

The hard work of head hunting

Recruitment process outsourcing can shore up staffing needs

by Bob Rodgers

It is estimated that 85 percent of all U.S. companies outsource some of their human resources functions.

What is human resources outsourcing (HRO), and can it work for us here in Gwinnett County? To answer the second question first, a resounding "yes." For more information on HRO, read on.

HRO allows small to mid-size companies to focus on their particular areas of expertise while relying on HRO specialists to take care of some or all of the functions of the company's HR needs, without the necessity of having an on-site HR staff within the company.

HRO firms serve as off-site HR departments, acting as either an extension of a company's own HR department or, as is more often the case, as a company's entire "off-site" HR department. Employee benefits, hiring, training, administration, payroll and even total on-boarding of new hires can be monitored by HROs.

Business owners need no longer worry about open enrollment periods or benefits paperwork when they have off-site specialists to do this job for them. Employees need only call an 800 number or visit the appropriate HRO website to answer questions they may have. While this may be tough to get used to at first, most employees grow to love the service.

One of the fastest-growing sectors of HRO is recruitment process outsourcing (RPO). This is where the hiring and other recruitment processes for a company are outsourced to an RPO specialist.


What makes RPO different from an executive recruitment firm? A few key functions.

First, typically (but not always) RPO recruiting is for a temporary (long or short-term) job situation. Basically, it's a "pay as you go" service, thereby allowing for cost benefits to the employer. In a seasonal business, for example, RPO can obtain the qualified talent you need for the time you need it.

Next, RPO is a measurable or scalable process. An updated version of employee leasing, an RPO specialist acts as a partner

in the growth of a company's bottom line. All recruiting, training and paperwork for the company's RPO hires are handled off-site by the RPO provider. The RPO model is methodologically modeled to be scalable. In the event of a sudden need for talent, say a company is launching a new product, or a company is opening a new division, or the company performs seasonally, the formula for talent created by the RPO specialist is scalable to all potential hires of the client's company. Fifty qualified people can be hired as easily as five, all in a remarkably quick time table. RPO providers have talent from which they can draw in a short amount of time, when speed is of the essence.

Naturally, RPO rules out C-level or board-level hires, and even most executive hires as well. For such specialized employees, you will need the services that only an executive recruiter can bring to the table. Again, the HR function of recruiting, or an RPO solution, is an off-site extension of the company for which it is being utilized, handling administrative tasks and on-boarding. As you can see, this is not the same as an executive recruitment agency, although more and more recruiters are currently implementing RPO models themselves.

One other important point to remember: RPO is not for broken companies. It cannot act in the manner of glue or tape to mend a cracked system. Since the hires are technically under the employ of the HR outsourcer, their loyalty lies with the person who signs their paycheck and this is not you. Sometimes it may be best to call in a business consultant or even an executive recruiter and see whether a new permanent position needs to be created within your company. RPO may be your answer if your employee needs are of an urgent, perhaps temporary or seasonal, mid-level nature. 

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