

Back to “Old School” Recruiting

The search for a local public-sector client’s Construction Project Manager required finding a candidate who possessed the right mix of humility and servant leadership, while being sophisticated and aggressive enough to drive multi-million-dollar government projects. This person needed to have a solid track record of working with and influencing a diverse set of stakeholders, while also capable of and willing to manage a diverse project portfolio from small budget projects to over \$200M.

Challenge

Finding a Construction Project Manager focused on Capital Improvements in a tight job market at the beginning of the construction season proved to be exceedingly challenging. Adding to the complexity of the search were many factors that had to be taken into consideration: it was a government position with a restricted budget, salary subpar to market, multiple stakeholders weighing in on the hire, a diverse portfolio of projects with a large geographical reach. In addition, the successful candidate would be stepping into some very large shoes as the departing Capital Improvements Manager was well-loved and leaving on very good terms. The candidate would need to be comfortable doing everything from working hands-on with tradesmen, to pulling permits, to donning a suit and tie and dining with city councilors, judges, and constituents. Project costs range from \$200 to \$200 million. With so many construction jobs in the country, recruiting someone to move to a smaller city in Oregon where the opportunities are not as ripe was not an easy task. The successful candidate would need a broad range of skills and wisdom gained through many years of experience in the field to handle the position and diverse range of stakeholders. The ideal CPM candidate would be someone who has a love for the community.

Solution

The County initially began the recruitment process on their own. Realizing they weren’t getting the results they were looking for, they hired recruiting experts Acumen Executive Search (Acumen). After reviewing the County’s results, the Acumen team designed a search strategy that would be much more effective and decided to start anew.

Many potential candidates could not be found with typical recruiting methods of today, making the search challenging. Senior recruiter, Amanda Szeto, would need to come up with a creative solution for finding qualified candidates which required “old school” recruiting. Talent was identified and cold calls were made, networking accomplished, and referrals received. She reached out to many different resources, including the stakeholders themselves and others who worked in and with the government. She studied the departing Capital Improvements Manager to learn what made him successful in his job. She became an effective and passionate brand ambassador for the County, helping potential candidates understand the incredible opportunity to live and work in a vibrant, growing, affordable, and up and coming city.

Results

Amanda built a large pipeline of people she could tap into. She reached out to about 300 people and interviewed 60-100 potential candidates before coming up with four who were worthy of submitting to the client. Of those four, one candidate rose to the top. The successful candidate worked for a nearby

City for 23 years in a similar position and intimately knows the projects and the community. An expert in the field of capital construction project management who understands the intricacies of the role, is a talented servant leader, and has a love for the community he works and lives in. The County is happy with their new hire, the new hire is happy with his new position, and Acumen is honored to have been involved in setting the appropriate strategy and finding the right person to help the County meet its diverse set of short and long-term goals (which include building a beautiful new courthouse).