

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN CASEBOOK

The UK, USA and EMEA operations of global pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca have been clients of Armstrong Craven for a number of years. The company had a requirement for an exceptional leader to bring together its IT Security, Risk, Governance and Compliance into a single Integrated Assurance/ Information Security function, a search which called for a consultative approach.

THE BRIEF

AstraZeneca, a leading global pharmaceutical company, was looking to locate and secure a high-profile individual to lead its planned merger of the IT Security, Risk, Compliance and Governance functions. It wanted to benefit from natural synergies between the two disciplines, while providing strong and inspirational leadership to positively drive change among those affected by the decision.

A long-standing client for whom Armstrong Craven had conducted a number of key projects, AstraZeneca knew that significant organisational restructuring, including staffing and process changes, would be necessary in order to achieve their vision for the newly combined functions. Therefore a leader with considerable management experience was required, preferably somebody who had already successfully completed the integration of IT Security, Compliance and related functions in a similar organisation and could bring both energy and authority required to excel in the new role.

RECRUITING AN INSPIRATIONAL LEADER

EXECUTIVE SEARCH – INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
GLOBAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

Armstrong Craven invested time in obtaining a detailed brief from the client, in order to understand not just the role description but also the vision for the job and the personal behaviours that would be found in an ideal candidate. Armstrong Craven is committed to delivering the best shortlist, benchmarked against the market, whether local, national or international. In this case, the company's researchers used their deep expertise of the pharmaceutical industry to define a global search strategy focusing on companies in highly regulated industries in addition to key competitors of AstraZeneca. Publicly available information, for example lists of conference speakers, was also used as a secondary source.

AstraZeneca had defined this role as two levels below board level. It soon became apparent that they needed to revise this, as the research demonstrated that, in order to achieve the business objectives and influence the relevant parties, the role needed to report directly to the CIO.

Consequently, Armstrong Craven acted in a consultancy capacity to provide feedback from the market, reposition the role within the IS structure and continue the search. A shortlist of eight candidates was produced, from three diverse industry sectors.

THE RESULT

AstraZeneca's resourcing team made the candidate selection and managed the interviewing process in partnership with Armstrong Craven and an appointment was made. The selected individual was a recognised leader in Information Security and assurance from the chemical sector. Not only had he previously combined the relevant functions before, he was also a well-known contributor at global conferences and also a founder member of a worldwide group of Chief Information Security Officers, committed to developing and raising awareness of next-generation security architecture.

The fixed fee for this search represented a considerable saving versus the costs AstraZeneca would have incurred by using a traditional search consultant. Armstrong Craven's services and fee structures are flexible, so the AstraZeneca team was able to select just part of the search service they needed to get a result, while handling the remainder of the selection and referencing process in-house.

Armstrong Craven believes in total transparency and always shares all the information gathered during the search with the client, enabling them to derive ongoing business value from the market information.

A major retail bank sought to understand the branch operations of its competitors ahead of making changes to its own organisational structure. This project led to the development of a comprehensive talent pipeline, resulted in subsequent ongoing multiple hires and has changed the way the bank manages its search process.

THE BRIEF

This top 3 UK bank was examining the structure of its UK branch infrastructure with a view to making organisational changes. It was interested in discovering how competitors managed their operations, specifically how products were delivered through the branch network. Armstrong Craven was commissioned to research competitor structures and profile key roles, providing details of experience levels, responsibilities and remuneration packages of senior employees. The intelligence obtained would be used to inform significant decisions about organisational development, fulfil succession planning needs and create a significant pool of potential candidates for immediate, medium and long-term requirements. The ultimate recruitment goal justified the initial expenditure on collecting intelligence about the available talent pool as a precursor to short-listing of candidates for specific roles.

MANAGING TALENT FLOW TO MEET ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND TALENT PIPELINING
FINANCIAL SERVICES INDUSTRY

The success of the relationship with Armstrong Craven has led us to ask what added value do we receive and why pay percentage fees per placement when there is an alternative research approach to board level & senior executive hires, succession planning and multiple hires.

