

Global Executive Search Case Study

Analytics VP-Asia

After initially establishing their office in Asia, Our US client needed someone who could grow the business but also manage the expanding team.



The Company

Our client, a privately owned analytic consultancy (US based), is one of the most successful FMCG/PCG analytic consultancy in market mix modelling, predictive modelling and customer loyalty analysis. They deliver innovative, customized services to clients across the globe. Working at the top end of FMCG/PCG, they opened offices in Europe & Asia in the 00's. Like many before them, this company had been challenged by the move outside their US base. Finding a leadership team with a track record in technical expertise to establish these operations was their first challenge. The second was finding high calibre VPs who understood how to manage and develop an organisation moving from being a large US based firm, to a global consultancy.

"listening very carefully to our client, was critical. Understanding the challenges of running a privately backed growth stage business was key,..... It was also about understanding how two different cultures perceive and engage with the world."



The Task

The company had worked before with Eugene Ivory, when they were sourcing their VP of Europe. Ivory had sourced an exceptional leader from the UK, with a track record in the industry to head up their European operations. Asia was the challenge, facing them, now.

As with their European office, the company had used experienced executives from their US base, to establish their operation in Asia to service their global clients, in the region. The next phase of development required an exceptional leader with a deep industry background in the region. After a couple of false starts with talented people who struggled with an poorly defined position, the company came back to Ivory and PSD partners to help them define their requirements and to source the right mix of skills, competencies and cultural fit.



The Resolution

PSD Partners, was asked to assess the situation, propose a solution, and locate the right person. According to Ivory, the key challenge was; *“Our client had hired an excellent MD for their Asia office, from a sales and business development prospective, but he was relying on technical execution being provided by the local office with support from the US base. Having come from a large enterprise background, the individual was used to environments with substantially developed back office for support. However, the reality of this position was that while the business expanded, the technical demands became too great to be supported by anything other than considerably enhanced local operational capacity. So the new VP of Asia would not only need excellent business development skills, but also require exceptional technical analytics experience with a deep understanding of marketing-mix modelling with the capacity to build and manage a local Asian team.”*

PSD began extensive data-gathering on relevant candidates with deep Asian market experience. The firm worked with the company’s senior team in the US and Singapore. A detailed profile of the individual required was developed.

PSD’s well-organised search process, monitored progress and helped validate the eventual decision to recruit and persuade the preferred candidate to lead the Asia operation & region.

A key part of the initial stage of the process according to Ivory of PSD Partners was *“to ensure that all stakeholders were aligned to what was required and expected. Reviewing the learning from the previous incumbent’s tenure critically informed the process”* Ivory maintains that *“listening very carefully was important. Understanding the challenges of running a privately backed growth stage business was key, also regular two-way communication and calibrating our findings from the market against the expectations of each stakeholder proved critical to the success of the search”*.

PSD initiated a thorough international search, with a primary focus on the Asian region. *“We worked with 7/8 respected industry sources, initially, from our own global network. This provided an excellent start for generating names and organisations to target. Ivory goes on to say, “One of our challenges was separating the ‘wheat from the chaff’. We directly targeted senior industry executives in Asia who had the required mix of modelling experience and business development skills. We were able to canvas 3rd party opinions through our network before making an approach*



The Outcome

An exceptional individual was identified. He was working as a senior regional VP in analytics, when PSD Partners made their direct approach. As a former regional VP for a major global market research group in Asia, the individual had a considerable track record. Hong Kong Chinese with a north American education with substantial experience of working in and for US organisations, the individual matched not only the technical, commercial and competency specification, he also had a very deep understanding of the cultural differences of how business in the US and the Asia is done. As Ivory said, *“The challenge with finding a person for a US client expanding into Asia is not just about identifying somebody who displays an understanding of surface level cultural behaviours, such as an understanding of how to greet or behave in a business meeting, it is much deeper than that. For many it is the difference between how the two cultures think and perceive the world. For the typical Western/US company, their paradigm is centred on the individual and the self, but in Asia, culture is the polar opposite, centring on the group and what is best for it. Finding someone who understands this is critical to finding a person who will succeed in a diverse cultural environment.”* In addition to deep domain experience, what really appealed to the company was that the candidate had a significant track record in aligning operational capacity to business growth. PSD identified 20 potential candidates, made approaches to them and culled it to a shortlist of 3 & then a hire.

PSD Partners conducted this global search entirely from their base in Dublin, according to Ivory *“the company, was keen that we controlled costs, initial candidate interviews were conducted via Skype video calls to facilitate this”*. This was a particularly challenging search that took 5 months to complete. The fact that the client had a couple of false starts re this position made the outcome particularly satisfying



About PSD Partners

PSD Partners works with companies across the globe. We help our clients to build their human capital. We find the best talent for their most important executive roles, helping them to build world class teams, and help them fund sustainable growth. We source the best, not only those seeking a role on the market at a particular time.

Our Executive Search assignments typically focus on Executive Officer, Vice President and Board level roles. Our engagements come from either international corporations expanding in Europe, company founders or investors in early or growth stage businesses.

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