

Recruiting Non-Executive Directors on the web – replacing the ‘old boy’ network

Article published in *Executive Grapevine*, October 2005, by Betty Thayer

Is your company considering adding a Non-Executive to its board? Or has a client approached you about finding a Non-Executive – but your database can't address their requirement?

In 2003 Sir Derek Higgs completed a comprehensive review of the role and responsibilities of Non-Executive Directors. Many of the recommendations were incorporated into the Combined Code and include important changes in how Non-Executives should be recruited and selected.

In response to Higgs we launched *The Non-Executive Director*, an internet-based one-stop-shop for those interested in learning about the issues that Non-Execs face as well as providing a place for them to register their interest in Non-Exec roles.

Today there are over 1,000 current and aspiring Non-Execs registered with the service (www.non-execs.com). Ernst & Young, who have a comprehensive programme for FTSE250 Non-Executives, sponsors the site, providing content and access to events for members.

The site's homepage is refreshed monthly and uses a web-magazine format to discuss current issues, review recent books and publications, profile a successful Non-Executive and bring members up-to-date on relevant courses and events.

On a daily basis the site is updated with national and international news of interest to Directors.

Companies who are looking for a Non-Executive can quickly and inexpensively take advantage of the combined power of both exec-appointments.com and non-execs.com. We have helped a wide variety of companies including the Bath Building Society. Dick Jenkins, CEO, said, "The use of the exec-appointments.com database allowed us to widen our search for non-executive directors at a manageable cost. This was a cost effective way of recruiting such people and I wouldn't hesitate to use it again."

For those companies who want to retain a consultant to assist with their search, we have a list of top-headhunters who work closely with us. They have complete access to the Register and use it frequently to find just the right candidate. These Recommended Associates include Russell Reynolds, DirectorBank, Boyden UK and Hanson Green.

They systematically augment their research efforts by using our service.

So do Non-Execs turn to the web to find what they want? According to the latest BRMB report on online audiences, 57% of online users are over the age of 35 and ABs represent 35% of users. The majority of our members come through search engines or word-of-mouth recommendations. For the term 'non-executive director' our sites hold two of the top four slots on google.co.uk.

If you are a search consultancy looking for new ways to find excellent candidates, contact us to find out how you can become a Recommended Associate at no charge.

Finding talent on the internet does not stop at the Board room anymore.