

Putting the State of Art in RPO to Work for You

An industry PRO explains how an outsourced solution can keep your HR team from being distracted by recruitment's administrative chores.

As the head of business development for CDI Corporation's Talent Management Division Chris Kilpatrick has spent more than 17 years in national and global sales roles within the staffing and outsourcing industry and was a key member of the Professional Recruitment Outsourcing (PRO) development team. To help recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) practitioners catch up on the latest market trends, he shared his thoughts on the most pertinent developments affecting recruitment.

Q: How has RPO helped today's growing organizations?

CK: RPO provides a focused and professional recruiting team not distracted by other HR responsibilities. This model supports alignment of recruitment with the client's business strategy and for sourcing qualified candidates. The RPO team assists HR in implementing consistent and best-in-class recruitment tools for improved branding and candidate experience. Additionally, RPO is managed through performance metrics and increases client visibility to the current state of recruitment. The RPO partner assumes risk for scaling their team as client requirements change over time, resulting in quicker acquisition of qualified talent at a lower cost.

Q: How can RPO help a buyer become more strategic?

CK: RPO allows HR to focus strategically rather than on transactions and increases operational leverage through scalability. Increased visibility to recruitment trends and forecasting, access to performance-based metrics, and improved alignment with end user needs create a tighter bond between recruitment and the company's strategic approach. The RPO partner is managed through performance, allowing greater focus on recruiting brand, policy decisions to best manage risk, and talent management to better support long-term goals. HR becomes an effective business partner, supporting growth and the bottom line.

Q: What should HR leaders be aware of and focus on when engaging in an RPO decision?

CK: First, understand what is being quoted. Second, don't underestimate the time and energy needed to evaluate and select the right partner, including negotiating a well-constructed contract. Third, recognize the need to invest in change management, including significant time educating and preparing the organization for the transition. Finally, cost savings is one decision driver but not the only one. Increased operating leverage and laser-focused recruiting will drive cost savings and provide increased performance and flexibility.

Q: Explain how your organization has established its approach to the marketplace?

CK: In 2005 CDI concluded RPO market research and identified key elements to drive our RPO solution, including a clearly defined market niche, performance-based pricing, and a high touch model supported by effective technology. We observed three supplier types: small, undefined niche players, technology players, and staffing firms leveraging temporary infrastructure for direct-hire services. We saw value in leveraging CDI's 50-year engineering/IT heritage and building a clearly defined solution. We also believe one RPO partner can rarely meet all the diverse and frequently global client requirements; therefore, our working model includes selecting strong recruiting and technology partners to deliver the best model to meet client needs.

Q: What differentiates your company among RPO suppliers?

CK: CDI PRO is a true end-to-end, performance-based solution. Clients are billed when hires are made. CDI minimizes customer risk through service level agreements (SLAs) with financial impact. We focus on professional level skills with average annual compensation of \$90k+, typically the most challenging to recruit. We are technology agnostic and can supply market leading technology, use client tools, or assist with technology selection.

Q: Can you share a client story of RPO supporting a more strategic HR?

CK: A large client viewed RPO as a platform for global growth and a standardized recruitment process to ensure that their talent acquisition strategy supported business goals and leveraged technology investment. Since a 2006 North American implementation, they have realized a reduction of more than 25 percent in costs, a 10-day reduction in time to fill, an 86-percent customer satisfaction rate, and a 99-percent compliance rate with documentation requirements. We have built a 500,000-plus database of qualified candidates and have begun global rollout.