

THE VALUE OF RETAINED EXECUTIVE SEARCH

The **recruitment and retention of talented senior executives** is acknowledged by leaders the world over as one of their **most critical tasks**. Without management that can handle the ambiguity and pressure of modern organizational life, the strategic challenges of global markets in a constant state of flux and the complexity of competing imperatives, an organization cannot achieve its full potential and be strongly competitive.

Identifying and recruiting outstanding senior executives without professional guidance can be a poor investment of valuable management time and resources. Retained executive search firms provide help with this most critical of tasks.

Experienced and well educated individuals become executive search consultants because of their desire to play an important role in the lives of organizations and talented individuals. The process they employ has been developed over many years and is fundamental to this level of recruitment. **One point of contact, exclusivity, confidentiality, partnership with the client and commitment** to succeed are all critical components of retained executive search work.

Acting as an impartial broker between the client and the candidate, the search firm performs a **proactive intermediary role** that is **essential in communicating, assessing and negotiating** with senior executives who are not necessarily active job applicants but rather passive, potentially interested candidates. The delicate handling of relationships during the courtship of recruitment is critical to a successful outcome and is best performed by a consultant who has the trust of both sides and who can help smooth the obstacles that inevitably arise.

A third party can help provide communication and resolution during difficult negotiations and act as a diplomat and problem resolver without the main parties involved becoming negatively influenced by each others' negotiating stance. Search consultants will be **actively involved during** the recruitment process **and also afterwards** as they continue to be in touch with the client and the successful candidate.

The contract between client organization and search firm is on a retained basis because it reflects the **essential relationship** that must exist between them if the search process is to be effective and is **to secure an outstanding candidate** – the only reason for embarking on the recruitment of a senior executive.

Retained search is **both an art and a science**. It requires a consistent and thorough process, the employment of tried and tested research methods and an underlying instinct as to when things are going both right and wrong in the search. The ability to assess executive skills, experience and culture is crucial, as are an enthusiastic willingness to represent the client in the market place and find that short list of outstanding candidates, any one of whom could perform an excellent job for the client.

The **stakes in senior executive recruitment are so high and the consequences of failure so significant** that anything less than a fully professional approach is shortsighted. Retained executive search consulting is here to help.

A Letter from AESC President, Peter Felix