



Themes and Trends in HR & Executive Recruitment

'The Power Hire' by Jerry McGrath, Partner, Caldwell Partners

Power hire. Over-hire. No matter what you call it, there is nothing more satisfying for an executive recruiter than working on a search that results in the client appointing a higher-octane executive than originally planned.

For clients, it is like getting into a house you never thought possible. For candidates, it is the satisfaction and perhaps excitement of moving to smaller, higher growth, global platforms. For everyone involved it is a positive development, and one that is occurring with more frequency in these times and in these markets.

As candidates and clients adjust and reset expectations in the aftermath of 2008 financial crisis, there is significant trend toward hiring more experienced executives than originally planned at the outset of a search, especially for CHRO searches and heads of talent, compensation and/or learning

and development. As I look down the list of my HR placements in 2011, more than half are power hires.

As executive recruiters, we generally launch a search by calling the most senior 'A' players in our network. We generate candidates for our search by asking them "who is the best professional you would recommend for the role?" Lately, it has been those very senior executives who, for one reason another, are saying, "I would be interested in that." In other words, sources are becoming candidates. More and more, I am happily introducing a candidate to a client by saying, "I actually called Joe S. to source him...and he raised his hand!"

Why now? There are several complimentary approaches and patterns at work on the part of both candidates and clients that are making this a win-win for organizations and candidates.

For candidates it is less about the compensation and more about the role, the culture and the global growth of the company. It can also be as simple as a region of the country in which they are seeking to live.

On the client side, it is a greater openness than ever before to look at candidates that have a compensation history that is in some cases 20% higher than what they can pay. I often tell clients, 'A' players are paid 'A' money and you can't blame candidates that did very well in the gilded age of the last decade. Clients respect highly motivated candidates that are taking the long view, seeking to help grow a company and perhaps, at some point, get back to a former compensation level.

All of us have – at some level – portfolios, house values, cash and equities that are lower than they were in 2008. This gives us a greater, more open context in which to view career opportunities and candidate slates.

Prior to 2008 I would never have thought of showing clients a candidate slate with candidate compensation at the same level or 'north' of the target range for the role. Today I do and it frequently is a wonderful solution and outcome to an executive search.

About Jerry McGrath

Jerry McGrath is a partner in the New York office of Caldwell Partners, and a member of the Human Resources and Financial Services practices. His clients benefit from his more than two decades of both corporate and executive search experience, and his specialty in the areas of corporate human resources, finance, general management and operations.

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We have conducted hundreds of human resources assignments across many industries including consumer products, manufacturing, industrial, technology, financial services, retail and healthcare. Each assignment widens our unique access to a well-established network of sources and candidates throughout the professional function.

Our focus is not on the quantity of searches completed, but rather the quality of our search work. We choose to perform multiple searches for a limited number of clients, allowing us to intimately understand our clients' needs and minimize off limits issues for the sector. This approach, coupled with our timely execution, has kept clients coming to us for many years.

Our research capability and proprietary global database allow us to pinpoint the industry's important players and make not only a timely placement, but the right one.

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