

Thrive!

Ready for RMO

Unlock the Power of Scalable,
Results-Driven Recruitment Marketing



Welcome...

Recruitment is changing.
Not gradually, but structurally.

AI is accelerating delivery. Clients are raising expectations. And access to talent is no longer enough to differentiate. What once created value in recruitment is being standardised, automated, and, in many cases, commoditised. At the same time, agencies are under pressure to grow. More competition, tighter margins, and increasing scrutiny on performance mean that traditional operating models are being stretched. Activity is high, but impact is inconsistent.

Recruitment Marketing Outsourcing (RMO) is not simply an alternative to building an in-house team. It is a different way of structuring marketing; one that connects brand, demand generation, and commercial performance into a single, accountable function to drive growth. It shapes how you position yourself in the market, how you attract both clients and candidates, and how effectively you convert demand into revenue.

This guide has been created to help recruitment leaders and C-suite executives understand what that shift looks like in practice. It outlines how RMO works, why it is gaining traction, and what to expect from a model designed to deliver measurable business outcomes.

If your ambition is to build a more scalable, efficient, and commercially-aligned recruitment business, this is where the conversation starts.



Kristie Perrotte
Founder, Thrive

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What is Recruitment Marketing Outsourcing (RMO)?

Recruitment Marketing Outsourcing (RMO) is more than outsourced marketing delivery. It redesigns how marketing operates within a recruitment business. Where traditional models rely on internal teams or fragmented agency support, RMO introduces a single, integrated function that connects strategy, execution, technology, and performance to commercial outcomes.

In a market where execution is increasingly automated, the real value of marketing sits higher up the chain. Positioning, demand creation, data maximisation and the ability to convert attention into revenue are now the defining factors of growth.

RMO is built to deliver exactly that. It combines senior-level strategic leadership with specialist execution across channels, underpinned by data, systems, and clear accountability. The result is a marketing function that is scalable, measurable, and directly aligned to business performance.

The Strategic Benefits of RMO

RMO elevates marketing from a support function to a growth driver. By aligning marketing with business objectives, introducing clear performance frameworks, and focusing on measurable impact, it ensures that every investment contributes to pipeline, placements, and long-term value creation. It is this shift, from activity to accountability, that defines the difference.

RMO vs. Insourcing

Building an internal marketing team can offer control, but it often struggles to deliver breadth and depth at the level now required. Recruitment marketing today spans multiple disciplines, from brand and content to CRM, automation, SEO, and analytics. Few in-house teams are resourced to execute all of these effectively.

RMO removes the need to build and manage that complexity internally. Instead, it provides immediate access to a full spectrum of expertise, allowing businesses to scale capability in line with demand, without the fixed cost and operational overhead of a large team. More importantly, it shifts marketing from being resource constrained to outcome-focused.

RMO vs. Agency

Traditional agencies are typically structured around service lines. They execute against briefs, often working in isolation from the wider commercial strategy. That model no longer holds. Recruitment needs partners who take ownership of outcomes, not just activity.

RMO replaces siloed delivery with a connected approach, where every channel, campaign, and initiative is aligned to a single commercial objective. This means marketing is no longer a series of disconnected outputs. It becomes a coordinated system designed to generate demand, support business development, and drive revenue.

Why Choose RMO Now?

Recruitment is entering a new era. The conditions that once supported growth, predictable demand, relationship-led sales, and access to talent, are shifting. Nearly 71% of firms have reported hiring difficulties*, and rising employment costs, driven in part by a £17bn increase in Employer NICs, are making large internal teams increasingly difficult to justify.

For recruitment agencies, the picture is more optimistic. Over half of recruiters are confident about the year ahead, and 84% of agency leaders expect sales growth. But growth brings pressure.

As agencies double down on business development, success will hinge on stronger brand positioning, better client and candidate experience, and more meaningful human interactions in an AI-saturated market.

Source: British Chambers of Commerce

Three forces are driving this change:

1.

Technology is resetting the value of recruitment.

Automation is accelerating delivery across sourcing, screening, and engagement. Tasks that once defined recruiter productivity are becoming faster, cheaper, and, in some cases, commoditised. This raises the bar for recruitment marketing.

2.

Businesses are buying differently.

Employers are more informed, more selective, and under pressure themselves to deliver results. They are not simply looking for suppliers who can fill roles. They expect partners who understand their business, bring insight, and add value beyond the hire.

3.

Growth now depends on demand.

Outbound activity alone is no longer enough to sustain growth. While business development remains critical, the most effective recruiters are those building inbound demand alongside it.

