



talent works

Recruitment Process Outsourcing

Change how you hire. Everywhere. In every way.

Turn up volume hiring.
Dial down candidate quality.

Can RPO ever really deliver both?



Introduction

There are still a lot of talent acquisition teams out there who view RPO with suspicion. Or, let's be honest, as a necessary evil.

You only bring in an RPO provider if the pain of keeping recruitment in house is going to be greater than the pain of watching it being outsourced. Quid pro quo.

Because we all know what happens when you bring in an RPO, right?

- » Recruitment becomes more process driven.
- » The focus shifts to filling roles than finding talent.
- » In-house teams shrink.
- » Candidate quality plummets.

And that's the inescapable fact for all employers and their RPO partners. That's the elephant in the room. It is impossible to hire at speed and to keep costs low, while still maintaining the quality of the candidate experience. It just can't happen.

Well, it can – provided you find the right provider.





Why bring in an RPO?

Organisations will usually bring in an RPO because they need to make a step-change in their hiring. This could be because the organisation faces a sudden period of growth, and it needs to bring in candidates quickly while also successfully managing the cost. For many employers, the challenge of scaling quickly – especially with just a small in-house talent acquisition or recruitment team available – is a challenge that they cannot tackle alone. They need to find an outsourced model and a supportive recruitment partner.

So far, so good. But not every recruitment challenge is the same and there is no successful, one-size-fits-all approach. This is where, over the years, the reputation of the outsourcing model has been damaged. Too many RPO providers make promises that they cannot keep. They will deliver great candidates at a fraction of the cost, and all their clients need to do is sit back and watch the applications roll in.

Then those applications don't roll in. And often, the costs don't reflect the failure to deliver because the only important measure for the project is how much time has been spent on a fruitless search. There is no doubt that RPO needed to evolve. The bigger question was **'how'**? What do clients need and how can RPO partners build out their value proposition to stay relevant in a changing market?



The changing role of the RPO provider:

56% of employers report difficulties in accurately forecasting hiring requirements. RPO providers now need to play a critical role in helping organisations navigate workforce planning with data-driven insights.

Recruitment Process Outsourcing Association:
2025 RPO Trends Report





What should hiring organisations look for in an RPO provider?

RPO has evolved. One of the key drivers behind how RPO has changed is how the expectations of clients have shaped what their partners need to be able to deliver. Of course, the basics remain in place: a good RPO provider will reduce cost-per-hire and time-to-hire.

But above and beyond that, an outstanding RPO provider will offer clients so much more:

Agility

RPO contracts are no longer just about hitting hiring numbers each month. RPO providers need to align with broader business goals, adapting to changes by increasing and decreasing the flow of talent into the business. Remaining agile, responsive and in tune with client needs is a huge challenge for larger RPO organisations that are not conditioned to adapt quickly to market changes.

Specialist Recruiting Expertise

When the focus is on quality of candidates, rather than simply quantity, RPO organisations need a depth of expertise as well as a breadth. For many organisations, the opportunity to easily access recruiters with deep sector knowledge is an essential addition to their in-house capability.

