

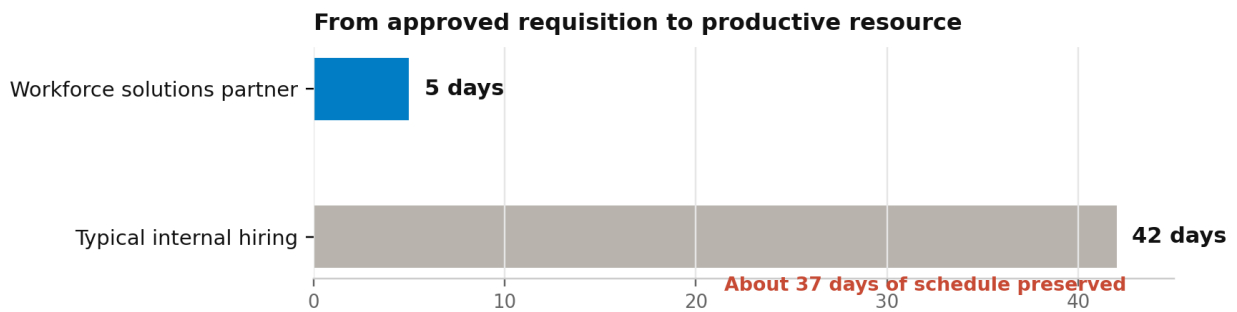
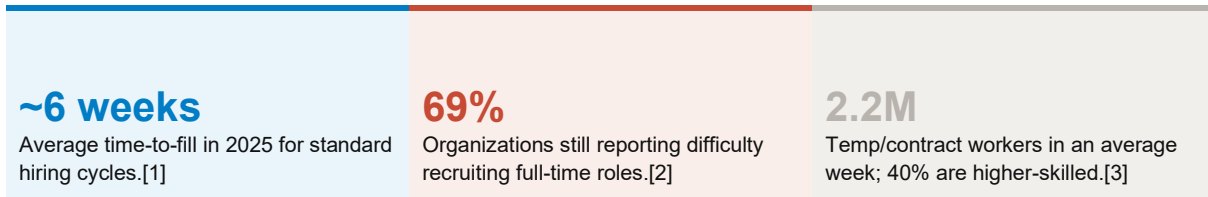


Speed-to-Execution

Why rapid-response workforce solutions outperform slow internal hiring on project-driven work

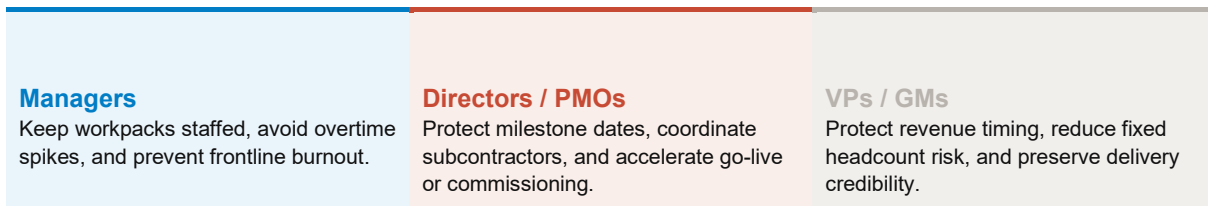
Published by **Ryan Wilson** | Chief Revenue Officer | ESP Enterprises, Inc. | March 2026

Executive summary. In project environments, labor strategy is not only a cost decision; it is a schedule decision. When scarce skills arrive five weeks late, milestones move, overtime climbs, and customer commitments slip. A workforce solutions partner converts labor from a fixed headcount decision into variable operating capacity, supplying qualified specialists in days instead of waiting through a standard full-time hiring cycle.



Note: Internal benchmark reflects SHRM's 2025 average time-to-fill of approximately six weeks. The 5-day partner benchmark is the ESP rapid-response target from an approved requisition to start-ready talent.

Why speed matters to management



Bottom line. Managers do not buy resumes. They buy regained schedule, safer milestones, and faster execution.



