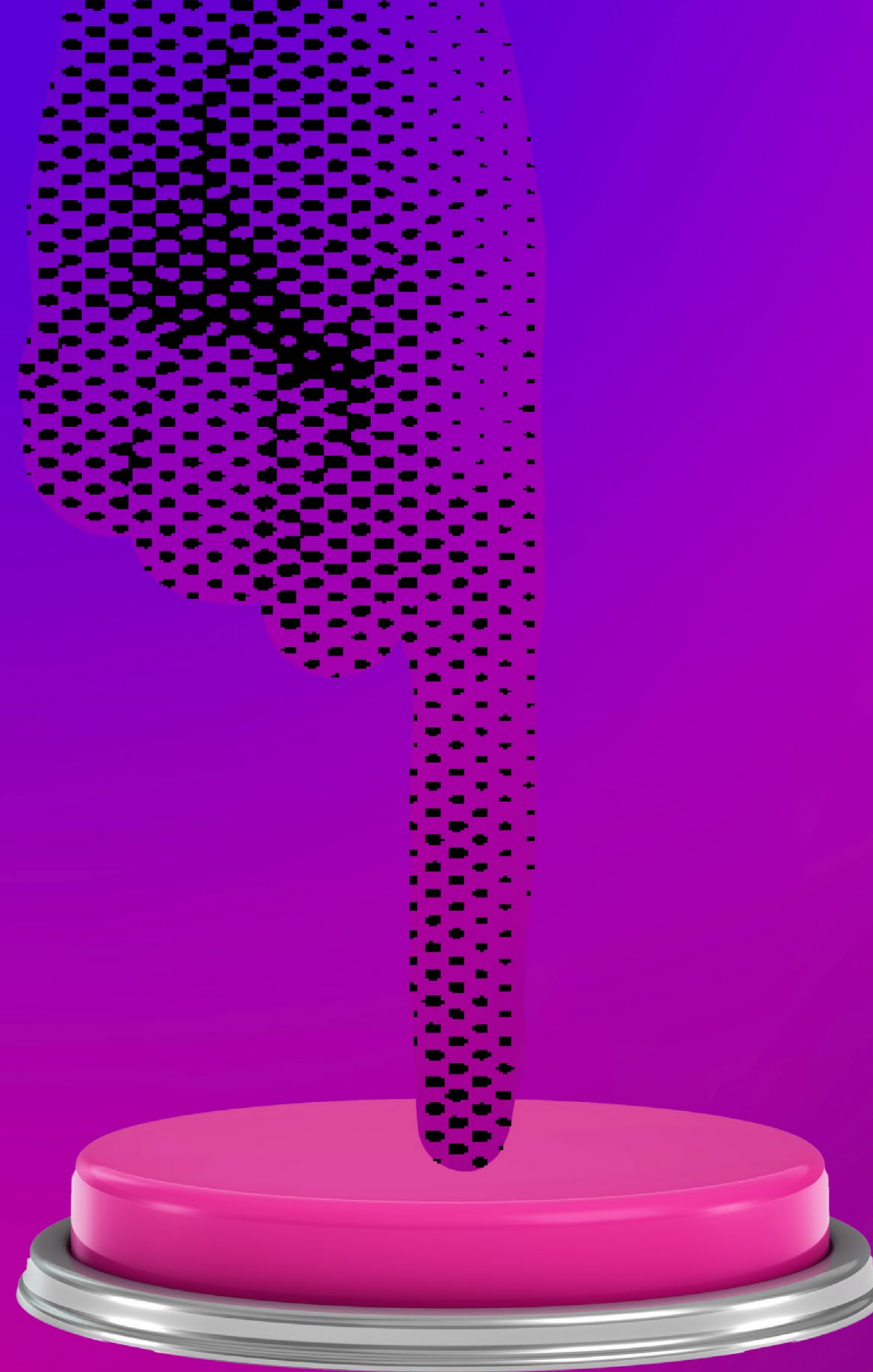




No need to hit the *panic button*.

Make RPO a part of your
hiring strategy.



Change how you hire. Everywhere. In every way.



Introduction

When it comes to hiring, many companies only call in an RPO provider when the alarm bells start ringing. It may be because they are scaling quickly, and they do not have the recruitment resource to cope in-house. Alternatively, they may have skills shortages in specialist areas and have realised they need to outsource help to fill critical roles. Whatever the reason, it's a reactive approach that can lead to rushed decisions, increased costs, and often poor hires.

