

AESC Candidate Bill of Rights

What should candidates expect from an executive search firm?

The growing number of firms and individuals declaring themselves to be professional executive search consultants has created the need for candidates to be especially diligent when responding to anyone claiming to be an executive search consultant. The shortest possible route to absolute confidence that you are speaking with a trusted firm is to determine whether the firm is a member of AESC. If so, the candidate can be assured that the firm has been carefully vetted and subscribes to the highest ethics and standards in the profession. What are your rights and obligations as a candidate? You can expect the following from an AESC member search firm.

I. Full Disclosure: Once you have been identified as a candidate for an executive position, the firm/consultant will provide full and open disclosure on the nature of the position and client organization.

II. Exclusivity: The firm/consultant has an exclusive agreement with the client organization, authorized by the client to find an individual who is a precise fit for a specific position. Without this exclusive agreement, executive level candidates could find their resumes floated to random clients, or as part of a large pool of undifferentiated candidates.

III. Confidentiality: The unintended disclosure of an executive's interest in a new position can be highly disruptive—even catastrophic. The executive search firm/consultant protects the confidentiality of the candidate's interest and other information.

IV. Communication: Because of the high-stakes nature of senior executive turnover, an executive search assignment frequently takes several months. Out of respect for the candidate, the search consultant will provide timely progress updates as the search progresses, and will be highly responsive to candidate inquiries. The consultant will also provide an honest appraisal of where the candidate does and does not seem to be a fit, and will be forthcoming if the client chooses to end the candidacy.

V. Professionalism: Executive search assignments are conducted at the highest levels, and candidates for these roles have pressing demands on their time. A professional firm or consultant will treat every candidate with professionalism.

Conclusion

Many candidates find the search process very rewarding, regardless of the outcome. With the guidance of a top executive search firm, candidates have the chance to explore their own interests and aptitudes, and even hone their interview and negotiation skills. In the end, it's always a win. A candidate either has a new challenge within a new organization, or has become a known entity to a reputable search firm, which could open other doors.

AESC provides a wealth of additional information for candidates, including career consultation and online executive seminars through its career management service for senior executives, [BlueSteps](#). Learn more about executive search at [AESC.org](#) or [BlueSteps.com](#).