

SPECIAL REPORT **BEST PLACES TO WORK IN L.A.****SMALL COMPANIES**

# Staffing Firm as Creative, Colorful as the Companies It Serves

When Diana Scott-Monck was looking for a job six months ago, her search focused on typical business development positions which she thought would complement work experiences, including a stint at a Web site.

## AQUENT LLC

Los Angeles

**Business:** Temporary and permanent staffing

**Founded:** 1986

**Local Employees:** 23

But her thinking changed when she came across an ad seeking an account director placed by the Los Angeles office of Aquent, a permanent and temporary staffing company focusing on creative and marketing related positions.

"The listing was colorful and dynamic," Scott-Monck said. "It had a lot of personality and spoke to me in terms of the company being

more independent and creative and more appreciative of people who possess those traits. To put it simply, it had flair and passion."

Since joining Aquent's L.A. office, Scott-Monck, who as an account director is responsible for relationships with client companies, said her experiences have matched her expectations. "There is a lot of room for the individual. There are a lot of different personalities, skill sets and backgrounds, but everyone fits together like pieces of a puzzle," she said.

Some of that individuality is present in the office's blog, titled "But Less About Me," which allows the staff to communicate with potential temporary hires but is also a forum for a wide range of topics including music, art and sports.



**Unusual: Company meeting.**

Aquent was founded in Cambridge, Mass., more than two decades ago by three Harvard University undergrad students as a desktop publishing and design firm. Over the years, the company's business model has evolved to focus on staffing needs and related services.

From a Harvard dorm room, the company has grown to 72 offices in 17 countries. Based in Boston, Aquent provides permanent and temporary employees to two-thirds of Fortune 500 companies and claims more than half-a-million matches between companies and employees.

Along the way, the company has been willing to diverge from standard practices in the staffing

arena. In 1992, the privately held company became one of the first national staffing firms to offer medical and retirement benefits to temporary employees. The company also has an open-ended vacation policy that allows employees to use their time to volunteer and reach personal goals.

Aquent's West Coast operations were launched by firm co-founder Mia Wenjen. Today, the L.A. office is staffed by 23-people, nine of whom have been with the company for more than eight years.

"It doesn't feel like it has been eight-and-a-half years, which I guess is a good thing," said Sharon Strauss, L.A. market sales director. "It is not like a traditional sales environment. We encourage people to work together on accounts. We are very much about the people and not about the numbers."

— Drew Combs

## SMALL COMPANIES

Rank	Company	Headquarters	Business	Local Employees	Exempt Salaries	Non-Exempt Salaries	Perks/Best Practices
1	<b>Aquent LLC</b> 6100 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 500, Los Angeles	Boston	Staffing agency for marketing and creative personnel	23	\$60,000	\$35,000	Corporate training team; open-ended vacation policy aimed at helping employees volunteer, reach personal goals
2	<b>Maternal and Child Health Access</b> 1111 W. Sixth St., Fourth Floor Los Angeles	Los Angeles	Low-income health care outreach, community agency staff training, perinatal case management	18	\$39,553	\$24,960	Employees gather daily over brown bag lunches, 100 percent employer-paid group health plan for employees and dependents
3	<b>Ballpark</b> 1630 Stewart St., Suite 110 Santa Monica	Santa Monica	Full service advertising agency	15	\$101,600	ND	Allows pets at work as needed, generous 401(k) policy
4	<b>Mansour Travel Co.</b> 345 N. Maple Drive, Suite 210, Beverly Hills	Beverly Hills	Upscale business and entertainment industry travel agency	19	\$77,000	\$47,500	Fully paid "familiarization" trips to destinations popular with clients, 100 percent paid HMO health benefit
5	<b>Harris Group/Marcus &amp; Millichap</b> 2141 Rosecrans Ave., Suite 5100 El Segundo	El Segundo	Commercial real estate brokerage	21	\$78,000	\$28,000	Annual team building vacation, mentoring program for junior brokers