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Transforming Hiring in the Digital Age

With Jade Clifford, Executive Director of RPO EMEA, Allegis Global Solutions

From communicating with job seekers to onboarding new hires, technology has changed the entire HR landscape. Talent acquisition leaders are now able to leverage intelligent tools to do tasks such as conduct interviews on mobile phones, answer candidate inquiries via social media platforms, and even eliminate bias in the hiring process. The modern HR team has become a hybrid function where humans and machines work together in a seamless, efficient, and effective relationship. But enabling a corporate culture that welcomes these technological innovations and managing the change management process into the digital era can be challenging. Here, Jade Clifford, Executive Director of RPO EMEA at Allegis Global Solutions, shares her insights.

Q: What are the key advancements happening in talent acquisition right now?

A: We are seeing more movement of talent than ever before. Companies are becoming more flexible in the types of workforce arrangements they offer, and talent acquisition teams are being forced to adapt in order to meet those needs. That means expanding hiring efforts into new talent pools and geographies and working in a much more agile fashion in order to retain talent quality. Recruitment teams no longer have the time to go and manually search individual job boards—they need to be able to flex and adapt their strategy at a moment's notice, no matter where in the world they are recruiting.

Digital transformation is a key component, with companies increasingly adopting automated and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled technologies that integrate into sophisticated technology stacks. You cannot overlook the hiring manager and candidate experience. Talent acquisition teams need to ensure they can maintain a high quality of interaction to keep candidates engaged whilst filling their talent needs. Recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) providers are helping them remain competitive, developing scientific ways to identify key moments of experience and designing processes to improve those encounters.

Q: What technologies have RPO providers begun to offer?

A: RPO providers have begun to integrate technologies throughout the entirety of the hiring process—from pre- to post-application. When looking at how to attract talent, everything from programmatic advertising to candidate relationship management (CRM) technology is driving value. In fact, hiring managers should not necessarily view applicant tracking systems (ATSs) and CRM platforms as two distinct technologies—we are in a new era of ATSs that provide strong recruitment marketing capabilities.

Companies are also finding it increasingly important to use intelligent automation technologies. This can include AI-powered chatbots that initially engage or speak to a candidate, or automated screening technologies that move candidates through the next stage of the recruitment process. Even sourcing is being automated, with a lot more tools in the marketplace that leverage AI to seek and assess available candidates. And what I really love seeing is that we're not overlooking the tail end of the recruitment process once a candidate accepts a position and onboarding begins, with a number of experience-based automated applications emerging to support both the hiring manager and the new employee through this stage.

Q: What do you see as the main barriers to success of adopting this new approach to recruitment?

A: It really comes down to change management. Any level of transformation is going to need a mindful

approach that acknowledges the impact of the change from the very beginning. HR leaders should keep in mind some key considerations: How do you make sure that you are backing the move to a more digital way of working? How are you communicating that transition across the business?

This takes time and for talent acquisition leaders, time is a precious commodity. Identifying a dedicated resource that can focus on managing that type of change without other distractions can be a huge advantage. Whether it is somebody from within the talent acquisition team or a specific project management resource, the right person for the job should be responsible for the entire change management journey and should incorporate a solid training and communication plan.

Q: What advice can you offer for organisations looking to engage an RPO?

A: I think that relationship and transparency are the most important factors—treating your RPO provider as a genuine partner really gets the best outcome. Companies should be as transparent as they can, communicating their business drivers, priorities, and objectives and really collaborating to put together a clear plan for partnership. Whether it involves business meetings or engaging in quarterly reviews, it's important to have that one-on-one positive working relationship and share information as it becomes available.