RMO is designed for this shift.

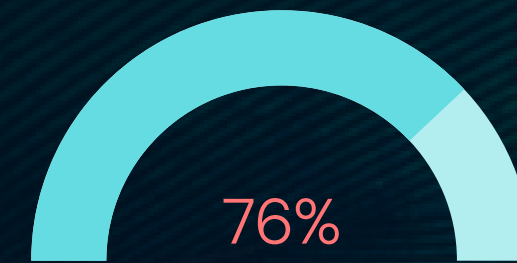
RMO brings together strategy, execution, and technology into a single, accountable function focused on commercial outcomes. Rather than adding more activity, it creates a structured approach to demand generation, brand positioning, and revenue contribution.

In a market where expectations are rising and differentiation is harder to achieve, RMO provides the capability and alignment needed to compete effectively.

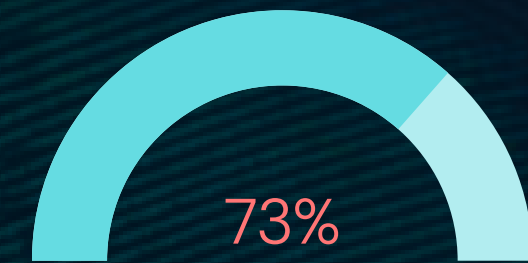
“RMO gives organisations the agility and expertise to scale via marketing, without the burden of in-house complexity.”

— Kristie Perrotte

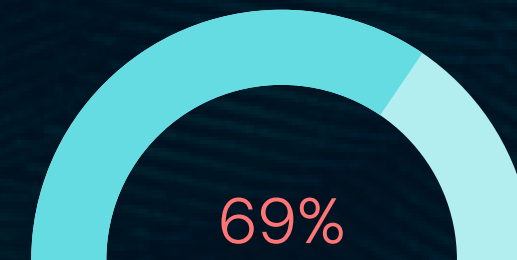
Key Industry Indicators



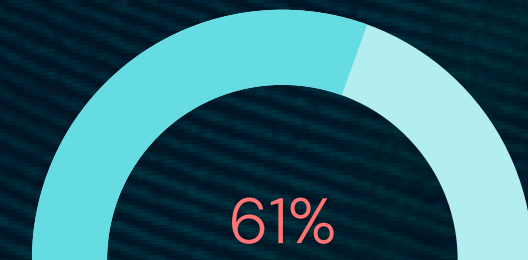
report ongoing talent shortages, making attraction strategy critical



of marketers say their budgets are more heavily scrutinised than they used to be



of recruitment firms use AI in some capacity, increasing speed but also competition



of marketers believe AI is causing the largest disruption in marketing in 20 years

Sources: HubSpot, The 2026 State of Marketing Report, Firefish: The Future of the Recruitment Industry Report: 2026, Bullhorn, GRID 2026 Industry Trends

Traditional vs. Future-Ready Recruitment Marketing

High-performing recruitment marketing teams aren't just doing more – they're doing what **matters**. Here's how the operating model is evolving.

Marketing Focus		Traditional		Future Ready
Commercial Alignment	→	Separate from sales	→	Fully aligned to revenue
Data & ROI	→	Activity metrics only	→	Revenue and pipeline visibility
Demand Generation	→	Outbound reliant	→	Predictable inbound pipeline
Marketing Strategy	→	Reactive, campaign-led	→	Aligned to revenue growth
Lead Management	→	Manual, inconsistent	→	Structured, conversion-focused
Brand Positioning	→	Generic, undifferentiated	→	Clear, market-led positioning
Digital Marketing	→	Disconnected channels	→	Integrated growth engine
Database Marketing	→	Ad hoc email campaigns	→	Embedded marketing automation
Search Marketing	→	Basic SEO focus	→	AI platform-led visibility
Marketing Technology	→	Underused tools	→	Fully optimised systems
Content Marketing	→	Volume-driven output	→	Insight-led, authority building
Social Media Marketing	→	Inconsistent posting	→	Targeted, audience-driven engagement

Types of RMO Models

There is no single “right” way to structure recruitment marketing. What works for a 20-person agency will not work for a 200-person business.

Yet many organisations attempt to scale using the same model, adding more people, more tools, and more activity without fundamentally changing how marketing operates.

RMO provides a flexible operating model that evolves with your business, aligning marketing capability to your stage of growth, level of maturity, and commercial ambition. Rather than overinvesting in fixed internal structures, RMO allows you to access the right level of expertise, at the right time, with clear accountability for outcomes.

