

CASE STUDY

Aon Consulting's Amris-powered RPO launches at Aon UK

NAME:

Aon Consulting

INDUSTRY SECTOR:

Management Consultancy

Overview

Aon Consulting has over 1200 employees in the UK, focusing on pensions, employee benefits, asset management and HR solutions.

Aon Consulting wanted to broaden the scope of the HR services it offered and recruitment process outsourcing (RPO) was an obvious choice, particularly as Aon Consulting in the US is enjoying great success with managed recruitment solutions.

Ben Thornton and Jon Beaumont joined Aon Consulting from Aon HR. As former members of the HR Resourcing Project Group they were acutely aware that Aon needed a radical recruitment solution and would make the perfect first client.

Together they selected Amris™ as the ideal recruitment technology platform to launch RPO and then set about convincing Aon that it should outsource its candidate sourcing and recruitment activities to their department, HR Solutions, within Aon Consulting.

In early 2005, Aon agreed to be the first client.

Opting for Amris™

Ben Thornton and Jon Beaumont knew what they wanted.

As Beaumont observes: "We had already created a blueprint. We needed to find the technical providers. We looked at a lot of systems first, and two other companies as well as the Internet Corporation.

Ultimately we went with Amris™ for two reasons - the technology was just what we were looking for, and the Internet Corporation people - who we met initially at the CIPD conference - were enthusiastic and helpful. Most importantly, they had vision. They could see the potential of more business coming in through Aon's clients once we were up and running and were refreshingly un-precious about allowing Amris to be packaged as an Aon solution."

Talent matching

As HR experts, Beaumont and Thornton knew what had to happen to Aon's recruitment process. Too much was being spent on recruitment and a multi-channel approach was needed to appeal to a wider talent pool.

Aon relied almost totally on recruitment agencies - other sources, such as online recruitment - hadn't been considered. Line managers had also tended to use their own pet recruitment agencies, rather than those with specially negotiated rates.

Beaumont and Thornton established a new Resourcing Team based in Farnborough to manage the recruitment process for Aon

using Amris™ technology. Line managers contact the team when there is a vacancy, then a hierarchy is worked through, from internal recruitment to checking CVs already held, to using job boards, placing recruitment ads and finally contacting agencies.

Soft launch

As you would expect from all good managers, Beaumont and Thornton planned a proof of concept phase, focussing on roles needing to be filled frequently, some as often as weekly - pensions administrators, for example. However, the arrival of a new Aon Corporation CEO in Chicago put a hold on all recruitment activities. When this was released positions coming through tended to be more specialised, so were less easy to fill via generic job boards and more likely to be filled by recruitment agencies.

Taking the bull by the horns started to seem like the only way ahead, so it was decided to go for the big bang approach and a full launch was planned for September 2005.

All systems go

At the front end, potential candidates are now able to apply online via the Aon website. Powered by Amris™, the careers section looks and feels like Aon, consolidating the positive brand experience a candidate will hope to get from the application process. Even if they are unsuccessful this time, Aon want them to feel good about their company, spread the word and come back again.

At the back end applications are processed by the Aon Resourcing Team. Aon personnel

from any department wanting to recruit must contact the team, while a built-in authorisation loop using Lotus notes ensures that approval for the recruitment request is picked up en route.

As well as sifting through and passing on appropriate CVs and candidates, the Resourcing Team are also able to use data from specific job applications online, or from those who have registered their details and interests and asked for job alerts, to create a talent pool. Thus whenever a job spec comes in they are able to provide instant, suitably qualified candidates who have already shown interest in working for the company.

Culture change

The biggest challenge Beaumont and Thornton have encountered is that of culture change. "When line managers have long-standing, comfortable relationships with recruitment agencies it takes time for everyone to be happy with a change of behaviour. However, as they have CVs to consider while the applications roll in, and as more and more quality candidates are being

delivered fast and with minimum fuss, our line managers are increasingly showing their appreciation. And of course the savings in business terms will be significant."

Permanent solution for temps

Next on the agenda is an Amris solution for the management of agency temp procurement within Aon. "At present there's no process other than direct to agency," says Beaumont. The lack of centralisation means many different agencies are used autonomously by line managers on an ad hoc basis, so there are no economies of scale. The plan is to channel applications through to a few key agencies at rates that make sense.

You can tell Beaumont is excited by the prospect of implementing his total solution: "Being able to offer a truly vendor-neutral recruitment process while most other players are either recruitment agencies or offshoots is causing a great stir amongst potential clients. It's the strong, flexible partnership between Amris™ and Aon Consulting that has made it all possible."

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