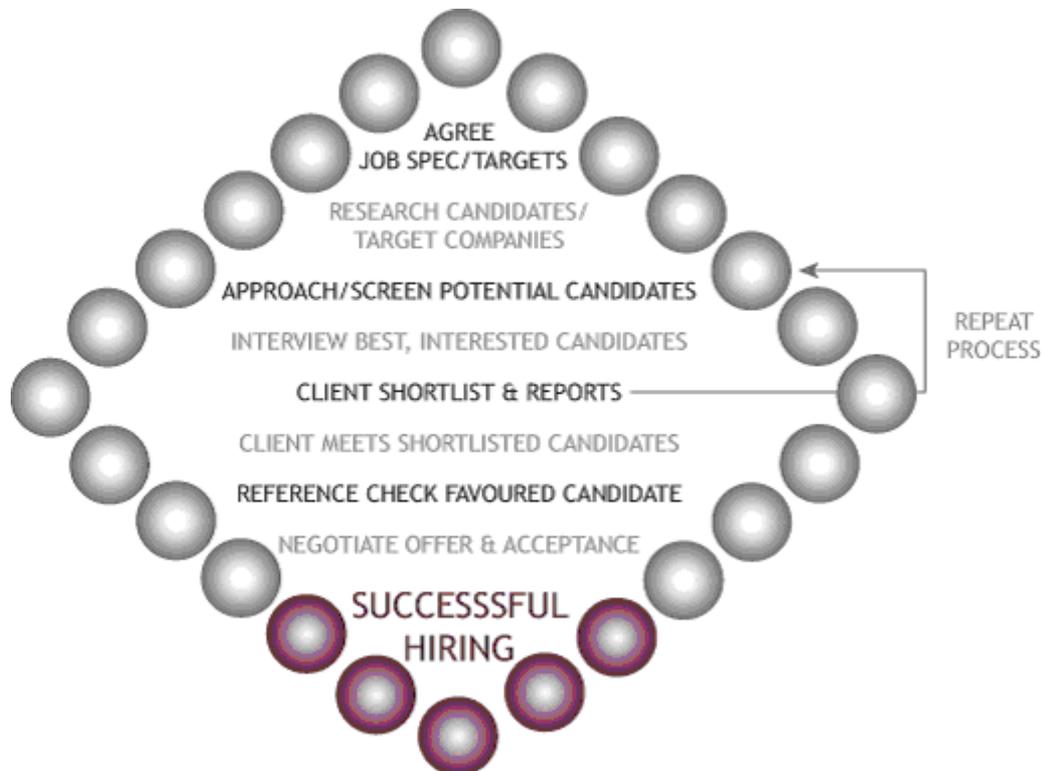


## **THE SEARCH PROCESS**

Executive search is like mining much research and hard work is required to find:



### **AGREE JOB SPECIFICATION AND TARGET COMPANIES**

Since search is a rifle shot, not a scatter gun, pointing the rifle at the best qualified senior managers in the appropriate companies is fundamental to the whole process. Thus, experience and demonstrable achievements are the prime indicators of likely future success, with factors such as age, education, nationality, languages, job location and travel requirements, family circumstances and personal qualities, also important in most job specs.

Defining where this specification is most likely to be found - which countries, industries, companies, levels, and cultural "fit" etc, is also vitally important, so that the next steps - research, approaches and interviewing - are pointing like a rifle at the correct targets.

### **RESEARCH POTENTIAL CANDIDATES AND TARGET COMPANIES**

While all search firms will already know of a few potential candidates, this is merely the starting point for a far wider and more systematic research effort to identify the best qualified potential candidates, what they have achieved, where they are now, and what motivation they may have for being attracted to our client.

Opus develops market intelligence by keeping a bespoke database of senior levels in its prime sectors - Energy and Natural Resources, as well as potential Chairmen, NED's or Advisers for all sectors - and by conducting targeted research. We attend key industry - specific conferences and constantly expand our networks to stay up-to-date and to anticipate trends on behalf of current and future clients.

Thus, our outstanding research team, aims to identify the best qualified potential candidates, with experience in relevant target companies, and then to help to attract them to our clients.

### **APPROACH AND SCREEN POTENTIAL CANDIDATES**

Search involves actively "direct approaching" potential candidates, usually initially by telephone, rather than the Selection method of passively awaiting respondents to an advertisement. Opus already knows, through targeting and research, who are likely to be the best qualified candidates for each job (unlike Selection, where the best may not see, be attracted by, or respond, to an ad). The task now for researchers and consultants is to attract the best candidates, screen out those less well qualified or not interested in a career move, seek information on any other outstanding possibilities, and draw up a list for the next step - interviewing.

### **INTERVIEW BEST AND INTERESTED CANDIDATES**

Opus now focuses on "narrowing the pool" to those who most closely match the client's pre-agreed job specification. Our outstanding research will ensure that all those interviewed are qualified, but some will have greater strengths, successful experience, motivations, personal qualities, and cultural 'fit' than others. For some, on closer mutual inspection (often, approached candidates do not know who our client is), there is not an ideal 'fit' - Opus has no interest in over-selling good candidates into the wrong career move. The end result of this phase is the client shortlist of finalist candidates which can be added to, or reduced, as subsequent 'iterations' of research, approaches, interviews proceed.

### **CLIENT SHORT LIST AND REPORTS**

These are the candidates whom Opus believes to be the best qualified and attractable from the search process to date, and on whom detailed reports are sent to our clients. The consultant's comments, comparing the strengths and any weaknesses of each candidate in relation to the pre-agreed specification, are as important as the bare c.v.

### **CLIENT MEETS CANDIDATES**

Mutually armed by Opus with detailed information about each other, client and candidate meet - often on neutral ground and with the consultant in attendance for the first such meeting (to refine yet further Opus' understanding of the client company, role and candidate 'fit'). The client then decides which, among those interviewed, are favoured for second interviews.

### **REFERENCE CHECK FAVOURED CANDIDATES**

While informal checks will have been made during the research phase, now comes the formal reference checks with former employers, peers, customers suppliers, etc, who can speak about the qualities of the favoured candidates (s) - without compromising their current employment (for Non-Executive / Advisory appointments, potential conflicts of interest are more important than current employment). Particular points to check may have arisen at the client interview. While usually taken by telephone, very senior referees are sometimes visited by Opus in person, and all are given to the client in writing.

### **NEGOTIATE OFFER AND ACCEPTANCE**

"Closing the deal" can sometimes be the most difficult part of a banking or sales transaction - so it can be with search. There is usually a quite narrow gap between the expectations of client and favoured candidate - e.g. exact title, responsibilities and reporting relationships, compensation and benefits package, future promotion prospects etc. It is the consultant's job to act as "honest broker" between client and candidates to bridge whatever gaps there may be, and to ensure that the offer is reasonable, acceptable and accepted - and that the "Diamond" of a successful hiring is completed, including subsequent follow-up with both sides.

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#### **For more information contact:**

- **Brian Martin, Partner:** [bmartin@opusexecutive.com](mailto:bmartin@opusexecutive.com)
- **Mark Weedon, Partner:** [mweedon@opusexecutive.com](mailto:mweedon@opusexecutive.com)
- **Oxana Bristowe, Partner:** [obristowe@opusexecutive.com](mailto:obristowe@opusexecutive.com)