



Using an Executive Search Firm

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Finding the right people in a highly competitive market is not easy. Doing it yourself can take up a considerable amount of management time and may not result in the best outcome. Using an experienced executive search and selection professional with a good knowledge of your industry, not to mention a clear understanding of transferable skills, often proves to be a far more cost-effective solution.

Much more than just a database of CVs

As well as dealing with initial candidate selection and screening, first interviews and the preparation of a shortlist, a proactive consultancy adds a great deal more to the talent acquisition and management process. On one level, this includes valuable input to discussions on structures and the most appropriate management configuration. At the more detailed level it can encompass advice on a broad range of related issues, such as market salary levels and benefits packages, relocation issues and how to deal with candidates whose current employer is making an offer to try and retain them. Internal candidates can also be benchmarked effectively within the recruitment process, adding a level of external objectivity.

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What about advertising?

Your consultant should be an extension of your management team, acting as an objective sounding board. The consultant will also be an ambassador for your business in the marketplace and therefore needs a clear understanding of your strategy, ambitions, culture and values in order to represent you most effectively in the marketplace and to attract the best to join you.

Bringing you together

We have worked with a number of businesses who have had no prior experience of working with a search firm, and we understand that it can be difficult to adjust your mindset from a contingent approach to the consultative and partnership-led approach of a search firm. If you are new to working with a consultancy, you might find these comments helpful:

- Find a proactive consultancy with a good knowledge of your industry and an understanding of the functional specialism you're looking to appoint.
- Make sure that you work with a consultancy that reflects your values and with whom you feel comfortable. The consultancy that you choose speaks volumes about you and your business to the people you're hoping to attract.
- Prepare a detailed job description and spend time giving the consultant a thorough briefing, providing them with as much information as

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possible about the company and the role.

- Take time to really understand what process the consultant recommends and discuss any issues openly.
- Agree a timetable and treat the time committed to interviews as sacrosanct.
- Communicate with your consultant on a regular basis and agree how often and in what format progress reports will be provided.

A few final thoughts

Above all, treat your consultancy as a trusted business partner. Encourage them to visit your business and meet key people. The trust built up over time will increase the value of the relationship to your business. A long term relationship with your search firm has a huge number of benefits from a shorter time to appoint to their letting you know about people they meet who can make a real difference to your business.