

Bob Olin

**HOW TO RECOGNISE EXCELLENCE IN
EXECUTIVE SEARCH**

A Best Practice guide
into top-level Executive Search

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“It doesn't make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do. We hire smart people so they can tell us what to do.”

- Steve Jobs

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Writing this book has been one of the most challenging things I have ever done. It was also a great adventure because I have never written a book before and this was 100 % outside my comfort zone. So why on earth did I write this book in the first place?

I genuinely just wanted to share my experiences in Executive Search with others, hopefully benefitting someone. During my over 30 years in Executive Search I heard a lot, I saw a lot, and I experienced a lot. I learned so much about Executive Search, and I could not stop myself from feeling that many others too could benefit from this, Candidates, Clients, University Students – our future business leaders, Executive Search Firms. It just seemed a waste not telling anyone about it. So, I wrote this book.

I also wanted to reach out to the general public. I am certain that a great many people are interested in Executive Search. For most people, Head Hunters and Headhunting sound exciting, mysterious, thrilling and interesting. Only, until now, as far as I know, no one has ever before talked about Executive Search in a book the way I do – and in a way that anyone can understand.

I can assure you that my thoughts were not at all that clear in the very beginning. Also, I felt I was just a Research Manager in a faraway country in Northern Europe, not working in any of the big metropolises like London or New York. I could not for the life of me imagine why anyone anywhere would be interested in reading my story. I believe one driving force behind my decision to start writing this book was the fact, that I still remember how much I used to long for someone to tell me what Executive Search was about when I started my career.

Like so many people nowadays, I too had become accustomed to mainly writing short text messages and emails. Those were more or less the writing skills I had when I started writing this book. I first managed to write only five pages with a few bullet points of some ideas I had developed. You don't much write a book based on a few bullet points, do you? However, it was the starting point I had.

I never knew in advance what kind of ideas and thoughts would emerge in my mind before I had finished the chapter I was working on. I proceeded this way all through the book, literally. When I started writing page one, I had no idea what I would write on page two. However, I felt confident that if I only would give this my best try, I would eventually find the right way to share my knowledge, i.e. to find the right words to write.

It was a thrilling experience to see how one thing led to another and many other things after that. But, to get all the way, you must first begin with the “one thing” and believe in yourself. At least I had to walk all the way, step by step, because there were no shortcuts or sudden revelations.

My views and opinions about Executive Search/Research are not only based on my 30 years of experience, but also on my personality, my characteristics, my feelings, my values, my expectations and goals, my way of working. This book is my very personal point of view, my way of describing what Executive Search is all about.

Of course, I have also been influenced by my colleagues, Clients, Candidates and the numerous business leaders I have had the privilege to meet and work with throughout my career. Without this interaction and exchange of opinions, I would never have developed into a top-level professional in the Executive Search Business.

It is impossible to say what I have learned from whom and when, but it is certain that all the people I have met and worked with throughout the years have together had a profound positive impact on my professional expertise.

Here I want to extend a special thanks to all my employers and all my colleagues for all the cooperation and all the advice, guidance and support I have received from them. I don't mention you all by name, but you know who you are.

In a Service Industry, like the Executive Search Industry also is, the level of and the quality of the service given is always down to the people giving it. Ultimately everything depends on the very person providing the service in question. There are numerous Search Firms and thousands and thousands of Search Consultants/Researchers in the world. Everyone has their own opinion about the various subjects in this book, perhaps not always in line with my thinking.

That I might be somewhat alone in my way of thinking was an often-recurring feeling when I was writing this book. Many were the moments when I thought that the only person who would ever be interested in this book was the writer himself. In confidence, I can tell you even he had his doubts.

Luckily, my will to write this book was stronger than my fear that no one would ever be interested in reading it and this enabled me to write the book.

I could never have done this alone. My loved ones, which are my wife, my daughters, their husbands and their children (even the dogs it sometimes felt), were my support group that enabled this book to come true. They believed in me. They supported me, they encouraged me and pushed me forward all the way. They were the ones that kept me afloat and going in the dark moments when I felt I would never make it. I am eternally grateful to them for enabling me to write this book and make a dream come true.

Camden Town, London 5.7.2018

Bob Olin

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