

# Culture, contacts and communication signal success

A strong Central and Eastern European network, high quality, frequent communication and a trusted relationship led to the successful appointment of what the client considered one of the most crucial appointments in retail banking.

KBC is a banking group based in Brussels, but with a strong presence in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region. With 12 million customers and 53,000 staff, the group is a key player in its market. Carmichael Fisher was asked to source a Credit Risk Management Director for KBC's Polish Operations. A similar job as they did for KBC Consumer Finance in Hungary.



*“I highly rate the personal interaction I get from Carmichael Fisher”*

## Carmichael fisher

Executive Search

*Carmichael Fisher specialises in providing executive search services to international organisations around the world. Its offices in Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Australia, work in collaboration and this collective experience in cross-border search and assessment is complimented by a deep knowledge and networks in the major industry sectors.*

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### Confident they would deliver

Bart Vanhaeren, KBC's Global Head of Consumer Finance, was responsible for the appointment and explained the importance of the role: "Credit risk is one, if not the most important, area in retail banking. You cannot afford to have a vacancy for any length of time, so a good appointment and a strong succession plan are critical. Credit risk is the motor of our business."

KBC was very specific in what they were looking for in this person. The individual had to combine excellent technical, analytical skills and strong leadership with the confidence to deal with people up to board level within the group. Carmichael Fisher took on the detailed brief and began the search, as Vanhaeren explained: "While Carmichael Fisher wasn't actually based in the region, I knew they had excellent local contacts and my past experiences with them gave me the confidence to know they would deliver."

For Vanhaeren, there are three aspects of a successful appointment: Firstly, high quality candidates; secondly, the service he receives from the search firm; and thirdly, the knowledge and understanding of the client's organisation, to ensure that all potential candidates will fit well within its culture.

When it came to KBC's culture, Vanhaeren believes Carmichael Fisher had such a good understanding partly because of the investment in time they were prepared to make. "Our key contacts at Carmichael Fisher actually came over to Belgium to spend the whole day with us at our annual strategic day," explained Vanhaeren. "They met with around 50 or 60 of our highest level managers and high potentials, giving them the cultural understanding of our business that helped them to find the best possible candidates."

### The service from Carmichael Fisher is exceptional

In fact, against all three of Vanhaeren's measures, Carmichael Fisher performed very highly. "The shortlist was so good that we could have hired two of the four candidates that Carmichael Fisher presented to us," continued Vanhaeren. "Sometimes you might get a long list, but they're not always worth talking to. Carmichael Fisher puts in the effort to ensure that we get exactly the right candidates on our shortlist."

"Not only that," said Vanhaeren, "but the service from the firm is exceptional. The Carmichael Fisher team combine frequent interaction, both with us and with the candidates, with very good updates and quick feedback. This makes them a pleasure to work with."

Vanhaeren also valued Carmichael Fisher's extensive CEE network. He said: "I dealt with the London office, but the firm clearly had excellent contacts and local speakers across CEE. They are very experienced in consumer and retail banking."

Alongside industry knowledge and local contacts, Carmichael Fisher's personal contact with Vanhaeren was something the client appreciated: "Having worked together for a number of years, there is a lot of trust between us. I highly rate the personal interaction that I get from Carmichael Fisher. They are genuinely interested in you and your business. I trust and value their opinion."