

PE-Backed Software Company Conducts Nationwide CEO Search



Objective: Find the Best Fit for New Leadership

Private equity firm KT Capital Partners, LP, needed a new CEO for one of its subsidiaries, The Estimating Edge, a 30-year-old tech company catering to the construction industry. The company's software product touts accuracy to avoid costly mistakes, and the search for the new placement had to be just as accurate or risk the same. Directors Jim Tapp and Peter Kacer were managing the complex day-to-day operations themselves after the previous CEO had been eliminated, so the position also had to be filled quickly.

Compounding these challenges, the company faced additional dilemmas: a trend of exaggerated resumes, job-bouncing, and unrealistic salary expectations in the tech industry, as well as needing to fill an on-site position in Florida when most applicants wanted to commute part-time rather than relocate. They had an existing consultant in mind who was already excelling in leadership, innovation in sales, operations, and customer experience, but the Board required an executive search to definitively answer the question.

Process: Choose a Search Partner with Industry Expertise

Peter knew he wanted to consult with a local boutique search firm rather than a larger one for more personalized attention and dedication to solving such a specific set of challenges. He immediately felt confident that James Gates – a Partner at Bell Oaks and former SaaS company operator prior to his tenure in search – and his team would bring a relevant and critical evaluation to the search process. Along with the internal candidate, Bell Oaks expanded the search nationwide, sourcing only the most qualified individuals with credible paths that had built up over time to the level of leadership required.

Previous experience with executive searches for both KT Capital and The Estimating Edge had shown Peter that cheaper firms did not deliver searches that were as comprehensive as he experienced with Bell Oaks – or placements that truly fit. "I appreciate not just what they do but *how*," Peter says. "They removed the frustration we had experienced searching on our own and with other firms. And, unlike many firms, Bell Oaks team members are able to leverage business acumen from past real-world experience as operators, so they have a different eye for what works and what doesn't. I would definitely consult with Bell Oaks again."

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Results: Board Selects a Technically and Culturally Aligned CEO

The Board had initially requested both new CEO and VP of Sales positions, but the resulting hire made such a natural transition that it was determined they had everything they needed in one – reducing stress and saving money for the company, team, and directors alike. “I was convinced that the Board should select a sales and marketing-oriented CEO versus a product expert; the company had matured to the point where the correct CEO could scale it even more quickly,” says James Gates. “They made the absolute best decision, and I credit KT Capital and the Board members for their commitment to the process.”

The new CEO fits the bill in every way, from steadily-improving executive positions in software-related construction to his ability to lead both the company (and its people) in promising new directions while coinciding with its culture and goals. Peter says, “He exemplifies true leadership with a penchant for pulling people together, and interviews with team members reveal their satisfaction and trust due to the peaceful environment he has created.” The search confirmed what Peter and Jim already felt: the best person for the role was right in front of them the entire time, and now they had the data points and evidence to prove it after such a thorough investigation.

“We faced a daunting leadership search due to the location of the position and specific technology field-related problems. James and the Bell Oaks team were able to navigate these challenges and deliver exactly the results we wanted.”