

case study The Carphone Warehouse Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO)



Established in 1989, The Carphone Warehouse (CPW) has grown at a phenomenal pace and is today Europe's leading independent mobile communications retailer, with over 1,700 stores. CPW's constant drive to develop new products and services has led to the development of a number of new areas of the business including TalkTalk, a fixed phone line business that recently hit the 1 million customer mark.

Hydrogen Group has worked in partnership with CPW since 1997 as a key preferred supplier of high quality candidates. As a direct result of this long-standing successful relationship, Hydrogen was appointed in 2003 to take full ownership of recruitment for the Head Office support functions, working in a co-sourcing capacity on-site at CPW's Head Office in West London. Over the last four years Hydrogen has placed over 500 candidates at The Carphone Warehouse.

Why did CPW look to the RPO Solution

CPW's key drivers were rapid growth, cost effectiveness and demand for the best candidates. Hydrogen has an ongoing Recruitment Process Outsourcing contract with CPW. Key objectives achieved to date include:

- Year-on-year cost savings of more than 30%, with total savings over two years exceeding £500,000
- A reduction in the average time to hire from 57 days to 27 days (against the CIPD average figure of 9.3 weeks or 47 days)
- The implementation of a range of internal mobility initiatives resulting in a significant increase in the number of hires from the "Refer A Friend" scheme, helping to drive down the cost of recruitment
- Sourcing of candidates that better match the roles and the organisation leading to a 25% reduction in employees leaving within the first 6 months
- Implementation of strategies leading to doubling the amount of direct hires
- 50% reduction in the use of external recruitment agencies
- Enhancing the screening process to ensure the supply of high calibre individuals is achieved without compromising timescales.

Establishing best practice

Hydrogen's RPO model also ensures 'best practice' recruitment methods are employed at every level in the organisation. Hydrogen's expert knowledge on candidate attraction, assessment and selection increases the ability and expertise within the resourcing function, provides a positive and professional 'candidate experience', as well as critical management information to HR. At CPW the benefits of Hydrogen's expertise to the business include:

- The selection, administration and interpretation of psychometric tests by qualified consultants, from a range of major test publishers including SHL and ASE
- The design and implementation of assessment centres, including the development of bespoke exercises such as analysis presentations, group exercises and role-plays
- The introduction of competency-based interviewing and the training of recruiting managers in the skills associated with effective interviewing
- Auditing and managing the preferred supplier list, including developing closer links with preferred suppliers to increase the quality and fit of candidates supplied
- Building and maintaining a strategic tracking database of targeted individuals who are committed to CPW in the mid to long-term
- Delivering detailed management information that enables HR to more effectively manage the operational day-to-day issues, but also drives corporate strategic decision making
- Working in partnership with HR to assist the delivery of the HR business plan freeing up HR time to align itself with the business

“ At CPW we strongly believe that by growing our people we will drive success. The decision to move to a recruitment co-sourcing model for our Support Function vacancies was a massive leap, but one we felt would help us to significantly improve our resourcing capability and better enable us to cope with the demands of our rapidly growing business. Since the introduction of co-sourcing, our time to hire along with cost per hire has reduced, while at the same time our turnover figures and anecdotal evidence indicate that there has been an increase in the quality and fit of candidates joining the business. In addition, the 'one team' approach adopted by CPW and Hydrogen means we all feel part of the same team, working together towards the same objectives. ”

Caroline Edwards
Head of HR, Support Functions

Summary

The success of the partnership between Hydrogen and The Carphone Warehouse has led to an ongoing agreement to deliver further benefits going forward. Having a specialist recruitment team in-house means there is less dependency on external recruitment agencies, lower costs and reduced time to hire. Recruitment is a specialised area of expertise, and people are crucial to the lifeblood of any business.

Rebecca Maynard

Internal Communications and Recognition

"Brilliant, just brilliant. The recruitment process had been in chaos, as there had been problem after problem and Hydrogen immediately took it off my hands. They came up with lots of ideas about how to source the right people, responded with real efficiency and took ownership for the entire process. I didn't have a specific idea of what I was looking for but they understood in essence what was important and the type of personality I required."

Thomas Scrope

Network Commissions Controller

"Hydrogen provided a short-list and heavily recommended one candidate, whom I saw and offered, which means that I now thoroughly trust their judgment. When I previously recruited at this level, I conducted about 15 interviews and looked at 50 CVs but this time I only had to see the one candidate for one interview. This had a very positive impact, saving me huge amounts of time."

Julian Przygodzki

Head of Design Studio

"I really can't fault the service we received - we gave Hydrogen a very, very difficult task and we have got what we wanted. They sorted everything, even when I gave them no notice and made last minute changes; they really saved me time and took the pain out of the process. It's a new process, so to have someone come in and take all the hassle away was brilliant. It is also amazing that something that happened for the first time went so smoothly."