

How executive search is meeting new and emerging needs in the business world

a white paper authored by Cerius Executives,
partner of Senior Management Worldwide in USA

2021

Best kept secret

The best kept secret (in North American business) is finally out – Here's how it's made executive search so much easier.

In a beautiful British accent, the caller on the other end starts the conversation with, "So what is the hang-up with Americans and the use of interim management?" As owners of an interim executive firm in the United States, all we could say was, "You're preaching to the choir." That was the first of two conversations we had in a single week in which we were asked why businesses in North America (both U.S. and Canada) have not adopted a staffing model so widely used around the globe, especially in Europe.

Europe is the birthplace of interim management, so it is no surprise that the interim market is flourishing in Europe with the UK, France, Netherlands, and Germany leading the pack.

Many of the largest organizations around the world are now making acquisitions and expanding into new regions, so they are looking for experts with local market knowledge, along with the operational and leadership skills to manage major change. Interim Management emerged in the mid to late 1970's, when permanent employees in

The Netherlands were protected by long termination notice periods and companies faced large costs for terminating employees. Engaging temporary rather than full-time managers seemed like an ideal solution. Since then, it has evolved in many ways for a variety of reasons.

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Interim management is not a new concept, but its use was not common two to three decades ago in the U.S. Back then, interim executives didn't exist in great supply. But that's all changed. Now, interim executives are one of the most sought-after professionals in the business world, and organizations can rent their expertise. They are able to bring skills and background into the company for only the duration needed.



Rather than trying to find the perfect executive who fits the five-page job description, it can work more like a puzzle. The job description can be separated into a series of projects and one or two part-time executive roles. Keeping it focused on skill sets helps drive a more accurate fit of executive expertise and experience.

What Is Driving the Adoption of Interim Executives?

From the standpoint of companies who use them, some of the top reasons we have already reviewed that drive the adoption of interim executives are:

- Lack of bandwidth
- The increasing cost of employees
- Lack of expertise
- Speed of placement and results

The 2008 recession also left a big mark on business owners when it came to heavy overhead costs and the need for flexibility with talent.

Talent remains the cornerstone of business, but today, talent can be more flexible and scalable through each stage of the business growth cycle compared to pre-recession times. And startups are being built from scratch around the philosophy of, “How large can I grow the company with as few employees as possible?”

While pre-recession thinking said, “I must own my employees,” post-recession thinking says, “I just need to rent the expertise I need, when and where I need it.”

Why Interim Executive as a Career?

We often hear, “Why is an experienced executive on the market and available to just step into my company as I need the help?”

Unless you have been an interim executive, it can be challenging to understand why executives choose the interim management career path. There are also a number of myths and misconceptions that we will go into more in-depth in chapter 4.



Year after year, Cerius conducts a survey of independent executives, and the top reason they indicate for choosing their career path is always the desire for more flexibility.

Most independent executives enjoy not working 2080+ hours a year, having the ability to choose the type of work they do, and working in a variety of companies and situations throughout the year.

Increasingly, we are also seeing executives take on interim executive assignments as a means to vet companies as they consider their next full-time role. Taking the right role that is the right fit is as important to executives as it is to companies.

International cooperation

This white paper is a contribution of SMW's partner Cerius Executives from USA. It is a chapter of their book 'The Executive Search'. Click [here](#) to get the complete eBook or buy it in paperback.

Senior Management Worldwide (SMW) regularly publishes best practice examples from its partners. SMW is an international group of like-minded specialists of interim management providers. They operate in partnership under common principles and standards of excellence. Each partner helps organizations solve critical management issues and influence business outcomes. SMW offers the strongest and deepest network of leading interim executives available anywhere in the world. They combine global reach with local knowledge. With their combined reach and experience, the 21 partner countries offer a wide pool of interim and independent executive professionals across the world.

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