



CHOOSING AN EXECUTIVE SEARCH AGENCY

If you've recently decided to find your new executives and senior management through an executive search and selection agency, then here's how to find and evaluate those agencies before you sign up.

There are thousands of recruitment agencies, big and small, but only a minority focus solely on recruiting for executive, senior manager and director-level appointments. If you need to fill important jobs with the best people, you need to select an agency that has access to excellent candidates and the experience to know which applicants will suit your vacancy.

When you approach a recruitment specialist to find senior people for your business, you should ensure that you know exactly what they're offering, and what experience they have in recruiting the types of candidates you are looking for.

Always shortlist a few agencies before committing yourself. Meeting the consultants and seeing how they work makes it easier to decide which agency you want to work with. Before you meet each agency, you should draw up a list of questions to ask them. For an agency that says it specialises in executive recruitment, you should be asking questions along the following lines:

- What is your experience in executive search and selection?
- How do you source the candidates that you pass to me?
- Do you narrow down the list of candidates before sending them for interview?
- What are your fees, and when do they apply?
- What happens if I employ the candidate and discover they are unsuitable for the job within the first month?

If you have a number of executive appointments to make or you are going to require the services of your executive search and selection company in the long term, then you should be looking for a consultant with whom you can establish a good working relationship. Their understanding of your business helps them to source the most appropriate candidates and also to put forward other good candidates who sign onto their books, giving you an opportunity to talk to them before they get sent to other companies.

Executive recruitment is a competitive sector and you won't be short of agencies who want your business. But even with all these agencies courting you, you should take the time to establish whether their services will really benefit your business.

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