

■ Media Planet's French language interview for *Hebdo Magazine* on why companies continue to rely on specialized executive recruitment firms to meet their senior talent needs.

Read the full interview in English below.

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Les particularités du processus de recrutement sont complexes et méthodiques

lorsqu'il s'agit de trouver des employés très qualifiés et il ne faut pas laisser de place au hasard. Rencontre avec Tobias Ernberg, Senior Vice Président de Bench International en Suisse, une société spécialisée dans le recrutement de profils spécifiques aux sciences de la vie.

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QUAND LE RECRUTEMENT NÉCESSITE UN SAVOIR-FAIRE PARTICULIER

■ Qu'offre exactement une société de consulting en recrutement lorsqu'il s'agit de trouver des gens très qualifiés?

D'abord, il faut que celle-ci travaille vraiment comme une extension de l'entreprise qui recourt à ses services. Ensuite, elle doit bénéficier d'une grande expertise et d'une expérience conséquente dans le domaine concerné. Dans ce cas, sa position sur le marché de l'emploi permettra au client de trouver

rapidement le meilleur profil parmi une multitude de talents. Enfin, la société de consulting pourra profiter des connaissances et du feeling d'expert dans le secteur en question et pourra ainsi juger non seulement du savoir du candidat mais également de l'adéquation de sa personnalité et de son intelligence émotionnelle avec les exigences du poste à repourvoir.

■ Comment faites-vous pour découvrir un nombre suffisant de

candidats lorsque les exigences d'une entreprise sont très élevées?

Grâce à une équipe de recherche professionnelle et à des recruteurs proactifs depuis de longues années, un cabinet de recrutement peut obtenir de nombreux profils. Dans notre cas, à Bench International, cela fait 40 ans que nous établissons une base solide, détaillée et dédiée au secteur des sciences de la vie. Ainsi, nous ne manquons jamais de candidats pour nos entreprises clientes.

■ Que peut offrir une entreprise de consulting en recrutement aux candidats?

Le principal service qu'elle peut leur proposer est de les aider à capitaliser sur leurs forces professionnelles et leurs buts afin de trouver la place de travail idéale. Ceci est également dans l'intérêt de l'entreprise qui recrutera ainsi un collaborateur pour le poste où il sera le plus efficient. Par sa position d'observateur et de plaque tournante du marché de l'emploi, la société de consulting peut également offrir des opportunités uniques aux candidats qui font appel à ses services.

■ Pourquoi les entreprises sont-elles parfois obligées d'externaliser le recrutement?

Etant donné que cette étape est très délicate et cruciale pour l'avenir d'une entreprise, il est nécessaire de s'assurer qu'elle soit réalisée soigneusement par des professionnels reconnus. En plus, cela permet aux sociétés d'être sûres qu'elles se posent les bonnes questions. Parfois, il s'agit aussi simplement de bénéficier d'un regard non biaisé sur les candidatures internes et externes.

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EXPÉRIENCE
Tobias Ernberg met son expertise au service de la recherche de solutions de recrutement innovantes
PHOTO: MATTHEUZELLWEGGER.COM



Tobias Ernberg
Senior Vice
Président de
Bench
International en
Suisse

INTERVIEW WITH MEDIA PLANET FOR HEBDO SPECIAL REPORT ON RECRUITMENT AND JOB SEARCHING *Full interview in English.*

1) What does a recruitment consulting company offer when it comes to finding a highly qualified employee?

- Working very much as an extension to the client firm, or more specifically, to the hiring manager and human resource department.
- Expansive knowledge of the environmental, regulatory and human dynamics to be considered in positioning the search process and company goal to be successfully met.
- Position the Company and role to the marketplace to advance the status and to maximize the ability to attract the best that the talent pool has to offer.
- Preliminary advise on the job description and profile.
- Depending on the firm, access to an extensive number of candidates through a proprietary database, focused on the client's needs.
- A large and valuable network from which to identify candidates which may be off the radar.
- A research team allowing for rapid, tailored and highly focused "candidate market" analysis.
- Experienced and industry savvy senior staff who will provide great value in vetting the identified candidates to ensure they not only have the competencies and experience required to do the job in question, but, and often more importantly, that they have the personality traits and meet the emotional intelligence requirements of that firm (cultural fit).

2) How do you go about finding a sufficient number of candidates when the company sets particularly challenging criteria?

- Thanks to a highly skilled research team, proactive recruiters and over 40 years of dedicated service to this sector, Bench International has a very detailed and robust data base and the most advanced research tools that allow us to respond to our client needs with speed and accuracy.
- Bench operates on a "one global team" model which means that all staff members are always aware of all the current searches. This allows us to be very proactive to client's needs, and critical objectives. We maintain the highest ethical standards in all communications, this holds true for our Clients and our Candidates. As a part of this dedication we are always candid with regard to our strengths and will not engage in searches that fall beyond our breadth of expertise, where we believe we will not deliver to the high standards we set ourselves and are rightfully demanded by our clients.

3) How do you go about managing risks related to "miss-casting" candidates when (client) management expectations are very high?

