

Recruitment and outsourcing leaders highlight need for collaboration to address resourcing crisis

Submitted by: BlueSky Public Relations Ltd

Wednesday, 22 November 2023

As the UK's skills crisis continues to intensify, leaders across the recruitment outsourcing and staffing sectors have warned that greater collaboration needs to be prioritised to secure the strength of the hiring market across the country.

In a one-of-a-kind event, APSCo OutSource and APSCo UK – the trade associations for the professional staffing and recruitment outsourcing sectors – brought together leaders across both sectors to discuss tactics to overcome the top challenges of 2024.

According to the representatives, collaboration is the most critical element for next year. Delegates unanimously agree that as both groups are part of the same talent ecosystem, they have an equal role to play in engaging with and educating candidates and clients alike.

In a report (<https://www.apscoutsource.org/resource/the-future-of-staffing-and-outsourcing.html>) covering the key takeaways of the event, APSCo OutSource and APSCo UK highlighted the five critical areas that the outsource providers and recruiters need to collaborate on:

- Adapting to the changing nature of skills: With LinkedIn revealing that skills sets for jobs have already changed 25% since 2015 and this number is likely to double by 2027, becoming talent advisors is a must. Traditional recruiters need to be upskilled to be insight-led and tech-enabled advisors – attributes that RPOs and MSPs can help build.

- A move to skills-first hiring: Shifting to skills-first hiring where abilities and potential inform recruitment rather than experience is the future of hiring. However, this move won't be easy. The staffing sector is in a good position to lead on this given its reputation for hiring for potential rather than experience, but there is still room for improvement that will require unity between recruitment businesses and the outsourcing sector.

- Utilising AI and technology: The pace of digital evolution is significant but skills development isn't keeping up with the speed of innovation. End-hirers require guidance on where they might be able to find adjacent skills that can fill immediate gaps. Staffing firms have the ability to support on this while the outsourcing sector has the technological know-how and the experience of managing services and projects to bring this all together.

- Adapting to uncertainty: With a general election on the cards and inflation fluctuating, uncertainty remains rife for next year. The recruitment and outsourcing sectors will need to embrace change and

invest in growth despite the challenging climate. For some, that may mean taking themselves and their businesses out of their comfort zones.

- Navigating the future of work: The office return debate is unlikely to dissipate. As the conduit between the labour market and employers, it will be staffing firms, MSPs and RPOs that have the unfortunate role of mediating the conversation. The impact that mandated office returns have on labour market movement will need closely monitoring and a unified conversation with employers to prevent another Great Resignation.

Melanie Forbes, Managing Director, APSCo OutSource, commented:

“The talent landscape is more sophisticated and more complex than it has ever been. It’s difficult to think of a period where so much disruption has been felt for so long and on such a scale as we have seen in the last few years. In a first-of-its-kind event, we brought together the staffing and outsourcing sectors to discuss and collaborate. For two groups of professionals who are often considered to be at loggerheads with one another, the potential for conflict was certainly there on paper. However, what we saw on the day was a coming together of like-minded individuals and an agreement that both parties need to work together for the benefit of the end customer, and perhaps more importantly, for the talent market itself.”

Ann Swain, Global CEO APSCo UK, added:

“As the sophistication of the hiring landscape continues to evolve, the recruitment proposition is becoming more complex and we need sophisticated recruiters who are well-versed in business-to-business engagement to support the stabilisation and growth that we are looking for. In this landscape, the relationship recruiters have with outsource businesses is changing and how recruitment is structured is also evolving. How consultants are rewarded and end-user clients are engaged is likely to also adapt in the near future.”

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About APSCo OutSource

APSCo OutSource is the trade association for Recruitment Process Outsourcing, Managed Service Providers, Statement of Work and Managed Project. We were developed from the Association of Professional Staffing Companies (APSCo) as a separate trade body which truly understands the differences between staffing and recruitment outsourcing and which specialises in the outsourcing market.

For more information, visit: <https://www.apscooutsource.org/>