



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION AND MANAGEMENT

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**RECRUITMENT PROCESS OUTSOURCING: KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIAN TALENT****TADAMARLA.ANUPAMA****ASST. PROFESSOR****COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC STUDIES****UNIVERSITY OF PETROLEUM AND ENERGY STUDIES****DEHRADUN****INUMULA.KRISHNA MURTHY****ASST. PROFESSOR****COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC STUDIES****UNIVERSITY OF PETROLEUM AND ENERGY STUDIES****DEHRADUN****ABSTRACT**

*After the globalization and aftermath liberalization process India is gaining the distinction of becoming one of the worlds' largest talent incubators where diversified skill set lie in all disciplines ranging from IT to Services. As the job scenario in the country changing from time to time, demand and supply variations in human resource at firm and industry level have made the role of HR department very hard to pick the right job for right person in right time. To fill this gap there emerged Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) where firms outsource their recruitment process completely or partially to an outside agency gained popularity in the early 2000's. The recent global recession impacted the flow of workforce resulted in hiring numbers went down across the globe have also made RPO firms had a tough time in talent hunt. In this article we have discussed and analyzed how this concept of RPO works in Indian context and what are the key challenges and opportunities for Indian talent and for RPO, growth potential of RPO business in India.*

**KEYWORDS**

Talent hunt, RPO, Globalization, Workforce.

**INTRODUCTION**

**R**ecruitment is an important part of an organization's human resource planning; their competitive strength lies in allocating resources to specific tasks done by specialized personnel. Competent human resources at the right positions in the organization are a vital resource and can be a core competency or a strategic advantage for it. Most of the business organizations fail to perform at their best because of the wrong allocation of human resource at different strategic levels in the organization. As the job scenario is changing from time to time, no employee sticks in an organization for more than two years that is the reason why companies spend lot of resources in terms of money and time in hiring the required human resource. There comes the need for RPO firms which act as the specialized consulting firm for recruitments. An RPO firm directly goes to the employers with the right kind of professionals, starting from a fresher to filling up the position of a well-experienced director. Recruitment Process Outsourcing where firms outsource their recruitment process completely or partially to an outside agency there by concentrating on their core competency areas such as management, leadership and brand position that enables superior results to be achieved towards the attainment of business objectives and goals, the company can focus on its core business rather than focusing on a non core area like hiring and may get a better return on investment made in the business. Also, if the demands are fluctuating then the company doesn't have to bother about scaling up or down which is handled by the RPO. Also, companies do not have to maintain large teams to manage the volumes. RPO offers them scale up/scale down flexibility and this is a great benefit given the volatile market scenario.

Recruitment of candidates is the function preceding the selection, where the main objective of the recruitment process is to expedite the selection process thus the objective of the recruitment process is to obtain the number and quality of employees in order to help the organization to achieve its goals and objectives. With the same objective, recruitment helps to create a pool of prospective employees for the organization so that the management can select the right candidate for the right job from this pool. Recruitment is a continuous process whereby the firm attempts to develop a pool of qualified applicants for the future human resources needs even though specific vacancies do not exist. According to the future step executive insight "RPO is a specialized service that allows clients to outsource some or all of the recruitment functions". An RPO provider leverages the combination of strategy, technology, resources and vendor management to improve the recruitment process. Business process outsourcing (BPO) and its subsets, notably including human resource outsourcing (HRO), are widely accepted strategic services that rapidly reduce a company's costs and improve its competitiveness. Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) is being adopted by companies to address increasingly strategic and tactical needs. According to the study, by global professional association and think tank Human Capital Institute (HCI), and research partner, Futurestep indicates continuing demand for RPO and companies are applying the practice to address both immediate tactical recruiting needs in difficult times and strategic functions of planning for long-term development In this globalization era as the economy is expanding more rapidly, many firms are expanding their presence and are getting large projects, for which professionals in large numbers will be required.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is no much literature available on recruitment process outsourcing, however the earlier works, most of them are surveys under taken by recruiting firms on this novel concept may contribute to the present explorative study. Look for more organizations to engage in "Partnership recruiting", a trend in which they outsource much of the recruitment and selection process to outside firms to avoid lengthy delays in hiring much-needed talent. Large corporations are looking for partnership with firms that can provide not only executive search and recruitment work but also strategic consultancy services. In addition to streamlining the hiring process, they're looking to cut costs (Allen Salikof). Recruiting is usually one of the last functions a company outsources, largely because of the importance that corporate culture plays in hiring. But once companies outsource recruiting, they usually stick to it (Michel Janssen, managing research director at Everest Group). For decades, companies have outsourced one or two elements of recruiting or sourcing for specific positions, but RPO means binding the process itself over to the provider and, most important, using the provider's expertise and scale to re-engineer the process for greater efficiency. The demand for global end-to-end recruitment process outsourcing (RPO), is growing as multinationals strengthen their presence in a range of markets and accelerate hiring (Hansen, Fay). Recruitment process outsourcing, or RPO, has been growing well since 2002, when there was a big push for total business process outsourcing. "Recruitment was pulled along on the BPO coattails," Recruitment is one of the most strategic parts of HR, if not the most strategic. There are important issues coming up, such as retirement cliffs, shortages of workers in critical jobs and workforce planning, that are tied into recruiting. People don't want to give up control of that." (Doug Rippey, senior workforce planning consultant with Watson Wyatt). The HR community needs to get more strategic, which is not the case today. HR professionals need to upgrade and position themselves to be more strategic than tactical; they need to understand the difference between tactical HR and strategic HR. (Robert McNabb, CEO, and Futurestep)

