

Thought Leadership

Maximizing the Role of the Client to Ensure Ultimate Outsourcing Success

By Kim Wipf

Six months ago, I decided to move from an organization where I worked as a client and champion of recruitment process outsourcing (RPO), to becoming a member of an RPO provider itself. Leading my former organization's RPO relationship for five years, I felt that I had a strong knowledge of RPO and how it's delivered to the client. However, as I gain a wider perspective into both sides of the spectrum, I've been surprised at how many clients and prospects are unsure of how to facilitate expectations when it comes to driving the success of the RPO partnership.

To maximize results and form a true partner relationship, clients should consider:

Accountability:

While it may seem obvious, it is vital for client RPO leaders to accept as much accountability for the success of the RPO as the RPO provider does. Let's face it –you will only be successful in your role, if the RPO is successful.

Best Practices:

- At the start of partnership, share your overall talent strategy with the RPO

provider. The RPO provider can only take part in the total responsibility of the talent acquisition solution if they understand your current, and more importantly, your future talent needs.

- Clearly define the governance model and escalation process. Who will make the ultimate decisions around resources, sourcing spend, etc.? How will these issues be resolved and who on both sides will be accountable?
- A good RPO relationship should act as a seamless part of the recruitment function. Commit to consistent messaging across the board and keep the mindset that any staffing action is a function of the organization's overall recruitment process, not a function of any one group.

Invest in the Relationship:

When you hire a new employee, there will always be a learning curve. The same goes for an RPO partnership. Be highly engaged in the implementation process, accurately assess the degree of resistance from the

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Kim is a Senior Vice President with The RightThing and provides strategic oversight of our client delivery model, constructing solutions to address client needs, overseeing development of the senior client delivery team and collaborating with others on our overall strategic mission.

Kim was our partner and former client at AstraZeneca for many years. In her previous position as Executive Director of Global Recruitment with AstraZeneca where she served for 9 years, Kim oversaw the global recruitment program for the UK and Sweden in addition to the US.

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business, create a change management plan and provide a solid orientation for your RPO recruiters. Since RPO providers don't live within your organization, it's vital to teach them what it's like to work in your company. The more you strategically integrate RPO team members into your culture, the better equipped they will be to truly understand and sell your organization.

Best Practices:

- Host on-site orientation and training sessions for the RPO team to help educate them on company values and culture as well as the unique pain points of your business.
- Allow RPO team members to shadow current employees on the positions they will support for a true "day-in-the-life" experience that will better enable the RPO team to speak to these positions.
- Introduce the RPO team to employees identified as top performers in the roles they will hire for. This will help the RPO team gain a clear picture of the specific characteristics and qualifications truly needed for success.

Champion Results:

Recruitment is challenging and businesses are always vocal on the quality of the candidates and the recruitment process. To ensure success, it's vital that Hiring Managers provide feedback on these things to allow for continuous satisfaction and improvement. A common theme I've heard repeatedly over the last six months is the lack of feedback from the Hiring

Manager or the Hiring Manager's unavailability to interview. As an HR leader, it's up to you to teach the organization the value of candidate relationship management.

Best Practices:

- Commit to training Hiring Managers on the importance of employment branding initiatives and set internal standards on feedback turnaround and interview cycle times. Some clients have gone as far as closing requisitions when Hiring Managers don't provide feedback within a given period of time.
- Invest in and utilize technology to help provide a high touch candidate experience from start to finish.
- Use metrics to track and monitor Hiring Manager turnaround time and if necessary incentivize Hiring Managers to participate in satisfaction surveys for on-going improvement.

Ongoing Discussions:

Keep the channels of communication open between yourself, your team, and the RPO team. Focus on solutions instead of placing blame. RPO recruiters are highly committed to the client and take ownership for their mistakes, but they like praise as well. Celebrate the wins and resolve the issues.

Best Practices:

- Champion ongoing and open communication. Commit to daily, weekly and monthly phone calls and

regular onsite process reviews to assess wins and identify areas for improvement.

- Most RPO providers have the ability to provide robust data and metrics to help tell the "true story." Take the time to understand these and use them to assist in educating, informing and helping internal staff see and understand the partnership value when challenges arise.
- Make it a goal to share your recruiting success stories. Share them not only with like groups of hiring managers, but across all functions within your organization.

With the unique opportunity to deliver on both sides of the spectrum, I've certainly come to a deeper appreciation of RPO and what it takes both from a client and provider to maximize success. By gaining a better understanding of each other, we can continue to build better partnerships and better outcomes. ■