Head of Executive Resourcing, UK Retail Bank

Armstrong Craven
Search & Intelligence 

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

Using its experience, research skills and established methodology, Armstrong Craven's research team was able to reach out to people at different levels throughout the branch network, to build accurate intelligence and market insight. Armstrong Craven delivered a detailed report to the bank's management, interpreting the data as a whole and on the basis of individual competitors. This included detailed organisational charts and company overviews, including structural comparisons. Armstrong Craven also took a consultative approach to identifying key themes and findings and highlighting important conclusions.

Twelve months after completion of the original project, Armstrong Craven continues to conduct searches for multiple hires; from area managers to senior director roles. For example, a high-quality shortlist for an executive search to fill a Regional Director position was produced in five days, as intelligence regarding suitably-qualified candidates had already been gathered.

THE RESULT

Thanks to Armstrong Craven's strength in both Intelligence and Search, this area of the bank alone has already saved £2.9m in recruitment budget, by working in partnership with Armstrong Craven to pursue a more proactive resourcing strategy. Through gaining an understanding of the market and existing talent, the bank is now one step ahead of the competition by generating interest in the organisation and understanding how to attract the top achievers for key roles. It has also significantly reduced time to hire and utilised Armstrong Craven's flexible, transparent approach to gain valuable market insight.

Where it would previously have automatically turned to a traditional search provider, the bank has now adopted the Armstrong Craven approach across the Group, which has proved to be a viable option from board level to middle-management positions.

In addition, another key benefit of working with Armstrong Craven is that the intelligence gathered is stored in a bespoke, fully searchable and accessible talent management database. This immediate added value enables the bank's internal team to directly retain, manage and grow comprehensive talent pools. Various areas of the bank are adding to the data by asking senior management to provide recommendations from within their own network; those individuals are then added and stored in the database. New hires are also encouraged to recommend former colleagues and contacts, allowing the bank to continuously build on the research undertaken by Armstrong Craven and therefore resource without further cost.

As part of a major diversity initiative for its fast-track prison manager training programme, HM Prison Service needed to proactively identify and engage individuals from minority ethnic groups (BME).

THE BRIEF

HM Prison Service had commissioned a recruitment advertising campaign for its fast-track prison manager programme, open to individuals from all ethnic backgrounds, however, they wanted to proactively encourage equal opportunities by simultaneously conducting a search for candidates from under-represented ethnic groups. Once the advertising campaign had been launched, Armstrong Craven was asked to manage a positive action programme to increase diversity, by searching for potential candidates among the relevant groups.

DELIVERING DIVERSITY

TALENT ENGAGEMENT AMONG
ETHNIC MINORITIES – PUBLIC SECTOR

Advertising alone does not always deliver sufficient candidates of the desired profile. By supplementing an advertisement campaign with bespoke intelligence gathering, clients increase the likelihood of achieving the results they expect.

Armstrong Craven
Search & Intelligence 

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

Armstrong Craven's long experience of understanding the talent market and locating the right people allowed them to reach individuals who would never have otherwise seen or responded to an advertisement.

The company's researchers approached contacts across both public and private sectors, including the health service, emergency services, education, social care and commercial organisations, to positively identify people who might be interested in working in the prison service. Making direct approaches to individuals who were recommended as possible candidates, the team was able to positively explain both the concept of the fast-track prison management training scheme and also how it might match their personal values, career aspirations and skill sets.

At the end of this process of talent identification and engagement, CVs and reports of the telephone interviews were presented to the client. Armstrong Craven delivered a number of black minority ethnic candidates to be incorporated into the core selection process. Candidates sourced in this manner were added to those generated by the advertising campaign and all candidates went through a formal, standard selection process which was managed by the client.

THE RESULT

Armstrong Craven takes a committed partnership approach to engaging with clients in order to really understand their requirements and deliver the best outcome. Services and fee structures are flexible, so clients can select and pay for the level of information they actually need.

Armstrong Craven's commitment to the client centres on a process that is transparent and provides outstanding value for money.