All Thrive RMO models are built on a retained, recurring structure, creating consistency, focus, and the ability to plan for long-term growth.

RMO

Built for 75+ headcount recruitment businesses that need senior marketing leadership and full delivery at scale. It connects brand, demand generation, digital and marketing technology to revenue goals, without the complexity of building a large in-house team.

RMO Lite

Designed for 50+ headcount recruitment businesses investing in marketing but not seeing meaningful return. It adds senior strategic oversight and joined-up delivery, bringing structure, focus and commercial alignment.

Embedded

Supports 20+ headcount growing businesses building marketing capability. It combines hands-on delivery with strategic guidance, helping early marketing investment stay structured, focused and aligned to future growth.

Agency

For businesses at the earliest stage, or those requiring targeted support, the Agency model provides focused delivery against defined priorities. While more tactical in nature, it still benefits from Thrive’s recruitment marketing expertise, ensuring that activity is aligned to clear objectives and forms part of a broader growth trajectory.

A large, stylized red quotation mark icon, consisting of two thick, curved strokes, positioned at the top left of the text area.

“What was once a reactive support function is now a driver of growth, aligned to our commercial goals and delivering measurable ROI. The impact has been transformational — from lead generation and digital performance to cost savings, and a significant shift in internal mindset. This partnership has become a core part of our long-term strategy.”

— Guy Hayward, Group CEO,
Good Together Group (Goodman Masson)

What Makes a Good RMO Partnership?

The most effective RMO partnerships are built on intent.

Organisations recognise their current marketing model is no longer fit for purpose. Activity may be high, but results are inconsistent. Teams are busy, but growth is harder to predict and sustain. They understand that unlocking the next stage of growth requires more than incremental change. It requires a different approach.

Strong RMO partners are typically looking to:

- Scale their business without proportionally increasing headcount.
- Improve efficiency and reduce wasted marketing spend.
- Create a clearer link between marketing activity and revenue.
- Build a more consistent and predictable pipeline .

They are also comfortable acknowledging where gaps exist, whether that is in strategic direction, specialist capability, or the integration of marketing with wider commercial goals.

RMO works best when there is alignment around a simple principle: marketing should be accountable for outcomes, not just output.

RMO is designed for...

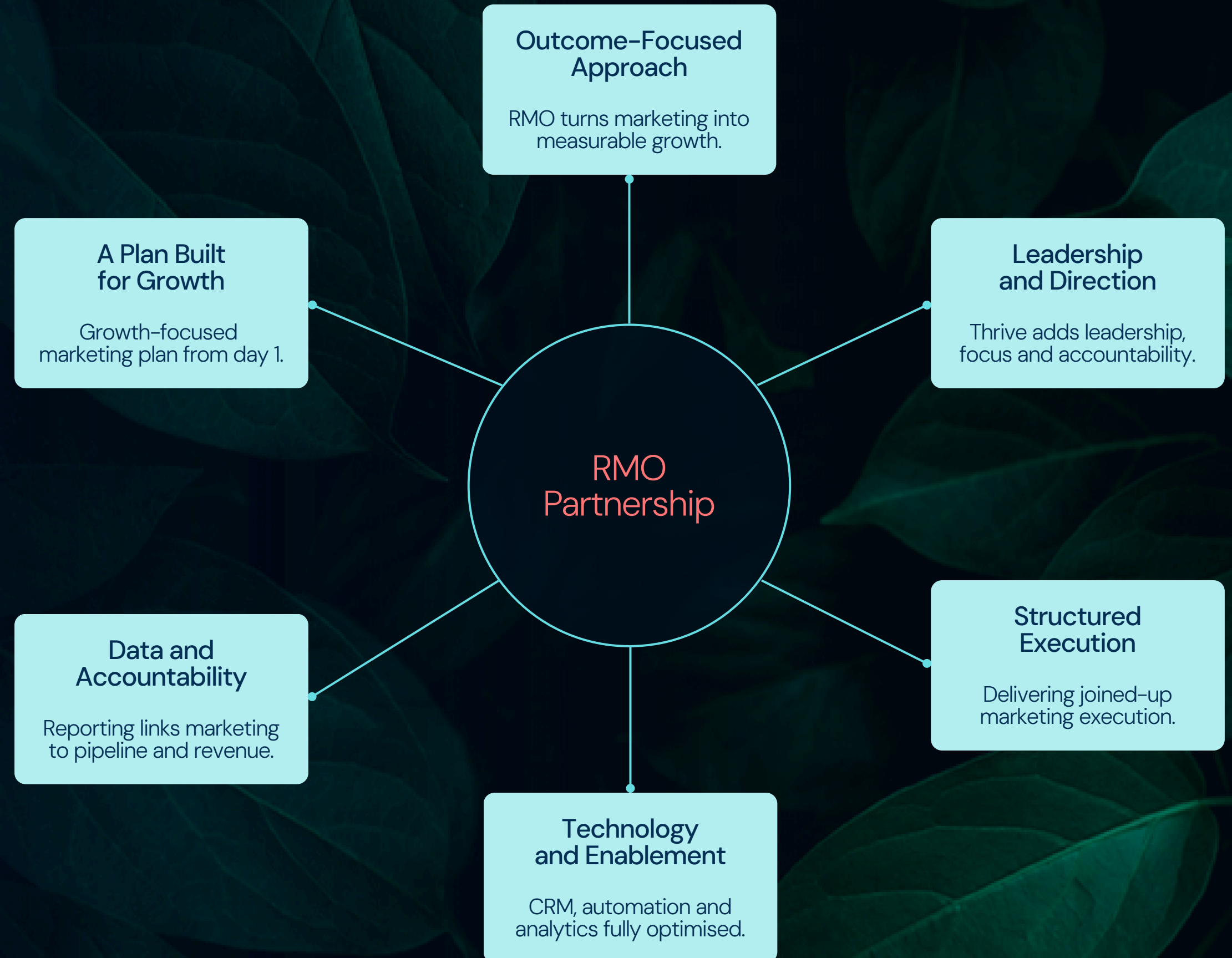
Growing and established recruitment agencies and specialist talent businesses that need scalable marketing support, better use of technology, stronger positioning, demand generation and structured execution to support growth, pipeline creation and expansion into new markets.

