



NGS GLOBAL

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

Making the Case for Bespoke Search Strategies

Authored by Lee Brantingham and Julian Buckeridge, Managing Partners of NGS Global - Greater China

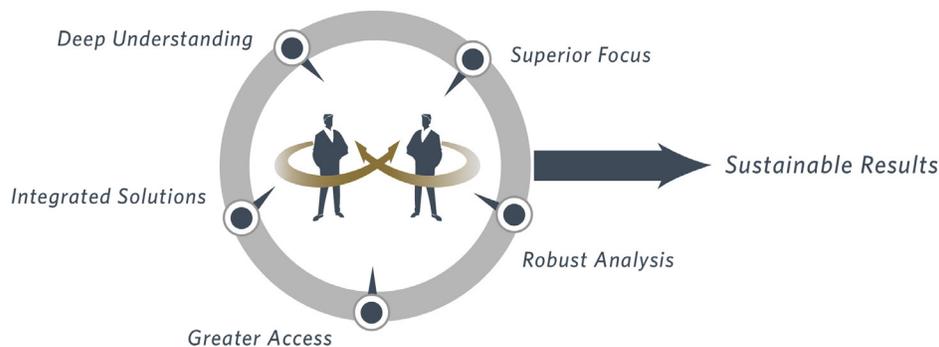
A successful partnership between an executive search professional and a client requires the critical action of performing a thorough analysis by both consultant and client to understand the organization's culture consisting of the strategic goals, value-based beliefs and characteristics in order to correctly identify the ideal candidate. The hard skills necessary for an executive role are relatively easy to identify, but soft skills and leadership qualities are fluid and dynamic. One size does not fit all, and every search has its own nuance to find the perfect candidate who is a cultural fit ultimately leading to an improved transition in leadership. Supporting this knowledge underpins the importance of crafting a bespoke strategy based on the needs, objectives and culture of the client. Julian Buckeridge and Lee Brantingham, Managing Partners of NGS Global - Greater China, discuss the importance of how a bespoke search strategy is key for every search assignment.

March 2019

The Search Process

Figure 1 depicts the methodology behind the executive search process and highlights the key areas of focus throughout the project life cycle. To determine a clients' true underlying needs, the process must begin with honest and open conversations with the client, coupled with the search consultant's experience and analysis viewed through his/her industry expertise, cultural nuance, and the impact of location and other factors. An integrated solution is then created as the basis for a bespoke strategy that delivers sustainable results across the clients' organization. This methodology figures prominently in recruiting for C-suite talent as executive roles have a greater impact on the bottom-line performance.

Figure 1 - Executive Search Methodology



Source: NGS Global LLC, March 2019.

Corroborating Support for Bespoke Search Strategies

Competing companies in the same line of business and similar target markets can have significantly different requirements for the executive they seek to hire for the same title and role. For instance, in recent search assignments for two leading Western multinational, consumer goods manufacturers in China, who were both seeking a General Manager for their China businesses with similar requirements for country leadership and P&L ownership. Each business, however, had radically different preferences for the style of leadership needed for the team, which ultimately affected the search strategy.

By crafting bespoke search criteria for each client, and implementing that criteria in the selection of the candidates, a successful outcome was evidenced by one company hiring an expatriate candidate with previous China experience who relocated to Shanghai for the role, while the other hired a Chinese national addressing the clients' need for deeper local expertise with the trade-off that they were less fluent in English and had a lower level of global experience. These roles were similar; as well as sharing market requirements, and both were based in Shanghai, but diverse needs around style and cultural fit with the existing teams required that each company have a different mix to allow for the best solution.

This approach also applies to an organization wishing to find the ideal candidate for two identical leadership roles in the same line of business, but in separate locales within China. In consideration of another recent search, a leading private equity firm needed new General Managers for each of its two assets for the same portfolio company and line of business, but located 2,000 miles apart in China. The benchmark candidate, however, was quite disparate for each asset based on the needs and preferences of the local leadership team.

One asset, based on their specific needs, hired a traditional non-English speaking Chinese national who was well-networked throughout China and therefore able to help the company with building relationships. The other hired an overseas Chinese individual with extensive multinational experience, who wanted to move back to China from the US. The latter was a leader in global best practices for their industry and would be able to boost the company's services in China. Similarly, each leader brought the right balance of skills, insight and networking required for the role; however, to deliver successful outcomes, each search required a customized strategy.

Final Thoughts

When an organization decides to recruit an outside leader for their business, a wide range of candidates exist who will all provide a solution to the need. To determine the optimal solution for the organization requires a well-resourced and executed process that can advocate on behalf of the client. Experienced executive search consultants with years of proven track record in successful placement can utilize their experience and skills to create a bespoke search to ensure that both hard and soft skills are assessed to deliver the best outcome and this is buoyed by ensuring a close cultural fit exists between the organization and the selected candidate.

AUTHORS



JULIAN BUCKERIDGE
Managing Partner - Greater China
T: +86.21.5178.5298
E: Julian.Buckeridge@ngs-global.com



LEE BRANTINGHAM
Managing Partner - Greater China
T: +852.8120.9452
E: Lee.Brantingham@ngs-global.com

ABOUT NGS GLOBAL

With offices across the Americas, Europe, Africa and Asia, NGS Global provides the extensive resources of major global executive search firms along with high-touch service, accelerated completion cycles and superior candidate access made possible by a mid-sized platform without external shareholders. Through our commitment to industry expertise, cultural knowledge and partner-led search execution, we deliver exceptional value to our clients.

For more information, please go to www.ngs-global.com