All intelligence gathered on behalf of the Prison Service during this project was shared with the client and that information has been included in their talent pipeline for medium-term recruitment purposes. The initial project fee of £20K was turned from an expense into a longer-term investment in hiring more of the right people.

Based in the UK, this insurance underwriting firm was struggling to attract good quality candidates to the commercial side of its operation. Work Group was commissioned to create a compelling recruitment brand for the company. As a starting point for developing the brand messages, Armstrong Craven conducted extensive research to understand what motivates and attracts insurance professionals.

THE BRIEF

Part of one of the leading UK retail banking groups, this commercial and personal insurance underwriter was having a hard time persuading high calibre individuals to join. Work Group was commissioned to create a new, compelling recruitment brand for the company, but first it had to understand the individuals in question – what motivated them, what they thought about the client company and how they evaluated potential employers. As part of Work Group, Armstrong Craven was asked to undertake the preliminary research among insurance professionals, enabling Work Group to obtain a clearer picture of what would attract them to a prospective employer and how they viewed their ideal job.

BUILDING A MORE ATTRACTIVE EMPLOYER BRAND

MARKET RESEARCH AND CANDIDATE ATTRACTION
– LEADING INSURANCE UNDERWRITING FIRM

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

Intelligence gathering is an Armstrong Craven speciality. Two decades of experience have made the company a leading provider of business insight, helping companies answer the difficult questions that call for deep understanding and a sensitive yet thorough approach. In this case, Armstrong Craven was briefed to conduct its research both within the client company and among four key competitors, whom the client wished to understand more closely and against whom it wanted to benchmark its attractiveness as an employer.

The first step was to identify the underwriters in these organisations who had the skills and experience profile required by the client. This was achieved through a combination of desk-based research, telephone interviews and anonymous telephone research. The researchers investigated a number of areas:

- The companies who were most respected as employers and why
- The companies individuals would like to work for and why
- Specific opinions on key companies in the sector, including the client
- Elements of an ideal role and how it compared to the individual's existing role
- How individuals gathered information about career options
- How people preferred to apply for new roles
- Which designs and images elicited a positive reaction

Armstrong Craven also interviewed a number of recent recruits to the client company, to determine what had attracted them to the organisation, how the client compared to their previous employer and whether the role had lived up to their expectations.

THE RESULT

Work Group received invaluable feedback to the branding process. By using Armstrong Craven's research skills as part of an end-to-end process that addresses all aspects of an employer's recruitment and retention needs, it could be certain that its branding solution addressed the real motivations of this specific target group and that recruitment communications were designed to resonate with individuals. Taking this approach is likely to produce a better long-term outcome for the client, as it has an increased chance of hiring and retaining people who are right for the role.

Specifically, the research revealed that underwriters were receptive to approaches from head-hunters and they all preferred to develop relationships with executive search firms, instead of responding to advertisements in the press. The majority did not even look at job advertisements or job websites. This insight was invaluable to Work as it developed a strategy for improving the employer brand – visibility in newspaper advertisements and online was not going to promote the client effectively.

Similarly, Armstrong Craven discovered that the client had a weak employer brand in the marketplace because respondents had to be prompted to name them as a respected company. Also, among recent joiners, the client's internal communications were judged to be very poor. Armed with this knowledge, Work Group was able to make recommendations about effective targeting of employer brand messages.

Armstrong Craven is equally strong in Intelligence and Search. As the client had an immediate need to hire, this project led into a consultancy project to look at the middle and senior management structure and provide a shortlist of underwriters who could be approached with a view to employment.

The £14,000 invested in upfront research saved the client considerable sums in potential wasted advertising and also provided a talent pipeline for future recruitment. Armstrong Craven is committed to providing the best outcome for the client and provides access to all the information it gathers during a project. This transparency allowed the insurance client to benefit from the added value of having a pre-qualified talent pool from which to develop shortlists for particular roles.

This UK retailer operates in a highly competitive segment. A new CEO wanted to ensure his company had the right management and compensation structure in place to gain market share in an increasingly difficult environment.

