

MDA and Executive Recruiter Collaborate to Help Non-Profit Select New CEO

Challenge

Because of their broad-based experience and ability to present high-quality talent, executive search firms are an indispensable resource for boards looking to identify new talent. Yet, recruitment interviews and reference checks are only one piece of finding the best fit for senior roles – assessment also plays a key part. When comparing CEO candidates, experienced boards recognize that having a second, objective voice at the table adds power to their critical decision-making.

Solution

Whenever boards are presented with highly qualified external CEO candidates, there's the potential for a “wow” factor to supplant otherwise objective hiring criteria. Internal candidates don't typically elicit the same “wow” response from the board, because board members already know them – some might say almost too well.

Because this non-profit's CEO finalists included both external and internal candidates, MDA Leadership addressed up-front the challenge of internal candidate familiarity. MDA Leadership collaborated with the board and executive recruiter to finalize a set of differentiating criteria to assess all of the CEO finalist candidates fairly and objectively. After assessing each candidate, MDA Leadership analyzed and shared aggregate results with the full board, presented charts comparing candidates on core criteria and provided insights on how each would lead. MDA Leadership's analysis also offered additional ideas for subsequent and final board interviews. The board then had a full range of data for its decision-making: board interviews, reference checks, candidate profiles and assessment data.

Results

Following MDA Leadership's input, the board completed its selection process and chose a new CEO who had been an internal candidate. More than three years later, this CEO is still successfully leading the organization, beating the odds for the tenure of newly selected CEOs, which is around 18 months.

The board credits MDA Leadership's CEO candidate assessment, comparison and analysis process as a key factor in its selection success. The CEO finalists thanked the board for its decision-making fairness and the insight they gained from MDA Leadership's assessment and input process.

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