RMO Is the Right Solution If...

- ☐ You lack the specialist expertise to execute across SEO/AEO/GEO, CRM, automation, etc.).
- ☐ Your team is stretched and focused on delivery rather than impact.
- ☐ You are investing in marketing but cannot clearly measure ROI .
- ☐ Your marketing lacks strategic direction or alignment with business goals.
- ☐ Your internal capability does not match your growth ambition.
- ☐ You are generating activity, but not consistent pipeline.
- ☐ You know what you want to achieve, but not how to achieve it effectively.

What to Expect from an RMO Partnership

An effective RMO partnership is not defined by activity. It is defined by outcomes. This means moving away from disconnected campaigns and towards a structured marketing function that is aligned with commercial priorities, accountable for performance, and built to scale with the business.



The ROI of RMO

RMO is not about activity. It's about commercial impact. Traditional recruitment marketing often focuses on outputs, campaigns delivered, content produced, clicks generated. The challenge is that these metrics rarely translate clearly into business performance.

RMO changes that. It introduces a structured approach where marketing is directly linked to pipeline creation, job flow, and revenue generation. The focus shifts from visibility alone to generating high-intent demand, opportunities that convert into roles, placements, and long-term client value.

From Activity to Revenue

At the core of Thrive's RMO model is a simple principle: marketing should contribute to revenue, not just awareness. This is achieved by:

- Generating inbound demand from current and future hiring needs
- Supporting business development with higher-intent opportunities
- Strengthening candidate engagement to improve conversion rates

Marketing becomes a consistent source of commercial value, rather than an unpredictable support function.

Clear Attribution and Visibility

One of the longstanding challenges in recruitment marketing is proving impact. Thrive addresses this by introducing clear attribution models, structured lead tracking, and defined reporting frameworks. This creates visibility across the full journey, from first interaction through to placement and billed revenue. Leadership teams gain a clear understanding of:

- Where opportunities are coming from

- How marketing is influencing job creation
- Which activities are driving the strongest return

This allows for better decision-making, more effective investment, and continuous optimisation.

Efficiency At Scale

RMO also improves cost efficiency. Rather than building and managing a fragmented internal team, businesses gain access to integrated expertise, supported by the right technology and automation. This reduces manual effort, increases consistency, and allows recruiters to focus on revenue-generating activity. In many cases, this leads to:

- Reduced reliance on paid acquisition channels
- Lower operational overhead
- Greater return on marketing investment

The result is a marketing function that is accountable, measurable, and commercially aligned, one that not only supports growth, but actively drives it.

“

“We've seen great ROI. You see progress almost immediately with Thrive. Our marketing spend is probably one of the only outlays I don't begrudge spending.”