THE BRIEF

Looking around the company where he had recently taken the helm, the Chief Executive of this UK retailer and his newly appointed HR Director considered the challenge of creating a business fit to compete effectively in a crowded and aggressive market. Neither was convinced that the company's management structure was as finely-tuned as it could be. Before making any decisions about the roles of the senior team going forward, they decided to find out more about how the most successful companies in their industry configured their business and to benchmark current salaries against industry norms.

AN INTELLIGENCE- LED APPROACH TO BUSINESS RESTRUCTURING

REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE –
UK RETAILER

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

Armstrong Craven has significant experience of conducting non-standard research projects to uncover information which is highly sensitive and not available in the public domain. The first step was to fully understand the client's business problem in order to ask the right questions. Given the sensitive nature of this project, the research team would need to adopt a creative approach, to persuade senior people to share the information they needed.

The client wanted to understand the scope and remuneration of the top 50 roles within each of four competing organisations. They asked for detailed information about the scope of each role, the job responsibilities, reporting structures, salaries and other benefits, to determine whether the client's management team had equivalent roles and comparable pay. This information would provide valuable insights into how the businesses considered industry leaders managed performance and drove business success.

Armstrong Craven's research team reviewed and gathered intelligence about 200 roles in just six weeks. They leveraged publicly available information and extended it through bespoke telephone research to identify individuals in key positions. The team then spoke to these people and others who had previously been employed there, to explain their research goal and confidentially gather information about best practice in the four organisations.

THE RESULT

The resulting intelligence report provided a summary analysis of the information together with details about how competitors were structured. For each business the research team presented an organisation chart along with compensation information, role descriptions for each of the roles, as well as transcripts of all intelligence-gathering conversations.

Armstrong Craven's long experience of market intelligence gathering and consultancy approach provided conclusions which helped senior management better understand the competitive environment and see where there was misalignment within its own organisation.

This market intelligence allowed the CEO and HR Director to consider any potential decisions regarding organisation structure and management team remits with a higher degree of confidence. Armstrong Craven

takes a committed partnership approach to engaging with clients in order to really understand their business issue and deliver the best outcome. Services and fee structures are flexible, so clients can select and pay for the level of information they actually need. For this client, their investment was money well spent, providing a degree of insight into the competition that had never been achieved before and allowing the new CEO to have the facts at his fingertips to make better informed decisions.

The parent company of a field marketing organisation was concerned that the newly-acquired subsidiary was under-performing. Armstrong Craven was retained to investigate the underlying causes and conduct a due diligence exercise on the effectiveness of the leadership team by benchmarking against industry competitors.

THE BRIEF

If a business is not performing according to expectations, it can be difficult to ascertain where the root of the problem lies. The new parent company of a field marketing organisation suspected that there were leadership issues preventing the company from making progress and asked Armstrong Craven to investigate why results were disappointing compared to other companies in the market.

BUSINESS REFERENCING TO IDENTIFY ROOT CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND DUE DILIGENCE –
MARKETING SERVICES COMPANY

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

Armstrong Craven embarked on a detailed review of the field marketing industry and identified market trends that might be impacting on performance. Subsequently, bespoke research was conducted among clients, potential clients, key competitors and other industry sources in order to validate the researchers' conclusions about industry trends, as well as benchmarking the overall performance of the organisation in question versus its competitors. A combination of telephone interviews and deskbased market research allowed Armstrong Craven's researchers to gain the trust of industry insiders and piece together a picture of the underlying issues. Questions centred on trends in the industry and asking how excellence in field marketing is achieved. This allowed the researchers to benchmark the profile of the company in the industry, perceptions of its services and an assessment of the capabilities of its key people.

