. The scope of this study is a REA in Atlanta, Georgia. The for-profit employment staffing organization was the only industry examined. Another limit to study is the participants' prior work experience (Collins & Cooke, 2013). My decision to conduct a final study using face-to-face interviews and a focus group in Atlanta, GA assured that the selected sample represents the population. The scope of this research is an accessible area.

**Significance of the Study**

In this section, I described why this study is relevant to the problem under study. Additional research may assist area organizational HRMs and directors in gaining an understanding of the contributing factors to HRMs' and directors' knowledge in employee retention. The potential for principal stakeholders to understand process improvements may increase profitability by exposing the unfavorable effects that continued use of harmful human resource strategies might have on local society (Mariappanadar, 2012).

### **Contribution to Business Practice**

Cicekli (2013) claimed that HRMs need to understand what job qualifications employers consider significant when making hiring decisions to mitigate the risk of unwanted employee turnover. Human resource managers' greater understanding of preferred qualifications may change executive retention processes (Cicekli, 2013). Active recruiting practices should facilitate preferred ERP performance (Pontes & Pontes, 2012). Cappelli and Keller (2013) argued that HRMs recruit job applicants based on personal experiences, educational background, and those believed to have the potential for a cultural fit within the organization. Broader candidate representation may positively affect the overall sustainability of the staffing industry (Akhtar & Khan, 2011). Sustainable business strategies apply to all operations (Cicekli, 2013). By having knowledge of business practices, HRMs and directors may gain strategies to use when retaining recruiting staff and recruiting job candidates.

### **Implications for Social Change**

Organizational HRMs and directors cannot implement modifications because changing situations may require an interdependent relationship between the HRMs, directors, and stakeholders (Rivero, 2013). Cappelli (2012) postulated that the applicant job recruitment and selection processes needed an alignment. Breugh (2013) posited that the manner industry HRMs recruit influences the culture, employee turnover, competitive advantage, and sustainability of a company. All principal stakeholders, including HRMs and directors, may use the research to change strategies. Businesses are sustainable when HRMs and directors conduct analysis, and use that information, to increase employment

in their communities (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). Understanding why employees leave jobs is pivotal to the development of retention strategies (Huffman et al., 2014).

### **A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**

The literature review section consists of peer-reviewed references, 85% of the references have a publishing date within the last 5 years. More than 100 references are from peer-reviewed sources. The organization of the review includes: (a) conceptual framework, (b) the history of staffing, (c) human resource practices, (d) recruitment practices, (e) employee turnover, (f) cost and effects of downsizing, (g) organizational effectiveness/competitive advantage, (h) policy, and (i) qualitative research. The primary search terms were *high employee turnover, employee retention, executive recruiter process, marketization and economic issues, human resources, and human capital investment*.

Table 1

#### *Literature Review Source Content*

Literature Review Content	Total #	# Less than 5 years old at graduation date	% Total peer-reviewed less than 5 years old at graduation date
Peer-reviewed Journals	107	99	89%
Books		2	1%
Older Articles	4	4	3%
Total	111	105	

### **Sustainability Theory**

According to Leszczynska (2012), sustainability is a descriptive analysis to measure and balance sustainable strategies against competing interests (Starik &

Kanashiro, 2013). Organizational business management practices influence stakeholder decisions (Smith & Sharicz, 2011). Employing guidelines associated with sustainability theory increases the likelihood for staffing leaders to attract and retain employees. Additional sustainability benefits include increased customer loyalty and new business development because leaders tend to conduct business with positive branded companies with value added corporate reputation (americanstaffing.net).

Sustainability factors such as performance productivity and operational efficiencies correlate to management strategies and employee practices in force (Mrope & Bangi, 2014). Human resource managers focus sustainability initiatives relying on the impact of stakeholder change and effective communications related to stakeholder intent (Lourenco, Callen, Branco, & Curto, 2013). The theory of sustainability applies to this study because employee turnover threatens organizational sustainability (Mrope & Bangi, 2014). Using participant experiences in Table 3, I applied the initial research findings to the elements of sustainability and found a consistent application as described by Tome (2011). I related the themes of training, transparency, and communication to each attribute of sustainability theory using managerial strategies and employee retention practices. There is an association between sustainability factors, that either promote or encumber financial and operational performance (Sharma, & Rani, 2014; Smith & Sharicz, 2011).

Stakeholders focus on sustainability initiatives. Sustainability initiatives are a process of exploring new possibilities while exploiting existing capabilities (Iarossi, Miller, O'Conner, & Kiel, 2013). Top managers support an open approach to surfacing

initiatives, and intra- and inter-organizational alliances (Tome, 2011). Efficiency wage theory is the idea that paying workers a wage higher than their marginal revenue product may lead to increased productivity from the worker (Bangwayo-Skeete, Rahim, & Zikhali, 2013). Poole and Berchem (2014) found that the employee turnover rate in the staffing industry was up 283.5% between 2010 and 2014. Therefore, I used both sustainability theory and efficiency wage theory to understand why there is such a high employee turnover in the staffing industry, to gain insight into strategies managers' use to retain recruiting staff.

The overarching problem is some staffing industry HRMs and directors lack strategies to retain staff. Additional theories reviewed included (a) mere exposure theory, (b) symbolic interaction theory, (c) human capital theory, and (d) predictive scale models. Mere exposure theory pertains to an individual's perception influenced by repetitive triggers in the market to stimulate perceptions that drive decisions (Lim, Ri, Egan, & Biocca, 2015). I reviewed this theory because employee turnover relates to social and media messages, which influence the satisfaction employees can have on the job (Owoyemi & Ekwoaba, 2014). However, this theory was not specific to this research because there are many influencing factors to why employees leave their place of employment.

Symbolic interaction pertains to individuals that have the propensity to act upon perceptions and feelings, and not objectively to facts presented (Patulny, Siminski, & Mendolia, 2015). Handberg, Thorne, Midtgaard, Nielsen, and Lomborg (2014) wrote symbolic interaction can change employee perception in the job market and can have an

effect on a worker's decision to leave a job. However, this theory was not specific to this research because it is ambiguous on executive recruiters' tendencies when deciding to leave a job. Additionally, this approach may not provide the analytical lens to when HRMs and directors of an organization enforce a reduction in force.

Human capital theory is the investment individuals make to improve their socioeconomic status (Peers, 2015). I reviewed this theory because many workers leave their place of employment once they acquire desired skills and experience to help maintain a competitive advantage (Chowdhury, Shulz, Milner, & Van De Voort, 2014). However, this theory was not specific to this research because companies may reduce workforce during difficult financial times to maintain a fiscal competitive advantage, rather than to invest in improving the staff.

Predictive scale models are forecasting tools to help managers predict and understand the basis of employee turnover (Huffman, Casper, & Payne, 2014). I reviewed this theory because early theoretical models predicted employee turnover behavior (Huffman et al., 2014). However, this theory was not specific to this research because there are many non-work attributes excluded from employment characteristics that effect work decisions. In the following table is a list of theories reviewed, accepted, and discarded.

Table 2

*Table of Data for Theories*

Theory	Author	Year
Sustainability theory	World Trade Commission	1987
Mere exposure theory	Baker	1999
Efficiency wage theory	Freeman	1984
Symbolic interaction theory	Mead	1938
Human capital theory	Becker	1962
Predictive Scale Models	March & Simon	1958

A conceptual framework is a structure used in a dissertation or doctoral study (Berman, 2013). The conceptual framework includes a dynamic assessment for researchers, aligning process, and focus on their goal (Berman, 2013). My intent was to understand how to assist HRMs and directors with retention strategies. The name of the organization depicted by the acronym REA is a regional employment staffing agency located in the Southeast region of the U.S. The REA leadership strategy employs price dominance and vast product offering in the staffing industry. The mission/vision was to present high-quality job applicants at reasonable prices with an utmost level of ethics and integrity. The prices offered are a result of the strong position REA employees has with its client base so REA HRMs and directors can influence the contracted terms. HRMs and directors in staffing may reduce expenses reflected in the service price. The strategy was to outsell the competition by offering quality candidates and service at better prices

that are available throughout the Atlanta, GA market. The pricing strategy will sustain the saturated market leaving investment for future growth in expansion to other domestic markets.

The members of the WCED brought the theory of sustainability to the forefront (Hahn & Kuhnen, 2013). Corporate sustainability is satisfying the stakeholder's needs without forfeiting the ability of the firm to meet future obligations. To pursue an objective of sustainability, HRMs and directors need to maintain their economic level while maintaining the focus on the short-term and long-term perspectives of the organization (Hahn & Kuhnen, 2013).

Many business HRMs and directors apply the theory of sustainability as a framework for the continued development of organizational success (Tome, 2011). Escobar and Vredenburg (2011) posited that the development of corporate strategies and policy building is pivotal for long-term sustainability. Business HRMs and directors may have the capabilities to measure the direct economic outcome through the pursuit of sustainability (Leszczynska, 2012). Sustainability measures disclosed in financial statements correlate to employee turnover (Ekwueme et al., 2013). Human resource managers manage sustainability when they conduct analysis, design, and implementation of socioeconomic related decisions and actions (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013).

I applied the sustainability theory as the framework that HRMs and directors influence managerial strategies of the organization. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) described sustainability as: "Development that

meets individuals' needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (WCED, 1987, p. 43).

Resources should limit what is essential for a given need to increase efficiency (Gramm & Schnell, 2013). Increasing production from a given set of resources is an approach to sustainability theory (Andrews et al., 2009). Developed by the WCED in 1987, the theory of sustainability had an absence of a distinct and agreed upon definition for what is sustainability (White, 2012).

According to Sharma and Rani (2014), sustainability pertains to economic, social, and environmental matters that can hinder the community. The theory of sustainability applies to this study because one definition of sustainability is how strategies balance against competing interests (Leszczynska, 2012; Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). Comm and Mathaisel (2012) stated that HRMs might attain organizational sustainability by aligning the needs of their stakeholders with the products and services HRMs offer. Human resource managers focus sustainability initiatives on the impact of change on the stakeholders and effective communications related to stakeholder intent (Lourenco, Callen, Branco, & Curto, 2013). Comm and Mathaisel (2012) argued that due to the complexities of pursuing sustainability, interdependent relationships between organizational HRMs and stakeholders is critical to their research.

Ciasullo and Troisi (2013) argued that ethics also apply to management's policies and procedures are significant strategy factors for company sustainability. Ciasullo and Troisi performed a case study using the theory of sustainability as a framework and found sustainability standards are part of the guiding principles that managers use to incorporate

value. Change management entailed thoughtful planning and sensitive implementation (Ciasullo & Troisi, 2013).

Conversely, corporate strategy and policies are a product of a belief system that management needs to ensure transparency throughout an institution (Ciasullo & Troisi, 2013). Sloan et al. (2013) suggested sustainability is a product of operational effectiveness and processes defined by organizational HRMs. Tate, Ellram, and Kirchoff (2010) argued that employees who follow sustainability strategies had a positive effect on the overall effectiveness of the organization. Marshall, McCarthy, Heavey, and McGrath (2014) postulated that sustainability practices and strategic changes had a positive effect on work and financial performance.

I considered the mere exposure theory (MET) for this study because disseminated information and company reputation help shape market discernment. According to Petty and Brinol (2014), market differentiation is part of perceptions in the market. Rainayee (2013) posited that perception drives employees to leave their place of work if HRMs fail to provide employees with perceived growth opportunities. Exposure to certain stimuli on an ongoing basis can influence the level of acceptance of the individual. Employee turnover is a product of employee perception (Rainayee, 2013). Baker (1999) explained that MET is a basic familiarization that triggers a reaction to certain stimuli as memorable and safe. The MET concept pertains to influencing market perception that can shape social construct of what is acceptable.

Advertised messages can shape how society processes information, which can change economic and political awareness (Petty & Brinol, 2014). Employee turnover

occurs because employees perceive the quality of individual companies and industries over others. Societal messages affect the decisions people have when they leave jobs (Mohr et al., 2012). Individual perceptions in the job market create a perceived opportunity (O'Halloran, 2011). According to Rainayee (2013), employees' perception of external job opportunities could influence employee turnover.

The role of the advertiser to prompt consumer interest and promote a purchase is the essence of mere exposure (Lim, Ri, Egan, & Biocca, 2015). Large amounts of funding to support advertising with television and radio commercials also to the Internet. Petty and Brinol (2014) suggested that influence and persuasion of personal choice depend on the individual's cogitative thinking processes of the targeted message. Mere exposure was in a study conducted by Baker (1999). Baker gathered 142 administrative students at Northeastern University to volunteer to test brand loyalty. Mere exposure theory may have the same level of relevance on how the labor force views corporations and industries. Radio broadcast and print media coverage can influence job seekers interest in a company or industry (Petty & Brinol, 2014).

Mohamed, Hassan, and Spencer (2011) found that individual concerns are a target of personal marketing. Effective marketing strategies engaging in peer-to-peer communications via social media influence also to targeting family and friends influence an employee's decision (Venkatesh, Inman, Mantrala, Kelley, & Rizley, 2011). Effective conditioning enhances the perception, branding, and identification of the institution (Petty & Brinol, 2014). Although, real consumer-based viral marketing may change branding and social media, the major influence on the younger consumer are their family and

friends (Yasin & Zahari, 2011). The negative perception of the job market creates a void in unemployment, as many people believe marketing professionals have an effect on employment.

Marketing strategies that engage the stakeholders are essential for increasing job applicants and employment stability (Akeusola, Daniel, & Iyere, 2011). Mere exposure theory is the phenomenon targeted messages cause a positive effect toward the particular brand (Ruggieri & Boca, 2013). The mere exposure theory is one reason employees voluntarily vacate an organization or industry. Use of mere exposure theory was not ideal for this study because the use of this concept did not support the general business problem concerning the underrepresentation of job applicants because of high employee turnover in the staffing industry.

### **Efficiency Wage Theory**

In 1984, Freeman argued that stakeholder theory narrowed the business gap between ethics and strategy (Harrison & Wicks, 2013). Ng and Sears (2012) posited that applying the stakeholder theory might prompt HRMs to assess how organizational change influences stakeholders. Sachs and Riihli (2011) wrote that stakeholder theory relates to management effectiveness aligned to stakeholders' perception of ethics and strategy. Stakeholders found financial credence critical, although limited in scope when considering a firm's value added activities related to customers, communities, suppliers, vendors, materials, and labor (Harrison & Wicks, 2013). Harrison and Wicks (2013) found that there might be a conflict of interest between the stakeholders.

Researchers could use case-based methods to collect data about the happiness of stakeholders', not necessarily operational effectiveness. Additionally, using stakeholder theory as the conceptual framework for case studies proves difficult to make generalizations that apply to a wider group of companies (Harrison & Wicks, 2013). Stakeholder theory seemed an appropriate lens; however, not ideal for this case study. In 1938, Mead introduced symbolic interaction theory to assess society's subjective values of an individual's perception of objects, events, and behaviors (Turner, 2011). Symbolic interaction pertains to the prevalent predisposed implications based on what people perceive and not what is objectively true (Handberg et al., 2014).

