

Mark Steele ESOA Member Profile

Business:

1) When did you start your career in the recruiting/search field?

I started my career as an "Employee Relations Trainee" for **Cooper Industries** and completed their three-year rotational training program in Sumter, SC (surviving Hurricane Hugo), Elk Grove Village (Chicago), IL and their Corporate Headquarters in Houston, TX. I was recruited away by **Rubbermaid** and worked in their Greenville, TX manufacturing plant and later their Goodyear (Phoenix), AZ manufacturing plant. I was approached by a recruiter who convinced me to join **Farnam Companies, Inc.**, a small privately held company in Phoenix which was the #1 Horse Care products company in America. Farnam was the exclusive marketer of Ivermectin products for Horses until the patent expired after 17 years. I was responsible for creating the HR department and was promoted several times during my ten-year tenure career and ended up as the Co-CEO until we were acquired by **Central Garden and Pet**. I found that I spent a significant amount of time at Farnam recruiting. In fact, by the time I left, my team and I had been responsible for recruiting over 50% of the staff.

I moved back to Texas to be closer to family. Before I started my recruiting business, I was working for **The Brinkmann Corporation** where I found myself spending a significant part of my time recruiting. When the company was sold in 2015, I decided to kick my addiction to the salaried paycheck and start working for myself as an Executive Recruiter.

2) Why did you decide on a career in the recruiting/search field?

Perhaps I was rather naïve, but I thought it would be easier to break into this industry that it has been. I bring a unique perspective to the role having been in manufacturing and corporate positions myself, much like my clients. I think I am very good at recruiting, but business development has proven to be a bit of a weak spot.

3) Briefly describe your company and specialization:

We specialize in filling roles in Manufacturing companies. A lot of our recent placements have been Engineering talent (New Product Development, Design, Operations Management) for Automotive, Consumer Packaged Goods and Food Manufacturing companies. We have also successfully placed Sales Managers, Procurement/Purchasing Directors, Accountants, and other positions clients have been willing to pay us for.

4) Describe any interesting success you had in our business, i.e a placement story, winning a new client, or whatever.

I tend to have a knack for the obscure hard to fill positions. Once recent example is with a client who wanted to hire a "Function Safety Consultant for Embedded Products" who would assist in the certification of products that are used in safety instrumented systems for the utility industry. Not only is that a strange title, but they also wanted to hire a contractor for 25 hours per week. I was able to find this person and set the bill rate at a level that I could justify the time I spent on this search. Now I understand why I have had so many career recruiters tell me that you have to be a little crazy to work in this business!

Personal:

5) What city/stat were you born and raised?

I am originally from Elkhart, Indiana and worked in the Manufactured Housing industry and a production worker installing doors, windows, and siding. In other words, I built mobile homes. It is there that I learned the phrase, "If it doesn't fit, get a hammer. If it still doesn't fit, get a bigger hammer!"

6) What are your hobbies?

I am a Trumpet player as a hobby and am a member of an organization called "Taps for Veterans." I am one of the volunteer bugler's that plays taps for Military funerals.

7) Favorite Movie(s):

"Mr. Holland's Opus" and "Sideways."

8) Fun fact about yourself, i.e. something about you, either past or present worth sharing:

I probably should have been an architect. I enjoy renovating old houses and recently took the house my wife and I are living in down to the studs. We changed the layout of the interior and turned it into a "green certified" smart home with the features and amenities most new home buyers want today.