

# Aftenposten

## Modern headhunters use technology

Headhunters are lagging behind the international development in the industry as they still keep finding their "candidates" in their close network.

**GUNNAR KAGGE**

Are you wondering why the headhunters do not approach you and offer you your dream job? It could be pending on the fact that you do not have the right friends.

In the future the headhunters will be in search of high potential candidates freed from their close knit "old boys network" and rather take use of the internet and American methods in finding candidates for the management and specialist positions to be filled. When this change takes place the "old boys network" will only be a supplement in the search process.

Christian Schøyen, Norwegian born, is stating from his office in London that they can find more qualified candidates to managerial and specialist positions regardless of industry and country in Europe where the client might be located. He is stating that a number of recruitment experts are lagging behind in the international development.

- Many headhunters are interested, and some of them try, while others stick to what they always have done. Schøyen now feels that some headhunters have started on an American way of development that will speed up.

Together with Nils Rasmussen he has written the book "Secrets of The Executive Search Experts" that is published in USA. The large number of books written about Executive Search are by veteran's who on strictly conservative and traditional terms deals with the business regardless of modern internet and communication technology. We on the other hand wanted to investigate how the best US headhunting companies identify the best talents in the marketplace. Schøyen approached the major US headhunting companies and got the opportunity to get inside to see how they worked. He had previously worked for two internationally recognised search firms in USA and Europe.

Schøyen turned the secrets into a business opportunity. From London and Los Angeles he operates the company Executive Search Research (ESR). He sells the services to the established headhunter companies.

- They come to us so we can find potential candidates for management positions. Within a short time frame we then come up with a "short list" of about ten candidates that are interested and qualified. Our expertise consist of finding the potential candidates, while the headhunters task is to choose "the best match" from the short list, to ensure that the most suitable person gets the job.

### Time and culture

- With our methods we can successfully solve all recruitment assignments. The only challenge is that we speak the language in the appropriate market fluently and that we understand the culture work in a similar time zone.

During last year the six employees in London completed 243 research projects for the headhunting companies in Norway, Sweden and Denmark. Along the way they have successfully built up a considerable



**Headhunter.** Christian Schøyen states that he can find candidates for any position to be filled, with the use of American methods and modern technology.

PHOTO: SVEIN ERIK FURULD

database of 150,000\* candidates. By working across the various country borders we free ourselves from the personal network which benefits our clients. Within specific industries it is at times a lack of people with a certain skills. It is then very helpful that we on behalf of Norwegian companies sometimes can go to Sweden to find the best candidates.

The search takes place through the Internet, databases and the American model. First of all the client needs to clarify what candidate profile and qualifications they are looking for, then the search starts. The same work model is being used every time, irrelevant of the level of the position or what industry is being covered.

- We are primarily looking for people who have something to gain by starting to work for our client. Are we looking for a CEO, then we would look at VP's at same size companies. Are we talking about a major company, then we would look into somewhat smaller companies as well. We always need to be able to offer something that is better to lure them away from their current position. If he does not find enough good names at the competitors then he looks into parallel industries or companies that uses the clients products.

On average we identify about 80 interesting names for the "long list". Then we approach the candidates by checking them out and talking to them to find out if they have the right background and if they are interested in the position. The research assignment takes minimum five days. The research project is completed when the client receives the folder with information on who Schøyen claims to be "the best qualified candidates" available in the market place for that specific position.

### «Democratization»

Schøyen states that the method he uses will soon become the new standard, also in Scandinavia. Currently the European headhunter are lagging after the US development.

- By becoming free of the personal networks it becomes a lot more candidates to choose from. He says that this is very positive for the corporate clients. Schøyen further believes that the method "democratizes" the selection process.

He says; We are increasing the opportunities also for those "not so visible", but who are high achievers to also get the new exciting job offers.