


EXECUTIVE Recruit

saft

—

Case Study



“From initial contact I was aware of progress at each stage with finite detail of requirements – tailored to both my own and the business needs.”

**Craig Duell, General
Manager at SAFT**

Key achievements

- Executive Recruit successfully placed a highly skilled General Manager to lead the UK business of global battery company, SAFT
- A combined search and advertised selection approach were used to identify a proven leader with experience in complex manufacturing businesses and an appreciation of innovative and agile environments
- Assisted in revitalising the commercial outlook of the business through the placement of a strategic and collaborative leader with strong change management skills
- SAFT are extremely pleased with their chosen candidate who is already making a significant contribution to the business



The Challenge



Exciting vision for the future

With continued growth and an exciting vision for the future, the board at global battery company “SAFT” had made a decision to undertake a confidential search in identifying a highly skilled General Manager to lead the UK business through this challenging period.

Executive Recruit engaged with the business leadership in structuring a tailored and confidential search. The fundamental requirements included sourcing a proven leader with appropriate exposure to complex, manufacturing businesses and an appreciation of innovative and agile environments. With a significant need for a strategic and collaborative leader, there was a key requirement to identify an executive with strong change management skills, a natural drive for process improvement and the ability to revitalise the commercial outlook of the business were critical.

The challenge was defined and presented in an open and honest forum which was clear and gave examples of good opportunities to bring operational excellence to the SAFT site in South Shields. Whilst the process was rigorous, it ensured both parties were `lined up` in terms of where the business was headed. This was further highlighted by Corporate philosophies and roadmaps which were discussed on a global scale. A full picture of the market scope was described – and where possible demonstrated in terms of applications and projects. Very much a `think big` `act small` mentality in a business where the product quality speaks for itself.

The challenge set of utilising this culture with new innovative systems of control and rigor whilst managing the diversity of the product; capitalising on market share.

A magnifying glass with a black handle and frame is positioned over a stack of books. The lens of the magnifying glass is centered on the text "The Search". The books are stacked on the right side of the frame, with their pages visible. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

The Search

The Recruitment Process

Based on the requirement, we proposed a combined search and advertised selection approach to this mandate. Ensuring our client's details remained confidential until the final shortlist stage, we utilised our internal research team who identified suitable General Managers and/or respective business leaders, allowing us to maximise our market mapping and candidate reach.

The role was also advertised confidentially and selectively on and offline, with a comprehensive response.

This active list of interested executives was complemented by our target list of leaders working within organisations of a similar size who have themselves undertaken similar challenging periods of growth and change.

With all the searches we undertake, our process involves the collation of data, exploring potential leaders with the sector, engaging with our known and established networks, whilst also utilising many of our other innovative routes to market.

Once our initial profiling and candidate qualification was complete, a shortlist of suitable executives was selected and fully briefed on SAFT and their exciting plans for the future. This shortlist of candidates was presented to the business leadership and taken through our agreed interview process.

With the conclusion of this process a successful General Manager was selected and agreed timescales for the appointment were set.

As well as SAFT leadership praising us for our search process, it is equally as of value when those appointed provide an insight into their experience. Craig Duell, the appointed GM, was happy to share his own perspective on the process undertaken:

General Manager Craig Duell said: “From initial contact I was aware of progress at each stage with finite detail of requirements – tailored to both my own and the business needs. This was met with a professional approach, progressed respectfully and Phil was always available for any update or clarification.

“This was treated confidentially and managed accordingly in line with the timescales required whereby we were able to negotiate successfully in defining expectations. This allowed a positive satisfactory outcome for both chosen candidate and the business need”.

A hand is pointing at a tablet screen. The screen displays the text "Why Executive Recruit?" in white, bold font. The background of the screen is dark with a grid of small, light-colored icons representing people. One icon is circled in red. The tablet is resting on a wooden surface.

Why Executive Recruit?

Continued Relationship

There is no greater recommendation or validation of the services that we provide than when our clients engage us again on future searches.

Within a short space of time into his leadership role with SAFT, the General Manager - Craig -, outlined his plans for the company and the greater opportunities that the organisations would now face, and therefore the required skills that respective leaders would need moving forward. The result being the need to appoint a driven and forward-thinking Operations Leader within the organisation.

Key to this appointment was sourcing an executive with the commercial acumen required when leading a manufacturing operation, a leader who can get things done and ensure continuous improvement and innovation remains at the heart of the business. Working with Craig now as a client, we undertook a similar process to that of his own appointment, identifying and shortlisting a selection of experienced and suited Operations Leaders.

Craig said: “Once this was identified, it was an easy decision to revisit Executive Recruitment to provide the same level of detail in finding suitable professionals who could collaborate and work with myself on specific goals – very quickly we were able to shortlist proven leaders with availability who could join myself and SAFT on the journey.”

“This enabled the appointment of John Pilkington immediately after the Christmas break following a number of meetings and site visits. Once again, due diligence was at the forefront in delivering the right candidate, which meant very close liaison between client and customer in the utmost confidence whilst this took place”.

Although the appointment itself had to also deal with working around the end of year shut down and Christmas break, it is a credit to the SAFT leadership and their back-office teams that they were able to ensure no momentum was lost throughout, working closely with Executive Recruit at every stage. Thus, SAFT started 2023 with the right Operations Leadership in place and the business starts this new year on a positive footing with a strong and driven leadership team in place.

SAFT has already shared positive news for 2023 in respect of their latest Storage Systems, that will now Support New Zealand’s Transition to Low-carbon Electricity. Executive Recruit are proud to have built a strong relationship with a business that is helping to shape all our futures.

A man wearing a yellow helmet, a blue t-shirt, and a blue safety harness is standing in the foreground. He is looking down and to his left. In the background, there are several wind turbines on a hillside under a clear sky. The terrain is dry and hilly.

About SAFT

About SAFT

Saft is a global battery company like no other. Thanks to its historical expertise, combined with a unique industrial approach, they have a leading position to meet the demands of the most demanding customers. Their batteries and battery systems make a difference for all the market sectors they serve.

Established in 19 countries and supported by 16 production sites, Saft has more than 4,000 employees across the planet.

Since 2016, Saft is a wholly owned subsidiary of TotalEnergies, a broad energy company that produces and markets energies on a global scale: oil and biofuels, natural gas and green gases, renewables and electricity.

EXECUTIVE

Recruit

**We'll help you find
the perfect candidate**

If you are looking to hire an exceptional senior executive into your leadership team, please talk to us about your requirements.

WEB: www.executiverecruitment.co.uk

TEL: 0333 0155 988