Yang, Wan, and Fu (2012) conducted a qualitative study and applied the symbolic interaction theory. The symbolic interaction theory is a way to uncover experiences of employees working in industries related to corporate management and employee turnover. According to Tabatabaei and Gardiner (2012), a recruiter's decision toward the employment candidacy of a job applicant is subjective. Symbolic interaction theory is not ideal to us for this study because it is unclear if executive recruiters are invoking predispositions when deciding to leave an organization.

The HRMs and directors of the REA should take an adaptive approach to facilitate quick changes to seize potential opportunities as the context of the market evolves. The message from HRMs and directors was to adopt adaptive strategies in the market. The message relayed or internalized from the employee's perspective was to maximize earning potential. The recommendation for companies that prescribe to improving their best practices or industry standards would adhere to adaptive HRMs' and

directors' principles. Applied techniques improving efficiencies that identify waste and re-vamp processes is an example of an organization welcoming change (Atilgan & McCullen, 2011).

The genuine participation of followers in setting the firm's goals can influence their accountability. Sharing in goal setting helps set the agenda for continued motivation and ownership in the activity process (Yukl, George, & Jones, 2009). Defined roles and consequences facilitate a greater understanding and appreciation of the individual's point of view (Kim & Mauborgne, 1999). This process creates a dialog to uncover potential process inefficiencies or concerns. Employing a participatory approach allows potential process re-engineering as an added benefit for improvement. Participatory goal setting helps management align priorities and performance measurements, in addition to, sharing the responsibilities of achievement with staff (Yukl et al., 2009).

The risk of entering a depressed domestic housing market and high unemployment economy are market indicators that the staffing industry needs to concentrate on employing improved efficiencies and embrace market expansion (Kim & Mauborgne, 1999). Efficiencies realized in coordination with energy technological advances are being pursued. Industry focusing their technologies around renewable energies is winning political favor and support as the current economics seem inauspicious at best. To maintain competitive advantage, staffing HRMs and directors need to innovate continuously to preserve the competitive edge (Kim & Mauborgne, 1999).

In 1962, Becker posited that human capital theory is the rational decision individuals make to invest in themselves as a way to better their social and lifetime economic benefits. I considered the human capital investment theory. Rivera (2012) wrote that employee and employer hiring decisions stemmed from the human capital level of the job applicant. Business HRMs who invest in their workforce may be reluctant to dismiss workers instead of forfeiting the accumulated human capital (Batt & Colvin, 2011).

Mohr et al. (2012) wrote that employees voluntarily leave their current work positions for a chance to gain beneficial experience, which enhances their likelihood of greater socioeconomic positioning. Nica (2012) suggested how individuals can invest in human capital regarding gaining additional or relevant experience. Employees gain experience or pursue a college degree to amass human capital. Caution may be necessary as decisions to invest in human capital have an inherent risk (Hall, 2012). Employees may secure latent short-term employment with a particular firm or industry as a way to obtain better jobs and earn more money (Sinow & Kyei-Blankson, 2012).

Caution may be necessary as decisions to invest in human capital have an inherent risk (Hall, 2012). Employees may secure latent short-term employment with a particular firm or industry as a way to obtain better jobs and earn more money (Sinow & Kyei-Blankson, 2012). Human capital investment theory is not ideal to use because this theory aligns with students investing in higher education. For the benefit of greater socioeconomic standing, rather than employee turnover as a way to obtain a better job (Sinow et al., 2012). In 1958, researchers March and Simon presented the theory of

organization equilibrium to explain why employees quit their jobs (Hom et al., 2012).

The premise is to create a predictive scale to help managers identify and understand the parameters of employee turnover. This foundation expanded with research conducted in 1977 with the structural model by Mobley and Price (Hom et al., 2012). Additionally, in 1981 and 1986 Price and Mueller created a collection of organizational experiences used as a variable to explain employee mindsets of job satisfaction and voluntary employee turnover (Hom et al., 2012). Hancock, Allen, Bosco, McDaniel, and Pierce (2011) wrote there is a need for additional research because of unclear results and lack of consensus concerning the parameters and business drivers and indicators of employee turnover.

Employing advanced technologies and restructuring strategies may improve the infrastructure efficiencies within the REA and reduce waste, energy costs, and improve overall employee satisfaction and morale (Sinow & Kyei-Blankson, 2012).

I considered the efficiency wage theory before applying Tome's (2011) sustainability theory to explore corporate strategies that suggest continued development of organizational success. Initially, managers' supported an open approach to initiatives and intra- and inter-organizational alliances that led to the theory of efficiency. I considered the efficiency wage theory to examine if higher wage offerings led to company loyalty that may lead to increased productivity from the worker. Aisha, Hardjomidjojo, and Yassuerli (2013) suggested that incentives could influence employee performance that affects sustainability.

Sustainability theory is used as a guideline to evaluate the financial position, operational effectiveness, in addition to social, ethical, and environmental performance

(Ekwueme et al., 2013). Sustainability factors, such as performance productivity and operational efficiencies, correlate to management strategies and employee practices in force (Mrope & Bangi, 2014). These two theories come together because both theories pertain to management strategies used to elicit top employee performance and loyalty to the organization.

### **Applicability of Theory to Industry**

My intent was to understand how to assist HRMs and directors with retention strategies. The theory of sustainability applies to the staffing industry. Ekwueme et al. (2013) recommended that managers be accountable to incorporate sustainability theory guidelines to influence operational policies and corporate strategies. According to Leszczynska (2012), sustainability is a descriptive analysis of how sustainable policies are measured and balanced against competing interests (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). Organizational business practices influence stakeholder decisions (Smith & Sharicz, 2011).

Theory of sustainability applies to the staffing industry because of embedded sustainability factors in a staffing firm's operational and decision-making process (americanstaffing.net). The employee turnover rate in the staffing industry exceeds 100% annually (Wren, Berkowitz, & Grant, 2014). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported the average overall employee turnover rate for the U.S. as 15%.

I intend to apply the theory of sustainability as the framework that managerial strategies and employee practices are subjective by organizational HRMs and directors (Smith & Sharicz, 2011). Alignment exists between management defined sustainability

factors and employee activities that either promote or encumber organizational financial and operational performance (Sharma & Rani, 2014). Sustainability factors such as performance productivity and operational efficiencies correlate to management strategies and employee practices in force (Mrope & Bangi, 2014). Human resource managers focus sustainability initiatives on the impact of change on the stakeholders and effective communications related to stakeholder intent (Lourenco, Callen, Branco, & Curto, 2013). The theory of sustainability applies to this study because employee turnover threatens organizational sustainability (Mrope & Bangi, 2014).

According to Ng and Sears (2012), applying stakeholder theory might encourage HRMs and directors to assess how organizational change influences stakeholders. Sachs and Riihli (2011) wrote that stakeholder theory relates to management effectiveness aligned to stakeholders' perception of ethics and strategy. Stakeholder theory seemed an appropriate lens; however, not ideal for this case study. Using stakeholder theory as the conceptual framework for case studies proves difficult to make generalizations that apply to a wider group of companies (Harrison & Wicks, 2013).

### **History of the United States Staffing Industry**

History of U.S. staffing industry is critical to understand because HRMs engage staffing firms to manage human resource functions such as retention, compensation, and payroll (Berchem, 2012). Understanding historical staffing strategies is beneficial, because staffing agents employ a third of the labor force in all businesses, in the U.S. (Berchem, 2012). Van Arsdale (2013) posited that the growth of the staffing industry is

reliant on employment agency professionals hiring staffing agents to reduce employee payroll, benefits, and insurance expenses.

Sriram (2014) wrote that staffing professionals consistently research how to optimize productivity and maximize continued profitability. Staffing companies provide a unique opportunity to provide a solution based resources for a client's external staffing needs (Klehe & Goede, 2012). Sriram (2014) found that to have corporate sustainability, HRMs needed to implement policy changes on how managers screen and represent job applicants. Rainayee (2013) argued that HRMs should develop and implement procedural strategies to address the threat of unwanted employee turnover.

Industrial growth, assembly line practices, the creation of unions, and the belief that workers are consumers, led to changes in the industry (Van Arsdale, 2013). Staffing agencies are in industrialized regions after World War II (WWII) (Payne, 2013). Employment agencies increased in prominence after the Great Depression of the 1930's (Van Arsdale, 2013). Lack of governmental regulations and unstable economic conditions after WWII fueled the growth of staffing agencies as HRMs could employ workers without having the burden of payroll expense (Van Arsdale, 2013). Van Arsdale found that producing jobs, during the 1950s and 1960s, was the main employment base, in the 1970s, this base transitioned to the hire of employment agents. Large companies continue to divest their workforce with staffing agencies. The staffing industry is one of the fastest growing sectors and is trending upwards (Van Arsdale, 2013).

## **Practices of Human Resource Professionals**

The vetting process is a central part of the human resources function in firms. Vetting is used to identify job applicants with greater productivity potential and least likely to lose or leave their job (Bartling, Fehr, & Schmidt, 2012). Additional research may help to gain an understanding of the general hiring process as human capital, social capital, and predispositions affect employer selection of new hires (Rivera, 2012). Employee selection is a human resource management process, which includes choosing applicants more apt to succeed (Ekuma, 2012). Recruiting practices are critical for an organization's sustainability (Nelson & Daniels, 2014). Human resource professionals generalize their practices and strategies (Bartling et al., 2012). Although, no perfect selection method exists HRMs use methods that capture the culture of the organization while reducing the risk of excessive costs (Madu, 2012).

Resumes of prospective job applicants is a tool used by HRMs during the employee recruiting process (Tsai, Chi, Huang, & Hsu, 2011). The employability retention process begins with the evaluation of a job applicant's resume. Educational background, work experience, and personality are determining factors in the decision of the HRMs to hire potential employees (Tsai et al., 2011).

Ofori and Aryeetey (2011) suggested that conducting preliminary interviews might help eliminate ineligible job candidates. Recruiters are not presenting all qualified candidates, based on low retention rates within the staffing industry (Hancock et al., 2011). Volatile staff changes within an employment agency reduce the number of available job candidates and clients back because of lack of trust (Mohr et al., 2012)

Employers use employment agencies to find suitable workers that, have both the necessary academic and work experience requirements (Klehe & Goede, 2012). Ideal job candidates are confident, self-aware, and able to work in a team-oriented framework (Shafie & Nayan, 2010). Job candidates that had similar attributes as the interviewing party increase the likelihood for a positive value for both the candidate and staffing agency client (Lam, Ahearne, & Schillewaert, 2012).

Rivera (2012) found that hiring is a product of cultural matching between the job applicant and the employer, rather than the skill set of the potential candidate. Tortoriello, Perrone, and McEvily (2011) wrote that employers hire and recruiters who represent prospective employees with a shared social connection representing the parties in the organization. Bidwell et al. (2013) maintained that interview processes have greater significance than a resume.

Flint, Maher, and Wielemaker (2012) suggested the need for further examination of the perception employers have toward the value employees add to a company. Rudd and Bragg (2011) posited that additional research might uncover client perceptions of ERP strategy. Human resource professionals align the value proposition of the network as a whole to job seekers' expectations (Nielsen & Montemari, 2013).

Some employment agents question job stability as a credential for job applicants (Basta, 2013). Udegbe (2012) contended that the bias from market HRMs is one reason for the stigma of quality associated with job applicants. Stakeholders involved in the retention process value an institution. Human resource professionals align the value

proposition of the network as a whole to job seekers' expectations (Mann & Henneberry, 2012; Nielsen & Montemari, 2013).

### **Sales Sector**

Sales organizational management need to retain successful salespeople whose personality fit within the culture of the firm (Lu, Bonfrer, & Voola, 2015). Comparable to staffing sector, identifying, recruiting, and retaining good salespeople are challenging tasks for management (Wren, Berkowitz, & Grant, 2013). The need exists for understanding how to improve the retention of effective sales professionals (Boles, et al., 2012).

Many direct costs, indirect costs, and lost revenue associated with employee turnover within sales organizations (Lu et al., 2015). Wren et al. (2013) posited costs to replace sales staff range between 25% and 200% of an employee's annual compensation. Lack of tenure and stability of a sales force exposes a sales organization to revenue loss as customer relationships formed by the sales professional follow the affiliation of the individual and not the firm (Boyles et al., 2012).

Recruiting firms and staffing firms with poor reputations of retention have difficulties recruiting top talent (Boles et al., 2012). This marketplace stigma hinders recruiters' success and the ability to attract effective producers (Boles et al., 2012). According to Wren et al. (2013), sales positions are one of the most difficult jobs to fill.

### **Retention through Recruitment Practice**

Organizational leaders have varying criteria for the job applicant selection process. Candidate selection may depend on the type of position and array of available

job applicants. Selection of potential hires may depend on the quality of work experience, education, the location of residence, communications, computer proficiency, compensation level, interview skills, as well as, others (Nica, 2012).

There is a relationship between recruitment of personnel and employee retention. On boarding, the ideal candidate could have positive long lasting effects on a company's culture, morale, and profitability (Cascio & Boudreau, 2011). Hiring the wrong person for a job can cause significant costs to the organization (Lu et al., 2015). Inappropriate recruiting practices limit the likelihood of hiring a long tenured employee (Yang et al., 2012). Organizational management with stellar reputations have better opportunities for attracting talent (Hancock et al., 2011). I chose to limit my study to only employee retention because low employee turnover improves a company's marketplace perception, which affects a significant phase in the recruitment process.

Recruiting practices may help to gain an understanding of the general hiring process as human capital, social capital, and predispositions affect employer selection of new hires (Rivera, 2012). Human resources professionals have a history of pooling recruitment initiatives with applicant selection (Fidler, 2012). Tabatabaei and Gardiner (2012) found there is a need to examine the experience of HRMs toward the events of recommending candidates for hire. Unsuitable recruiting practices increase employee turnover rates within an organization (Yang et al., 2012).

Additional attention on the relationship between education, employability, and the practices executive recruiters follow will influence the amount of individuals who find employment (Wickramasinghe & Perera, 2010). Individual employability is as important

because it may provide insight into how HRMs and directors think. Employers use formal education and work experience as one criterion to identify skill sets and measure a job applicant's potential success (Nica, 2012). Fidler (2012) wrote that recruiters are the authority on hiring, due to of their strong relationship across multiple industries and companies assisting HRMs and directors with hiring talent. The majority of HRMs typically work with managers as a way to establish a profile of the preferred applicant. Applicant profiles can include a competitive market analysis to identify market value for the position based on what the client considers significantly (Fidler, 2012).

