Shaping the future way people work

Our Approach
The Client:
A private, clinical-stage biotechnology company developing therapeutics, headquartered in Massachusetts.

The Objective:
To expand the boards’ capabilities by adding financial expertise and additional independent director ahead of Initial Public Offering (IPO). The client expressed a preference for diversifying the board in terms of gender. The new director needed to bring senior leadership experience in finance in a large public company, the experience of serving on a public company board and the credentials to chair the audit committee. The project was extremely time sensitive due to the planned IPO.

The Outcome:
The client appointed an exceptional candidate in sufficient time (7 weeks), so it could be included in the S1 filing with the SEC. The delivered shortlist met the expressed preference for a women director.

The successful candidate was selected for her years of experience in financial leadership positions of mid and large-sized biotech companies. Her strategic financial stewardship of R&D focused businesses, complex financial transactions in a global context, and her experience serving as Audit Chair on the board of another biotech company made her suitably qualified.

The Search Approach:
1. Liaised with members of the nominations committee and the board and defined the desired profile of the new board director (including core finance and board experience), also considered this profile in the context of the experience of the existing members of the board.
2. Built a clear and targeted market research and search strategy focused predominantly on women candidates, the desired geographic location (East Coast), the experience and qualifications, and the capacity to serve.
3. Ensured a strong field of women directors were reached by leveraging the full extent of our network of current or prospective women directors established by our prior recruiting, advocacy, engagement and research efforts as well as approached our partners delivering board training and development of women leaders.
4. Expanded the search based on referrals of accomplished board directors supporting gender-balanced boards.
5. Developed a unique and structured assessment methodology and performed a consistent evaluation of the defined competencies across all candidates.
6. Worked with the board and updated them on progress during the investment roadshow.
7. Devised a well-positioned target list of candidates which included 80% women. The chosen candidates were reviewed with the nominations committee and the best directors were selected, including 7 women and 1 man.
8. Delivered the short-list of four exceptional candidates (3 women and 1 man).
Board of Directors
Non-Executive Director
Public Company
The Client:
A Nasdaq-listed, clinical-stage biotechnology company developing therapeutics for age-related diseases, headquartered in Massachusetts.

The Objective:
The company was approaching the end of a Phase IIb study and there was a need to appoint a new board director who would bring a deep experience in drug development, from early-mid stage clinical development through to late-stage clinical and life-cycle experience. The search needed to be carried out discretely and with forethought as to the target population of candidates.

The Outcome:
Liftstream delivered a high-quality shortlist of four candidates, which was balanced in terms of gender and diverse in respect of ethnicity and nationality. All shortlisted candidates were serving on boards of public companies.

The candidate nominated to the board was chosen for his incredible accomplishments in developing drugs in common diseases with significant impact on human health, as well as rare diseases and his deep understanding of the disease areas the company is working in.

The Search Approach:
1. Performed a thorough company assessment, liaising with members of the nominations committee and the wider board.
2. Clearly defined the desired profile of the board director to be appointed based on critical experience analysis, and by assessing the drug development experience of the current board members.
3. Built a clear targeting strategy for the search that encompassed experience, disease and modality experience, location, capacity to serve and other factors.
4. Developed a structured assessment methodology which evaluated the appropriate competencies for the board position and enabled a consistent evaluation across all candidates.
5. Selected candidates for their experience in multiple facets of the life sciences industry, research and academic institutions, through to regulatory bodies, as well as biotech and pharmaceutical companies.
6. Devised a balanced and well-positioned target list of candidates which comprised 40% women candidates. Due to the sensitive aspect of the search, this target list was first presented to the nominations committee for review.
7. Engaged with selected candidates in an orderly manner and assessed their capabilities and suitability to serve on the board.
8. Delivered a long-list of 12 candidates (42% of women) which after evaluation led to the short-list of four (two women and two men).
Executive Management
Chief Business Officer
Private Company
The Client:
A private, clinical stage company committed to bringing new small molecules treatments to patients living with both rare and common neurodegenerative diseases – headquartered in Switzerland, with US affiliate operation.

The Objective:
To recruit a Chief Business Officer to lead the business development and corporate development activities for the company as both the lead program and pipeline programs advanced through the clinic. It was important for the requisite experience to be acquired for the company to pursue all the strategic options available to it.

The Outcome:
The shortlist candidates interviewed with the CEO / management team and 2 final candidates were selected for interviews with the Chair of the Board and the nomination committee of the board.

The candidate selected was chosen for his considerable experience in multiple functions across the industry, including BD and Corporate Development, as well as product management and marketing. With the experience of M&A activities in the >$bn range, he demonstrated not only the transaction experience but a strong set of skills and competencies that were valuable to the company.