- Miss-casting of candidates is often a sign that the recruitment process has probably not been carried out appropriately. This is generally due to one or several of the following points:
 - The recruitment firm may not have sufficiently analyzed the client's needs and expectations before embarking on the actual "hunt."
 - The actual vetting of the candidates is incomplete or insufficient enabling miss fitting candidates to slip through the net.
 - There is insufficient communication and calibration being carried out between the client and the recruitment firm to ensure that the candidates who are presented as meeting the client's expectations effectively do so in reality.
- Bench Intl will spend considerable time with the client before starting the search to ensure that everyone is on the same page with regard to the actual profile of the candidates the client is looking to meet their talent need. This is particularly important when the expectations are very high (speed of delivery or very unusual profile). Having over four decades as specialists in recruiting within the broad life science sector, Bench can accurately provide feedback to the client on how realistic the latter's expectations are relative to the market situation, potentially leading to a fine-tuning of the search project and parameters of the search.
- Though such a process should technically exclude, or at the least minimize a miscasting, a complex search will always come with a certain number of unpredictable variables. Regular contact with the client, such as weekly status calls and written reports ensures that we are regularly calibrating our search activities with the client's expectations and reality.
- We also regularly make use of a highly sophisticated management assessment tool as deemed appropriate as a compliment to our process that can help to ensure the best possible fit for the role and the organization as a whole. This instrument is tailored in collaboration with the client and is designed to gauge a candidate's fit with the unique features of the client's corporate culture and values.

4) Besides recruitment, what other services do recruitment firms offer to candidates?

- The main service recruitment firms offer to candidates is to assist them in capitalizing on the professional strengths and goals as well as to understand where the fit does not exist; both are critical to the long-term success of this important relationship. It is not just a matter of finding their next career opportunity. However, it is important here to distinguish between what is defined as contingency and retained search companies as their models vary somewhat as do the services they offer. Contingency firms work on an opportunistic basis (often not exclusively) to manage their revenue stream. Retained firms are, as the name implies, financially retained by the client to work exclusively on the search project.

■ Generally speaking, besides there being different services provided by the firms depending on their business model, each firm will offer somewhat different additional services to candidates including advice on CV writing, analysis of a candidate's strengths, career coaching and interview coaching to name a few. Their work does, however, predominantly focus on finding the right candidate for the client and there are now specialized firms who work exclusively with helping candidates manage their profiles, train their presentation and interview skills as well provide them guidance for how to further or change their careers

5) In what ways do you provide assistance to companies before they embark on a search for candidates?

■ As mentioned earlier, Bench will work closely with companies to help them understand the marketplace in which the search will be executed, to work together to identify the internal as well as the external issues that will need to be managed before the search is launched, to avoid unwanted rippling effects post-launch, where possible. Tactically, we work with our clients as closely as they wish in developing the position specific and profile outline for the positions they are looking to fill. Further, over the years we have found that our clients truly value our ability to provide critical information on current market trends in their line of business as well input on how the market landscape is looking. At the same time we are often called upon to help clients with mapping projects which is often used as a pre-search project tool allowing them to get a clear vision of what the talent pool is for a specific position allowing them to better plan their talent acquisition strategy, short, mid and long term.

Bench will also regularly guide organizations as to how to structure their teams to do more with fewer leaders who possess multidimensional skills sets, thus responding to new complex business issues and the need to mitigate the cost inherent in larger teams. Additionally, strategic mapping of segments of talent, by function, region and diversity, allows for companies to design for near and long term future scalability without having to be reactive when a need arises. Bench is particularly strong, and proud, to excel in diversity recruitment to ensure companies mirror the populations they serve (an essential element in recruiting in the US and becoming increasingly important in Europe).

Our deep capabilities assist our clients in gaining a competitive edge not just in acquiring talent, but knowing where to access that talent and determine who is "Ready Now", ready in 2-3 years, thereby defining their human architectural plan.

6) In your industry/sector, CVs are very important – is the interview equally important? What other criteria do you take into consideration?

■ CVs are of course a very important element as it will help us visualize a person's professional experiences as well as achievements. It remains, however, very much a starting, and to some extent qualifying, point as there is only so much a CV can convey. For candidates who we feel fit the criteria for a specific search we are working on we will always insist on having a face to face meeting or at least a video conference interview should the candidate be based in a difficultly accessible location. Getting to understand a candidate's style of working, communicating and leading, which allows us to provide these insights to our client relative to the candidate's ways of working and motivations (and de-motivators) will allow us to provide a fuller global picture of the person. Furthermore, understanding how and why people have made certain choices in their career is an important element to develop and will allow us to better decipher a CV. When matching candidates for positions, it is of course important that they have the necessary competence and experience to do the job. Equally important, and sometimes more so, is to understand not only if the person can actually do the job, but if they will do the job; will they feel motivated by the culture of the hiring company, including their values and working style.

Finally, in our specific segment, where we focus primarily on senior positions, geographical mobility is a big element to consider at an early stage in the search. Most senior positions in the life sciences industry require people with international experience and it is unlikely that all candidates will be local. In today's reality where often both partners in a couple are working, assessing a candidate's real capacity to move is important to do early in the process.

7) Why are companies sometimes helpless in recruitment projects forcing them to seek help from outside?

■ In recent years we have seen several companies increase the size of their HR departments, mainly with recruiters, with the aim of reducing costs associated to talent acquisition and, to some extent, maintain these processes internal. In parallel, we have been seeing an extensive expansion of social network sites specializing in recruitment which has been the root of many articles predicting the end of recruitment firms around the world. Though there has been a steady shift by companies to use more internal resources in order to manage their searches this has been mostly occurring for the less senior and more "turned-over" positions. With regard to senior leadership positions, and where, experience, judgment and strategic prowess is critical, companies are still challenged when looking to identify and connecting with the relevant talent pool, especially if it is on an international basis. These recruiting activities are a delicate wooing and negotiating process, having an experienced third party often makes the critical difference in a successful outcome. In addition to using recruitment firms to help seek and find candidates, companies also tend to prefer to outsource the vetting process in recruitment to ensure they have a consistent and unbiased approach and be able to compare and contrast all potential candidates, both internal and external in a neutral process.



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