Gelens Dries, Hofmans, and Pepermans (2013) found the real cost of recruiting the wrong talent for the organization. Hiring the wrong talent can cause the overall moral and culture of the employee base in the firm to decay (Yang et al., 2012). Walsh and Byrne (2012) claimed that internal and external clients want to collaborate with recruiting agents who best match individuals with the needs and culture of their organization.

Human resource managers use employment agents to find suitable workers that, in addition to having the necessary academic requirements, can add to active learning, reasoning, and critical thinking skills (Klehe & Goede, 2012). Candidates that had similar attributes as the interviewing party increase the likelihood for a positive value for both the prospective employee and staffing agency client (Lam, Ahearne, & Schillewaert, 2012).

Rivera (2012) found that hiring is a product of cultural matching between the job applicant and the employer, rather than the skill set of the potential candidate. Tortoriello,

Perrone, and McEvily (2011) wrote that employers hire and recruiters who represent job candidates with a shared social connection representing the parties in the organization. Bidwell et al. (2013) maintained that interview processes have greater significance than a resume.

Incentive compensation for sales professionals, such as recruiters, can affect the motivation and intentions of sales people (Zoltners, Sinha, & Lorimer, 2012). A common practice held by industry HRMs and directors is to align incentive programs with short-term performance measures. Wiese and Coetzee (2013) suggested that the incentive compensation aligned to short-term metrics might compromise the sustainability of corporate culture.

Hiring manager motivation, when tied to compensation, does not necessarily create inspiration (Castleberry & Tanner, 2011). Gonzalez-Padron, Akdeniz, and Calantone (2014) posited that sales professionals employed bias veered from dictated procedures during the sales process of sophisticated products. Branch production, profitability, and executive recruiter compensation aligned to how well each staffing agent followed policies to identify, coordinate, and represent job applicants to clients (Zoltners et al., 2012).

### **Employee Turnover and Operational Performance**

Employee turnover is critical to employment relations and effect on operational performance (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Mohr et al., 2012). Service industry leaders have sustainability challenges because of high employee turnover (Mohr et al., 2012).

Operational support with HR and supervisory commitment is a pivotal variable affecting

employee turnover (Stanley, Vandenberg, & Bentein, 2013). Additional research is required to understand consequences of financial and operational performance because of employee turnover (Mohr et al., 2012).

There are many variables that add to employee turnover, such as; compensation, and management style (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Schmitt, Borzillo, and Probst (2012) posited that employee turnover is common in a service-based organization. Sales force retention in employment service organizations is critical (Slatten, Svensson, & Slvaeri, 2011). Employee turnover is sometimes a result of working in a high-stress environment, offering low salaries driven by commissions, and lack of supervisory. All of these factors influence the corporate climate of the organization (Owoyemi & Ekwoaba, 2014). Employees leave their employer if job-related stress influences job satisfaction (Khurram, Sarmad, Abbas, & Khan, 2011; Boswell, Olson-Buchanan, & Harris, 2014).

Organizational climate affects the employee perceptions that influence decisions affecting employee retention. In contrast, Johnston and Spinks (2013) found no significant relationship between organizational climate and voluntary employee turnover. Recruiters build service excellence and maintain organizational sustainability (Slatten et al., 2011). Additionally, sales professionals like executive recruiters dealing with job applicants are crucial to employment agents when they attain competitive advantage within the staffing industry (Marques, Suarez-Gonzalez, Cruz, & Ferreira, 2011). According to Rainayee (2013), limited employee turnover advances organizational performance and mitigates costs. Prior researchers focused on the high-cost employee

turnover; my intent was to conduct a descriptive case study of a REA with retention strategies that may highlight industry employee turnover to improve sustainability.

Job applicants, HRMs, and directors represent the clients within the staffing industry. The recruiter services both groups as each a pivotal component of the sales process. Staffing is an industry where both the product and the buyer are interchangeable (Brymer, Molloy, & Gilbert, 2014; Wears & Fisher, 2012). Prospective employees must have an interest in the represented company, and the HRMs in the client company need to have an interest in the job applicant. Employment service providers are in the business of managing the experience and expectations of the customers serviced (Sahay, 2014).

Employee turnover can be the result of a poor hire. Unsuccessful hires can hinder the corporate culture of a firm, by negatively influencing the remaining staff (Brymer, Molloy, & Gilbert, 2014). Employee turnover can have significant consequences affecting the sustainability of an organization (Hancock et al., 2011). Specialized and highly trained employees who quit represent dysfunctional employee turnover and poor performers who voluntarily leave, as well as, planned downsizing represent functional employee turnover (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Dysfunctional employee turnover is when top company performers move, and functional employee turnover happens when ineffective and inefficient performers leave. Human resource managers rectify poor hiring decisions with the termination of employees; however, companies branded as places of high employee turnover can have difficulties attracting key talent (Hancock et al., 2011).

A common misconception of managers is that employee turnover is inherently damaging to business leaders (Hancock et al., 2011). Placement of personnel exposes

firms to strategic and financial risks including lost knowledge retention, additional employee turnover, replacement costs, and quality of service (Brymer, Molloy, & Gilbert, 2014). Hom et al. (2012) found that the financial costs of recruiting and training replacement staff employees are 90% to 200% of the employee's annual compensation. The potential for costly employee turnover requires HRMs to develop hiring strategies that minimize talent acquisition costs (Gandolfi & Littler, 2012).

Loss of knowledge retention is a product of high employee turnover. Knowledge is the capacity acquired and applied from members of a company to make informed decisions and take effective actions within an organization (Bairi, Manohar, & Kundu, 2011). The absence of this business knowledge decreases the ability to operate efficiently (Bairi et al., 2011). Limited knowledge influences loss of client base because of trust and changing recruiting base of the organization. The more managers move away from standardized procedures, the greater the risk of customer and efficiency loss with the elapsed critical employee based knowledge (Mohr et al., 2012). Complex or sophisticated work design reduces the level of voluntary employee turnover (Batt & Colbin, 2011). New employees who replace the workers, who voluntarily quit, lack the expertise to perform their duties because the retained knowledge of more experienced workers is gone (Mohr et al., 2012).

Understanding and mitigating corrective activities to reduce employee turnover is critical for HRMs to control costs (Rainayee, 2013). Incurred company costs can be direct to recruit and train new employees or indirect due to poor market perception translating to increased opportunity costs and costs associated with lost production. Many

HRMs correlate organizational profitability to employee turnover processes (Bairi et al., 2011).

Employees who receive compensation benefits based on the performance of duties may be more satisfied with their job, thus reducing the level of employee turnover (O'Halloran, 2011). O'Halloran wrote that empirical evidence revealed productive, and engaged employees who receive commissions or bonuses as part of their compensation structure have less desire to quit their job, Poole and Berchem (2014) argued that the staffing industry had a 200% employee turnover rate amongst recruiters who receive commissions and bonuses.

Performance pay could elicit negative results if external conditions influenced the frequency and magnitude of an employee's total pay (Batt & Colvin, 2011; O'Halloran, 2013). Prior research uncovered relationships between employees' pay and the frequency of employment termination. Evidence of low employee turnover existed with HRMs, who offered long-term compensation benefits solutions such as; equity, stock options, profit sharing, and period end bonuses. According to the efficiency wage theory, HRMs whose practice was to compensate employees above market rates should have less termination of employment (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Conversely, employees earning commissions had evidence of high employee turnover (Batt & Colvin, 2011; O'Halloran, 2011). Batt and Colvin (2011) posited that human resources strategies and procedures could help HRMs manage employee turnover to the respective optimized industry level. I explored how managers within the staffing industry predicted and control recruiter turnover, which is critical for organizational sustainability.

### **Costs and Effects of Downsizing**

The costs and effects of downsizing can affect communities and families (Pedderon & Madden, 2013). Employment downsizing or reduction in force (RIF) through attrition is the planned elimination of employment positions (Cascio, 2012). Between 2012 and 2013, there are 500,000 planned job cuts, which took place to sustain the business in the U.S. (Pedderon & Madden, 2013). Alternatively, unplanned employee losses due to lack of retention policies resulting in high employee turnover had direct costs and lost profit (Bairi et al., 2011; Hausknecht & Trevor, 2011). The planned reduction in forces (RIFs) has significant short-term and long-term outcomes that HRMs and directors need to monitor and control. Human resource managers affect profitability when companies require by law or through internal strategies compensation of downsized employees. Employee turnover is a significant cause of declining productivity, hampered company morale, and organizational sustainability (Huffman et al., 2014).

According to Hancock et al. (2011), unplanned employee turnover negatively affects organizational performance, profits, expenses, and service, as well as reduce physical safety. Hausknecht and Trevor (2011) posited that employee turnover reduces production and weakens financial performance. For instance, downsized highly compensated technology sector employees cost companies on the average of \$100,000 per displaced worker (Bulkeley, 2009).

Trevor and Nyberg (2008) confirmed using empirical research that voluntary employee turnover among the surviving employee's increases for two reasons. One reason is due to the anticipated transition from being someone who survives downsizing,

to someone who may be next to go. The other explanation is the size of the reduced workforce, is small. Firms executing planned RIF's can expect to lose 1.6 employees through voluntary employee turnover for every person downsized (Trevor & Nyberg, 2008).

Costs associated with employee turnover can be overwhelming. Assuming staff has the necessary skills to perform the expected duties, there is a lower cost to retain staff than to hire a new employee (Cascio & Boudreau, 2011). Some direct costs include severance pay instead of proving notice to the employee. Accrued personal time off days, outplacement services, and pension or 401K payouts, administrative costs, or supplemental costs. Some indirect costs are recruiting costs for new hires, greater risk of losing survivor staff, poor morale, and retraining staff (Cascio & Boudreau, 2011).

Recruiters hold a pivotal role in the relationship between a client, a job applicant and employment agency (Klotz, Motta Veiga, Buckley, & Gavin, 2013). Human resource managers may consider cost savings in their profit and loss statements in the short term because of reduced staff. However, the HRMs need to consider how much value an employee can create. Voluntary and company initiated employee termination negatively affect the perception of quality and customer satisfaction (Batt & Colvin, 2011).

### **Organizational Effectiveness and Competitive Advantage**

Employee commitment to an organization is increasing in demand as it aids business HRMs in retaining more staff, thereby, increasing organizational effectiveness (Shahid & Azhar, 2013). Human resource managers in different types of industries utilize a framework for operating principals to manage their business processes (Andrews et al.,

2009). Cappelli and Keller (2013) suggested that employers maintain authorization to modify operating procedures to re-engineer production processes that optimize organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage.

Sustainability is an executive concept used to recognize opportunities for greater competitive advantages, as HRMs redraft and define new operating procedures and efficiency measurements (Akhtar & Khan, 2011). Gonzalez et al. (2014) posited that managers needed to pursue operational effectiveness and competitive advantage in re-engineering, and implementing effective strategies. Operational change requires effective communications between the HRMs and followers in an organization (von Groddeck, 2011).

Lin, Tsai, Joe, and Chiu (2012) contended that HRMs, perceive an educated and skilled labor force fundamental for industry HRMs to achieve organizational effectiveness and sustain competitive advantage in the market. Business strategies change, to increase the transferability of this study I included how HRMs garner a competitive advantage and reach organizational effectiveness in the market. The value, to the use of sustainability theory as the framework, underscores areas for providing a temporal view of the sustainability theory (Gramm & Schnell, 2013). Lourenco et al. (2013) suggested that the reputation of an institution affects the organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage.

Staffing companies reduce labor costs by offering a flexible workforce and maintain a competitive advantage by keeping costs low (Van Arsdale, 2013). Besides employee training costs and employee turnover costs, a company can lose its competitive

edge in the global market. Stark, Poppler, and Murnane (2011) suggested a positive correlation between the job performance and candidates with a college degree.

Thomas, Francis, John, and Davies (2013) posited that HRMs maintain a competitive advantage to achieve sustainable economic growth. Sloan et al., (2013) conducted case study research on sustainability and argued that the significant research lacks towards change management. Managing organizational change is successful when HRMs apply sustainability techniques (Thomas et al., 2013).

Poole (2012) reported that, during 2011, the staffing industry generated close to \$119.8 billion in sales, \$98.3 billion providing contract staffing and \$11.5 billion in executive recruiting services. The staffing industry has added more than 786,000 jobs between June 2009 and July 2012 (Berchem, 2012). The estimated unemployment total, as reported by the researchers of the BLS, is more than 23 million (Berchem, 2012). While staffing agencies account for 10% of job losses during the recession of 2007 to 2009, the staffing sector handles 25% of employment gains since the end of the 2009 recession (Berchem, 2012).

### **Policy**

Policy dictates how HRMs engage potential employees (Calvasina et al., 2014). The equal employment opportunity commission (EEOC) strategic enforcement plan for 2013 to 2016 includes enforceable and governed policies. According to Calvasina et al., these policies are; (a) eliminating problems in recruitment and hiring, (b) protecting vulnerable workers, (c) addressing all emerging or developing issues, (d) enforcing equal

pay laws, (e) preserving access to the legal system, and (f) preventing harassment through enforcement and outreach.

These policies can present a challenge for HRMs and directors in revamping company strategies to maintain organizational effectiveness (Battistelli, Odoardi, Vandenberghe, & Picci, 2014). Administrators' expertise in analyzing and adopting new systems is vital, based on the context of a situation essential for organizational effectiveness (Zoric & Braek, 2011). Retention strategies are relevant to both job applicants and companies serviced. Management practices, which increase employee performance monitoring and foster arduous work conditions, increase employee turnover rates (Hancock et al. (2011).

Performance for pay strategies may motivate low producing employees to quit more frequent in anticipation of being fired (Batt & Colvin, 2011). Conversely, performance pay strategies may keep accomplished employees longer because these workers have the potential to earn more. Updating strategies and practices by sustainability guidelines can create wealth maximization for both shareholders and stakeholders (Lourenco et al., 2013).

Wickramasinghe and Perera (2010) posited that employability skills are essential for economic and social development. Wright and Domagalski (2011) found that HRMs use preconceived notions related to job function, employment, stability, and education to determine the quality content of a job applicant and recruiter. Understanding the influencing factors and those affected by the job placement improve the recruitment of applicants who are the best fit for the organization (Finch et al., 2013).

Embedded issues of quality such as completing a rigorous and ethical process are necessary credentials because accreditation affects HRMs' perception of job applicants (Roe, Toma, & Yallapragada, 2015). This judgment may affect the representation process of HRMs in a staffing agency. Brehmer, Lilly, and Tippins (2013) argued that management solely looks at retention efforts for the success factors of potential job applicants, which may overshadow failure tendencies with the prospective employee.

