7-minute read

Three Trends that Will Define Contingent Staffing This Year

Raise Resources: Trends | Insights | Innovations

They say that wisdom lies in being able to tell the difference between what you can and can't change.

And while Contingent Staffing doesn't get much say in the forces that are shaping the world today—like the economy, interest rates, or technological advances—that doesn't mean there's nothing you can do about it.

In our opinion, **the most successful contingent programs will be those that are able and willing to embrace change as it comes**, rather than waiting on the sidelines. While there are many barriers to change—financial, personnel, regulatory—today's trends are asking for transformation rather than system updates.

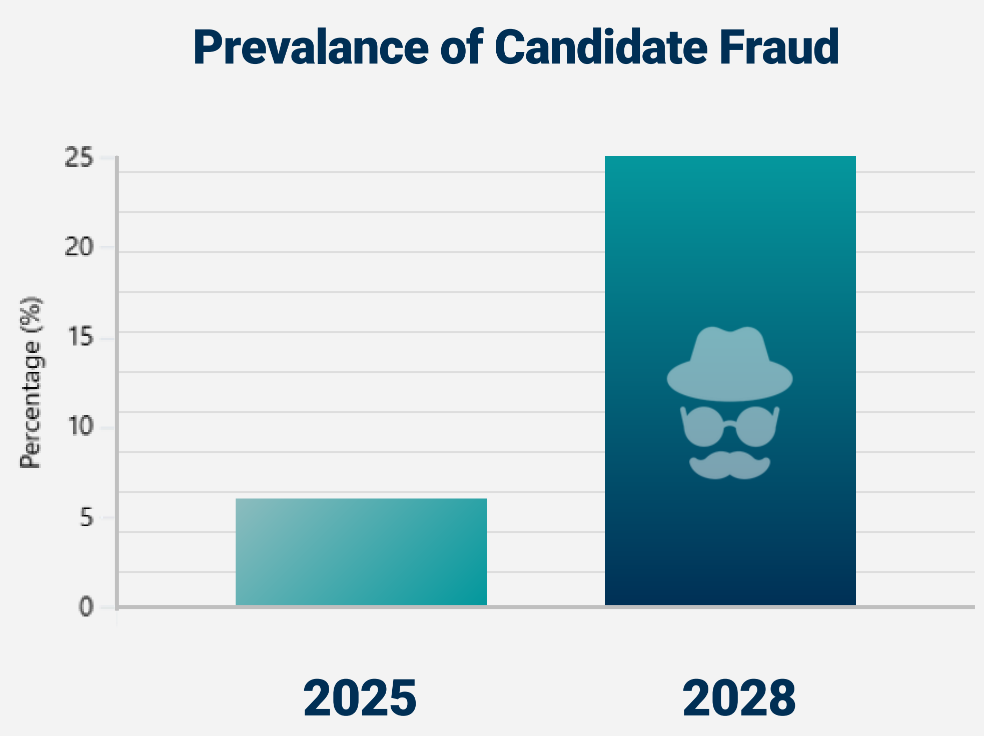
What does that change look like today? **Here are the three priorities** that every contingent program should be thinking about in the short-term:

Trend #1

Candidate Fraud is on the Rise

Many contingent staffers and recruitment firms have noticed a trend that has become undeniable—**there are more and more profiles coming into jobs every day, and more and more of them are fraudulent.**

Gartner's 2025 survey of 3000 candidates found 6% admitting to interview fraud—a number Gartner predicts could go up to 25% by 2028.



Here are the kinds of candidate fraud you can expect to see today:

- **Exaggerated or fake resumes**
- **Candidate impersonation**
- **AI assisted interviews/ skills testing**
- **Polyworkers** (people with multiple jobs)
- **LinkedIn Profile/ identity theft**
- **Document forgery**

Candidates in the US lost a combined $501B to job scams last year according to the Federal Trade Commission—more than five times what they lost in 2020.

Trend #2

A Weaker US Job Market Is Looking More Likely

The US labour market has been slowing through the end of 2025 and looking to hold that trend into 2026.

US Job openings hit a 5-year low at the end of the year, while hiring intentions dropped 13% YoY

on the other side of the border, Canadian unemployment continues its slow rise, up to 6.8% as of 2026.

So **far trends seem to indicate a holding pattern**, where layoffs and hiring are both muted. But that could also change quickly. For candidates, that means increased competition in addition to technology disruptions on the job search trail.

What does a weak job market mean for contingent staffing?

- **In some sectors, talent could be a easier to find:** Industries heavily affected by the introduction of AI may experience a talent surplus in the near term.
- **A slower economy could mean slower growth:** Some programs may reduce openings or start scaling back.
- **Business strategy could shift towards contingent workers and away from perm: A** slow economy tends to favour the flexibility of a contingent workforce.

Contingent workforces often notice change before the full-time market does. Like anything else, a changing economy offers challenges and opportunities. **Organizations that use data-driven insights to align their business needs with their workforce supply will be well-positioned regardless of where the economy goes next.**

Trend #3

Candidate Sourcing is Ripe for Change

New technology has made onboarding and payroll processes more complex. And just as job boards and VMS changed staffing in the recent past, **Artificial Intelligence is disrupting how employers find, verify and hire employees,** just as it is radically changing how candidates look for work and connect with jobs.

Here's how candidates get jobs today:

10-20% from career sites and other channels

10-20% from job boards

60-80% from networking, referrals, etc.

It looks like direct sources of hire (networking, referrals) are becoming more common these days, while indirect sources like job boards are declining

Why?

Because **technology is introducing new levels of complexity and noise into the hiring process.** A candidate found on the internet is no longer certain to have the skills they say they do—neither are candidates taking remote interviews.

And with that complexity comes a certain amount of risk—if a bad candidate gets through, where did the problem arise? From the supplier? From their ATS, and their process? Was it an onboarding issue?

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Technology	Candidate impacts	Employer Impacts	Broad Hiring Market Impacts
LLM Resume Builders	Easier, faster application process	More tech/time required to screen applicants effectively	Higher application volume; lower applicant quality; harder to hire online
Automated Resume Screening Tools	Major incentives to use AI to format application materials	Ability to screen candidates at scale	More homogeneity in resume databases; harder to find/place atypical candidates
Talent Marketplaces	More exposure to internal opportunities	Simplified onboarding; improved internal talent mobility	Fewer advertised jobs
Sourcing Automation; AI Screening Agents	Easy, on-demand screening calls; potential for higher spam/scam volumes	Potential for cost reduction; standardized intakes/processes	Friction with candidates who dislike automated screening; new opportunity for scams
Skills Testing Platforms	Higher friction/effort application process	Skills verification; reduced fraud; faster, more reliable hires	Disruptive for traditional candidate acquisition platforms/channels

There are multiple platforms competing for the same space in the same market: each with totally different strategies and solutions. Until temployers figure out what does and doesn't work for their candidate sourcing, we won't see clear signals on where hiring is heading next.

Every organization is different and will need to take a different approach to sourcing—**but aligning the right strategies with the right platforms will be critical for success going forward.**