

Recruitment Process Outsourcing Crosses the Channel



After trailing the adoption rate in the U.K., RPO in continental Europe is starting to make greater inroads.

By Ettore Landini

It's no secret that the U.K. is one of Europe's most mature markets when it comes to recruitment process outsourcing (RPO). However, companies across the region—from France to Norway to Italy to Germany—are now becoming part of this rapidly growing trend by leveraging the strategic benefits that this highly specialized service offers.

Although you might hear multiple definitions in the marketplace, Futurestep defines RPO as a highly customized, fully integrated single-source solution in which expert consultants manage all of a client's human capital requirements, either on-site from their location or from the provider's. The goal is to attract the highest-quality talent while also bringing improved processes and efficiencies to the organization. To do this, providers leverage brand, leading-edge technology, proven diagnostic and metrics, and their global reach.

RPO is meant to be customized to what an individual company needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach to the recruitment function. A good recruitment partner must be agile and prepared to scale its support as client needs fluctuate. When done correctly, it is clear that RPO helps build stronger teams, which positively affects customer satisfaction and improves business results. The right RPO partner will offer:

- **Expertise and a solid track record.** Companies are looking to leverage RPO providers who offer best practices when it comes to volume recruitment strategies.
- **Speed.** It is a constant challenge to find the right people as quickly as possible, so identifying strategies

to reduce time-to-hire is critically important to any company's core business.

- **High quality.** Just about anyone can fill a seat, but a good RPO provider will deliver top-quality candidates with the expertise required and within the pre-defined parameters while also bolstering the overall recruitment process.
- **Cost control.** Savings can be spread across an organization when recruitment efficiencies occur or when variable cost models are employed. An upfront diagnostic can identify many of the hidden flaws in the internal recruiting process, while mutually agreed-upon metrics can ensure that the results are achieved both on time and on budget.
- **Technology-supported strategic objectives.** The right blend of HR expertise with leading-edge technology support (not vice versa).
- **Global oversight.** Companies insist on maintaining and reinforcing control of their recruitment function, and we find this to be particularly true for international clients. With this in mind, a good RPO provider will honor that need while also adding value, improved communication, and strategic insights every step of the way.
- **Pan-European and/or global capabilities.** An RPO partner with a large global footprint can scale to meet demands that change over time.

When Will You Be Ready?

While each company faces unique challenges with its industry, geographic footprint, and sheer size, there are a few definitive signs that it might be time to consider outside support of your recruitment function. Here are a few points to consider:

- Your company has immediate plans to hire high volumes of employees—from a few dozen to hundreds or more—in three to five months.
- These imminent volume hires are for highly specialized roles (engineering, finance/accounting, healthcare, etc.).
- Your organization requires these volume hires to be strategically placed across multiple geographies.

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- You work for a start-up organization or are planning to relocate.
 - Your company faces a significant shift in business strategy and/or plans to launch new products or services.
 - Merger or acquisition plans are on your company's horizon.

An RPO might be right if you face complex recruitment challenges requiring long-term strategic and day-to-day tactical support. RPO in one market is gaining momentum. Just three years ago, single-search transactions comprised approximately 90 percent of Futurestep Italy's business mix, with the remaining 10 percent going towards project recruitment. Today, more than 60 percent of Futurestep Italy's business is in project recruitment and RPO account work, with single transactions making up the rest.

This acceptance can be seen in employers such as European consumer electronics manufacturer Kesa Darty Group, which is hiring 150 workers for its facility in Darty, Italy. Other examples of RPO users include volume hires for building products leader Lafarge Roofing and Italian beer giant Birra Peroni. These clients are proof of a significant shift among companies recruiting locally in Italy.

Historically, continental Europe has been slower to embrace RPO than the U.K. Now, however, the concept is being more widely put into practice by companies located in countries all across Europe and across the world.

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