Judgment may affect the representation process of HRMs in a staffing agency. Brehmer et al. (2013) argued that recruitment efforts only look for the success factors of potential job applicants, which may overshadow failure tendencies within the selection process. Expansion of recruitment practices should include a fully balanced evaluation capturing both achievement factors that could contribute to the success of the individual and failures that may inhibit the success of the job applicant (Brehmer et al., 2013).

### **Transition and Summary**

In Section 1, I presented the foundation of the study. Section 1 included the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose. An explanation of the nature of the study including a description of the conceptual framework, definitions of key terms, and the significance of the study are significant in section one. Moreover, Section 1 included a review of the literature related to the research topic. In this section, information was from empirical research on HRMs' and directors' employment strategies. Section 2 includes the design of my qualitative research related to lack of strategies HRMs use to recruit job applicants. Additionally, located in Section 2 are the data collection details. Section 3 contains the results of the data collection and analysis.

## Section 2: The Project

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this single qualitative case study was to explore the strategies HRMs and directors use to retain recruiting staff. The targeted populations will comprise of HRMs and regional directors from a REA located in the southeast region of the U.S. Eligibility criteria for participant selection included HRMs and directors from a regional staffing agency with a two year record of high employee retention rate. An implication of positive social change is the potential for principal stakeholders to understand employee retention strategies. The community may be impacted by employee retention policies because people working in companies invest their labor, knowledge, and skills in the running of the company to ensure compliance with the targets set for them (Hunko, 2013).

### **Role of the Researcher**

I was the primary instrument for the research study. Additional roles of a researcher were to conduct the interview process, observe participants, identify sampling, conduct the data collection analysis, interpretation, and report (Cater, Machtmes, & Fox, 2013). I complied with the office of research integrity and compliance code of conduct and followed the rules and regulations set forth by the Walden University IRB. The Belmont Report standards that included (a) boundaries between practice and research, (b) basic ethical principles, (c) applications were factors used to conduct an ethical study. There was no thank you gift(s), compensation, or reimbursement (for travel costs, etc.) offered for participation in this study. Human subjects are treated equally with respect,

and in a fair and unbiased, ethical manner, protecting the respondents' wellbeing (www.waldenu.edu). Only volunteers with informed consent and understanding of risks and benefits associated with this research can participate. Disclosure pertaining to research procedure, the purpose for volunteers, risks, and benefits, in addition to, the right to withdraw from the study at any time was made available to participants. Human subjects should be treated equally with respect, and in a fair and unbiased ethical manner (www.waldenu.edu). I will use an interview protocol (see Appendix D) to for data collection. The interview protocol is essential for creating and sustaining an environment for the elicitation of reflective and genuine participant responses (Rabionet, 2011). There are several concepts of an interview protocol. I structured the interview protocol with the following: (a) interview questions, (b) a script, and (c) prompts to remind a researcher what information is pertinent to collect as described by Jacob and Furgerson (2012). Use of an interview protocol facilitates ease of understanding and sets the tone of the process.

To mitigate bias, I developed a relationship with participants and allowed them to view the information provided to ensure accuracy. Participants provided full disclosure and consent, as well as, comprehension of the purpose of the study. The data collection process includes identifying and reporting common themes from participants and analyzing data (Ogden & Cornwell, 2010; Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuegbuzie, & Green, 2012; Wilson & Allen, 2011). During a previous employment tenure, none of the respondents invited to participate in this study, directly or indirectly reported to me. The participants did not have functional responsibilities in the department I supervised.

While facilitating the semistructured, face-to-face interviews, and focus group discussion, part of the role was to take notes and to record participant expressions and emotions related to their connections with employee retention. Stake (2010) posited that the interpretation of nonverbal cues is as valuable as verbal responses. Telephone interviews are not ideal because of the absence of nonverbal communication (Stake, 2010). My role was to ask interview questions, (Appendix C) facilitate the group discussion, and provide volunteers the latitude to articulate responses based on their expertise. Individual interviews and focus groups are cases in the same study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 38).

I have 17 years of experience as a financial director, responsible for the hiring and management of large teams. Included in these responsibilities are the management of activity-based costing and process re-engineering teams. My experience in executive search processes spans more than 15 years as a hiring manager charged with the placement of job candidates throughout the U.S.

### **Participants**

The participants were HRMS and directors from a REA in the southeast region of the United States. The 10 HRMs and five directors associated with the REA were knowledgeable of strategies and practices with retaining recruiters and staffing agencies. I interviewed 10 HRMs and conducted a focus group of five regional directors. These HRMs and directors were responsible for employee retention impacting operational and financial sustainability of the firm. I gained contact information of potential participants by using an acquaintance who worked at the REA. Viable participants expressed a

willingness to participate received an electronic mail version of the consent form (see Appendix A).

I used a homogenous purposeful sampling to find participants. A homogenous purposeful sampling approach brings people together who have similar experiences, reduces variation, simplifies the analysis, and facilitates group is interviewing (Patton, 2001). Researchers use a homogenous purposive sampling technique for participant select to target individuals with an understanding of the subject matter. Homogeneous purposeful selection is useful to uncover an in-depth understanding of a research problem (Steinhauser & Barroso, 2009). There are over 10,000 employees across the company and less than 50 in the southeast branch ([www.kellyservices.us](http://www.kellyservices.us)). The eligibility criteria are HRMs and directors from a regional staffing agency who have a two-year record of low employee turnover.

Using a small sample size of 10 HRMs and five agency directors provided data regarding the retention staff. Guest et al. (2006) noted that a small sample size is appropriate for qualitative studies. Data saturation occurs when no new information is received from participants (Marshall, 1996). Pattern identification includes nonverbal cues from the participants (Sin, 2010). Larger datasets may not add to the value of the study because a few participants can increase the depth of the issue (Simon, 2010).

### **Research Method and Design**

Research method and design selection are ideal when aligned with the research question (Wahyuni, 2012). Use of semistructured interviews allowed me to address the research question. Stake (2010) wrote the interview process could yield rich data from

participants' verbal and nonverbal responses. I chose a qualitative method because this approach has no limit on an inquiry (Bluhm et al., 2011). I used a case study design because this provided an opportunity to acquire feedback from business leaders to identify areas to innovate and improve retention strategies.

### **Research Method**

Three research methods considered were qualitative, quantitative, or mixed method-qualitative deemed ideal for this study. Simon (2010) wrote that the use of a quantitative method does not provide an in-depth understanding of a descriptive study. Use of a quantitative method can create difficulty in determining why one conclusion is pertinent compared to another result (Simon, 2010). Bluhm et al. (2011) wrote that the use of qualitative methods has no limit on an inquiry. Researchers, who use quantitative data, can isolate information into categories, or units of measurement (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Use of a quantitative method allows researchers to construct graphs and tables of raw data (Simon, 2010). However, other research methods, such as observations and semistructured interviews can produce both quantitative and qualitative information. According to Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton (2013), using semistructured interview is a constructive method to elicit participant feedback. Valuable data can be collected through the use of semistructured interviews or within focus groups (Groeneveld, Tynners, Bronkhorst, Ashikali, and Theil 2015). Researchers using the qualitative method in this study facilitated the review of strategies used to manage employee retention within a REA.

Mixed method research is the use of both qualitative and quantitative data and only applied when there are numerical data to test (Jogulu & Pansiri, 2011; Qu & Dumay, 2011). A mixed method approach may add to the complexity of the research, not necessarily the validity of the study by having both qualitative and quantitative components (Bazeley & Kemp, 2011). Statistical data do not apply to this case; thus, the use of a mixed method is inappropriate. My intent was to conduct qualitative research using semistructured interviews as a way to determine if the organizational prospective employee selection policy and process require change. Semistructured interviews complement qualitative research (Simon, 2010).

The approach of gathering information that is not in numerical form is qualitative research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). For example, diary accounts, open-ended questions, unstructured interviews, or unstructured observations are nonnumerical reports. Qualitative data are descriptive data and are harder to analyze than quantitative data (Whittemore et al., 2001).

### **Research Design**

The primary research designs considered were case study, narrative, or phenomenological. Phenomenological and case study research may be appropriate for determining if current prospective employee retention strategies are sufficient (Ormston et al., 2013; Scape, 2013; & Warren, 2011). A phenomenological design is the description of personal feelings about the retelling of a lived experience; without the implication of the daily work experience (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology is an investigation of lived experiences of a uniquely traumatic experience within the

environment (Moustakas, 1994). In this study, daily work experiences are investigated, and traumatic experiences were not the focus, and as such, a phenomenological design was inappropriate. In this study, factors influencing perception was not the focus, and as such, critical theory designs are inappropriate. A narrative design is an interpretive approach used to capture the emotions and feelings of the participants (Flory & Iglesias, 2010; Larsson & Sjoblom, 2010). My intent was to explore the cost implications, lower business performance, and risk loss of continuity, not to restate stories from memories, and as such a narrative design was inappropriate. A case study design is appropriate to enhance the discovery process by engaging the participants in an open and trustworthy manner (Marais, 2012).

Dresch, Lacerda, and Miguel (2014) found that an objective of case study research is to explore, describe, and explain existing systems. Researchers use case study research to investigate complex and in-depth examination of specific constructs (Almutairi, Gardner, & McCarthy, 2014). Vohra (2014) posited that a case study design is appropriate to capture the context of leadership strategies in rich detail. Case-study designs are appropriate when applying multiple data sources to bring together different outlooks on a given problem (Almutairi et al., 2014). Simon (2010) indicated that case study designs are an opportunity to collect data from various sources. I used a single-case study design and collected data using semistructured interviews and focus group on comparing the cases. Case study researchers explore, describe, and illustrate the context of a setting, an entity, or a situation (Wynn & Williams, 2012). A case study design aligns with the problem under study. I used a case study design because this provides an

opportunity to garner feedback from business leaders to identify areas to innovate and improve retention strategies.

Yin (2014) wrote that that case study research is appropriate when researchers show interest in learning how or why something occurs, and when there is no control of behavior. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) posited the results of case studies are unable to generalize to the wider population. However, the rich qualitative information helped to provide insight for additional research.

Simon (2010) wrote that a case study method is all-encompassing for qualitative or quantitative studies. Direct, detailed observations as a source of evidence may not be necessary in case studies (Jogulu & Pansiri, 2011). I used a case study approach to uncover if HRMs' and directors' recruiter retention strategies need to change. Yin (2014) wrote that that case study research is appropriate when researchers show interest in learning how or why something occurs, and when there are no controls on behavior. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) posited the results of case studies are unable to generalize to the wider population. However, the rich qualitative information helped to provide insight for additional research.

Data saturation is the absence of additional themes, findings, concepts, or problems discovered from the data. Guest et al., (2006) posited that a homogenous sample size of six participants is sufficient when performing qualitative research. Using data saturation is significant because a researcher can address the adequacy of a sample to demonstrate content validity (Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles, & Grimshaw, 2010). Francis et al. (2010) established a formula for conducting ten

interviews and adding three additional interviews until achieving data saturation. My intent was to use three additional interviews after the initial sample to determine if new information emerges. Patterns of three interviews continued to progress until I achieved data saturation. After 15 participants, I reached saturation. No additional participants were necessary to test for saturation. According to Guest et al. (2006), a homogenous sample size of six participants is acceptable when conducting qualitative research.

### **Population and Sampling**

There are more than 10,000 employees throughout the company and less than 50 employees in the southeast branch. Population for this study consisted of a total of 28 HRMs and directors employed with the REA. O'Reilly and Parker (2013) posited that the focus of research should be less on sample size and more on when one reaches saturation. According to Guest et al., (2006) a homogenous sample size of six participants translates into meaningful themes and analysis. Sample sizes in qualitative research are based on the adequacy to answer the research question (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). The sample is a representative subset of the general population following HRMs' and directors' strategies. According to O'Reilly and Parker (2012), sample sizes relate to the scope of data and not the frequencies and should include participants who best signify the research topic.

I used a homogenous purposeful sampling to recruit participants for this study. Participants in the study managed ERs: by targeting this population, I sought to capture a representation of management within the staffing industry. A homogenous purposeful sampling approach brings people together who have similar experiences, reduces

variation, simplifies the analysis, and facilitates group is interviewing (Patton, 2001). Researchers use purposive sampling to elicit knowledge from participants to gain insight and in-depth information (Kindstrom, Kowalkowski, & Nordin, 2012). For this study, the applied fundamentals were HRMs and directors of a REA who had a minimum of two years of experience managing employee retention strategies.

The objective of the researcher should determine the design and sample size (Marais, 2012). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) wrote that population and sampling are when one looks at a group of people in a state, city, business or organization, and then extracts a part of that population scientifically. A sample group is random when it possesses the same characteristics of the population. The population consisted of HRMs and directors working at a national staffing firm in the southeast region of the U.S. who have responsibilities to apply strategies to retain recruiting staff to facilitate the mission of the organization.

Hiring manager processes include managing executive recruiting teams, business development, and recruitment of job candidates by cold calling, using Internet job boards, social media, and professional networking, including networking websites. The sample consisted of a minimum of 10 HRMs and five directors in the Southeast region of the U.S. working for a REA. Guest et al. (2006) argued that small homogenous sample sizes are adequate to represent significant themes and analysis. O'Reilly and Parker (2012) posited that sample size in qualitative research is less of a concern than the appropriateness and adequacy of the sample. I reached data saturation at 10 interviews. Results of the focus groups helped test and confirm for a data saturation. No new themes

were revealed with the focus group, indicating that the sample had reached data saturation. I conducted semistructured interviews and a focus group at a mutually agreed-upon location with each participant. The locations were neutral and comfortable to ensure a positive working environment to conduct effective semistructured interviews and focus group.

### **Ethical Research**

Ethical research is the focus on disciplines that study standards of conduct, such as business, law, or psychology (Manhas & Oberle, 2015). Ethics is a method or procedure for analyzing complex problems. Assurances that findings adhere to ethical principles are salient to researchers (Wester, 2011). I was a former employer for this agency, had no personal relationships with any participants, and ensured the protection of each participant's privacy. I have no contractible obligations with this agency. My contacts were not participants in this study to retain anonymity. I did not exercise any undue influence to prospective participants because I did not supervise them. There is no mention of the participants' identities to maintain participant safety. Participants gained information on institutional review board (IRB) regulations and the plan for the destruction of all data safely archived. I will store respondents' data for 5 years on a password protected the hard drive.

Ethics applications from doctoral students are forms of active research (Wallace & Sheldon, 2015). I complied with the office of research integrity by following the rules and regulations set forth by active researchers by the Walden University IRB. All forms are in the appendices of this proposal such as the consent forms, and the confidentiality

agreement. I began data collection after the IRB approved this study. Institutional review board and committees safeguard treatment of study participants in compliance with ethical standards and respect (Tuchman, 2011). The data collected and interviews conducted were in full compliance with IRB regulations and ethical standards. The IRB approval number for this study is 12-16-15-0256384, and this number expires on December 15, 2016.

