

Client Bill of Rights

“Retained executive search consulting” is defined as a specialized form of management consulting, conducted through an exclusive engagement and on a pre-determined retainer-fee basis. The purpose is to assist your institution in defining executive positions, identifying well-qualified and motivated candidates, and selecting those best suited through a comprehensive, quality assured search process.

The Search for Talent

Spelman Johnson will provide information and feedback that not only helps direct your search for leadership talent but also assists your institution. This includes:

- knowledge of the professional area in which the search will be conducted, including availability of candidates, comparative assessments of those candidates, and salary levels
- general market research regarding how your institution is perceived in the market and what kind of recruiting strategies may, or may not, work
- by its very nature, an executive search requires you to divulge highly sensitive information about your institution, which will be treated with the utmost confidentiality

At the same time, the consultant cannot conduct an effective search without making some information available to potential candidates. To protect your interests, however, the search consultant should guarantee that they will:

- use confidential client information only for the purpose of conducting the search
- disclose client information only to potential candidates who have a need to know the information
- never use confidential information for personal gain or provide that information to third parties for their personal gain

Understanding the Leadership Opportunity

To conduct a successful search, the consultant must have a clear understanding of the position to be filled, the requirements of the position, and the institutional culture. Accordingly, you should insist on receiving a report that details the consultant’s understanding of:

- the desired level and type of experience for the position
- the background, education, and skills needed to be successful
- responsibilities of the position
- interpersonal skills needed

Good search firms will do more than just feed back the job description you present them. They will proactively help you develop, modify, and refine your own understanding of the position. To help with this critical step, your search consultant needs access to all those who will participate in the selection process as well as your encouragement to participants to provide full disclosure regarding the position to be filled.

As the position description represents the bedrock of a successful search, you have a reciprocal obligation to notify your search consultant any time circumstances (either internal or external) require a change in the position or the type of person you are looking for. To keep you up-to-date, Spelman Johnson will provide ongoing progress reports that include:

- the institutions from which the search consultant has tried to target candidates
- the market response to the position
- obstacles to identifying or attracting candidates
- candidates currently being developed

Qualifying Candidates

Spelman Johnson will present qualified candidates who fit the position and the culture of your organization. Your search consultant should present you with a range of qualified potential candidates, whom he or she has thoroughly assessed. The consultant should be able to discuss each candidate's:

- experience level and significant achievements relative to the position to be filled
- education and background
- intellectual, interpersonal, and motivation competencies
- personal strengths and weaknesses with respect to the position to be filled
- perceived cultural fit
- interest in the position
- remuneration and financial expectations

Immediately after you have interviewed candidates, your search consultant will solicit your comments and feedback and help you conduct a comparative candidate assessment and analysis. Spelman Johnson will also perform reference and background checks.

The Offer

Spelman Johnson may help you negotiate with the final candidate, representing both parties with skill, integrity, and a high degree of professionalism.

Once you have selected a final candidate, the consultant's role changes from search agent to negotiator and communicator. At this point, the consultant's primary function is to help you bring the candidate on board in a manner that facilitates a long and successful stay with your institution. This includes:

- acting as an intermediary between you and the candidate regarding compensation, benefits, and other conditions of employment
- feeding back to you any reservations or concerns the candidate may have about accepting the position
- helping the candidate to assess the opportunity
- working with both sides to create a "win" for everyone

Although the consultant represents your interests first and foremost, he or she must also remain sensitive to the needs and concerns of the candidate. To do otherwise significantly reduces the chances of a successful hire. In addition, representing both parties with integrity and professionalism ensures two important outcomes:

- the candidate comes aboard feeling that he or she has been treated fairly
- the search enhances your institution's reputation in the marketplace

On-Boarding

Seemingly successful placements can sometimes fall apart during the transition period. As a result, the consultant's responsibility does not end when the candidate accepts the offer. Instead, the consultant should stay in contact with the new hire as long as necessary to ensure a smooth transition and help the new hire settle into the new position. Above all, the consultant should make sure that you are fully satisfied before considering the search a success and concluding the assignment.