

ProSearch Recruits Top CIO's Who Stay

Attracting and Retaining the Right People Is Critical to Success

Today, attracting and retaining the right people is critical to an organization's success. Salaries, benefits and other employee-related expenses consume 70 to 80 percent of the typical company's budget, according to search firm executive Suzanne Fairlie, president of ProSearch, a Philadelphia-based retained search firm that specializes in senior level IT and financial leadership positions.

ProSearch's clients range from *Fortune* 50 to mid market companies, including pharmaceutical, financial, retail, healthcare, and manufacturing industries. Successful ProSearch candidates (sourced worldwide) encompass many races, both genders and varying age groups.

On the Same Page

"The cream of the business crop is very selective in today's 'War for Talent,' it's this cream of the crop that clients want and need to hire," Fairlie explains. "These candidates are not just driven by money. They enjoy challenge and take great pride in their accomplishments. One barrier to accomplishing challenge is internal mixed messages from the hiring team.

"When it comes to recruiting top talent, every member of the hiring team needs to understand and endorse the company's mission, goals and culture," Fairlie says. "Only then can you hire colleagues to enhance, not hinder, your organization."

Partnering With Clients

After 19 years in the search business and previous experience in Information Technology, Fairlie knows how to attract and hold on to top-tier employees. ProSearch, which she founded in 1988, has an outstanding reputation for placing excellent candidates, and also boasts an enviable retention record.

"We consistently complete our searches, with 95 percent of our placed candidates with their companies over three years," Fairlie says. "In addition, our average candidate stays with the company for over seven years, with several still there over 16 years. By contrast, research indicates that 80 percent of all senior level employees fail or leave in less than three years."

Fairlie is proud that each successful search is based on a strong partnership between ProSearch and her client. This close relationship, founded on integrity and two-way communication, starts with a series of detailed questions essential to pinpointing what the client needs in a candidate, and what the candidate can find in the client. A client meeting is held to ensure that all are giving the same message to the candidates. This meeting enables ProSearch – and the client – to understand the client's organizational culture, which is key to a successful search.

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www.ProSearch.com • 215-659-9005 • 3555 Welsh Road • Willow Grove, PA 19090

"Companies that value and retain their people have a significant edge over their competitors."

– Suzanne Fairlie, President, ProSearch

"The right buzzwords are important in getting good candidates to the table, but they'll remain at the table only if they feel they fit in with the culture," Fairlie says.

Company, Know Thyself: Understanding Corporate Culture

Corporate culture involves a lot more than what people wear to work or how late they work, Fairlie explains. Of far greater importance are the answers to:

- How are decisions made? By committee, hierarchically, or somewhere in between?
- Is it better to ask for forgiveness (make a decision and risk making a mistake)? Or is it better to ask permission first?
- Is collaboration valued or is individual autonomy more important?
- Should you ask for forgiveness or permission electronically, face to face or other?
- Is innovation valued or feared?
- Is senior management trusted or questioned?

There are no right or wrong answers to questions about corporate culture, Fairlie stresses. "What's important is that everyone on the hiring team is on the same page, and that the candidate knows and is comfortable with it. It's personal preference, knowing what suits you."

Points of Pride:

- Our clients are our best source of referrals.
- "Pennsylvania's Best 50 Women in Business 2005" and Aetna Small Business of the Year.

Identifying Passion

Fairlie cites a second critical step in successful search. The company and the candidate each need to identify their passion ... what gets them excited. If they are following their passion, then it is easier to be very successful. Fairlie was fortunate in that she worked for excellent companies, including IBM, Sun Oil, and Tandem, in her earlier systems career. But it wasn't until she migrated to the search world that she found her passion: recruiting top candidates for top clients. She has not changed jobs or careers in the last 19 years, and feels very fortunate to be paid for doing what she loves. Her passion for success, and ProSearch's success, are truly related to their clients' successes!



Suzanne Fairlie
President of
ProSearch