RPO has always been the quick fix fall-back plan for these scenarios. But what if you could use RPO in a more strategic way? Increasingly, RPO providers are endeavouring to build longer term partnerships with clients, offer a wider range of services and achieve a new level of agility in how they operate.





Why the traditional RPO model is changing

Waiting until recruitment requirements reach a critical level before implementing an RPO solution can often have consequences further down the line – especially when the RPO contract runs its course. The partnership can end as abruptly as it has become, once all the roles have been filled. All too often, the end of the partnership reveals that the foundations put in place during the RPO were never really built to last.

If an RPO has been implemented without the right expertise, resource and processes underpinning the partnership, the focus is often only on hitting the numbers rather than reaching the best candidates. Without quality candidates coming into the organisation, engaged by the career conversation and genuinely motivated by the excitement of the opportunity, the likelihood is that those new recruits will drift away just as quickly as they arrived once the RPO has been wrapped up.

This is the challenge that traditional RPO providers face. The RPO model is evolving quickly, offering employers solutions that are based on long-term partnership and built on continuous improvement. A model that is not only dedicated to filling roles but also to building processes that last, growing an organisation's employer brand for the future and scaling up and down in an agile way to meet changing needs.



RPO should not be
your last resort,
but rather a
foundational pillar
in your *long-term talent*
acquisition strategy.





Adapting to the market

Over the last two years, a large number of talent acquisition teams have reduced in size and been asked to work with smaller budgets.

This has meant that those teams have fewer dedicated specialists in place – whether that is specialists in HR technology, in talent attraction, or in process improvement. This in turn has led TA teams to look at RPO providers differently – can they do more than simply supply recruitment resource? Can they fill the gaps in expertise in our team, helping us with technology implementations, brand-building, social media management, and the application process?

Who are the RPO providers who do more than the just the basics – improving talent attraction, growing talent communities, improving quality and driving better return on investment? By the time most companies look for an RPO provider, they're already in firefighting mode — looking for an instant fix. But effective recruitment takes time, planning, and consistency. It's not a switch you can flip overnight.

An evolving RPO model

A more reactive RPO model may, of course, be delivered out of necessity, rather than choice. But those employers need to change how they hire. You might get the hires you need, but you lose the opportunity to shape a sustainable, candidate-first, data-driven recruitment function.

Imagine having an RPO partner embedded at a strategic level — aligned to your values, consulting on your processes, and with full visibility into your workforce planning:

- Strategic workforce forecasting to prevent bottlenecks.
- Consistent employer branding and candidate messaging across all roles.
- Data-informed decision-making, using live dashboards and analytics.
- Lower cost-per-hire through process optimisation and talent pooling.
- Improved candidate and hiring manager satisfaction, thanks to clear processes and communication.
- Access to specialist recruiters with expertise across sectors, markets or roles.
- The agility to scale without compromising on quality.

Working in partnership
with a ***more strategic***
RPO helps to foster
**resilience, reduce risk,
and build a stronger
talent pipeline for
the future** — not just
a band-aid *for today.*





Make the change

The best time to adopt RPO isn't during a crisis — it's before one happens. Client/agency relationships are built over time, building solutions together rather than implementing a one-size-fits-all approach.

In 2026, it is likely that there will continue to be skills shortages in some areas, and economic uncertainty that affects business decision-making. With this in mind, employers can be reviewing their supplier strategy now and asking themselves whether they have a partner in place who can adapt to meet their changing needs. Ask yourself:

- Are you planning rapid growth in the next 6–12 months?
- Are you struggling to hire specialist roles or meet headcount goals?
- Is your candidate experience inconsistent or underwhelming?
- Are your internal teams stretched or lacking the right tools?
- Do you have visibility over recruitment metrics and ROI?

Not every RPO provider is going to be able to help you find the right answer to these questions – especially if their focus is on fighting fires, rather than building solutions.



Conclusion

Understanding the hiring landscape is difficult at the moment. It changes quickly and new challenges emerge that often ask talent acquisition teams to do more, with less.

The RPO companies that will strike the right message in 2026 will be those that can help their clients navigate through the uncertainty. How do they help you make the most of your budget? Are they helping you deliver long-term gains for the business, as well as meeting short-term hiring needs? Are they thinking beyond the typical RPO space, and exploring how they can engage their clients in the co-creation of a bespoke solution?

RPO isn't just a fix for urgent hiring. Done well, it is the enabler that can reshape your hiring solution, elevate your in-house capability and build your reputation as a destination employer.





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

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