

“I’ve worked with many different search firms during my career, but Acumen took things to a whole new level and was a new experience for me. In short order, they presented a range of highly qualified candidates with the right niche industry experience, qualifications, and cultural fit who could take us to the next level during our rapid growth.”

“I’m comfortable telling people what they could have done better and I seriously cannot think of a single thing that Acumen could have done differently. The hardest part about working with them was trying to decide between the many highly-qualified candidates they presented.”

– Joel M. CEO of a high-growth early-stage technology company.

### **Situation:**

A fast-growing telecom and networking technology company in a niche and category-defining new space was seeking a seasoned, industry-savvy Chief Financial Officer (CFO) who grasped the finance and accounting complexities for companies developing both hardware and software.

This CFO also needed experience in quickly scaling systems, people, process, and international infrastructure as the organization had just received an impressive infusion of funding from a Silicon Valley VC and was planning to nearly double in size and revenue in an accelerated fashion. Additionally, the CFO needed to help extend the organization’s footprint outside the U.S.

Acumen Executive Search (Acumen) spent several days interviewing the executive team to understand their priorities, the business, the culture, and to ensure that the major stakeholders were in alignment as to the proper profile of the ideal candidate.

Acumen also helped refine their strategy as to whether a CFO or VP of Finance would be the best fit for their needs and the type of individual who would work well within their culture of hard work, agility, collaboration, and humility. It became apparent that this individual needed to be a CPA with banking relationships, who had worked in a high-growth environment where scaling was necessary, had experience with fundraising as well as Board reporting, taxation, contract negotiation, building out ERPs — who could also bring big telecom/networking company process and entrepreneurial grit. A candidate who represented diverse thinking was also highly desirable.

Acumen then used an array of sourcing methods to locate a wide range of highly qualified candidates nationally who each brought a different mix of expertise and industry backgrounds to the table. Finding this particular blend of experience and skills in this industry in Portland, Oregon presented itself as a challenge.

### **Resolution:**

After multiple interviews with team members and investors, the CEO ultimately hired a local CFO, Claire, who satisfied the profile of the ideal candidate. Within 6 months, the company, customer base, and revenue doubled in size (all through organic growth) and she was able to bring much industry expertise to a landscape that involves complex multi-state billing and taxation for both software and hardware as well as multi-state employees.

During her ramp-up, the company was invited to join a highly-lauded accelerator program with one of the world's largest technology companies and went into partnership with another, so she had to help scale people, processes, and systems quickly. Quick wins included leveraging her broad network to set up infrastructure for future international expansion through MSPs, acting as an ERP SME, setting up back-office systems, and adding to the finance team. She also moved invoicing to the first of the month and implemented Expensify to streamline work flow approval in a matter of two weeks.

When interviewed, both the CFO and CEO agreed that they could not have found a better fit and advised Acumen to "keep doing what you are doing."