To conduct ethical research, respectful and courtliness treatment of participants enables rapport and trust throughout the data collection process (Drake, Gerde, & Wasieleski, 2011). Participants received information on the purpose of the study and had an assurance there were no risks associated with participation in the research study to assure I adhered to ethical requirements. The participants have the assurance regarding the protection of privacy and given assurance; that identities will remain confidential. Member checking of the study by respondents, before the publication of the findings, served to confirm the accuracy of the interview data.

Participation in this study was voluntary; I did not offer incentives. Participants were informed that all may withdraw from the study in writing by emailing the researcher. Participants signed an informed consent form (Appendix B). The participants were all fluent in English, and the consent form contains no ambiguous words. Persons reading at a 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade level would be able to comprehend the message in the form. The informed consent form contains a declaration of confidentiality, stating that names of individuals will remain confidential. I cataloged participants systematically, labeling the first participant ATL1 and so forth. The code ATL stands for the location; the number

following indicates the participant order. Directors of REA firms that participate in interviews was REA1-5. The consent form contained a statement that the use of a CD stores all recorded data on the digital recorder. To protect the rights of the participants, the CD and any accompanying handwritten notes and transcriptions will remain in a locked fireproof box at my home for 5 years. I will destroy all records both written and stored in computer files, 5 years from the publication date of this study.

### **Data Collection**

This section includes a description of the data collection instruments, the data collection technique, and the data organization. My intent was to collect data by using semistructured interviews. In this section, I detailed the process of triangulation. I used a face-to-face interview questionnaire as the primary instruments of methodological triangulation. Using this approach had the distinct advantage of enabling me to establish rapport with potential participants.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

I was the primary research instrument for this study and used semistructured interviews and a focus group techniques to collect data. Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information (Manhas & Oberle, 2015). The instruments used to gain information are important to researchers. Crowther and Lloyd Williams (2012) posited that in the case of studies, researchers collect data via interviews. Fenton-O'Creevy, Soane, Nicholson, and Willman (2011) conducted a study using semistructured interviews as a way to analyze the effect of what people are doing to address the business problem. Qu and Dumay (2011) posited semistructured interviews as a viable way to

elicit participant reflection about the research question. According to Rowley (2012), the semistructured interview is an ideal instrument to elicit a broad narrative about the experiences of participants.

Focus groups are a socially oriented method that can enhance research credibility and incur little or no costs to the researcher (Sarma, 2015). Focus groups are an appropriate method to pursue qualitative research with the examination of general values and perceptions. (Lappegard & Noack, 2015). Hu, Pazaki, and Velander (2014) found that lively and attentive discussions through focus group structures could uncover meaningful information used to generalize the main themes of a study. Lappegard and Noack (2015) posited that focus group discussions facilitate connections that participants make to associations and thoughts that would not necessarily be present in other methods. According to Lindegaard (2014), focus groups are interactional events that generate insights to the research in rational order. I structured the focus group around a set of carefully predetermined questions (see Appendix C). I moderated the focus group discussion to ensure even participation in an open and spontaneous format, with the objective of generating different ideas and opinions in the allotted time.

I recorded the interviews as stated in the interview and focus group protocol (see Appendices D & D1). Recording helps to improve reliability and validity by having the data readily available to check to ensure accuracy during data transcription (Al-Yateem, 2012). According to Yin (2014), reliability and validity of case studies improve when employing multiple sources for triangulation. Triangulation is one process researchers use to determine the validity and reliability of the study by conducting cross verification

from at least two or more sources or types of data (Tracy, 2010). Flick (2014) argued that the triangulation in research is the blend of different methods or conceptual viewpoints. For methodological triangulation, I used the responses from semistructured interviews compared with findings from the focus group. I used an auto recorder to record answers, then used basic Microsoft transcription service to transcribe the data. The ATLAS.ti7 was used to organized the data to discover themes. Transcripts were reviewed to determine the frequency the similarity of word choice supplied by the participants to uncover patterns. Word frequency count was used to create a graphic representation of the word frequency. The most cited terms provided data for content analysis to identify patterns of emerged themes.

Member checking is a process where the researcher substantiates individual interpretations and understandings of the interview by checking with the participant (Harvey, 2015). A researcher uses member checking for research quality, credibility, and validity (Harper & Cole, 2012). Member checking is the process in which a researcher takes descriptions and themes back to the participants of the study to check if this adequately represents their statements (Kornbluh, 2015). Researchers uses member checking to ensure accuracy and completeness of findings (Harvey, 2015). I used member checking during this study. I emailed summaries of the interviews to each participant to ensure my understanding of emerged themes aligned with their intent. During member checking, no participants offered new data or disagreed. Near the end of the study, participants reviewed for the legitimacy of work. Respondents checked to determine and validate that an authentic representation is conveyed and transcribed

during the interview. I used handwritten notes and a digital recorder to record and transcribe interview data.

### **Data Collection Technique**

After contacting and confirming potential participants with an email. Participants who indicated their willingness to participate received an email version of the Informed Consent form (see Appendix B & B1). Using an interview protocol (Appendix D), the semistructured focus group interviews occurred at a mutually agreed upon location. Interview participants understood that their participation was voluntary and that the duration of the interviews would be approximately 45 minutes unless they chose to extend the time. I conducted all interviews within the agreed upon 45-minute timeframe. Focus group participants understood that their participation was voluntary and that the duration of the group discuss would not go longer than 90 minutes unless the participants chose to extend the time. The focus group discussion was conducted within the agreed upon 90-minute timeframe.

I conducted semistructured interviews using the six open ended interview questions and conducted the focus group using five discussion topics (see Appendix D). The literature review was the foundation used to develop interview questions and discussion topics. During the sessions, I used a Sony® ICD PX333D digital recorder to capture the audio participant feedback. Al-Yateem (2012) posited that interview recordings are a viable tool when analyzing data, I created transcripts of the interviews using the Sony® recording device with Dragon® transcribing software and uploaded the

recorded data into a Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> document. The researcher deleted all identifying items of participant or participant's organization information from the system.

Use of semistructured interviews and focus groups have the advantage for the researcher to ask follow-up questions to achieve further clarity of participant intent (Cachia & Millward, 2011). Researchers use interviews to represent and elicit participant insight and observation of a specific subject matter (Cachia & Millward, 2011; Rowley, 2012). Researchers garner considerable returns by conducting interviews because of the ability to divulge for greater clarity by being in a position to ask detailed questions and follow-up questions (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Participants expounded upon responses they previously gave as a result of me asking follow-up questions during interviews and group discussions. Doody and Noonan (2013) posited the importance for researchers to engage and build a rapport with participants. Building trust between researcher and volunteers facilitates the asking of follow-up questions to help clarify participant feedback. The cost and length of time allocated to collect data can be a disadvantage of using interviews and focus group discussions (Doody & Noonan, 2013).

For reliability, I used member checking during this study. Member checking is a process where a researcher receives a participants' endorsement that the data collected matches the expected delivery and intent of the participant (Harvey, 2015). Member checking is often used to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Birt et al., 2016). Summary of results and confirmation for follow-up calls were electronically mailed to participants and scheduled within three days of summary review. During summary review discussions there was no addition of new data.

### **Data Organization Techniques**

The primary sources for data collection came from semistructured interviews and focus group discussion. Raw data from digital recordings and handwritten transcriptions contained in Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> automatically transferred into ATLAS.ti7, a computer software tool used to assist in the thematic coding and analysis of qualitative data. ATLAS.ti7 is software used to assist the analytical process and facilitate grouping and identification of emerging themes in qualitative research (Carcary, 2011). I took notes during the interviews to capture nonverbal cues from the participants.

I used coding to organize the data. Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, and Pederson (2013) posited that coding to organize the data helps researchers uncover emerging themes. According to Pierre and Jackson (2014), using the coding technique to convert raw data into usable information facilitates analysis of data. I organized words, phrases, and patterns associated with the responses to the interview questions. Once I downloaded the collected data to the Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> spreadsheet, a five-phase qualitative analysis process commenced. Using semistructured interview questions is a valid approach to engaging and elicits true responses from the participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

The ATLAS.ti7 was used to organized the themes from the data to discover themes and codes the data. Transcripts were reviewed to determine the frequency the similarity of word choice supplied by the participants to uncover patterns. A graphic representation of the frequency of words used helped to identify common themes. The majority of cited terms provided data for content analysis to identify patterns of emerged themes.

I stored the transcripts and hand-written notes on the wide-ruled composition notebook in a secure location. I transferred audio-recorded data to my computer using Dragon<sup>®</sup> software and imported into ATLAS.ti7 on a password protected flash drive stored in a locked desk. I plan to use a cross shredder to destroy all paper notes and destroy data stored on digital devices, 5 years from the completion date of this study.

### **Data Analysis**

Triangulation is a process to ensure reliability, confirmability and credibility in qualitative research (Corti, 2012; Dev & Kisku, 2016; Easton, 2010). Tracy (2010) posited that using numerous sources of information could increase the validity of the study. I used methodological triangulation for this study. Methodological triangulation is the process of utilizing two or more sources to verify the results of a study (Kaufmann, Stämpfli, Hersberger, & Lampert, 2015). I compared participant responses to the interview questions to focus group feedback and secondary data to counterbalance the imperfections of some responses; triangulation will occur. I interviewed both employment agency HRMs and directors. The feedback from the 10 HRMs and five REA directors' allowed me to determine the similarity of all participants' experiences.

I used ATLAS.ti7, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software to save time, by locating particular words and phrases to facilitate analysis (Bazeley, 2009). Sinkovics and Alfoldi (2012) posited that computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software improves validity during the research process. Keyword lists and counting word occurrences were compared to hand-written notes and transcriptions. All data collected from the semistructured interviews and focus group is in the data analysis. Raw data from

digital recordings and handwritten transcriptions contained in Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> automatically transferred into ATLAS.ti7 to assist in the coding and analysis of qualitative data. Data coded based on participants' frequency of word choice during the semistructured interviews and focus group.

In the following figure, categorizing the sequences of common words was used to identify groups of shared meanings of responses. The analyzed data is present, and the common themes resulted from the reoccurring concepts from the HRMs' and directors' feedback. Common themes of HRMs' and directors' feedback were put in groups, as to why executive recruiters do not leave their job, based on directors' responses on how managers approach retaining employees. Themes were relevant to the research question.

PRIMARY DOCUMENTS	CODES							TOTALS	
	Communication	Compensation	Job Market Management	Style	Onboarding	Recruiting	Training		
P 1: ATL1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
P 2: ATL2	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	5
P 3: ATL3	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	5
P 4: ATL4	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3
P 5: ATL5	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
P 6: ATL6	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
P 7: ATL7	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
P 8: ATL8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
P 9: ATL9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
P10: ATL10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Directors::DG1	0	3	0	0	2	1	0	0	8
Directors::DG2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	7
Directors::DG3	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	6
Directors::DG4	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	6
Directors::DG5	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	4
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>58</b>

Figure 2. ATLAS.ti7 textual code for theme analysis

Jansen (2010) posited using an approach to identify patterns and themes using the process of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding is the process of

making smaller usable groups of data (Jansen, 2010). Axial coding pertains to the analysis of the parts identified in open coding. Selective coding is the consolidation of groups to determine emerging themes.

Marais (2012) identified six sources for triangulation (a) documentation, (b) archival records, (c) interviews, (d) direct observations, (e) participant observations, and (f) physical artifacts. Triangulation is the use of more than one source of evidence to strengthen the reliability of a study, by comparing two or more sources or types of data (Tracy, 2010). I used methodological triangulation as a way to compare responses from participants to national hire averages in the staffing industry.

Methodological triangulation allows researchers to compare findings to assure accuracy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Methodological triangulation is appropriate because different data sets are typical of homogeneous sampling (Easton, 2010). For methodological triangulation, I used the responses from two semistructured interview groups and compared them: This is a *methodological triangulation*. The application of homogeneous sampling is the same as methodological triangulation. Methodological triangulation is a multi-method approach improving validity and confidence in results (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Methodological triangulation is ideal for applying more than one data collection method to qualitative research. By using multiple sources, I was able to reduce biases or deficiencies that exist in single-based methods. Hesse-Biber (2012) found that methodological triangulation consisting of qualitative and quantitative data components is the most common model applied. Methodological triangulation consists of two

methods, within method triangulation and across method triangulation (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2011). Bekhet and Zauszniewski wrote that methodological triangulation is appropriate when one uses the qualitative method.

### **Reliability and Validity**

Reliability assures research is repeatable, and validity indicates a researcher implored a scientific or ethical method (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The following of rigorous and appropriate procedures, which comply with validity and reliability standards, may add credibility and transferability to a study (Pereira, 2012).

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2010) noted that the sample might be representative of the population used for research, not the entire system.

The results of this study may be credible to the participants. Bias related to the process and any preconceived notions from the researcher may jeopardize the reliability and validity of the study (Moustakas, 1994). I minimized bias by developing a relationship with participants and allowed them to view the information they provided to ensure accuracy.

Memorandum writing throughout data collection and analysis was the intended bracketing technique to examine and reflect my engagement with the data (Cooper, Fleischer, & Cotton, 2012). I wrote memos throughout the data collection and analysis as the intended bracketing technique to examine and reflect my engagement with the data. By assuring, the results of this study are transferable and replicable strengthens the reliability (Cooper et al., 2012)

### **Reliability**

I used member checking and an outside industry expert to help ensure dependability. According to Kornbluh (2015), member checking is the process in which a researcher takes participants' descriptions and themes back to the participants of the study to check if this adequately represents their statements. Member checking helps verify accuracy and completeness of findings (Harper & Cole, 2012). Participant verification of work helps validates research applicability. Respondents checked to validate that the summary and tone of assessment correlated to the participant responses during the interview (Harvey, 2015). Member checking is often used to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Birt et al., 2016). I presented the summary of findings to each participant via email using the participant's preferred email address. Participant email contained data interpretation attached and request of confirmation to participate in a follow-up discussion within a three-day period from receipt of this email. During summary review discussions, there was no addition of new data.

According to Kornbluh (2015), member checking is the process in which the researcher takes their descriptions and themes back to the participants of the study to check if this adequately represents their statements. Upon conducting member checking no participant disagreed with the themed analysis or offered new information. Expert analysis in the field of study will add assurance to research validity (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). Experts used in qualitative studies can review to determine if confidential feedback received is indicative of the industry. Using member checking and an outside industry expert may add validity, creditability, and reliability to study.

### **Validity**

Barusch, Gringeri, and George (2011) found that methodological triangulation is an accepted way to validate findings. The ideal approach, to achieve validity, is to use a combination of strategies (Barusch et al., 2011). In this study, I established the validity using a combination of methodological triangulation, member checking, and expert analysis. Validity initiated with the audio recordings of the interviews. Validity is heightened with recordings because researchers can continuously compare recordings for accuracy with transcribed data (Al-Yateem, 2012).