Branding & Marketing

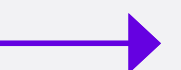
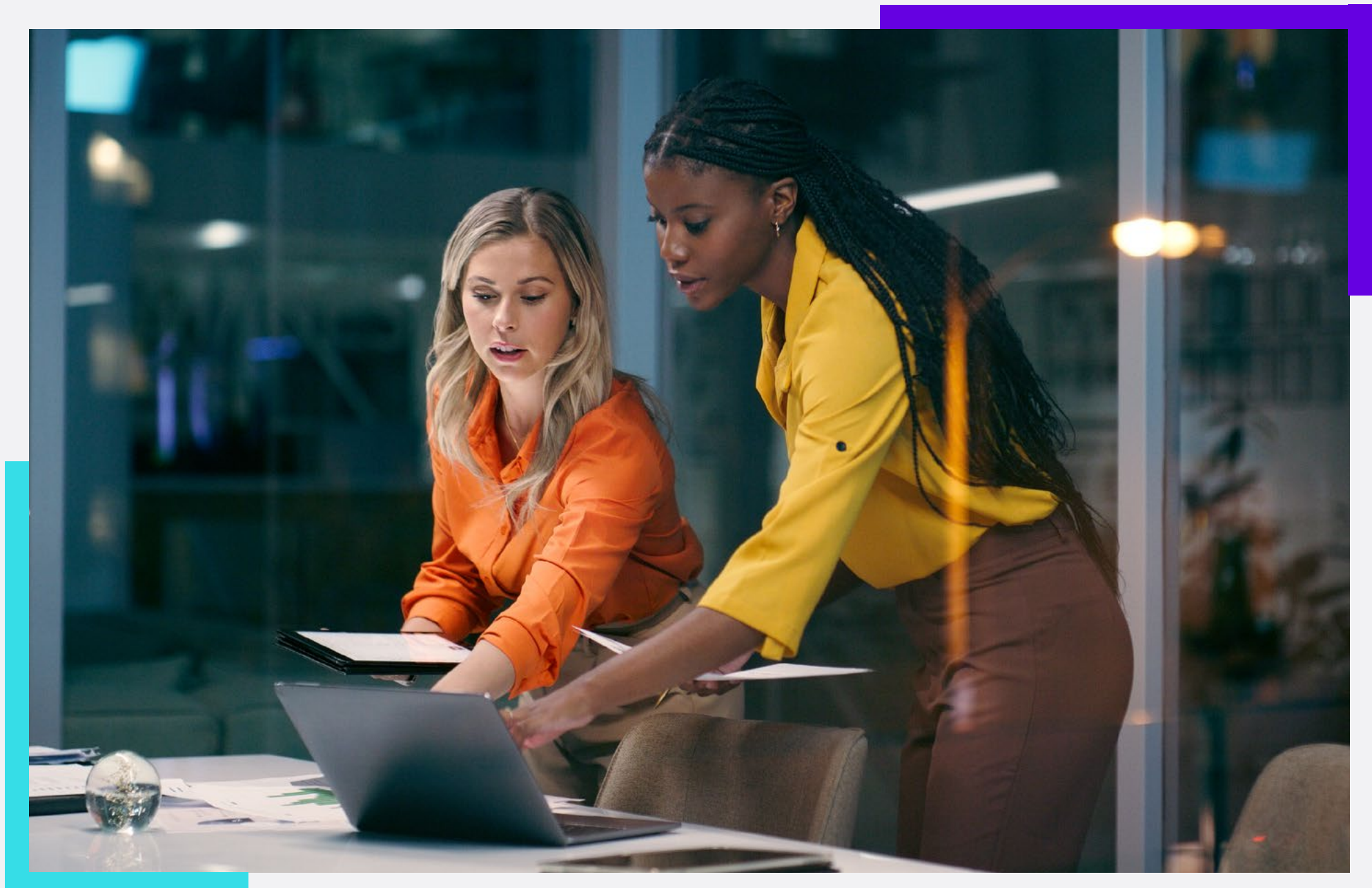
In the era of continued global skill shortages, employers need to increase their capability to attract and engage talent. It's not always enough to rely on existing networks or tried and trusted recruitment platforms. The ability to help build your employer brand and engage new candidates through digital marketing is a critical, new-generation RPO service.

Analytics and Reporting

Every client expects analytics and reporting that shows return on investment. But not every RPO is set up to deliver it in a coherent, accessible way. The best RPO partners have the strategic vision and data know-how to show a complete, end-to-end picture from initial attraction through to final application – preferably updated in real-time.

Process Improvement

At the heart of the evolving RPO model is a shift in mindset. It is less about simply outsourcing the process and more about playing a strategic role in reshaping the process. More and more, RPO teams work in close, open partnership with in-house teams, introducing best practices and helping HR and talent acquisition teams to future-proof their recruiting model and build in the agility they need to meet the ever-changing demands of the business.



Conclusion

Modern RPO organisations want to be measured by a different set of metrics. Not simply whether they find candidates – but also on how they help clients to plan, shape and build their future workforce. There are opportunities for RPO providers to impact on process, introduce best practices and help talent acquisition teams embed a new model that they can grow into and build out themselves in the future.

The emergence of a more strategic, consultative approach to RPO is built on a true sense of partnership with clients – setting shared objectives, understand the longer-term goals and delivering tangible value beyond the candidate pipeline.

Moving forward, the challenge for RPO organisations now is to be able to provide the depth of expertise and sheer range of strategic thinking that clients expect, alongside the agility to move fast and stay lean on costs.

For many RPO providers, that's a balance that's difficult to strike.





To find out more about our offering, or to discuss how we can support your business, **please get in touch.**

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