THE RESULT

Armstrong Craven prepared a comprehensive report for the client, which concluded that the root causes of poor results were related in part to a shift in market conditions and in part to the existing management team. The company was operating in a saturated market where services were becoming commoditised and it was increasingly difficult to achieve differentiation from the competition. Unlike competitors who had developed experiential marketing offerings, the company had not been agile in its response to market pressures. It was suffering from having a lower profile than others in the industry. Furthermore, there were flaws in a new business development process which had been introduced, as well as weaknesses in responses to tenders that were preventing the company from winning new business. It was losing out to competitors in bid situations because it had not made allowances for the fact that clients were now looking for bespoke solutions.

The recommendations included taking steps to raise the profile of the organisation, address concerns raised by due diligence regarding the current CEO and adapting the go-to-market mode to suit changes in the way field marketing services were being purchased.

The client benefited from a thorough analysis of the industry environment and an objective evaluation of the subsidiary's performance which would allow it to make decisions based on solid evidence and to guide the field marketing company towards recovery. Armstrong Craven's extensive experience of similar sensitive projects and commercial due diligence meant it could gather the information discreetly, in a timely and cost-effective manner. Armstrong Craven services and fees are flexible, allowing clients to select the level of service appropriate to their specific business issue. At the same time, researchers work closely with clients to understand the nuances of their problems, applying an innovative and committed approach to delivering the best outcome and successfully unearthing intelligence to address often complex questions.

A global industrial corporation wanted to grow its nuclear capability in response to renewed emphasis on civil nuclear energy. Armstrong Craven conducted detailed research to identify and scope a talent market in short supply, as a foundation for the organisation's strategy development.

THE BRIEF

The unpopularity of nuclear power over the last twenty years has led to a skills shortage in the nuclear engineering workforce. Nuclear physics has been a less attractive option for undergraduates and the existing ageing population of experienced civil nuclear engineers and scientists has consequently not been replenished with fresh talent. Now, nuclear energy is back on the political agenda and this global engineering company had recently appointed a new president to develop a strategy for revitalising its nuclear division. Faced with important decisions about the location of new facilities and attracting talent to resource the business, the company asked Armstrong Craven to conduct a detailed market intelligence report into the size and scope of the nuclear engineering workforce.

UNDERSTANDING A FINITE SPECIALIST TALENT POOL

STRATEGIC BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE –
GLOBAL ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

“Our President is probably the most nuclear savvy person in the UK right now and this insight still managed to inform him about new areas in his industry.”

Armstrong Craven
Search & Intelligence 

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

Employing its expertise in strategic intelligence gathering to understand markets and people, Armstrong Craven focused on identifying organisations across Europe currently employing individuals with civil nuclear engineering skills, to assess the size and demographics of this specialist workforce. Key objectives for the experienced researchers were to determine where an agreed set of transferable skills existed and also to understand how other companies were addressing the overall shortage of available skills in the short- to medium-term.

To meet a tight deadline, the research was conducted over a six-week period, using a combination of publicly-available industry information as well as networking among industry contacts to gather supplementary insight, validating the skill profile of each company. After engaging with industry leaders and managers, academics, regulatory authorities and professional bodies to discreetly acquire the relevant information, a comprehensive report was produced, drawing conclusions about the availability and applicability of skills.

THE RESULT

Armstrong Craven was able to identify pockets of relevant talent across Europe and highlight those areas where the most severe skills shortages existed. The client also gained a good understanding of how key competitors were attracting transferable skills and where those skills were located. The client used the intelligence report as the starting point for its business strategy development.

Now the talent pool has been identified, the client is working with Armstrong Craven to extend the scope of the intelligence in specific areas, for example graduate attraction, comparing the viability of a number of location options and gathering additional information needed to develop an acquisition strategy.

Armstrong Craven now has an in-depth understanding of the various kinds of civil nuclear talent that exist around Europe and is ready to assist the client with identification of key individuals and groups of individuals who may be targeted for hire. With long experience of researching and managing key talent in markets where resources are scarce and competition to attract the best people is tough, Armstrong Craven helps organisations to find talent that meets their business requirements, understand how they can attract the top performers, hire and retain the talent they need to be successful.