I further achieved validity by ensuring I reached a saturated sample. Data saturation occurs when no additional categories or themes surface from collected data (Marshall, 1996). I assured that enough data are present through replication and confirmation, which ensures completeness and establishing the collection of sufficient data. Francis et al. (2010) established a formula for conducting interviews and adding three additional interviews until achieving data saturation.

I applied the method put forward by Francis et al. (2010) to test for sample saturation. Francis et al. (2010) supported setting up a sample size needed for analysis, in conjunction to, stipulating some additional samples to establish saturation. I chose 15 participants as my initial sample size and confirmed saturation at 15 interviews.

### **Credibility**

Member checking and methodological triangulation strengthened the credibility and reliability of the data collected. Credibility enhanced in qualitative research by member checking (Birt et al., 2016; Harvey, 2015; Harper & Cole, 2012). I distributed to semistructured interview participants an interview protocol and focus group participants a

focus group protocol on simplifying the understanding and set the tone of the data collection process (see Appendices D and D1). To heighten credibility and mitigate bias, I developed a rapport with participants and allowed them to view the data interpretation to ensure accuracy. Participant Verification helped me determine the suitability of interpretation.

### **Conformability**

Conformability is the degree that the results from a study are free from researcher bias (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I conducted semistructured interviews and focused groups asking probing questions, conducting direct observations, as well as, using an outside expert to review confidential feedback for legitimacy. Emerging themes from data are separated into the common subject matter. Common themes include HRM feedback as to why they do not leave their job associated with directors' responses on how they approach retaining employees.

I entered participant records in a password-protected database. I established transferability by allowing all participants and the public to review the information collected, which improves the reliability of the study. Yin (2014) posited that researchers adhering to recommended processes for conducting single design case studies would make the repetition of the study more likely. Repetition of a study could further prove credibility (Wahyuni, 2012). Common themes include HRM feedback as to why executive recruiters do not leave their job associated with directors' responses on how they approach retaining employees.

Conducting of semistructured interviews and facilitation of focus group was conducted in an inquisitive, non-threatening, and probing manner. Follow up member checking via telephone discussions was used to establish the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Birt et al., 2016). Using this approach had the advantage of enabling me to continue positive rapport with each participant. Tracy (2010) posited that triangulation used by researchers allows cross verification from at least two or more sources or types of data to determine the validity and reliability. In this study, I triangulated through semistructured interviews with 10 HRMs and facilitated a focus group with five employment agency directors on the topic of whether organizational strategies require changing to retain recruiting staff.

### **Transferability**

The transferability of research is the degree to which data applies to other contexts (Throop, 2012). Studies are reliable when there are consistency and repeatability in the process (Sin, 2010). Reliable studies exist when researchers can obtain similar outcomes using the same approaches to collect and analyze data (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Qualitative studies are reliable when the method is consistent with topical research (Astalin, 2013). The intent is to establish reliability by documenting a rigorous process for participant selection, and collect, record, transcribe, and interpret the data (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Tracy, 2010). Consistent outcomes are a way to determine the reliability of the instrument used (Ihantola & Kihn, 2011). Applicability of findings may explain communications between employees and managers by describing and exploring which

management practices increase employee turnover, retention based recruitment, factors influencing the employee decisions to quit a job.

### **Transition and Summary**

Section 1 included the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose, and nature of the study. Moreover, Section 1 included a review of the literature related to the research topic. The information in this section was about empirical research on HRMs' and directors' retention strategies. Section 2 of this study included the purpose of the study, the role of the researcher, population, and sampling, and the need for this study. I described the applied research method, design and presented why a qualitative case research study is the correct approach compared to using quantitative or mixed method research approaches. Section 2 included the validity and reliability, the research questions, and the research instruments.

Section 3 contains results that emerged from the data collection and analysis of themes derived from the raw data. Moreover, the presentation of the findings, application to business practices, implications for social change, and suggestions for future research is in Section 3. The conclusion includes a summary, recommendations for further studies, and reflections on my experience.

### Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore the strategies HRMs and directors use to retain recruiting staff. I used a purposeful chain sampling technique to find 15 participants out of 62 in the Southeastern region of the population. Consistent with the literature, participants indicated there is a lack of strategies HRMs and directors use to retain recruiters in staffing agencies. Five directors and 10 HRMs responded to 11 open-ended interview questions. The uncovered themes are training, transparency, and communication.

In the literature review, there is a lack of strategies that HRMs and directors use to retain recruiters in staffing agencies. Above average ER turnover exists throughout the staffing industry, and the loss of ER personnel can affect the sustainability of a staffing organization (Batt & Colvin, 2011; Mohr et al., 2012). Operational performance can be negatively impacted as effective employees leave, taking with them critical employee based knowledge and established client relationships (Bairi et al., 2011; Mohr et al., 2012). The following section provides a presentation of findings; application to professional practice; implications for change; recommendations for action; and further research, reflections, and conclusion.

#### **Presentation of the Findings**

The overarching research question for this study was the following: How can HRMs and directors in the staffing industry improve managerial strategies to retain recruiting staff? I conducted semistructured interviews and a focus group with a saturated sample set. I used a homogenous purposeful sampling technique to find participants.

Subsequently, I conducted an analysis of data using ATLAS.ti7. I used ATLAS.ti7 for a word frequency count to depict a representation of the word frequency. Findings consistent with participant feedback indicating that training, transparency, and hiring practices are elements which might effect the sustainability of an organization. All participants gave responses that lead to the creation of themes from similar ideas. The similarities in participant responses led me to identify three themes which are training, transparency, and communication. The most cited terms provided data for content analysis to identify patterns of emerged themes. Three themes included increasing employee job training, improving transparency in strategic planning and business practices, and enhancing communication of the employee roles and responsibilities (see Table 3).

Table 3

*A Sample of Participant Perceptions from Identified Themes*

Theme	Participant: Experience
Training	<p data-bbox="873 1283 1430 1415">ATL5 Staffing-assessment tools used systematic, often highly sophisticated methods to match people to jobs that suit their unique skills, talents, and interests.</p> <p data-bbox="873 1451 1430 1518">DG2 Job training motivates recruiters to do and see things differently.</p> <p data-bbox="873 1554 1430 1717">DG3 Increasing training either makes employees bored or creates better employees, to have a positive effect on employees; training dollars should be spent on those who want the training.</p> <p data-bbox="873 1753 1430 1852">DG5 Encourage education, not training- so individuals can do what they want and not be stuck (in a job).</p>

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Transparency

ATL5 Ask for feedback about large projects and prospective hires. Often employees know of each other, before hiring.

ATL7 Identify drivers of employee turnover companywide and by business unit and other demographics -- then make changes based on employee feedback.

ATL9 Build a database of employee turnover information by department, job, and other demographics, enabling analysis of the causes of employee turnover and identification of what can be done to reduce employee turnover by job type, department, location, etc.

DG2 Listen to your employees; the things they say and the things they do not say.

Communication

ATL1 I explain and define to each employee what is expected of them at work, and make them agree to terms in writing.

ATL3 Assure no one has personal issues that could affect work. One does this by asking "How are you?" and listening to what the person, not the employee has to say. If they stay focused on work topics, then start with "And how is your family?" and listen.

ATL10 I let each employee know how valuable they are to me personally and professionally. I try not to hire people that have something to offer the organization in both capacities.

DG4 The cost of losing a valuable employee is horrible for the individual and the organization. To reduce employee turnover, recruiters have to know they are a part of the organizational structure, and they are valuable to the culture and clients here.

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Participants shared statements confirmed high employee turnover in the staffing industry. For instance, all respondents reported an average ER tenure of fewer than two

years' experience in the staffing industry. Less than two years of tenure indicates high employee turnover in an industry that has been active for decades. However, there is a marginal shift in research as participants referred to improper onboarding practices as a cause for retention issues rather than recruiting practices. Participant ATL4 shared the opinion that recruiting practices are critical for an organization's sustainability.

Employee training, transparency between management and ERs and communications throughout an organization improves the likelihood of business sustainability (Klehe & Goede, 2012). A correlation exists between management defined sustainability factors and employee activities that either promote or encumber organizational financial and operational performance (Sharma & Rani, 2014). Ekwueme et al. (2013) posited that managers be held responsible for integrating sustainability theory guidelines to influence operational strategies and corporate objectives. Employee training, transparency, and corporate communications could include operational strategies and organizational goals.

### **Theme 1: Training**

There are two groups comprised of 15 participants in the case study including ten HR managers and five directors. Using the pattern matching technique, as described by Dev and Kisku (2016), the primary theme that emerged was training. The ten HR manager participants indicated that training new employees in recruiting benefitted the organization (ATL1, ATL2, ATL4, ATL5, ATL6, and ATL10).

Training could include organizational goals. According to Aisha et al. (2013), managers need to understand and be aware of the factors that influence employee

productivity. Training is a way for management systems to be effective which fosters employee satisfaction and company performance. For this study, I interviewed 10 HRMs (ATL1-ATL10) and conducted a focus group of a 2<sup>nd</sup> data source comprised of five regional directors (DG1-DG5) working for a REA in the Southeast region of the United States. All participants reported an average tenure of fewer than two years in the staffing industry. According to all participants' tenure may be affected by improper onboarding processes and a failure to communicate job expectations (ATL1, ATL4, ATL6, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> data source, DG2, and DG5). According to ATL4, ER staff has a better chance of retention if, "Good onboarding processes and clear expectations from day one."

Aisha et al. (2013) posited that employees are an integral part of the organization that influences operational success. The emphasis of training would be to promote behaviors consistent with the values of the organization. Aisha et al. (2013), revealed that the ability of the worker, in conjunction with the condition of the facility, imposed management style, and motivation, have an impact on employee performance. ATL6 said that "Executive recruiters may be influenced by managers if employers, provide feedback and ongoing training or improvement opportunities."

The talent culture in an organization can suffer when employees are not credible (Yang et al., 2012). Walsh and Byrne (2012) wrote that the clients served by the staffing industry want to work with recruiters who match organizational needs and culture. Participant DG4 shared a statement that suggests employee turnover weakens the financial performance of an organization, "The cost of losing a valuable employee is horrible for the individual and the organization. To reduce employee turnover, recruiters

have to know that they are valuable to the culture and clients here.” Conversely, DG5 responded based on experience that, “Recruiters are cycle driven employees, they will come and go.” Findings in the literature review appear to support participants’ views that onboarding processes have greater significance than reviewing resumes alone. Thereby, having confident recruiters during the onboarding process aware of strategies that are not reliant on resume review may increase efficiency.

Participants ATL1, ATL2, ATL4, ATL5, ATL6, ATL10, ATL5, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> data source DG2, DG3, DG5 considered training to be a necessary element to help promote sustainability and by mitigating the risk of employee turnover. Organizational leaders use training to develop and reinforce corporate values and cultures to employees. Training fosters use of to elicit consistent responses to help promote a unified front and corporate readiness.

## **Theme 2: Transparency**

Transparency was important for participants ATL2, ATL6, ATL10, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> data source, DG1- DG5 (53% of participants) as the common variant constituent of this question. Participant DG1 shared “They will leave and take the skills they learn to the next competitor if they were only there for the money.” Participant DG3 shared that training helps encourage employee behaviors within the values of the organization, “Increasing training either makes employees bored or creates better employees, to have a positive effect on employees; employers should spend training dollars should on those who want the training. Participant DG5 shared that an educated employee base can add to

the organizational effectiveness and sustainability of an organization, “Encourage education, not training so individuals can do what they want and not confined to a job.”

Findings suggested that information sharing and openness to share reduces employee stress and increases production and loyalty, participant ATL8 shared the suggestion that leaders can “Eliminate obstacles impacting employee performance.” I found communication and training are most important in determining the right candidates from participants ATL1, ATL3, ATL4, ATL5, ATL6 through ATL9 (40% of participants).

The findings concluded that satisfaction surveys could make employers seem untrustworthy. Participants ATL1, ATL2, ATL5, and the 2nd data source, DG3, DG4, and DG5, shared experiences when job satisfaction surveys resulted in employees’ negative perception of motives concerning why employers conduct surveys. The expressed experiences may allude to distrust on both sides, one that the HR managers have employee turnover due to the satisfaction of employees, and two, when employee turnover happens it may be better to mitigate costs instead of finding the root of the problem. ATL1 stated, “Many employees are fearful of losing their job, and few companies are hiring. At such time, most employees are happy to keep their job and prefer to search for a new job if jobs were available.”

ATL2 offered, “If my organization is experiencing high employee turnover in one or more departments, it is highly cost-effective to conduct a survey.” ATL5 stated, “increase effectiveness for managers.” The 2<sup>nd</sup> data source, DG3 expressed, “Although

satisfaction surveys can sometimes be effective, many employees believe there is an ulterior motive for them.”

DG4 offered, “There have been many instances where production has gone down as a result of workers being surveyed. They tend to be on guard after they are taken.”

DG5 stated, “The negative perception perceived by employees is more significant than the goals of the survey.”

Many quality process upgrades consist of systematic and continuous actions that lead to measurable outcomes within an organization (Roe et al., 2015). According to ATL7, ATL9, ATL10, DG1, DG2, DG3, DG4, and DG5, the onboarding process would reduce employee turnover if protocol included clear expectations of job function and performance measurements. Problem solving analysis would serve to determine what change would lead to a quality improvement measure. Basic RCA is a Six Sigma® technique that encompasses five ideas leaders apply to define, measure, analyze, improve, and control an organization or a situation (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). When one utilizes an RCA plan, they are using a sustainable strategy (Tome, 2011). Sustainable strategies should be transparent (Sloan et al., 2013).

Participants responded to their experiences with survey data during semistructured interviews and focus groups responding to the second question. ATL2 responded, “If my organization is experiencing high employee turnover in one or more departments, it is highly cost effective to conduct a satisfaction survey.” ATL7 responded by suggesting that satisfaction surveys can, “Help identify drivers of turnover companywide and by business unit and other demographics, enabling management to

consider changes based on employee feedback.” ATL10 conveyed that job satisfaction surveys are used as, “Receptivity to employees’ ideas.” ATL8 responded, “Satisfaction surveys may contain data to help eliminate obstacles impacting employee performance.”

Transparency is only an option in a free economy, which means staffing must also be clear, free of bias, and encourage diversity (Barusch et al., 2011). Eighty percent of participants identified strategies that add to transparency consisting of: Less emphasis on compensation, listening to prospective employees during the onboarding process, equal opportunity, and engaging employees in leadership decisions (ATL1, ATL2, ATL4, ATL5, ATL7, ATL9, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> data source, DG1, DG2, DG3, DG4, and D5).

