

# Ten Tips for Hiring the Best

by Bente Hansen and Joseph Daniel McCool

## 1 Don't Settle for the First One

Even if you have been referred to a highly experienced candidate, you won't know if s/he is the best unless you compare. Even though it looks as if this person is a great find and is available, compare to your key predetermined requirements for the role.

## 2 Sell the Opportunity

Assume that top executive candidates have other (potentially more attractive) career options. Remember that they're evaluating you and your organization as much as you're evaluating them. Be an enthusiastic interviewer and don't forget to market what's great about your organization and the specific opportunity. If they're a great fit, they'll be attracted to the opportunity, and will feel a sense of support and enthusiasm from their new employer.

## 3 Get Out of Your Comfort Zone

Be open to candidates who are smart and willing to learn new industries. There are positions when backgrounds from device, healthcare and pharma should cross pollinate and there are candidates who have held leadership positions in the military or other companies with management programs who can better respond to change, adversity and risk.

## 4 Cultural Fit

Interview for the cultural fit that you and the team are creating and would like to continue. Put the key components in writing so the entire interview team will keep them in mind during the interview. That will guide your questions and help to recognize candidates who will be a cultural match.

## 5 Specifically Ask for a Diverse Candidate Slate

Don't assume that the search consultant or HR will purposefully target diverse leadership candidates. And don't assume that you'll successfully diversify senior-management without expecting more inclusive executive candidate slates.

## 6 Avoid Interviewing Delays

Don't commit to be a stakeholder on any executive search assignment unless you can commit to clear your schedule to meet candidates and provide timely feedback. Failing to commit to the process can cost your organization top candidates. Don't get in the way of progress on each search assignment. The opportunity cost of each vacancy is huge, and the best candidates won't wait for you if you're not prepared and committed to make timely decisions.

## 7 Be Clear with Deliverables

Know the 3-month, 6-month, and 1-year deliverables expected of the role so questions about them can be asked during the interview and compared against the action-plans presented by candidates.

## 8 Know Why Retained Executive Search is Different

When you want to target the best in the business and convert exceptional leaders now employed by competitors and other growing companies into candidates for your critical role, retain an executive search consultant.

## 9 Do Your Homework on Which Search Firm to Use

You can draw a straight line from the due diligence you put into assessing, selecting and engaging an executive search consultant to the results your organization gets from any search assignment.

## 10 Provide Closure for Finalist Candidates

If you've interviewed an executive for a top role with your company, you owe them the courtesy of providing some closure on their candidacy. Ensure that either someone from your organization or your executive search consultant has closed the loop and effectively informed the individual that the search resulted in someone else's hiring. This will leave all candidates with closure as well as a positive opinion of you. Leaving a good impression is so important.

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