

# Managing the Search Process Effectively

**F**or very valid reasons, over the last decade, the vast majority of human resources specialists have tended to focus on the areas of organizational structure and team building. While effective team interaction unquestionably represents an integral part of organizational productivity, to a large degree, any team is only as strong as its individual members. Individual accountability represents an equally essential component of corporate performance. Those companies that attract and develop the best talent are positioning themselves ahead of their competition and substantially enhancing their ability to effectively compete in the marketplace.

Organizational change, in any form, provides an opportunity to upgrade management. The decision to add external talent in an important one for any organization and represents an equally important decision for those candidates considering a career change. It is therefore imperative that the consulting process be handled with the utmost in professionalism and integrity. No two searches are the same - the degree of challenge will inevitably vary with the breadth of the position profile and availability of qualified candidates within the identified compensation parameters. Regardless of the challenge, the search process is usually strengthened through the following steps:

**Tight Position Specifications;** the foundation of any successful search is comprehensive job specifications. The position profile needn't be lengthy, however it should be thorough providing an overview of the company, the most important aspects of the job mandate and qualifications of the ideal candidate. By the same measure, it must be practical, differentiating between 'must' and 'want' objectives, which serves to bring focus to the search from the onset.

**Comprehensive Market Screen;** the only way to ensure that the best candidates are found is through an exhaustive market screen. It is not unusual for our company to review resumes of twenty-five candidates, or more, to develop a short list of three. Some of very the best candidates may be 'not looking', often the result of the fact that they are simply not aware of opportunities beyond their current organization.

**Reasonable Pace;** from the point of engagement, most searches should be completed in two to three months, including reference checks. In many cases, rushing this process runs the risk of an incomplete market screen. A prolonged search can be even more dangerous in that it may result in the loss of enthusiasm of some of the best candidates.

If a search is well handled, the offer decision is frequently difficult, involving a choice between more than one qualified individual. The position profile specifications should serve as one benchmark, as should the fit between the new manager and the current organizational culture. It also important to recognize that candidates have invested substantial emotional energy into the process and, as such, they deserve comprehensive and straightforward feedback. Above all, organizations should recognize the opportunity to refresh their talent pool and invest the resources required to make an informed hiring decision.



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