

# Hamptons Employment's Aleksandra Kardwell

**H**amptons Employment Agency founder and president Aleksandra Kardwell discusses staffing your Hamptons home, the challenges of seasonality and building the best employer-employee relationships.

## What inspired you to found Hamptons Employment Agency?

I founded Hamptons Employment Agency (HEA) in 2011 because I saw a need in the market for a friendly, client-focused agency that truly cares about making excellent matches between domestic professionals and employers. In the domestic staffing industry, while there are some firms that provide great service to their clients, oftentimes companies are looking to simply put anyone in a position and make their fee. Our top priority is to pair the right domestic professionals in rewarding positions with employers. We serve a wide range of individuals and families, including CEOs, government officials and Hollywood actors. And I'm also proud to mention that HEA was voted the 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 Platinum Best Domestic Agency by *Dan's Papers* readers.

## What are some of the biggest challenges people in the Hamptons face with domestic staffing?

In looking for domestic staff, employer-candidate chemistry is essential, but it's also critical for clients to clearly define their position. We hear stories from candidates who previously worked with other agencies about how they were promised one thing but got another once they started working. To ensure a successful long term

employer-domestic relationship, we help our clients delineate what knowledge, skills and abilities they would like in a domestic professional and what their expectations are. We then openly communicate about the position to make sure that everyone is on the same page. That way, when a candidate starts working, both they and the employer are happy.

## What's the range of staffing needs that HEA can help provide? What types of staffing needs can prove particularly challenging here in the Hamptons?

HEA helps clients with both year-round and seasonal domestic placements. Among the positions we help fill are managers, couples, housekeepers, chefs and butlers. We also provide event staff to clients, which includes servers, bartenders, greeters, grillers and others. Lastly, we work with business owners for administrative placements and retail stores to fill salesperson positions.

One of the main challenges that we see clients face is competition for the strongest candidates for seasonal positions. In many cases, domestic professionals find positions very quickly, well before the season starts. We therefore encourage clients to begin their search for summer help early in the season—even as early as February—and we now serve clients throughout the greater New York area, the Cape Cod region, Florida and beyond with offices in Manhattan, Southampton and Boca Raton.

## What sort of personal touch do you bring to your clients?

While we have three offices, we remain a boutique staffing agency

at heart, and we maintain highly personalized relationships with our clients. As HEA's owner, I find that oftentimes clients like to work with me directly, or have access to me, and I'm eager to be personally involved with clients. I also personally interview the candidates in our Southampton and New York offices, and I'm involved with interviewing in our Boca Raton location as well. The number one priority for my team is to provide an exceptional experience for clients and domestic professionals, and we work hard to do what it takes to meet that goal.

## What's the one thing that you think sets Hamptons Employment Agency apart from all the others?

What separates HEA from others in the field is that we strive to fully understand each client's needs and preferences so that we can present them with only the most relevant, top-notch candidates. Additionally, we are very committed to respecting and helping maintain our clients' privacy at all times. On the candidate side, we seek to understand each domestic professional's skills, abilities, preferences and goals in order to place them in positions where they will be happy. A great match between employer and employee is the key to longterm placement success.

We are fortunate to be able to serve many high-powered, well-known people. One of our largest clients is an investment executive who is highly social and enjoys premier service for himself as well as for his friends and family. The client requires a weekly staff throughout the summer of around 30 people, including chefs, servers, bartenders and housemen. By putting together a group of top-notch domestic professionals, we help foster a positive-energy work setting that helps the client most fully enjoy summer in the Hamptons. 🍷

