



Strengthening Leadership Together

Together, AESC and its members
change the world with strong
leaders, teams, and culture.

An abstract graphic on the right side of the page. It features a dense cluster of overlapping lines in orange, teal, and pink. These lines converge towards a single point at the top right, where they form a large, upward-pointing orange arrow. The background is a solid dark blue.

As an
AESC member,
you gain access to
exclusive research
and resources to
strengthen your
business and provide
opportunities to be
thought leaders and
change makers.



About AESC

The Association of Executive Search and Leadership Consultants (AESC) is the professional association for firms that represent the highest standards in executive search and leadership consulting worldwide. Since 1959, AESC has set the standard for quality and ethics in the profession across the globe.

- AESC member firms share a commitment to quality and professional standards for their own firms;
- See the importance of collaborating for the good of the profession; and
- Together, raise the visibility of our profession and differentiate between AESC members – the highest quality firms - and the rest.

About AESC Members

AESC member firms are the leaders in executive search and leadership consulting. AESC member firms range in size from large global firms and networks to regional and boutique firms. More than 250 firms around the world are AESC members, comprised of 16,000+ individuals across 1200+ offices in 70+ countries. Our members share a passion for the profession and a desire to create a better world by strengthening leadership together.

While we compete in the marketplace, we collaborate for the good of the profession.

Our Purpose

Strengthening Leadership Together.

Our Mission

Since 1959, AESC has set the standards for the executive search and leadership consulting profession. Our members are committed to quality and meet or exceed AESC standards – elevating the reputation of their firms and our profession. While our members compete in the marketplace, together we collaborate for the good of the profession.

Our Values

The foundation on which AESC membership is built. Our Professional Practice Standards are aligned with these values:

- Ethics & Integrity
- Excellence
- Objectivity
- Diversity & Inclusion
- Confidentiality



AESC Membership Provides:

RECOGNITION:

for a commitment to the highest quality standards.

AESC members can leverage the AESC brand, demonstrating your commitment to the highest standards of quality with clients, candidates and competitors.

- Showcase to your clients that you meet the rigorous standards of AESC and are among the highest quality firms in the world with the AESC Seal of Excellence.
- Amplify your message and promote your brand on AESC's digital platforms.

COMMUNITY:

to collaborate for the good of the profession.

AESC members gather, innovate, exchange ideas and represent the best of the best.

- Network with your peers in the profession in a collaborative, learning-based, non- competitive environment.
- Gain insights and learn from your peers at AESC's conferences and forums, diversity councils and through serving on our councils and Board.

LEARNING:

to continue to grow, develop, and innovate.

AESC shares best practices, insights, legislative updates, critical research and professional development.

- Receive updates and advice on legislative and regulatory issues that impact the profession.
- Find exclusive thought leadership, market insights, research, benchmarking studies and surveys of the client community worldwide.
- Access certification programs for consultants, researchers and associates, attend content-rich meetings and conferences and join a members-only webinar series to keep you up-to- date on critical issues impacting your business and your clients.

OPPORTUNITY:

to elevate the profession.

AESC members elevate the profession in the marketplace by their ethical practices and quality standards.

- Engage with AESC and align with the highest standards in the profession.
- Leverage AESC's research to stay ahead of trends impacting the profession and the clients you serve.
- Access AESC's future-forward conferences and thought leadership.

Our Purpose in Action

We Shape. Connect. Educate. Innovate.

SHAPE

quality standards, legislative response, and best practices.

- AESC helps members stand out in the marketplace through quality standards and best practices.
- Avoid risk by staying up to date on legislation and regulation.
- Impact the future of the profession.

CONNECT

members with peers, clients, and candidates.

- Build business success through AESC peer-to-peer networking and idea exchanges.
- Feature your firm and consultants in the AESC Member Directory used by clients globally.
- Leverage AESC's BlueSteps Executive Career Services as your partner in candidate care.

EDUCATE

through insights, trends, and continuous learning.

- Stay informed and ahead of the profession through informal and formal learning opportunities including AESC's global conferences, idea exchanges, research and webinars.
- AESC offers certificate programs and on-demand learning options to meet the professional development demands of members while providing them with a competitive edge in the marketplace.

INNOVATE

on the issues that matter today and tomorrow

- AESC provides members-only research, resources and leadership that drive innovation in the profession.
- Stay ahead on the issues with exclusive insights that impact leaders, teams and culture from inclusion and sustainability to cyber security and artificial intelligence, and much more.

AESC Code of Professional Conduct

ETHICS & INTEGRITY

AESC members put integrity above all else. They maintain the highest ethical standards within their firms, with clients and candidates, and in the community.

EXCELLENCE

Excellence guides the work we do. AESC members focus on their clients' unique business needs, using rigorous, evidence-informed, results-focused methodologies while innovating new solutions when needed.

OBJECTIVITY

AESC members exercise independent, objective judgment. Trusted relationships are grounded in knowledge, expertise, honesty, and respect.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

AESC members know the power of diverse talent and inclusive cultures. They are guided by this knowledge for the benefit of clients, candidates, and themselves.

CONFIDENTIALITY

AESC members protect confidential information entrusted to them by clients and candidates. This includes a commitment to data privacy and security.



How We Look at Prospective Members

AESC members can be any size, from global firms, networks, regional firms and boutique and independent firms. We have some of the largest firms in the world and solo-practitioners finding value in AESC membership. What matters most is deep expertise and meeting our shared standards of excellence.

Our Ecosystem

Our profession is a complex ecosystem that includes a range of things. Our members focus on **exclusive, retained executive search**, and many have broadened their offerings into several advisory services, for example interim management and on-demand talent, and leadership advisory services that might include:

- Assessment
- Board search and assessment
- Coaching
- Cultural alignment
- DEI consulting
- Leadership development
- Succession planning
- and more.

How We Define Executive Search

One area often misunderstood is what we mean by exclusive, retained executive search. This is the definition we use when evaluating prospective members:

1. Assignments are exclusive. Multiple firms never work on the same assignment at the same time.
2. A majority of assignments are at the executive level or above;
3. Assignments contain a significant advisory or consulting element; we view our business as advisory rather than transactional.
4. Assignments include a significant non-refundable retainer fee, because the work is advisory.

A Commitment to Excellence

AESC members focus on their clients' unique business needs, providing high quality service and using rigorous, evidence-informed, results-focused methodologies.

From exclusive, retained executive search through the entire ecosystem of services, prospective members are evaluated on whether all the executive search and leadership advisory services they provide meet AESC standards.



The Path to Membership

We will connect you with an AESC team member who will guide you through a series of discussions about your business strategies and service offerings to determine if your practices align with the standards outlined in our **Code of Professional Conduct** and our **Professional Practice Standards**. We will conduct an audit of your client-facing and candidate processes, document elements of the application and ask for both client and member references.

Throughout the process, we want to be sure that we are learning about your business strategy, quality standards and processes while answering your questions about the value of AESC membership.

An AESC Membership Committee (the Board for global firms and the respective regional Council for regional firms) will review your application and vote on admission to AESC.

New members are welcomed with a robust onboarding process. Every employee of the member organization becomes a member of AESC and can enjoy the benefits of membership.

Belonging to AESC

As a member of AESC, you will belong to the global association that sets the quality standard for the profession. You and your colleagues will have access to a wide array of benefits designed to help you succeed in today's competitive and rapidly evolving market.

AESC team members are here to help, whether its understanding AESC research and trends, supporting your growth strategies with market insights, or helping you navigate your AESC membership to maximize both your benefits and your contribution to AESC and the profession.

Join AESC, and we'll strengthen leadership together.

For more information on AESC, visit aesc.org