

RECRUITMENT OUTSOURCING SELECTING YOUR PROVIDER: 7 STEPS TO SUCCESS

You've decided you want to outsource your recruitment. You understand the various options available to you, the different business considerations you need to take into account, and you're ready to start considering which provider. Choosing the right outsourcing partner can be one of the most difficult parts of the process, but it doesn't have to be.

Here is our seven step guide to success:



1. Be clear on your objectives

It's an old adage; begin with the end in mind. Focus on the outcomes you want to see, not just what you are doing about it. Consider who needs to be involved and who is impacted? Are you all in agreement on the desired outcome? Set out clearly your objectives and evaluation criteria and return to them as a panel throughout the decision process.



2. Plan realistically

It's easy to underestimate how long selecting the right provider and implementing a solution can take. You need to build in enough time to run a tender, presentation, negotiation and implementation.

Allow for holidays, If you fire off a 50 page RFP just before Christmas requesting it back on your desk by January, you may find at least half of your shortlist unable to give you the full attention and input you deserve.

This could reduce the quality of response, compromise your competitive playing field and mean you miss out on insights and ideas.

We always find allowing extra time for implementation helps, especially as stakeholder engagement is an important factor for any first time programme.



3. Select your shortlist based on fit not just functionality

It can be tempting to select the top five providers on a list. However, when it comes to selecting an external provider for your resourcing, whilst their services may seem similar on the surface, different kinds of businesses lend themselves to different suppliers. Take some time to look for companies with a track record in your industry, or who work with businesses similar to you in size or geographic footprint.

Ask for recommendations and client references. Then speak with them to better understand the vendor's scope, quality of service, turnaround time, client engagement practices and support. Take this opportunity to discuss potential challenges and how to overcome them too.



4. Be structured but invite innovation

Getting the balance right regarding how prescriptive you should be in your RFP document can be tricky. Going out with a blank sheet approach runs risk of you not getting back the solution you need. Going out with a highly prescriptive approach makes it harder to differentiate the responses and means you may miss out on new ideas, the latest thinking and innovative responses that can deliver you the most effective solution.

If practical you will also want to invite the shortlisted suppliers to an engagement session to improve their understanding of your company. This creates a level playing field and allows providers the opportunity to explore in more detail what you actually need and where there is room for a different approach.



5. Stress test the solution

Ask providers to model their pricing with different sourcing mixes and with 30% reduction/increase in volumes to see if their model still holds true. We know even the best plans change, and variances in volume are inevitable, it's important to understand now if they can commit to their price under different scenarios.



6. Don't underestimate the relationship

Often this is a long term commitment, and suppliers with access to the best technology and methodology aren't always the best fit for your company. A good external provider will become part of your team, and will integrate seamlessly, so make sure the people you meet are the ones who will actually be managing your account for the duration.

Also, when you ask for those client references look for long term relationships, where you can see how they have survived highs and lows.



7. Sense check your decision

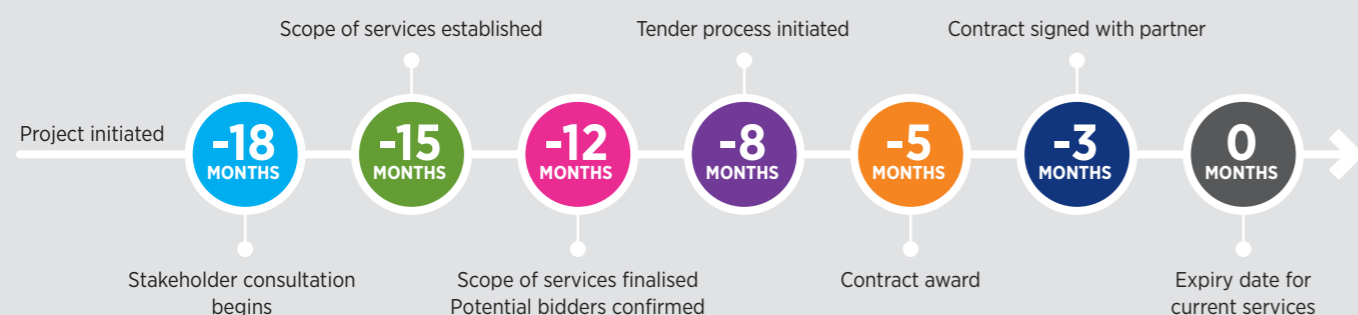
Decide as a panel, with representatives to cover the various stakeholders that will be impacted, everyone brings a different perspective.

Even when you feel the decision has been made ensure you do your due diligence on the company and the proposal.

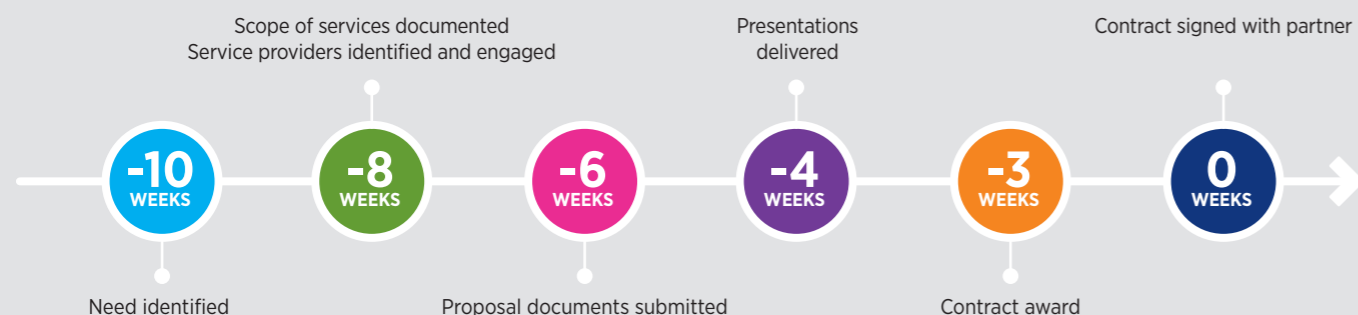
- **Assess their financial stability** – are they growing or shrinking and at what pace?

- **Check their staff retention and turnover rates**, the last thing you want is to build great relationships with a member of staff and then have to start all over again with someone who doesn't know your business.
- **Explore the integrity of their IT systems and equipment.** What back-up systems and support do they have in place for when things go wrong? We all know what it's like when an IT problem causes delays, what measures do they have in place to avoid this impacting you?
- **You'll want to understand if they can manage your programme alone or will they need to subcontract parts of it?** As well as checking the small print, including exploring any potential intellectual property issues? For example, who will own the talent pool? As we said previously take references, ask to visit a client site or a delivery office to get a real feel for what it'll be like to work with them.
- **Finally, beware the provider who says yes to everything!** You're paying them for their expertise, which means advising you on the best course of action for you, and being realistic about what to expect.

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