

Executive Search

Case Study

Regional Sales Head (Europe)

For an India headquartered intralogistics
organization

Business & Professional Services

Background

Our client is a leading intralogistics automation solution provider with a sharp focus on Parcel, Piece and Case Handling applications.

What was the exact ask/ role specification

Our client was looking to bring on board a Regional Head for the European region. This position would entail the responsibility for driving sales (top line revenue & profit margins) by deploying the relevant sales strategy & priorities and achieving goals across products, alliances, and customer satisfaction for the region.

This role would report to the Chief Business Officer and be based out of the Netherlands.

The process

We started on this mandate by working with the hiring manager (the Chief Business Officer, in this case) to sharpen our search. This involved:

- Listing out a set of organizations that would form the universe from which we could identify suitable candidates. The ask was specifically for organizations in the intralogistics space in Europe.
- Specifying the exact type/s of intralogistics products on which the detailed experience was required. E.g. Sortation related experience would fit the bill accurately.

We generated the first list of 18 candidates from the target companies and shared it with our client. We received positive feedback on this list. However, we agreed to make some minor adjustments to the list of target companies identified and dropped a few large companies since this was a ground-up opportunity and there were some serious doubts about the candidates displaying the required entrepreneurial mindset. We then moved on to connecting the shortlisted candidates and building on the candidate pool.

Based on the responses, we immediately made a few observations:

- There was a distinct reluctance from the potential candidates to engage – many candidates declined the opportunity without even providing us a window to discuss the mandate in detail.
- This period was also the time when many of the target organizations were going through their annual compensation revision cycle, and they wanted to see it through before they came forward for any discussions with us.
- We had started the process during the holiday season in the Netherlands/Europe and most candidates had already planned 2 to 3 week vacations. As a result, they were not interested in engaging in any work-related discussions during this period.

We immediately sounded this off to the hiring manager and aligned expectations regarding the timelines. The client decided to open out the mandate beyond the Netherlands and include France and Germany in the mix.

From the third week on, we started making our candidate presentations. It was slow, but we kept the hiring manager updated every step of the way on the active set of candidates and why they were coming forward or dropping out after the initial interest.

By the end of the 8th week, we had made 6 submissions (with another 2 more in the pipeline) and our client finalized one candidate who fit the bill perfectly for them. They clearly stated that they would like to close out on him and put all other interviews on hold.

The chosen candidate had completed all his interview rounds virtually via video conferencing, and it was now important for the client to meet with the candidate for in-person discussions. This happened only 3 weeks from when the penultimate video interview was held. Both the hiring manager and the Founder-CEO met with the candidate during a trade fair and

were more than satisfied with the conversation, giving us a final go-ahead on the candidate. The candidate too was happy with the in-person discussion and was eager to go ahead with the opportunity.

The next step for the client was to establish/set up their entity in Amsterdam, Netherlands, and then extend the formal offer of employment via that entity. During the process of this setup, the hiring manager discussed all the terms of employment and the compensation numbers with the candidate and PeopleAsset assisted in setting expectations with both parties, arriving at a win-win situation.

The process of setting up the entity lasted for 4 months, and it was imperative that the chosen candidate did not lose interest nor find the need to pursue another opportunity during this period. PeopleAsset, along with the hiring manager, engaged with the candidate in tandem and frequently, to ensure that the interest was kept alive and well.

Finally, when the formal entity was set up and the final offer rolled out, the candidate served his notice period of 1.5 months. He was relieved earlier than anticipated and came on board without any hurdles. The candidate was also able to travel to India to onboard and meet the larger organization and the leadership team.

The chosen candidate brought about 30 years of total experience of which more than 50% was intralogistics focused. His primary market coverage has been the whole of Europe (Norway, Sweden, Italy, Spain, France, Russia and more), Asia and South America.

PeopleAsset differentiator

- PeopleAsset quickly zeroed in on the right set of candidates early in the process, making it easier to aggressively build the next set of candidates.
- We also highlighted potential challenges to the hiring manager and how we will be moving forward irrespective of the potential and existing hurdles.
- Our evaluation process ensured that we were able to hand-pick the right set of candidates so that the client truly found value in the conversations with the small pool of candidates presented.
- The extended handholding process before the formal offer was rolled out, kept the candidate hooked and ensured that he didn't lose interest in the opportunity – we also actively involved the hiring manager in this process.
- PeopleAsset conducted research into the cultural nuances and the differences between Dutch, German, French, and Indian cultures. We adapted the right practices to ensure no cultural faux pax was made during the entire duration of the engagement across multiple candidates.