Recruiting decisions can have long-term negative effects, to include high training costs to minimize the incidence of poor performance and high employee turnover (Bidwell et al., 2013). Considering the transparency theme that emerged from respondents, it is important for HRMs and directors to engage in fair business practices and clear communication.

Participants responded demonstrating genuine concern for employees as individuals are more important than assessments and that money is not the only driver impacting employee turnover. ATL2 stated, “Know what work your employees’ do, and how to do it. If you, as the manager, can work with the employees and show that you can do a job, they respect you more; and they are happier to work with someone who was where they are.”

Participants responded that face-to-face interviews and background checks were overwhelmingly popular as employment assessment tools. Levashina, Hartwell,

Morgeson, and Campion (2014) posited that the employment interview is one of the most widely used tools to assess potential employees. All participants expressed that effective interviewing techniques may identify job applicants who would fit the organization. Four participants (ATL3, ATL5, ATL9, and ATL10) regarded third party background investigations as a widely used assessment to compliment the interview as an approach to determine employees that may fit into the existing organizational culture. All participants ATL1 – ATL10 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> data source, DG1 – DG5 used the Internet, specifically social media to depict the integrity of personality of a potential hire. Participant ATL7 shared a statement that confirms the findings of (Reicher, 2013) that a common HRM practice is to use the internet and social media websites to determine a profile of a prospective candidate for employment. “Whenever a resume with promise comes across my desk, I immediately Google their name and review any information that is on Facebook or LinkedIn” profile.

Each participant suggested that an HRM could mitigate security risk during the initial candidate screening with a background check. According to Roulin, Bangerter, and Levashina (2014), many applicants tend to offer deceptive responses during an interview to increase the likeliness of a job reward. Findings illustrate confidence in background checks as a way to solidify interview performance and expectations. Additionally, Roulin et al. (2014) suggested that the use of structured interviews better gauge the appropriateness of potential hires. The risk of ineffective interviewing techniques is to hire individuals who may be less competent to handle the responsibilities of the position (Roulin et al., 2014). According to Ekuma (2012), employee selection is a human

resource management process, which includes choosing applicants more suitable to succeed. Nelson and Daniels (2014) posited that recruiting practices are critical for an organization's sustainability. Human resource professionals should align the value of the network as a whole to job seekers' expectations.

From the second data source, participant DG4 shared a statement indicating that employee turnover can have significant consequences affecting the sustainability of an organization "The cost of losing a valuable employee is horrible for the individual and the organization. To reduce employee turnover, recruiters have to know they are a part of the organizational structure, and they are valuable to the culture and clients here."

Participant DG4's statement was that employees leave their job if there is minimal job satisfaction. Employees must know they have value to provide the same to an organization.

Participant DG4 shared a statement indicating that "More compensation helps." Participant DG1 responded, "They stay until they are offered more money elsewhere." The participants did not agree that compensation higher or lower led to any positive effects on recruiters. Overall, participants shared that allocating time to finding those who shared a passion for the staffing industry was more, cost-effective, sustainable, and encouraged cultural values (ATL1, ATL 3, ATL4, ATL5, ATL6, DG1, DG2, DG3, and DG5). Compensation incentives are one aspect that HRMs and directors may use to influence production. Employee satisfaction will lead to higher performance and a greater likelihood of sustainability and retention.

A typical staffing reorganization may include a merger or consolidation, or employees processes or both (Ekwueme et al., 2013). Business leaders from larger organizations requiring simple processes from smaller firms may help recruiters complete a primary job function, which was to hire and retain qualified candidates. Approximately 3% of new staffing agencies start through acquisition (Ekwueme et al., 2013).

Benchmarks or talent acquisition strategies are part of a rapidly, evolving, talent-hungry, increasingly talent-centric, job marketplace (Gonzalez-Padron et al., 2014). Business leaders can take successful staffing programs and separate into categories, from less successful ones, by including onboarding process as a form of employment characteristic within an agency (ATL1, ATL4, ATL6, ATL10, and *the 2<sup>nd</sup>* data source, DG2, DG3, and DG4). Participant DG4 offered a statement, “Good onboarding processes and clear expectations from day one.” Participant ATL6 said, “provide feedback and ongoing training or improvement opportunities.” Participant ATL4 responded, “Work is always changing, and companies also need to change with the needs of the employee.”

Participants ATL1, ATL2, ATL4, ATL5, ATL7, ATL9, and *the 2<sup>nd</sup>* data source DG1, DG2, DG3, DG4, and D5 expressed transparency as a fundamental condition needed to improve employee and manager relationships. Strategies recommend by the participants pertain to the manager and employee both practicing transparency, which advances trust, thereby reducing the level of employee turnover and increasing the likelihood of organizational sustainability. Participants conveyed that transparency helps instill that ERs are part of the fabric of the organization, appreciated, and acknowledged.

Findings disconfirmed that HRM recruiting practices are not central to identify job applicants least likely to leave their job voluntarily.

### **Theme 3: Communication**

Participants responded that the strategies known and used to communicate with staff regularly, such as defining work and expectations of recruiters, showing appreciation through compensation, staying consistent with expectations, establishing values throughout the organizational culture (ATL1, ATL3, ATL4, ATL5, ATL6, ATL7, ATL8, and ATL9). Participants ATL2 and ATL10 shared that by illustrating that effective communications between managers and staff is needed for operational readiness. “By using communication to increase or build credibility, I can determine whether or not an employee is worth retaining. If a recruiter was not credible, I do not want them” (ATL2). “I let each employee know how valuable they are to me personally and professionally. I try not to hire people that have something to offer the organization in both capacities” (ATL10).

HR manager participants expressed that screening and assessment practices may be an unreliable predictor of whether an ER will be effective or will stay within the company. Additionally, the director participants indicated that leadership style is an element that influences employee turnover. I found that drug screens, as an assessment strategy, are not very reliable (ATL2), and staffing assessments were the preference of recruiters (ATL1, ATL3, ATL4, and ATL5- ATL10).

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> data source, participant DG2 shared, “Employee turnover is affected by having motivating leaders. People stay when individuals want to be part of a team.”

Participant DG3 offered the following statement that expands the findings of Cascio and Boudreau (2011) by indicating that employee retention is an element of the manager and employee relationship. Participant DG3 stated, “Engage employees, making sure they are committed and productive in an organization, engaged employees see a purpose in what they are doing and rarely leave.” Conversely, participant DG1 added, “Well liked employees leaving positively and negatively effects turnover.”

In human interaction, leaders use symbolic and actual communication to modify the attitudes of others to meet goals (Glavan, 2012). The participants indicated that HR managers should be a good communicator (2<sup>nd</sup> data source: DG1-DG5). Participant DG1 offered a statement concerning how compensation incentives might influence employee turnover “Make sure they want and like their job, and are not there solely for the money.” DG2 stated, “Listen to your employees; the things they say and the things they do not say.” DG3 expressed, “Be selective and give every employee an equal opportunity.” DG4 stated, “Uplift and promote within.” DG5 offered, “Encourage education, not training so individuals can do what they want.” All strategies for improvement require an adjustment to meet organizational needs. Strategies for improving staffing agencies could consist of reorganization, benchmarks, quality improvement, and solve for problems and not symptoms.

Participants ATL1, ATL4, ATL6, ATL10, and *the 2<sup>nd</sup> data source* DG2, DG3, and DG4 responded that it is possible to reduce ER turnover if there were better communications conveyed by management and ERs. Findings confirmed that interdependent relationships within the organization are critical for organizational

sustainability. Participant experiences in Table 3 show participants ATL1, ATL3, and ATL10 believe that by managing responsibilities and expectations, personal issues affecting work performance can be recognized, and ERs will know how contributions fit within the structure and strategy of the organization.

### **Applications to Professional Practice**

This study might be of value to HRMs and staffing directors in the United States as communication, transparency, and training are imperative to the staffing industry and could devise strategies used by job agencies to attract potential clients (Klehe & Goede, 2012). Business leaders in other industries may find the staffing strategies of use to create relationships, moral obligations, and provide employees ethical standards (Huffman et al., 2014). Creation of these relationships among HRMs, directors, and recruiters could reduce employee turnover.

Employee oriented companies have lower employee turnover rates (Peers, 2015). Reducing employee turnover may lead to wealth creation for stakeholders (Hunko, 2013). Increasing wealth for stakeholders could increase trust and confidence in managers; thus, the organizational value can reduce costs, and increase competitive advantage (Tse, 2012). Staffing directors may consider this study as a contribution to the effective practice of staffing by reinforcing existing knowledge of management strategies to add to their leadership styles, thereby increasing stakeholder trust.

Leaders, who are ethical, can find trust within organizations, which may increase employee loyalty, and reduce employee turnover (Avey, Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012). Reducing employee turnover in the staffing industry can lead to positive effects on the

United States economy. Job creation instead of national job outsourcing might help leaders instill a better work ethic for those national staffing companies that can positively influence community sustainability. Leaders who utilize the strategies presented here may engage employees and provide opportunities for advancement to reduce further employee turnover.

The results of my study could contribute to business practices by encouraging area leaders in the staffing industry to be transparent in training and hiring practices. Many of the HR managers, who participated in this study, conveyed that new employee training has lasting benefits to the staffing business and that training could include organizational goals. Training may promote employee behaviors consistent with the values of the organization leaders may find results of this study affect organizational and social change by encouraging area business practices that influence Stakeholders to contribute to society.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The results of my study may contribute to social change, and business practices as local leaders meet company financial performance needs through reduction of employee turnover. Business executives may be able to offer additional jobs and invest financial gains into the infrastructure of the local community. Additionally, higher local corporate profits can spur greater economic development as more job applicants relocate to areas where there are a growing economy and secure job base. All principal stakeholders, including HRMs and directors, may use the research to change strategies. Businesses are sustainable when HRMs and directors conduct analysis, and use that information, to

increase employment in their communities (Starik & Kanashiro, 2013). Understanding why employees leave jobs is pivotal to the development of retention strategies (Huffman et al., 2014).

### **Recommendations for Action**

My recommendation is that future researchers create opportunities to reduce employee turnover while leaders become more aware of the need to mitigate employee turnover. High employee turnover stifles organizational profitability and can damage the morale of the existing employees. In identifying and hiring the ideal job applicants from the start reduces employee turnover. Employers should interview the candidates to ensure not only the job skills are proficient; however, to interview to ensure that the personality of the job applicant fits well with the organizational culture. Communicating clear and consistent onboarding practices will help build trust and reduce employee turnover. Human resource managers should set compensation based on required experience, talent pool, industry expertise, and job location. Additionally, HRMs and directors should annually review employee compensation and benefits packages to ensure their strategies are within the current marketplace trends.

Business leaders and government leaders need to pay attention to the results as employee turnover effects business profitability and sustainability, as well as, governmental services funded by tax payers such as unemployment benefits to help those unemployed. Managers should not overlook the importance a positive work environment can have on retention, performance, and production. Employee recognition to foster a positive work environment can take place in meetings, emails, company newsletters

amongst other means. I intend to share results in training seminars and conferences on employee retention, motivation, and performance.

### **Recommendations for Further Study**

I recommend future researchers investigate opportunities for organizational leaders who may use my analysis of staffing strategies as a way to reduce employee turnover. Researchers would need to establish how HRM and director strategies influence the profitability and sustainability of an organization. I recommend future researchers consider expanding the examination to include gaps found to understand the effects of new employee onboarding and the impact of training and transparent communications, correlating results against retention. Future research should expand the study to include what variables influence employees to stay at a job. Expanding this study to other industries, more American businesses' may benefit.

Researchers can revisit limitations identified in this study in future research by expanding the investigation to include additional industries. Use of additional industries may increase the sample size and uncover accompanying gaps, which were not present. The research process also pertained to current attitudes of the participants, which could be influenced by the current economic environment. Conducting this study in multiple stages of the economy may yield different results.

### **Reflections**

I began the data analysis without any notions of what the codes may be to answer the overarching research question. The ideas presented in the literature review had an influence on the answers provided for this research. As the primary researcher for this

study, I proposed, designed, interviewed, and engaged in sampling, data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Before conducting the study, I assumed how individuals might respond. To eliminate bias, I performed a pretest once the prospectus was approved; the Committee assigned to this research checked for bias. Unexpected findings did not occur.

My role was to collect data using a variety of means to analyze strategies currently in use to mitigate a situation and the meaning participants assigned to those strategies. Researchers reflect on participants' experiences to control data analysis. Each interaction with participants was positive and motivating. Participants did not show physical manifestations of negative emotion while sharing experiences. By meeting with regional directors in the staffing industry, I was assured that the right topic to study was indeed strategies to reduce employee turnover. The choice of topic is of particular interest to shareholders in the staffing industry.

I am a stakeholder in many staffing venues and having respondents share their experiences with employees made the research more valuable to the staffing industry. The findings of this study support the findings of other researchers with similar topics (Brymer et al., 2014; Gelens et al., 2013; Batt & Colvin, 2011). The focus of this study and the business application allowed me the opportunity to understand concepts that contribute to sustainability.

### **Conclusion**

Leaders should use multiple strategies including being honest and transparent to restore stakeholder trust, and address public concerns. By increasing managers' ability to

communicate with others to gain their trust; employee turnover may recede.

Trustworthiness and ethical leaders have the ability to create wealth and help all employees reach their goals.

The findings and recommendations from my research may provide a framework to address how organizational change influences stakeholders. Stakeholder theory as it relates to management effectiveness can change stakeholders' perception of leaders' ethics within an organization. Through ethically meeting the demands staffing stakeholders may have, a strategy could then be deployed in business to create sustainable management, communicate with employees, and increase transparency.

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## Appendix A: Invitation to Participate in Research Study

Date

I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration with a concentration in finance. I am conducting a qualitative research study as part of my doctoral study project entitled, *Understanding Strategies: How Staffing Agency Managers Mitigate Employee Turnover*. With this letter, if you are a director and have been with the company six months or more, I am asking for your voluntary participation. Your participation will include a confidential 90-minute group discussion of you work experiences with staff retention. This study, supervised by my committee chair, Dr. Gwendolyn Dooley, will aid in my successful completion of my academic requirements for this degree.

Participants will be asked to share their experiences through their own objectivity and discernment on policies and procedures that have made them able to retain staff. The focus group will be conducted using open-ended questions as topics to help me understand the problem and gain clarification of the case. Any illegal information reported; however, must be disclosed. A copy of the questions to be asked, and the interview protocol is attached so you can learn more about the study and you will be asked to sign a copy at the start of the interview/focus group.

