



Kristin Shulman
Head of Digital Marketing and
Brand, Allegis Global Solutions

Enabling a Better Relationship with an RPO Partner

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In today's global economy, five generations are working side by side for the first time in history—each with its own skillsets, communication preferences, and leadership styles. Faced with this increasingly diverse talent pool, immense technological innovation, and the growing expectation of a consumer-like experience, organisations must adopt a flexible, adaptive approach to recruitment or risk getting left behind. Partnering with an RPO firm that provides a consultative approach could be the secret ingredient to succeeding in the war for talent.

Q: What are some of the top recruitment challenges that employers are facing today?

A: The top challenges are really understanding the emerging digital landscape, defining user experience from a talent acquisition perspective, and creating an aspirational roadmap for the TA function. The talent landscape is evolving due to generational changes, and this combined with the growing digital economy means that attracting the right talent with the right skillset can be a major challenge.

In this environment, employee and candidate engagement are emerging as key differentiators, with organisations working to motivate their employee base to become brand ambassadors. But beyond that, HR professionals are increasingly focused on the importance of their marketing and branding efforts. How can we be efficient in how we are advertising our roles to new talent landscapes or talent pools? What types of advertising channels do we need to look at? How can we leverage the skillsets of individuals who do not necessarily look like a good cookie cutter fit for the organisation?

These are all questions that are top of mind for today's business leaders.

Q: What are the expectations of today's clients when they partner with an RPO?

A: Whereas we used to see a transactional approach before, RPOs are really taking a holistic and consultative approach now. At the core, it is still about getting the right people in the role at the right time, but today's RPOs are working to enable the organisation to enhance their recruitment process with the right technology while maintaining a positive user experience—whether it's for the candidate, hiring manager, or recruiter.

If an organisation is struggling to adopt new technology, RPOs work to help them build a roadmap that integrates their future needs with their current tech stack. And this isn't just limited to the RPO's technology offerings; providers today have strong relationships with various tech partners, enabling deeper workflow conversations and more customised tech solutions. It's not about pushing what we have—it's about sharing knowledge, helping clients meet their goals, and developing an effective change management process.

Ultimately, the goal is to understand the customer's pain points, their needs, and their end goals, and then tailor a solution accordingly. One-size-fits-all solutions are no longer the norm; RPOs are using a consultative approach to help their customers understand the evolving market and emerging trends as they go through their roadmap development.

Q: How can HR leaders ensure an effective partnership with an RPO provider that is delivering a customised programme?

A: Number one is relationship management. One of the things that we're focused on is ensuring that we're open and transparent throughout the entire relationship—really driving communication throughout the entire process. Establishing regular governance and health checks is important. Part of that is defining a clear strategy, understanding the timeframes and what the roadmap looks like, and then thinking of the future and beyond, or the art of the possible.

To do this effectively, it's essential to define key metrics of success and then measure how the programme is performing against those KPIs. If a programme is hitting its goals, how can we continue to improve? If it is not, how can we fill the gaps and set priorities?

The frequency of these health checks should be established up front, because the governance cadence can vary widely depending on the specifics of the programme and the preferences of key stakeholders. For example, the CHRO may only need to meet with the RPO account director once a quarter, but the vice president of HR may want to meet every fortnight. Organisations should establish the right points of contact and develop a clear communication plan throughout the lifecycle of the programme.