The Search Approach:
1. Performed internal interviews with CEO to develop a strong understanding of the company's business and development strategy, leadership team composition and to identify their core needs.
2. Developed a role profile consistent with the company's objectives. Devised a bespoke competency matrix required to guide the recruitment process in accordance with the core needs of the role and the company.
3. Planned a clear, objective and deadline driven search strategy.
4. Performed an extensive market research of the required therapeutic areas and modalities, including mapping out the potential territories and hubs of BD and corporate development talent.
5. Developed comprehensive communication materials featuring information sought after by prospective candidates to facilitate higher engagement ratio and efficiency.
6. Implemented an extensive global search and identified a large cohort of suitably experienced candidates assuring successful completion of the search.
7. Performed structured, consistent, bias-free, multilevel assessments of identified candidates’ capabilities against desired competency matrix.
8. Delivered a shortlist of 5 exceptional candidates, 4 men and 1 woman. All shortlisted candidates were selected, with explicit input from the client, from a long-list of 13 candidates (9 men and 4 women).
The Client:

Pre-clinical, immuno-oncology company developing novel therapies to enhance anti-tumour immune responses, with very compelling and differentiated approach within the immuno-oncology field.

The Objective:

To recruit a Chief Scientific Officer for the company as it moves forward with pre-clinical and clinical development of the pipeline and evaluates strategic possibilities for development in new therapeutic areas. The person recruited needed to have expertise in a niche branch of the immuno-oncology field, able to influence the stakeholders and be culturally aligned with the current team operating in the virtual mode. The client had previously worked with another recruitment partner who had been unsuccessful.

The Outcome:

Successfully delivered a diverse cohort of senior experts in the niche branch of immune-oncology and work with the client to select the best candidate.

The appointed CSO was chosen for his deep and unique scientific expertise, which was complemented by a number of years as a practicing physician. The candidate was selected because of their professional experience was both broad and deep in research and translational development, acquired over many years in academic, clinical and industry roles. This reputable immunologist offered the very best experience the company needed to advance its innovative work.

The Search Approach:

1. Conducted client’s assessment including technology, targeted diseases, publications, patents, drug discovery and development pipeline, financial trajectory and built the case and proposition as well as candidate profile.

2. Interviewed CEO and evaluated the company's strategy, leadership, culture, funding and sustainability. Clarified requirements specific to the CSO role and opportunities it creates. Influenced revaluation and modification of core requirements.

3. Clarified with the client the extent of prior recruitment efforts, assessed its impact on the market and designed communication strategy taking into the account prior engagements and discussions.

4. Defined 7 important parameters and devised a bespoke matrix of competencies for assessing the CSO candidates.

5. Performed systematic and extensive research of the international pharmaceutical, biotechnology and academic community and mapped where requisite talent and the desired niche scientific expertise might exist.

6. Systematically engaged with a vast cohort of candidates including existing CSO level and below. Assessed the knowledge of niche biology and mapped core competencies against the established matrix.

7. The long-list of 15 exceptional candidates (40% women candidates) was discussed with the client and the shortlist of 6 was delivered.
Executive Management
Head of R&D, Rare Diseases
Global Pharma
The Client:
A top five global pharmaceutical company with a highly diverse range of R&D activities in many disease settings and modalities.

The Objective:
The company had experienced mixed success in creating a rare diseases business unit. With a maturing gene therapy platform, clinical programs, and commercial stage assets, the company wanted to appoint a Head of R&D to develop and implement the strategy for effectively leveraging the company’s scientific and development resources. The role to be recruited was at the SVP level and would report to the Global Head of R&D and member of the executive committee and board, as well as the SVP of the Business Unit. This was a highly strategic and important appointment and so demanded a global search.

The Search Approach:
1. Conducted a deep review of the client’s faltering recruitment process over previous months leveraging our understanding of the rare diseases market.
2. Developed a full competency matrix for the position which covered both technical and leadership competencies.
3. Created a role-specific search strategy and the candidate assessment methodology.
4. Developed a clear and compelling proposition and engagement strategy to facilitate effective and informed relationships-building with the candidates.
5. Expanded project management efforts to coordinate the many processes and interactions across both the client and candidates.
6. Due to the complexity and geographic reach, recommended expansion of the shortlist to 7 and to deliver the shortlist in two phases. It was important to deliver ultimate success rather than reduce time commitment.
7. Prosecuted global search in accordance with the strategy (multiple time zones spanning a 17-hour range). Targeted and engaged candidates from across many different countries. The final shortlist was drawn from the US, Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, and the UK.
8. Delivered a diverse selection of suitable qualified candidates representative of gender, racial, ethnic, nationality and cultural diversity.

The Outcome:
Delivered a final shortlist to the client within 15 weeks from the initial briefing. The candidate chosen from the 7 candidates was an exceptionally well-qualified woman.

She became only the second woman in the global R&D leadership team. The client was extremely satisfied with the project Liftstream delivered when we conducted our routine post-project service quality review.
Contact Us

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