

Following a company's train of thought.....

Kelly Barlow, HR Director at South West Trains, came to Carmichael Fisher on an industry recommendation. She found the team to be so professional on the Deputy Finance Director search that she's using them again for another senior position in employee relations.



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Right track and personal touch

Kelly Barlow found the company reputation impressive and decided to see if Carmichael Fisher could find the right person for the finance role. The search started in August and Kelly appreciated how focused the team were on the relationship with South West Trains and their human resources contact in particular. The team were excellent at 'getting under the skin' of the firm's requirements, that were not forthcoming on paper, and they spent a lot of time drilling Kelly in order to save time later down the process.

"They took time to understand the role requirement, not just from a job description perspective but the wider context in terms of fit. Particularly when you're searching at such a senior level, the ability to find not just the credentials but someone who is okay for today and is also going to be brilliant for tomorrow."

Kelly points out that recruitment mistakes are very costly when they're made badly, so the time and effort from the start is key. The regular updates made it easy for her to work with Carmichael Fisher and increased her confidence in their candidates.

"We hire recruitment companies so they can take the stress and the strain off the search, but they're also my brand. They're talking to potential candidates about South West Trains and me. The fact that they do it so eloquently, and sell the brand without me having to, means the candidates put in front of me have already had the brand sold to them."

Mechanics in place

Carmichael Fisher responded very well on feedback and identified all miscommunication early on. As a natural part of the process, it was handled well and Kelly was happy to point out that the team were very good at putting in the work. She admits the challenge was in finding a person who could manage the technical expertise of the job, display people leadership skills, and interface well with external stakeholders.

"We were looking for quite a lot in one person and initially we were quite decided on a person who had some rail experience. We felt they would need that in order to hit the ground running. It turns out that the person we selected ticks all the boxes but doesn't come from a rail background at all. They got us to think differently by putting quality candidates in front of us."

Their final choice of applicant not only looked good on paper, she also performed well at interview. The benefits of using Carmichael Fisher were obvious in this case as the individual hired was not actively job searching at the time and would not have been apparent had the team not handpicked her.

"The legwork they did with that candidate, to sell the difficult role in a company in a new industry, to get them into a position where they wanted to apply and were credible at interview; that is Carmichael Fisher. They don't give up!"

All the indications are extremely positive and Kelly thinks the chosen candidate will be with them for a long time. She highlighted the partnership, personal and professional aspects of the Carmichael Fisher experience and insisted she was happy to use Carmichael Fisher again and, indeed, talk highly about them to others – "Which I don't do for other head hunters, I must say!"

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