Because of the expertise RPOs provide a lot of other benefits to the companies like lower lead times, process efficiency like better screening, lower cost due to scale and most importantly, it doesn't bear the fixed cost of the hiring set up – the cost is only transactional," (Deepak Kaistha, managing partner, Planman HR). The RPO market is evolving quickly from merely a process and cost focus to a strategic transformational change process designed to fast track organizations' ability not only to compete more efficiently for talent at an enterprise-wide level, but to secure a competitive advantage at the industry-wide level. HRO and RPO are fast becoming adopted as strategically important sub-sets of BPO. In fact, RPO may just be this decade's most powerful, yet best kept, "secret weapon" in the war for talent (Tim Nelson and Brett Gerard).

### RPO BUSINESS AT GLOBAL LEVEL

Recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) is in its early stages compared to more mature BPO and HRO services such as payroll processing, benefits administration (which comprise almost 2/3rd of the total HR outsourcing), it is one of the most fastest growing services emerging in support of organizations' talent management requirements. The Global RPO market has been growing well since 2002 when there was a big push for total business process outsourcing. Talent management is the top HR issue faced by organizations today, hence the need for improved speed and quality of talent acquisition is the major driver for companies looking to outsource to providers with recruitment expertise. The recent global recession impacted the flow of workforce resulted in hiring numbers went down across the globe have also made RPO firms had a tough time in talent hunt, however the value proposition of RPO is still resonating with buyers that are looking for a cost-effective and flexible option to withstand the current turmoil and at the same time create an efficient and effective talent-acquisition process that can be scaled up quickly when business environment improves. The HCI/Future step survey has revealed recent trends of RPO business which includes, in terms of adoption more than half (59%) of organizations surveyed outsource some or all recruiting practices, and 50 percent say they will use RPO within the next five years. In terms of scope, the majority of current RPO deals cover selective practices for tactical needs. Among users, the most common definition of RPO (indicated by 36 percent of respondents) is the outsourcing of some recruiting activities for some levels of employees. Organizations ranked "Active Recruiting," the service they considered most important to their talent management goals, second most likely to be outsourced. Practices focusing on strategic talent needs, such as talent strategy development/consulting, are outsourced less frequently. Key findings of the survey: Organizations rating the Return on Investment (ROI) for their RPO program number as "good" or "excellent" number only 39 percent and those that use an RPO approach for longer-term strategic needs, such as workforce planning, employment branding and competency management, are significantly more likely to report excellent ROI for their recruitment outsourcing. When HCI re-surveyed 86 respondents in November 2008, to gauge how the economic crisis will affect RPO during the next two years, responses showed that RPO, especially when focused on strategic business needs, can become a tool to compete during tough times. 44 percent of those respondents indicated that, even in the event of a recruitment budget decline, their organizations' investments in RPO may still increase in the future thus the demand for global end-to-end recruitment process outsourcing is growing as multinationals strengthen their presence in a range of markets and accelerate hiring.