To stay ahead of the competition, this well-known premium drinks client knew it had to have the right people onboard. Succession planning revealed it would not have the internal marketing talent it needed in the next 18 months. As it prepared to hire executive level talent for its iconic beer brand, the first step was to understand the competitive landscape and profile outstanding performers.

THE BRIEF

This FTSE 100 premium drinks company operates in a highly competitive sector where market share is constantly challenged and complacency can be lethal. Consequently, the marketing function plays a pivotal role in the success of the organisation and its products. The company appreciates the importance of forward planning and wants to recruit the best available marketing talent, with the appropriate experience and creativity to secure the future of the brands in its portfolio. The client's succession planning process highlighted a shortage of internal candidates for business-critical director-level marketing positions due to become vacant in the next 18 months, including the lead role for its iconic beer brand.

GATHERING INFORMATION TO MAKE INTELLIGENT HIRING DECISIONS

PIPELINING BEST-IN-CLASS MARKETING TALENT – FTSE 100 FMCG COMPANY

Recognising the need to hire externally, the client asked Armstrong Craven to conduct a market intelligence study to learn how other beer companies created success through organisational structure and best-in-class talent. The client sought insights into a number of areas:

- Understanding of how competitors use marketing to maximise the potential of beer products
- Identification of marketing professionals who may achieve success in this market segment
- Benchmarking of external versus internal talent
- Generation of a candidate pipeline to meet business needs in the next 18 months

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

With two decades of experience in Search and Intelligence, Armstrong Craven has substantial expertise in understanding markets and locating talent, irrespective of location and sector. This was a comprehensive brief which allowed the company's researchers to put their proven intelligence gathering methodology to best use.

To focus on creating a global pipeline of people they would need to deliver competitive advantage, Armstrong Craven worked with the client to identify companies who would employ people with the required profile and behaviours. Research was then undertaken to identify the marketing structure and senior personnel at a global, regional and country level within three organisations with outstanding beer marketing functions. Confidential conversations were held with well-qualified individuals in these organisations and in the wider industry to understand industry-led definitions of best-in-class marketing talent. These definitions, alongside the client's definition of its ideal candidate profile, were used to identify individuals who were regarded as the leading marketers in the industry. Finally, these people were approached and engaged in discussions about the client's value proposition and potential opportunities.

THE RESULT

Using a classic networking approach, Armstrong Craven was quickly able to understand how the client's competitors structure their marketing operations and how they execute marketing strategies at regional and global level. It was also able to define best-in-class marketing talent, information which could be used to create an ideal candidate profile in future. By locating outstanding performers, Armstrong Craven was able to build a pipeline of top beer marketers with particular strength in innovation that would meet the client's needs in a 6-12 month timeframe.

Almost without exception, relevant marketing professionals were willing to discuss their industry, as well as their perceptions of what made their companies successful and who was driving results. They shared information about structure and process that allowed the researchers to understand how beer companies grow market share, as well as confirming that the three companies selected for investigation were universally viewed as leaders in their field. Fifteen outstanding individuals were identified for consideration and, after approaches were made and other recommendations were received, Armstrong Craven produced a pipeline of ten interested people. These have been screened by the client, who is maintaining a relationship with them until a specific hiring opportunity arises.

For forward-thinking organisations, gathering talent-related market intelligence has become an essential part of human capital

management. This client demonstrated that an appreciation of the importance of market intelligence can shift the emphasis from recruitment fees as an irretrievable cost to being a long-term investment in hiring the right talent. Apart from contributing to the search and selection process itself, the project delivered considerable added value to the company, which now has invaluable market information about how successful competitors operate.

Armstrong Craven's commitment to the client centres on a process that is transparent and provides outstanding value for money. The client has been billed £25,000 for work completed to date – a highly competitive rate for market research as well as the source of ten potential hires for positions where base salary will range from £90,000 to £140,000. Hiring will now be a faster, simplified and much more cost-effective process.

A US-based client International Finance Corporation (IFC) filled a niche role with a very specific ideal candidate profile, recruiting a new Senior Investment Officer for Madagascar at a cost that represented less than 15% of base salary, in spite of the complexity and global nature of the search.