The economics: move labor from fixed cost to variable capacity

A permanent hire is the right answer **for durable core roles**. It is often **the wrong instrument for finite workpacks, mobilizations, cutovers, shutdowns, launches, and specialist backfills**. In those settings, project leaders need access to capability only while the work exists.

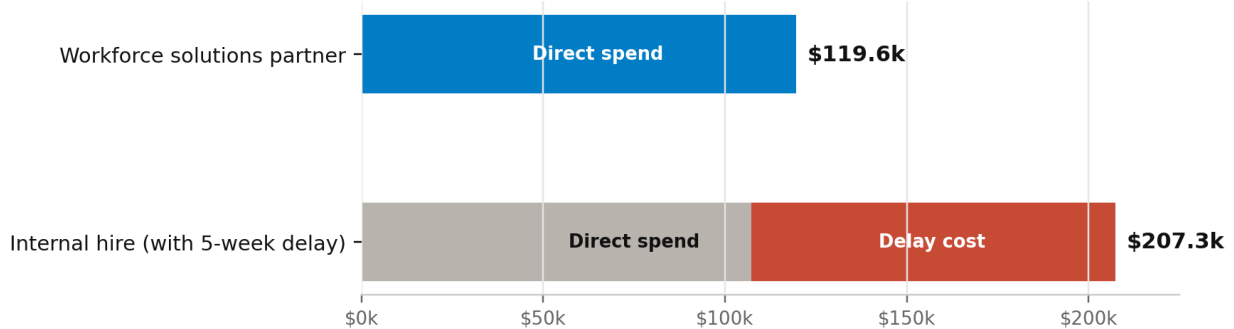
Internal hiring: fixed-cost bias

- Recruiting overhead, approvals, and interview load sit inside the business.
- Average nonexecutive cost-per-hire is \$5,475 before salary and benefits.[4]
- Salary, burden, and bench risk stay on the P&L even if scope changes.
- If the match misses or the candidate exits, the cycle often restarts.

Workforce solutions: variable-cost bias

- Spend is tied to productive weeks, shifts, or project phases.
- Sourcing, screening, compliance, and onboarding move to the partner.
- Ramp-up and ramp-down can follow site demand or milestone timing.
- Replacement speed reduces interruption when a resource rolls off.

Illustrative 26-week specialist model: direct cost vs. delivered cost



Illustrative model assumptions: \$145k salary equivalent, 28% burden, SHRM nonexecutive cost-per-hire, \$9k onboarding/redeployment friction, and \$20k weekly value at risk over a 5-week timing gap. Budget model is directional, not a rate card.

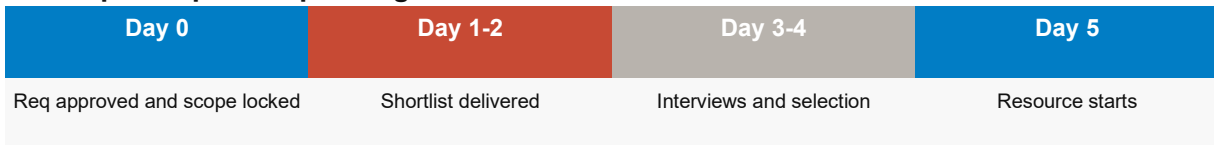
Rapid response workforce solutions win when...

- The work is finite, phase-based, or uncertain.
- You need scarce specialists, technicians, or project talent fast.
- There is a mobilization, launch, shutdown, cutover, or backlog spike.
- A delivery-critical role must be backfilled immediately.

Internal hiring wins when...

- Demand is stable and capability is core to the business model.
- The role is leadership-heavy or culture-shaping.
- Long-term ownership matters more than immediate speed.
- The work requires durable institutional knowledge and low turnover.

A practical rapid response operating cadence



Why this matters. A higher bill rate can still be the lower-cost operating choice when it protects schedule, customer acceptance, plant uptime, or revenue recognition.

Sources: [1] SHRM Business-Driven Recruiting, 2025; [2] SHRM 2025 Talent Trends - Recruiting; [3] American Staffing Association, Staffing Industry Statistics; [4] SHRM 2025 Benchmarking Survey; [5] BLS JOLTS, December 2025: 6.5M job openings; [6] ManpowerGroup 2026 Global Talent Shortage.