Sincerely,

Andrew Borg  
Work # 770 789 4251  
Cell # 678 922 9161  
andrew.borg@waldenu.edu

## Appendix B: Consent Form

Please accept this note as an invitation to participate in a research study to explore the strategies Human resource managers and directors use to retain recruiting staff. This form represents the part of the research process known as *informed consent*, which the purpose to provide additional information to learn and acknowledge the process in order to understand this proposed study prior to your decision to volunteer. You are invited to participate because you have at least at least three years of staffing industry experience as a human resource manager.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of the research study was to explore strategies Human resource managers use to retain recruiting staff.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a semistructured interview that will be audio recorded and will approximately 45 minutes.
- Review findings to ensure the accuracy of the data.
- Indicate by initially statement below that you have at least three years of staffing industry experience in the placement of job applicants with clients.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation is voluntary, and was 100% confidential and in such, personnel in your organization was unaware of your decision to participate or not participate. There is no adverse action, from your decision. No thank you gift(s), compensation, or reimbursement (for travel costs, etc.) will be provided for your participation in this study.

### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the study:**

The risks to participating in the study are minimal if any. Involvement in this study will not pose any risks to a person's safety or wellbeing. A benefit of participation was to help uncover the motivations of the external client base There are no personal relationships which may compromise the individual conducting research and no financial arrangement based on the outcomes of the study. If unforeseen conflicts of interest become present, I will terminate the interview and withdraw the participant from the study.

The benefits to participating in the study may provide Human resource managers strategies and processes which may show best practices on how to retain staff.

### **Privacy:**

Participation privacy was to be maintained and practiced with complete confidentiality. Personnel in your organization was uninformed of your decision to participate or not participate. All information provided by you will be kept with the utmost level of confidentiality. I will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. All digital and manually transcribed data will be kept in a fireproof locked box for a period of no less than 5 years as required by the university.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

If you have any comments or questions at any time, I can be contacted from 8am to 10pm Monday thru Saturday at 678 922 9161 or by email at [andrew.borg@waldenu.edu](mailto:andrew.borg@waldenu.edu). If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1 800 925 3368, extension 3121210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-16-15-0256384, and it expires on December 15, 2016. Please keep/print a copy of the consent form for your records.

### **Copy of Summary of the Research Findings:**

Please provide your name and address below if you wish to obtain a copy of the summary of the research findings.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information; I have a minimum of three years of years of staffing industry experience in the placement of job applicants with clients. I believe I understand the basis for this research and have adequate information of the study to make a well informed decision as to whether or not to participate. However, any illegal information reported will be anonymously disclosed to the appropriate agencies. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent," acknowledges that I comply and agree to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant and Date of consent

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## Appendix B<sub>1</sub>: Consent Form

Please accept this note as an invitation to participate in a research study to explore the strategies Human resource managers and directors use to retain recruiting staff. This form represents the part of the research process known as *informed consent*, which the purpose to provide additional information to learn and acknowledge the process in order to understand this proposed study prior to your decision to volunteer. You are invited to participate because you are a human resource director with staffing industry experience and have been with your firm for a minimum of six months.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of the research study was to explore strategies Human resource managers use to retain recruiting staff.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a focus group that will be audio recorded and will approximately 90 minutes.
- Review findings to ensure the accuracy of the data.

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

Participation is voluntary, and is 100% confidential and in such, personnel in your organization was unaware of your decision to participate or not participate. There are no adverse actions, based on your decision. No thank you gift(s), compensation, or reimbursement (for travel costs, etc.) will be provided for your participation in this study.

### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the study:**

The risks to participating in the study are minimal if any. Involvement in this study would not pose any risks to a person's safety or wellbeing. A benefit of participation was to help uncover the motivations of the external client base. There are no personal relationships which may compromise the group conducting research and no financial arrangement based on the outcomes of the study. If unforeseen conflicts of interest become present, I terminate the interview and withdraw the participant from the study.

The benefits to participating in the study may provide Human resource managers strategies and processes which may show best practices on how to retain staff.

### **Privacy:**

Participation privacy will be maintained and practiced with complete confidentiality. Personnel in your organization was uninformed of your decision to participate or not participate. All information provided by you will be kept with the utmost level of confidentiality. I not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. All digital and manually transcribed data will be kept in a fireproof locked box for a period of no less than 5 years as required by the university.

Please be advised that although the researchers will take every precaution to maintain confidentiality of the data, the nature of focus groups prevents the researchers from guaranteeing confidentiality. The researchers would like to remind participants to respect the privacy of your fellow participants and not repeat what is said in the focus group to others.

### **Contacts and Questions:**

If you have any comments or questions at any time, I can be contacted from 8am to 10pm Monday thru Saturday at 678 922 9161 or by email at [andrew.borg@waldenu.edu](mailto:andrew.borg@waldenu.edu). If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1 800 925 3368, extension 3121210. Walden University's approval number for this study is 12-16-15-0256384, and it expires on December 15, 2016. Please keep/print a copy of the consent form for your records.

### **Copy of Summary of the Research Findings:**

Please provide your name and address below if you wish to obtain a copy of the summary of the research findings.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### **Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information; I have a minimum of six months of experience working with the firm. I believe I understand the basis for this research and have adequate information of the study to make a well informed decision as to whether or not to participate. However, any illegal information reported will be anonymously disclosed to the appropriate agencies. By replying to this email with the words, "I consent," acknowledges that I comply and agree to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant and Date of consent

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## Appendix C: Interview Questions

Appendix C lists the interview questions intended to explore the experiences of recruiting professionals to gain perspective on their employee retention strategies.

### **HR Managers Interview Questions**

1. What is the tenure of your recruiting staff?
2. How have employee job satisfaction survey data informed your strategies for recruiting staff employee retention?
3. What employment assessment tools do you use to determine the right employee fit with the organization?
4. What factors, positively or negatively, have influenced recruiting staff turnover?
5. What managerial strategies do you use to retain recruiting staff?
6. What information can you share about the retention strategies for recruiting staff that I have not asked you?

### **Director Focus Group Discussion Topics**

1. What managerial strategies do you use to retain recruiting staff?
2. What factors, positively or negatively, have influenced recruiting staff employee turnover?
3. What have been your experiences with retaining recruiting staff based on compensation?
4. How does increased job training affect the outcomes of employee turnover?
5. What information can you share about the retention strategies for recruiting staff?

## Appendix D: Interview Protocol

<b>Interview Protocol</b>	
<b>What you will do</b>	<b>What you will say—script</b>
<p>Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over a meal or coffee</p>	<p>Before we begin, I want to thank you again; your participation is highly appreciated. The purpose of the meeting is to conduct an interview session to address experiences of human resource professionals to gain perspectives of how they retain recruiting staff. The interview is expected to last 45 minutes.</p> <p>First, please note that a) this interview is audio recorded for use as data for coding and analysis, b) the treatment of your answers is confidential and your identity confidential, c) the study will not report on individual participations, and you may withdraw at any time.</p> <p>The interview design helps me to gain insight from human resource professionals related to staff retention. Please note there are no right or wrong answers. If you believe you are not in a position to answer any question (or set of questions) for any reason, simply inform me. After a few questions acknowledging your background and experiences, I asked you a set of open-ended questions. Please feel free to elaborate or illustrate any way you feel fit when answering the open-ended questions. When I ask follow up questions, I am seeking to present clearly, what I ask in the question since some of the questions could be interpreted differently. Please ask me to restate any question that may need clarification.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for non-verbal queues</li> <li>• Paraphrase as needed</li> <li>• Ask follow-up probing questions to get more</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is the tenure of your recruiting staff?</li> <li>2. How have employee job satisfaction survey data informed your strategies for recruiting staff employee retention?</li> <li>3. What employment assessment tools do you use to determine the right employee fit with the organization?</li> </ol>

indepth	4. What factors, positively or negatively, have influenced recruiting staff turnover?
	5. What managerial strategies do you use to retain recruiting staff?
	6. What information can you share about the retention strategies for recruiting staff that I have not asked you?
Wrap up interview thanking participant	I appreciate you taking time from your busy schedule to help me with my research. This concludes this interview round.
Schedule follow-up member checking interview	As discussed, I would like to schedule a follow-up discussion so you may be able to review the summary of results to ensure that your responses are captured and reported accurately.
Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage	Thank you for meeting with me again. As discussed, I wanted to you to have an opportunity to review the summary results and help clarify your intent if needed.
Share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question	Please find a copy of the purpose for each asked question.
<p>Bring in probing questions related to other information that you may have found—note the information must be related so that you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval.</p> <p>Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask: Did I miss anything? Or, What would you like to add?</p>	<p>1. What is the tenure of your recruiting staff? This question designed to discover average employee retention to see if this organization is successful in retaining executive recruiter (ER) staff. The overall consensus is that ER retention is less than two years.</p>
	<p>2. How have employee job satisfaction survey data informed your strategies for recruiting staff employee retention? The intent of this question was to discover if survey data is a viable means to capture viable information to influence human resource managers' and directors' retention strategies. The findings concluded that satisfaction surveys have the risk of generating untrustworthiness and discouragement among staff and management.</p>
	<p>3. What employment assessment tools do you use to determine the right employee fit with the organization? This question designed to discover what evaluation measures are used to determine if a potential hire will flourish in the role and stay employed at the company. Third party background checks and employing effective interviewing were described as tools used to identify ideal candidates</p>

	for the firm.
	<p>4. What factors, positively or negatively, have influenced recruiting staff turnover? The question designed to discover if any influencing factors effecting employee retention. Engaging ER staff and helping them stay committed to production recognized as influential to retention, whereas compensation was seen as less of a defining factor.</p>
	<p>5. What managerial strategies do you use to retain recruiting staff? The intent of this question was to determine if management employed consistent retention strategies. The results of the study revealed that managers do not follow any consistent method to retain ER staff.</p>
	<p>6. What information can you share about the retention strategies for recruiting staff that I have not asked you? The question was designed to discover if there were additional employed retention strategies used to retain ER staff. Findings revealed that on-boarding techniques influences ER retention.</p>

## Appendix D1: Focus Group Protocol

<b>Interview Protocol</b>	
<b>What you will do</b>	<b>What you will say—script</b>
<p>Introduce the interview and set the stage—often over a meal or coffee</p>	<p>Before we begin, I want to thank all of you again; your participation is highly appreciated. The purpose of the group discussion is to conduct a focus group to address experiences of human resource professionals to gain perspectives of how they retain recruiting staff. The discussion is expected to last 90 minutes.</p> <p>First, please note that a) this focus group discussion is audio recorded for use as data for coding and analysis, b) the treatment of your answers is confidential and your identity confidential, c) the study will not report on individual participations, and you may withdraw at any time.</p> <p>The focus group design helps me to gain insight from human resource professionals related to staff retention. Please note there are no right or wrong answers. If you believe you are not in a position to answer any question (or set of questions) for any reason, simply inform me. After a few questions acknowledging your background and experiences, I asked you a set of open-ended discussion topics. Please feel free to elaborate or illustrate any way you feel fit when answering the open-ended questions. When I ask follow up questions, I am seeking to present clearly, what I ask in the question since some of the questions could be interpreted differently. Please ask me to restate any question that may need clarification.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch for non-verbal queues</li> <li>• Paraphrase as needed</li> <li>• Ask follow-up probing questions to get more</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What managerial strategies do you use to retain recruiting staff? The intent of this question was to determine if management employed consistent retention strategies. The findings revealed that clearly communicating defined initiatives and providing training helps reduce unwanted employee turnover.</li> </ol>

<p>indepth</p>	<p>2. What factors, positively or negatively, have influenced recruiting staff turnover? The question designed to discover if any influencing factors effecting employee retention. Effective communications and training with ER staff in a transparent manner helps improve employee retention.</p>
	<p>3. What have been your experiences with retaining recruiting staff based on compensation? The intent of this question was to discover if compensation was an influencing factor in ER retention. Findings revealed that compensation was not a significant influencing factor on ER retention.</p>
	<p>4. How does increased job training affect the outcomes of employee turnover? The design of this question was to discover is job training helps improve ER productivity and retention. Findings uncovered that training motivates staff by investing in ER and their success.</p>
	<p>5. What information can you share about the retention strategies for recruiting staff?</p>
<p>Wrap up interview thanking participant</p>	<p>I appreciate each of you taking time from your busy schedule to help me with my research. This concludes this focus group discussion.</p>
<p>Schedule follow-up member checking interview</p>	<p>As discussed, I would like to schedule a follow-up discussion so you may be able to review the summary of results to ensure that your responses are captured and reported accurately.</p>
<p>Introduce follow-up interview and set the stage</p>	<p>Thank you for meeting with me again. As discussed, I wanted to you to have an opportunity to review the summary results and help clarify your intent if needed.</p>
<p>Share a copy of the succinct synthesis for each individual question</p> <p>Bring in probing questions related to other information that you may have found—note the information must be related so that you are probing and adhering to the IRB approval.</p>	<p>Please find a copy of the purpose for each asked question.</p> <p>1. What managerial strategies do you use to retain recruiting staff? This question designed to discover average employee retention to see if this organization is successful in retaining executive recruiter (ER) staff. The overall consensus is that ER retention is less than two years.</p> <p>2. What factors, positively or negatively, have influenced recruiting staff turnover? The intent of this question was to discover if survey data is a viable means to capture viable information to influence human resource managers' and directors'</p>

<p>Walk through each question, read the interpretation and ask: Did I miss anything? Or, What would you like to add?</p>	<p>retention strategies. The findings concluded that satisfaction surveys have the risk of generating untrustworthiness and discouragement among staff and management.</p>
	<p>3. What have been your experiences with retaining recruiting staff based on compensation? This question designed to discover what evaluation measures are used to determine if a potential hire will flourish in the role and stay employed at the company. Third party background checks and employing effective interviewing were described as tools used to identify ideal candidates for the firm.</p>
	<p>4. How does increased job training affect the outcomes of employee turnover? The question designed to discover if any influencing factors effecting employee retention. Engaging ER staff and helping them stay committed to production recognized as influential to retention, whereas compensation was seen as less of a defining factor.</p>
	<p>5. What information can you share about the retention strategies for recruiting staff? The question was designed to discover if there were additional employed retention strategies used to retain ER staff. Findings revealed that on-boarding techniques influences ER retention.</p>

## Appendix E: NIH Certificate



## Appendix F: Letter of Cooperation



September 14, 2015

Mr. Andrew Borg  
2885 Sudbury Ct.  
Marietta, GA 30062  
(770) 789-4251

Mr. Borg,

Kelly Services Has authorized you to conduct your research study on Human Resource Management at the Atlanta, GA branch. As part of this study, you are authorized to conduct interviews and focus groups, as well as, give the results to participants. You may not deviate from daily work as assigned, or interfere with the work of others. All communication between yourself and participants at this branch for this study must occur during authorized break, or lunch periods- or off site during non-work hours. If these rules are not followed in accordance with your research consent to conduct your research at this Kelly Services location will be revoked. This authorization is good from the date of receipt until September 14, 2017. If you have further questions regarding this issue please contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Boyle", written in a cursive style.

John Boyle

Regional Southeast Manager