

AESC Client Bill of Rights

What should clients look for in an executive search firm?

Introducing new leaders can have a significant impact on market perception, consumer confidence and employee engagement. Choosing the right executive search firm is a critical business decision with long-term impact. What are your rights and obligations as a client? You can expect the following when working with an AESC member.

I. The executive search firm provides clients with an accurate and candid assessment of its capabilities to perform your search.

That assessment includes a firm's internal resources, knowledge of the function and industry in which the search will be conducted, and an understanding of the client's cultural or regulatory environment.

II. The executive search firm is forthcoming about the client team.

Clients should be sure to meet with the individual consultant and the team who will handle the search assignment and request that the search consultant disclose the resources available to support the assignment and the sourcing strategy.

III. The executive search firm develops a thorough understanding of the organization and its hiring objectives.

Effective, successful searches require that the consultant possess a deep knowledge and understanding of a client's unique executive talent needs, organizational culture, customer strategy and regulatory challenges.

IV. The executive search firm provides a high-level consultative relationship.

An executive search firm works in partnership with a client to help define the assignment, identify candidates, assess using sophisticated methodology and select and onboard those best suited through comprehensive, quality-assured search processes.

V. The executive search firm holds client information in strict confidence.

The executive search process requires that clients divulge highly sensitive information. The ethical search consultant treats any and all information with the utmost confidentiality while only providing necessary information to candidates.

VI. The best executive search firms provide clients with regular, detailed status reports on the progress of the search.

Depending on the position to be filled, the availability of talent, and a host of other factors, a successful search can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months. The executive search firm ensures effective, ongoing communication regarding all aspects of the search, including

market response, list of candidates being developed, and any potential challenges that may inhibit the search.

VII. The executive search firm presents qualified candidates who fit the position and the culture of the client organization.

Executive search consultants present a range of qualified candidates and partner with clients in assisting with their internal assessment of candidates, including interviewing techniques that avoid unconscious gender bias.

VIII. The executive search firm is invested in the entire process and helps the client negotiate with the final candidate.

Once a client has selected a final candidate, the role of the executive search consultant evolves from that of search agent to negotiator and communicator, acting as an intermediary between client and candidate to increase the likelihood that the candidate will accept an offer.

IX. The executive search firm provides clients with a clear understanding of any replacement policies and other unusual situations that may arise during and after the search.

The executive search consultant provides in writing an explanation of the firm's policy regarding possible outcomes, including if the search firm is unable to fulfill an assignment after the search has begun, conditions under which the search firm can withdraw from an assignment, or if the client hires a candidate presented during the search for a position other than the assigned vacancy.

X. The executive search firm commits to follow-through.

As a trusted advisor, the executive search firm's responsibility does not end when the candidate accepts an offer. A committed executive search firm assists with onboarding and integration, remains in communication with the new hire for a period of time for support, and determines with the client that the search has indeed concluded.

CONCLUSION

The competition for top executive personnel is intense, and the stakes have never been higher. Trust and integrity are at the core of a successful relationship and a successful search. Clients are wise to choose gold-standard firms at the top of the profession, and should partner only with firms that are committed to professional excellence in executive search and leadership consulting: [members of AESC](#).