THE BRIEF

Part of the World Bank Group and headquartered in Washington DC, IFC provides investments and advisory services to emerging markets, building sustainable economies driven by the private sector. Creating jobs, generating tax revenues, improving corporate governance and environmental responsibility, IFC helps private-sector organisations contribute to the communities in which they operate, giving people in developing countries the opportunity to escape poverty and improve their lives. As part of IFC's strategic programme in Africa, it wanted to appoint a Senior Investment Officer in Madagascar.

The nature of IFC's business called for a rare combination of skills and experience: an individual with substantial expertise in international project finance, as well as considerable local knowledge and understanding of infrastructure deals in Africa. The client was also seeking someone who had an MBA to demonstrate broad-based business acumen. To be successful in this role, the best candidate would need fluent French and English and ideally be an African national with experience of studying and working in the West.

SEARCHING THE WORLD FOR RARE TALENT

SENIOR INVESTMENT OFFICER – FINANCIAL
SERVICES INDUSTRY

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

At first glance, this appeared to be an extremely tall order. However, with Armstrong Craven's proven and transparent research-led process and track record of conducting searches in 105 countries, IFC had confidence that no stone would be left unturned in order to secure the right candidate for the role.

With almost two decades of expertise in research-driven executive search, Armstrong Craven's researchers examined international press, the company's in-house and specialist industry databases, conference delegate lists and MBA school alumni. Very quickly, they had generated a list of organisations which might employ people of this calibre and profile, as well as names of individuals who might be potential targets or recommenders. In particular, they approached French-speaking banks, African development and finance organisations and independent advisors in the sector.

Engaging with these groups and individuals to seek recommendations and begin to approach candidates, Armstrong Craven demonstrated that success in executive search is dependent on having the right contacts, not necessarily on having a local presence. It made good use of its multi-lingual resources, based in the UK and USA, extending the search across multiple cities and continents while drilling down into individual banks to locate the appropriate Africa-focused teams and specifically project finance professionals working on the African trade desks.

THE RESULT

Concluding a search covering 120 contacts in 55 organisations and 25 countries across Africa, Europe and the USA, Armstrong Craven produced a shortlist of three candidates. From this list, IFC selected a French-speaking African working for a merchant bank in Johannesburg, a candidate who had been recommended by an Armstrong Craven contact in the USA.

Armstrong Craven used a classic networking approach to an apparently very tough brief. Its success was due to the unparalleled depth and quality of data and contacts, allowing a global project to be completed swiftly and thoroughly, locating not just candidates who were available, but those who were best qualified for the job.

Armstrong Craven's commitment to the client centres on a process that is transparent and provides outstanding value for money. Research-based headhunting produces the same outcome as traditional headhunting, but at a significantly lower cost to the organisation. In this case, IFC recruited its new Senior Investment Officer for Madagascar at a cost that represented less than 15% of the base salary, in spite of the complexity and global nature of the search.

The added-value to IFC went beyond cost savings. For forward-thinking organisations, talent planning has become an essential part of human capital management. That's why Armstrong Craven provides clients with all the data collected on their behalf during the search process, in a proactive and collaborative approach to talent identification and pipelining. The insight document shared with clients on conclusion of a search contains profiles of other individuals identified in the marketplace, along with details of their salaries and career history. IFC now possesses information on a global resource pool of project finance professionals with Africa-specific knowledge, information which could prove invaluable to their business in future. This unique transparency in market information shifts the emphasis from recruitment fees as an irretrievable cost to being a long-term investment in hiring the right talent.

A global pharmaceutical company had narrowed down the potential locations for its European financial shared service centre to seven cities. But which one was best suited to its operations and viable as an ongoing source of appropriate talent? Armstrong Craven set out to find the answers.

THE BRIEF

This global healthcare company had enlisted the support of a management consultancy to determine where to locate its European financial shared services centre. The consultancy had produced a shortlist of seven cities in three countries – Cork, Dublin, Maastricht, The Hague, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh – but needed further information in order to make a recommendation to the client.

