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From Life Sciences to Leadership:
My Journey Through the Lens of
“Leaders in Life Sciences”



Participating in the ***Leaders in Life Sciences*** podcast with **Henk Jan Out** was an opportunity to reflect on my journey as an executive search consultant and share insights into a profession that blends strategy, relationships, and a deep understanding of leadership. As the **Head of the Life Sciences & Healthcare Practice Group at Pedersen & Partners**, I've spent over two decades helping organizations find the leaders they need to innovate and succeed.

In this article, I'll take you through my story, the role of Pedersen & Partners in driving leadership excellence, and why executive search remains a critical component of success in the life sciences and healthcare sectors.

From Recruitment to Executive Search: A Career Built on Relationships

In my conversation with Henk on ***Leaders in Life Sciences***, I shared how my career in executive search began. My background in international management and marketing initially led me to roles in recruitment consulting and financial planning. Those early experiences taught me the importance of building rapport and understanding people's motivations—skills that have been invaluable in my career.

My journey into **executive search** began somewhat unexpectedly when I moved to the UK and joined Ken Clark International. For the next 15 years, I specialized in **Life Sciences and Healthcare**, helping companies secure leadership talent across the globe. Later, I joined ZRG Partners before finding my current home at Pedersen & Partners eight years ago, where I've been **leading the global Life Sciences & Healthcare Practice Group** for the past five years.

One key hurdle is cultural bias. Research involving **15,000 executives** found that while many claimed to see no difference in male and female leadership capabilities, **81% subconsciously believed men were better suited to lead**. Addressing these entrenched perceptions is essential to driving meaningful progress.

Pedersen & Partners: A Trusted Partner in Executive Search

During the podcast, Henk and I discussed what sets Pedersen & Partners apart in the competitive world of executive search. **Our global reach is a key differentiator**. Life Sciences is a highly international sector, and our ability to source talent from across continents ensures **our clients have access to the best leaders, no matter where they're based**.

At Pedersen & Partners, we pride ourselves on **building long-term partnerships** with our clients. Every search is tailored to the client’s unique needs, from identifying the right leadership qualities to ensuring a strong cultural fit. As I mentioned to Henk Jan Out, we don’t see ourselves merely as recruiters; **we’re strategic advisors**, helping clients build leadership teams that drive growth and innovation.

The Importance of Executive Search in Life Sciences

Henk Jan asked a question I often encounter: with platforms like **LinkedIn**, do companies still need executive search firms? My answer is always a resounding yes. While LinkedIn has made talent more visible, **executive search adds value** in ways that go beyond what technology alone can achieve.

In our podcast discussion, I highlighted three key areas where executive search excels:

- 1. Confidentiality:** Leadership transitions often require **discretion**, which we handle with the utmost care.
- 2. Access to Passive Talent:** The best candidates are not always actively seeking new roles, and reaching them requires a thoughtful, **personalized approach**.
- 3. Tailored Solutions:** Every search is customized to align with the **client’s strategic goals** and the candidate’s personal and professional aspirations.

Executive search is particularly vital in life sciences, where leadership can make the difference between groundbreaking innovation and stagnation. As I told Henk Jan, **“It’s about finding the right leader at the right time to drive success.”**

The Executive Search Process: Precision, Partnership, and Purpose

On *Leaders in Life Sciences*, I walked Henk Jan through our meticulous executive search process. It begins with **understanding the client’s needs**—what the role entails, the leadership qualities required, and how the candidate must fit into the organization’s culture. From there, we conduct **detailed market research** and mapping, leveraging our global network to create a longlist of potential candidates. Through a series of interviews and evaluations, **we refine this into a shortlist**, which we present to the client. This collaborative process ensures that we identify not only the most qualified candidates but also **those who align with the company’s vision and values**.

One aspect that sets Pedersen & Partners apart is **our placement guarantee**. If a candidate leaves within the first year, we redo the search at no additional cost, demonstrating our commitment to delivering lasting value.

Diversity: A Pillar of Leadership Excellence

Diversity was a recurring theme during the podcast interview. At Pedersen & Partners, **diversity is central to our mission**. Our shortlists are always diverse, not only in terms of gender and ethnicity but also in skills, experiences, and leadership styles.

In life sciences, where innovation thrives on varied perspectives, diversity is essential. As I shared with Henk Jan, **“It’s not just about ticking boxes; it’s about finding the right person with the right expertise to drive organizational success.”**

The Human Side of Executive Search

One of the highlights of our discussion on ***Leaders in Life Sciences*** was exploring **the human side of executive search**. Building relationships and maintaining trust are at the heart of what I do. Over the years, I’ve built a network of professionals who know they can turn to me for guidance, whether they’re looking for their next opportunity or seeking leadership talent for their organizations.

Asked what makes my job so rewarding, for me, **it’s the long-term impact**. Seeing a candidate I placed grow into a leadership role or become a client years later is incredibly fulfilling. **Executive search is about more than matching CVs** to job descriptions—it’s about shaping careers and driving organizational success.

My discussion with **Henk Jan Out** on ***Leaders in Life Sciences*** podcast reinforced the essential role executive search plays in connecting leadership with opportunity. At Pedersen & Partners, our focus is on **finding the right leaders** who align with an organization’s vision and can drive meaningful progress in the life sciences and healthcare sectors.

Leadership transitions are pivotal moments for any company, and navigating them requires a thoughtful, strategic approach. Through our global reach and sector expertise, we help clients identify leaders who will make a lasting impact, while supporting candidates in taking the next important step in their careers.

As the industry evolves, the need for capable, forward-thinking leadership will only grow. **I’m proud to contribute to this critical process** and look forward to continuing to help organizations and individuals achieve their goals.