— Arran Warner, Managing Director, IntaPeople

The End of the Traditional Marketing Model

Internal teams are increasingly unable to manage the full scope of modern recruitment marketing demands. The problem is not that internal marketing teams are ineffective. It is that the model they operate within is no longer built for the demands of modern recruitment.

Today's environment requires a level of specialisation, speed, and integration that is difficult to achieve with a traditional in-house structure. Three limitations are becoming increasingly clear.

1. Lack of Specialist Depth

Modern recruitment marketing spans multiple disciplines, from brand and content to SEO, CRM, automation, and data analytics. Most internal teams are built around generalists. While capable, they are rarely equipped to execute across every channel at the level required to compete. This creates gaps in performance, slows progress, and limits the overall impact of marketing.

2. Inability to Scale Effectively

Growth places pressure on internal teams. As demand increases, businesses often respond by adding more people or more tools. This can create complexity without improving outcomes. Scaling in this way is costly, difficult to manage, and rarely delivers the flexibility required to adapt to changing priorities.

3. Misalignment With Commercial Goals

In many organisations, marketing operates separately from business development and revenue generation. Without clear alignment, activity becomes disconnected from commercial outcomes. Effort is spent, but its contribution to pipeline, placements, and revenue is unclear.

At the same time, advancements in AI and automation are increasing the pace of change. New tools, channels, and expectations are constantly emerging, raising the bar for what effective marketing looks like. Internal teams are trying to keep up with a moving target.

A Different Approach

RMO addresses these limitations by introducing a model designed for how recruitment businesses now operate. It provides access to specialist expertise across all areas of recruitment marketing, without the need to build and manage a large internal team. It enables businesses to scale capability in line with demand, rather than through fixed structures. And most importantly, it aligns marketing directly with commercial objectives, ensuring that activity translates into measurable business outcomes.

The question is not whether your marketing should be in-house or outsourced. It is whether your current model is capable of supporting the level of growth your business is aiming to achieve.

CASE STUDY

From Marketing Service Desk to Revenue Growth Engine

How a £175m professional services firm transformed marketing through an RMO model.

Industry: Professional Services

Involvement: RMO

Location: UK & USA

This long-established professional services firm operates across recruitment, RPO and consulting, with a strong market presence in the UK and USA.

With significant growth ambition and an internal marketing function already in place, the business partnered with Thrive through an RMO model to strengthen its marketing capability, improve commercial alignment and support growth at scale.

Key Results

3,585
client leads

£360k
saved spend

£1m
in revenue

[READ FULL CASE STUDY](#)

The Challenge

This established recruitment, RPO and consulting firm had strong market presence and growth ambition, but marketing had become a service desk: busy, visible and helpful, yet disconnected from revenue, ROI and accountability. With no meaningful KPIs, dashboards or attribution, plus SEO damage from a failed migration, as well as underutilised Bullhorn Automation, it lacked the digital, MarTech and performance expertise needed at scale. The business needed a new operating model.

The Solution

The business needed an embedded outsourced model with fCMO leadership and specialist delivery across strategy, brand, SEO, automation, lead generation, data and attribution. Thrive realigned marketing to commercial outcomes, rebuilt reporting, repaired SEO, improved website conversion, streamlined requests, redesigned Bullhorn Automation and reviewed spend. The result: a joined-up function with board-level alignment, technical depth and provable impact.

The Outcome

Marketing moved from reactive support to a commercially accountable growth engine. In year one, it delivered 3,585 client leads, generated £1m+ in trackable revenue and saved £360k+ across job boards and technology. Website engagement surged, ad-hoc requests reduced, and consultant satisfaction improved. The client renewed the partnership and increased investment, proving marketing had become a measurable driver of demand, revenue and long-term value.

Are You Ready for RMO?

The question is not whether recruitment marketing needs to change. That shift is already underway. The question is whether your current model is built to keep up.

As AI accelerates delivery and competition intensifies, growth will depend less on activity and more on how effectively you position, differentiate, and create demand. Businesses that continue to rely on traditional structures will find it harder to scale, harder to stand out, and harder to sustain consistent performance.

RMO offers a different path. It brings together strategy, execution, and accountability into a single, commercially aligned function, designed to generate pipeline, support business development, and drive measurable revenue impact.

For organisations ready to move beyond fragmented activity and build a marketing function that actively contributes to growth, the opportunity is clear. The next step is understanding what that looks like for your business.

**Speak to Thrive to discover which
RMO model fits your goals.**

GET IN TOUCH

Let's Thrive!

Thrive!

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