Intelligence was required regarding compensation and availability of skills for four key functions, from clerks to senior managers. The client also wanted to know whether it might be expected to pay a premium for language skills at any of the locations. The consultancy's shared services team had not found a supplier who could help them acquire this information in a very tight timeframe – they needed the answers within ten working days.

INVESTIGATING INTERNATIONAL SITE LOCATIONS

TALENT POOL RESEARCH –
GLOBAL PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY

A recommendation led them to contact Armstrong Craven, who are experts at delivering this type of non-standard research to answer difficult business questions that cannot be adequately addressed by published

market research reports or information in the public domain. Armstrong Craven was willing to accept the challenge of discovering whether a talent pool existing for each site and understanding the expectations of the local workforce.

Armstrong Craven
Search & Intelligence 

THE ARMSTRONG CRAVEN APPROACH

Combining telephone and desk-based research, Armstrong Craven gathered quantitative and qualitative information about salaries and availability of staff. Publicly available data, such as statistics on demographics, was supplemented with outreach to HR professionals and individuals working in the recruitment sector in each of the seven cities. These recruitment specialists were asked to share their views and experiences concerning current salary levels and ease of recruiting staff for the defined skill sets. Armstrong Craven has deep experience in executive search in the shared services arena, which was useful background to this project. It was thanks to the company's linguistic capabilities, however, that the researchers were able to complete the project in only seven working days, making contact with 235 individuals.

THE RESULT

The client was presented with a final report in spreadsheet format and a document containing transcripts of conversations with sources. The information gave insights into the availability of talent and also considered whether it was refreshable. The client particularly appreciated the qualitative comments gathered about locations and people. On the basis of the data collected, the management consultancy was able to further reduce the shortlist to three of the cities, which were subsequently visited by the healthcare client. Eventually, Dublin was selected as the location for the shared services centre.

This project demonstrates Armstrong Craven's expertise in locating appropriate talent and understanding its motivations and expectations, in order for companies to begin building relationships with potential future employees. Armstrong Craven believes in total transparency and shares all data collected during an assignment with the client, who derives ongoing value from detailed intelligence about the markets it operates in. The company's intelligence gathering is underpinned by strong language skills and technology, removing boundaries and allowing Armstrong Craven to locate, understand and attract talent, however rare, wherever it resides – locally, nationally or globally.

“When I heard of Armstrong Craven’s unique executive search model, I was dubious but interested enough to give it a shot. It would have cost me a very substantial sum of money with a traditional search firm to recruit our CEO for Asia Pacific, they did it for a fraction of the cost and I was absolutely delighted with the service.”

Global SVP HR

leading market research and brand consulting company

“Time after time Armstrong Craven has delivered rapidly to meet our complex requests and tight deadlines. An excellent, top quality service, on flexible terms, delivered by a great team of people – highly recommended.”

Global Head of Recruitment,
international engineering consultancy

“We have used Armstrong Craven on a variety of recruitment projects, many of which have involved searching Europe and the US. The methodology adopted by the AC team was a departure from our traditional methods of recruitment but the professionalism, quality of candidates, transparent communication, flexibility of fee structure and cost effective model is a breath of fresh air.”

HR Director Strategic Operations,
leading multi-national engineering company

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

“Armstrong Craven’s passion, in-depth knowledge of our needs and research expertise has helped us to develop our talent acquisition capabilities. Indeed, through market intelligence, talent mapping and direct resourcing, they have provided a flow of highly skilled people across our global R & D organization which is vital to our continuing success and growth.”

VP Global R&D Recruitment, major pharmaceutical company

“I use Armstrong Craven to take advantage of their research-based approach when requiring competitor and market intelligence, in addition to their ability to generate superb quality candidates.”

Staffing Director,
global pharmaceutical company

“The transparency of their process, their international reach and ability to understand and penetrate our specialist markets on a global basis has positioned them as a strong and valuable resourcing partner which is of particular importance to us given our organization’s development plans.”

Global Head of Recruitment,
international engineering consultancy