### RPO BUSINESS IN INDIA

As a developing country and major market for international players, India plays an important role in world economy. After the BPO and KPO boom, the corporate sector in India is steadily gearing up for RPO. There has been a sudden surge of demand for candidates as the job scenario in the country looks in a good shape, to bridge the gap between demand and supply variations in human resource, more RPO firms are coming up for taking the burden out of the head-hunting business of the corporate sector. With the employment scenario taking a healthy turn in India, hiring of RPO firms by companies for their recruitment solutions would certainly play a vital role in near future. And this would then ease the burden on the HR operations of a company. While the RPO concept has taken a healthy shape in the Western countries, in India is currently at its infant stage; however there are only a few RPO firms currently catering to the needs of various domestic as well as multi-nationals in hiring employees for them. Since corporate companies are aspiring to build large talent pools within a short period of time are at a loss when it comes to assessing and selecting right candidates by resume processing, screening & validation; candidate skill-mapping and in database building and management, many international companies are opening up their offices in the country and looking for professionals to handle their operations. Keeping in view the booming job scenario, IT, finance, banking, pharmacy, life sciences, retailing are identified as some of the areas where there is a sudden surge of demand for candidates. In a bid to cost cutting measures, most of the corporate giants based in the United States and the United Kingdom are looking to leverage their recruitment process outsourcing services from emerging market locations like India and China. According to global consulting and research firm Everest Group, increasing cost pressures in the current economic environment has led North American and UK buyers to start receiving the back-office RPO services from offshore location such as India. The recent global recession impacted the flow of workforce resulted in hiring numbers went down across the globe have also made RPO firms had a tough time in talent hunt however to create an efficient talent acquisition process that can be scaled up quickly when business environment improves over a period of time as the economy witness higher growth. Indian suppliers such as Infosys, Wipro and Caliber Point have already entered this space in the past two years, while Western suppliers such as Momentum and People Scout are also leveraging India for delivering RPO services. The RPO industry has good potential for growth in India. It has a huge population and moreover 54% of its population is below the age of 25, India all set to reap the demographic dividend, the demographics in the industrialized nations – the US, UK, Germany, France, Australia and so on – has changed significantly. Population in these countries is shrinking dramatically and US companies are recruiting as many people from India as they can and all of the multinationals want to recruit more engineers from India. There are dramatic demographic changes happening around the world, therefore, huge potential for Indian talent, moreover, there are excellent universities that are churning out very good talent and yet to make education reforms that will pave the way for interaction between industry and education. Last and most important, there have been huge capital investments made in India, so as companies grow and realize that they need more and better quality talent, the RPO model will be sought as a savior for many companies. According to the leading RPO firm futurestep, "India is considered to be the number one market, bigger than the US, significant investments were made in this business and market India is huge on outsourcing", however the RPO industry is still in its infant stages but a lot of companies in the US, specially financial companies, have opened outsourcing centres in India, and are seeking RPOs to tap quality talent and have better, reliable and cost-effective processes in place.

### CONFLICTING VIEWS ON CHANGING HR SCENARIO

Earlier firms used to outsource manufacturing, but now services taking that place and where the role of RPO is become very crucial in work force planning in an organization. Because of the seasonal fluctuations in demand and supply of human resource and to sustain in recession times, companies are in quandary whether to go with in-house recruitment or perhaps find a strategic partner which can architecturally design and customize the recruitment process to improve results. That is, engaging a recruitment processing outsourcing (RPO) firm to design a process which is best for a company to acquire, groom and retain talent. The challenge of acquiring and retaining the right talent has brought the HR fraternity to prominence. Recruiting often is the most tedious process to outsource because it requires HR to stay intimately involved with the provider; Companies need to think hard about the strategic and administrative implications of outsourcing recruitment. The problem identified in RPO system is that some employers have been disappointed in the candidates recruited. Here, however, the fault may lie in the fact that the employer fails to define the value proposition for working environment or selection process made by RPO does not suitable to the requirement of the employer. The RPO industry is undergoing a transformation, it is changing dramatically. Companies will need to have HR departments that are more strategic in nature, and that understand the demographic challenges and the limitations of individuals. The changing nature of workforce is the primary reason for HR becoming more strategic.

### RPO WOULD FREE UP HR TO FOCUS ON OTHER PRIORITIES?

HR departments are being undermined by cost-driven recruitment outsourcing deals that do not take enough account of quality, while it was right that process functions were being outsourced in the name of efficiency, recruitment was a key strategic tool and outsourcing it could leave HR sidelined, outsourcing can reduce quality days, and that is a problem for HR at a time when it is trying to prove itself at executive level.

Therefore an RPO firm should be very careful in approaching an employer and should have multi disciplinary approach in line with the HR in recruiting the candidates. All HR functions should look at outsourcing their recruitment, freeing up HR staff to concentrate on other matters.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIAN TALENT

