

# Helping Hands

Finding the **PERFECT STAFF** to make your life run smoothly

**S**tephen Candland and his team at Private Staff Group function as professional matchmakers for high-net-worth individuals and families looking for top-shelf staff to manage their households, personal affairs and often, jet-set with them to their far-flung residences.

With offices in Greenwich, the Hamptons, New York City, Palm Beach and San Francisco, Candland has spent more than a decade translating his clients' unique wish lists into the right candidates to keep their busy lives running smoothly.

We checked in with him recently to discuss trends in domestic staffing.

**GM: What are your clients looking for, and how do you help?**

**SC:** We've been doing this for eleven years, and we always have interesting searches going on. Our niche is finding staff for high net worth and ultra-high net worth clients. This clientele usually has the resources and vast business and personal needs to require full-time support managing their personal lives. That can range from a private chef to a house manager capable of running their homes. Sometimes we're working with someone who has a sizable staff already and needs someone to oversee it all. Most of our hires are full-time and long-term, but sometimes there may be a need for some kind of short-term project management. For example, you're relocating to Greenwich, and you need some help getting settled and getting the house up and running.

What we don't do is nannies, part-time housekeepers or senior care. That tends to be more niche and, in the case of seniors, more on the medical side.

**GM: Do your clients have preferences in terms of how much their private staff is part of their overall family dynamic?**

**SC:** Yes! You'll have someone say my ideal person is someone who is doing this for twenty or thirty years and is very comfortable running their affairs but plays more of an executive role and isn't part of the daily life of the family. In some cases, they're even a buffer between the family and the staff. On the other end, you'll have someone looking for a very active individual—often this is for a young family or a family that travels a lot—who is quite happy to be on the move all the time. They are really interested in someone multifaceted who



is able to shift from managing business needs to the kids' schedules.

**GM: Has Covid changed your client's staffing needs?**

**SC:** More and more of our clients are working remotely and moving about their various residences for longer stays. They might go to the Hamptons for three or four months or Florida for five or six months. Pre-pandemic, these were places they went for vacation, but now they are settling in for longer periods of time.

**GM: How do you recruit candidates?**

**SC:** A big part of our process is working with our clients to create a detailed job description. That

way we're able to present several carefully screened and well-qualified candidates. Because we've been doing this for more than ten years, we have a very strong data base of talent. So, even if someone isn't the right candidate, we may know them as a great networking resource. We are strong at networking and using technology as a resource for recruiting. With Zoom, we've been able to widen the net and do some of that initial screening virtually.

**GM: How important is discretion?**

**SC:** It's almost always a top priority. Initially, we don't disclose anything about the client except for a general overview of the role. As we move forward with a candidate, we always do so in a way that protects the client.

**GM: Lots of people in Fairfield County may not be in the market for full-time staff but do have some kind of household or child-care help. Any tips for them?**

**SC:** Always think of these part-time hires as what they are: an employment situation. You should always be focused on protecting your family's privacy, security and personal information. You need to do a thorough hiring process. That includes doing the right reference checks and asking the right questions. For some people, for example, it might be important that their help live near the community where they live. Then, it's really important to offer a sensible letter of employment, even for a part-time person. Stipulate things like, "Here's what you get paid. This is how we'll deal with extra hours." Discuss things like benefits and time off. Have clear conversations about anything that may be uncomfortable. I really encourage people to feel like they've done their due diligence.

Also, pay people on the books. That's something you should do to protect yourself.

