

CASE STUDIES

Head-hunting with awareness – Sipral from the Czech Republic

APRIL 15, 2019 | CASE STUDIES



How to find a perfect candidate whilst the aggressive battle for talents on the local market rages on? Empathy and thoughtfulness may be the best strategy, as the case of Czech company Sipral shows.

Top quality executive search process is like hunting for a very rare kind of fish. You gather all your knowledge and resources, do research about the fish environment and habits, and hope that the species you target will be the right choice for your client. But how to operate, when there are fewer and fewer fish in the pond? And the client still wants the rarest and the finest of them all?

In other words – how to conduct an effective executive search on the local, but extremely competitive market? The client is a company with global growth potential and very specific expectations regarding the candidate's personality. **IMSA Czech Republic represented by Jan Nováček from Nováček & Partners seems to know the answer.**

The nation with practical mindset

The Czech Republic is a quite demanding market for head-hunters. The country economy is stable with rising GDP rate and, according to Eurostat, the 2018 unemployment rate was 2.7. The lowest in Europe.

On the other hand, the market still remains local, with only several companies operating worldwide. Finally, Czech companies value people who can follow common sense, in their work, as well as in their private life: **“Czechs prefer candidates with a very practical mindset and the ability to resolve problems very quickly.** They are not interested in people, who pay much attention to sophisticated procedures and bureaucracy. The solution has to be short and to the point,” Jan Nováček from Nováček & Partners, explains.

The combination of a good economic situation, a small number of experts available and high client expectations result in a vicious battle for talents, the highest bids and hostile takeovers of the best managers, which often comes down to overpaying the candidate, who is not even happy about his or her new position.

Wanted: member of the top management team with common sense and heart

In this particular environment, the Czech head-hunting boutique company, Nováček & Partners (part of IMSA Search Global Partners Network) had to find a new member of the top management team for Sipral, a company specializing in progressive building technologies. The task was to find a skilled manager with project management experience and

- Building technologies/construction industry experience
- Treasury experience
- Production controlling capabilities/experience
- Willingness to travel (London, Paris)
- Interest in becoming part of a family company which is managed with common sense and heart
- Human approach, Responsibility, Flexibility and Humbleness

All this within a very short, one-month deadline . Not only did Nováček & Partners complete the task, but they also won a new customer. How did they manage to achieve this? Answering this question requires going back six months in time.

Human approach during harsh battle

In the early 2018, six months before Sipral put the assignment on Jan Nováček's desk, another company called the office with a completely different problem. A manufacturer of residential and storage containers had been sold and the whole branch in the Czech Republic was about to be closed down. This measure was taken rather unexpectedly and the companies' HR director asked Nováček & Partners for help with a consulting program for their employees.

“Unfortunately, they had no budget for it. The company was not even our client. However, our creed is to help if we can, and so we organised a one-day workshop and follow-up consultations at the company's headquarters, free of charge,” explains Jan Nováček, IMSA Czech Republic.

The direct result of this pro bono action remained to be seen.

Confidential search

Then, six months later, the assignment from Sipral's new CFO arrived. Nováček & Partners had to act quite promptly. Given the Sipral's highly specialized profile, consultants were left with just several local companies to search for suitable candidates and approach them with confidence.

As a result, shortly after receiving the assignment, Nováček & Partners managed to present three candidates to Sipral. One of them was Tomáš K., whom Jan Nováček had met during workshops in the storage containers company. They kept in touch in the last months. Tomáš K. seemed to be a perfect candidate for Sipral. As so, the company invited him for an interview.

“We always try to be present at the first meeting between our client and the candidate we suggested. It was no different that time. Being present at the first interview makes the whole process more personal and we are also able to manage it more carefully and collect immediate feedback. This is crucial. After that particular first meeting we received tons of positive feedback from both sides. This let us think that Tomáš K. might be happy at Sipral,” says Jan Nováček, IMSA Czech Republic.

Unfortunately, there was one obstacle on the road. Tomáš K. was already employed. In the automotive company Plant outside Prague.

Unhostile takeover

“I knew that Sipral was Tomáš's dream job. That's why I decided to act in a quite risky and unconventional way. I asked Tomáš to set us a meeting with the Plant's automotive company manager. We met personally and apologised for the problem we created by recruiting Tomáš K. for a different job. I've offered help with the search for the open position in the Plant's management. It was really fair to offer a discount and cooperation began. We presented three relevant candidates just after two weeks. The candidate has accepted the offer and we are happy to have a new client in the automotive industry,” explains Jan Nováček.

As a result of Nováček & Partners actions:

- Tomáš K. finally agreed to take the job in Sipral where he started his mission in January 2019.
- Two other candidates from the free workshop found their dream job with the help of the company consultants.
- Cooperation between the automotive company Plant and Nováček & Partners is being continued.

“As all IMSA Search Global Partners members, we believe that everyone deserves their own head-hunter,” explains Jan Nováček, IMSA Czech Republic “The case of Sipral shows that simple empathy and fair play very often pay off even in the most competitive environment. We are honoured to be part of IMSA Search, a network of boutique head-hunting companies and consultants who sincerely share a common vision.”



RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- » Head-hunting with awareness – Sipral from the Czech Republic
- » The know-how of consumer-centric executive search
- » IMSA Search expands its operations to the USA
- » IMSA Italy supports Brandon Group in the appointment of CEO
- » IMSA Search Report on Executive Trends 2019