Multinational corporations have been regularly placing some of their best brains in their global system, the search for talent among these global enterprises is now gathering pace. Global enterprises have started scouting the country for quality talent to fill positions across geographies. Recruitment companies say Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific, Middle East and the rest of the SAARC region are expected to import talent from India across profiles and domains, in significant numbers. According to industry estimates, close to 100 top level executives (CXO positions), 30,000 middle to junior level hiring across profiles and domains are expected during the year and these numbers are expected to only go up in the coming years. While Africa is exploring Indian talent for the telecom and mining spaces, Singapore Canada and the US are looking for talent for their banking and finance, IT and semiconductor industries. On the other hand, Dubai and Malaysia are expected to be looking for personnel for infrastructure and construction verticals while UAE's oil and gas sectors have been largely hiring Indian engineers and managers. No other market offered the kind of diverse and quality talent that India does. Indian talent pool comes with a proven record of working in challenging and complex environments. They are capable of replicating this success wherever they are posted. Australia is another market where there is dearth of talent across industry domains. Also, telecom is a new vertical for most of Africa and the country wants to hire from India. Many high-tech job positions are said to be currently vacant in companies across France, Spain, Germany, Norway, Finland, Sweden, the Czech Republic and Switzerland. Companies will start hiring for these positions once recovery firmly sets in. The European Union is in the process of introducing a uniform immigration framework. Once that is in place, it will be easy for EU countries to import talent that is not available locally. Indian professionals are seen to be confident; they are good with customers, are able to mingle with diverse cultures. They are seen to be competent in handling complex markets and customer scenarios. "Already most of the Indians are working as mid-and senior-level executives with hands-on cross-border travelling experience. Almost 2-3 weeks in a month they would be travelling, so the place of posting hardly makes a difference to their profile". In the world of technology, there is growing recognition that Indians are among the best placed to run some of the businesses, and these would be done best out of India itself since it better reflects the requirements of fast growing emerging markets in general. Global managements are realizing that America is not the core of the world anymore. The balance of the world economy is shifting towards emerging markets like India and china. In India as more and more firms are looking at reducing the cost of recruitment process and enhancing the quality and speed of the process, recruitment process outsourcing is gaining ground. "Most of the foreign and joint venture RPO firms focusing on the Indian market, and are extending through metro cities and also planning to cover smaller towns in the near future.

### KEY SECTORS ATTRACTING RPO BUSINESS IN INDIA

IT and IT enabled sectors are the key industries that go for RPO. Indian software IT industry needs more software professionals at all levels like software programmers, software engineers, project managers, architects, database administrators, systems administrators etc. Sectors that have consistent recruitment need due to expansion and attrition opt for RPO. Banking & Financial Services, Retail and Telecom are other major industries which usually do recruitment process outsourcing; these growing sectors are bringing in lot of opportunities for aspiring professionals. "RPO offers tremendous exposure and learning to people in areas like Sourcing, Client Management, Process management, Operations and Quality. Aspirants in RPO can specialize in these areas and can have multiple career options. "As RPO matures there would be many streams where aspirants can look forward to build their career like process specialists, quality, automation, sector wise specialists in hiring etc". The industry is looking for people with good academics, communication skills, knowledge of various industry segments

According to experts, the industry is in a transformation phase and is giving an edge to the recruitment processes making it a hassle free process for the employee and the organization. With the changes in the employment scenario in the country, hiring RPO firms by organizations for their recruitment solutions will be the way forward in future. The automobile industry in India, which includes design, development, manufacturing and sale of cars, two wheelers, three wheelers, as well as trucks, buses and tractors has witnessed an upsurge over the last few years and continues to boom even today. While India's automobile industry is one of the largest in the world, the country was the fourth largest exporter of automobiles in Asia last year (2009). Additionally, as per the Automotive Mission Plan (AMP) 2006-2016, presented by the country's Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, India is a favorite investment destination for international auto makers, many of whom have set up manufacturing divisions in the country, opening a whole new vista of job opportunities for engineers. As an increasing number of international as well as Indian players in the automobile industry look towards expanding their business in India, the demand for automobile engineers is witnessing a steady rise.

### CONCLUSION

The services of RPO firms are better rated in terms of cost and flexibility and in terms of economies of scale than the traditional in house recruiting, head hunting and executive search firms. However for the successful interaction between the employer and employee the RPO firms has to make sure that the understanding of organizational culture, needs and expectations of the employer and present technological and business needs that require good talent, thus reduce the gap between choosing the right vendor and suitable talent acquisition for the job. As the job scenario is changing from time to time, no employee sticks in an organization for more than two years that is the reason why companies spend lot of resources in terms of money and time in hiring the required human resource. Most of the RPO companies have delivered better results in closing the gap between employer and employee; however the potential growth of RPO business lies in delivering the high quality professionals with increased efficiency to multinational companies where cross culture mechanism go hand in hand with the growth of economy. In India the RPO business is at its initial stage and it is slowly gaining momentum in exploring the opportunities for Indian talent across the world. India is the second fastest growing country in the world after china with lot of skilled confident professionals, capable of doing complex jobs; they are good with customers, are able to mingle with diverse cultures. They are seen to be competent in handling complex markets and customer scenarios. Since most of the RPO firms are foreign based and are operating in India either by joint venture or as a consulting firm, therefore to assess the ideal impacts of RPO business in India there should be a forecasting mechanism to be developed to constantly watch the progress of recruitment that will determine the future potential growth of RPO business in India in times to come.

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