

Bonnell Aluminum: Succession Plan for an Outgoing Executive



Objective: Find the Best Talent for VP of Operations Role

With their Vice President of Operations nearing retirement, Bonnell Aluminum reached out to Bell Oaks Executive Search. Patrick C. Daniel, Bonnell's Vice President of Human Resources, was responsible for overseeing the recruiting process through Bell Oaks. While he'd worked with executive search firms in prior roles, his current company had very little experience with such partnerships. "Bonnell had limited familiarity with a retained search firm partnership versus a contingent search firm arrangement. Bell Oaks was thorough in explaining their process to me and Bonnell's president, Brook Hamilton, and followed up with subsequent discussions, recalibrated as needed and kept us updated on timelines."

Process: Grasp Unique Environment and Attract Ideal Candidates

As the search was underway, Patrick could tell he was in for a different experience than he'd had with past firms. "I found Bell Oaks to be engaging and interested in supporting our needs," he reports. "They took the time to learn everything about us, even visited our facilities to know more. We don't have a household name, so we don't always 'show well' because of that. As a labor-intensive role, it's not always the most attractive to some. I was candid with them about that. They represented us well to ensure no one was misled or misunderstood the nature of the work or the environment." Patrick was introduced to five qualified candidates by Bell Oaks and considered making offers to two. While most firms stop at the point formal offers are being discussed, Bell Oaks kept searching, just in case an even better fit for Bonnell was around the corner. It was.

Results: Assess Process and Degree of Success

Having several qualified candidates made it simple for Bonnell to recognize the ideal person when he was uncovered in the second round of sourcing. Upon meeting him, the decision was easy. Their hire has been a standout success – so much so, that Bonnell's parent company has requested Bell Oaks' information to use for their own executive searches. Both Brook and Patrick have been equally pleased with their new VP of Operations and the experience of partnering with Bell Oaks. Says Patrick, "You know when you've had just an okay experience with a search firm, or a bad one or an exceptional one. Bell Oaks falls into the latter. They did their job exceptionally well and considerably better than firms I've worked with in the past. They listen and provide food for thought and direction. Their professionalism in how they handle all aspects of the process is top notch."

"We absolutely recommend them. In fact, we've engaged them on another retained search, the second in the history of the company, and we'll probably engage them in a third one."