

5 ways to find a strong interim manager

a white paper authored by Kontakt Intersearch,
partner of Senior Management Worldwide in Russia

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What to do if a strong Interim Manager is urgently needed

Companies are more often practicing inviting interim managers; this trend is fueled by developing technologies and the pandemic. Due to the instability of the economy, companies stop designing business development strategies for a period of more than 2-3 years. Therefore, companies need executives, who are not joining the company for a long-term period, but only for a year or less, realizing the certain project or urgent task. Examples of such urgent tasks, the implementation of which cannot be postponed even for 2-3 months, are: opening the production of a vaccine against COVID-19, launching a telemedicine project, establishing online sales channel, etc.

Due to the crisis triggered by the pandemic, many companies simply cannot afford to hire a strong executive full-time for a long term. An effective interim manager is ideal for the company. He will complete the project in a short time and will also allow the employer to save money (after all, the manager will be hired under a fixed-term employment contract). The problem is that effective top managers usually have little interest in short-term, temporary work. What should an employer do when a top manager is needed for a short time right now?

International cooperation

This white paper is a contribution of SMW's partner Kontakt Intersearch from Russia.

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1. Build a project team from an experienced top manager over 60 and a young top manager, albeit insufficiently qualified, but highly motivated

Top managers of retirement age and young leaders agree much easier to enter a project than 30–45 years old candidates, since both have fewer family obligations and fewer options to take a high position on permanent basis. Their effectiveness will not be lower, but possibly even higher. And their services can be cheaper.

For example, a pharmaceutical company invited a team of experienced 68 year old VP of production and 26 year old project manager for a plant construction project. They did a great job.

The best way to search for top managers of retirement age is references. You need to ask for recommendations of those market experts, who have a wide network among top managers from different companies in the industry, and who are known in the professional community.

2. Consider candidates from other countries

Remote work has opened up new prospects for employers: a company may invite a candidate from another country. It is quite realistic to invite an expat for managerial positions in strategic marketing, IT, M&A, and it's not necessary to relocate him to Russia. Such cases already exist, although this is more a future trend.

Obviously, candidates from the USA and Western Europe are valued the most. But the easiest way is to find suitable candidates in Eastern Europe, India or China: they are interested in moving to Russia, and financial expectations are close to Russian realities. India offers a large pool of candidates with experience in pharmaceuticals, and China in consumer goods manufacturing. For quick selection of candidates, you can use the LinkedIn website (unfortunately, this resource is blocked in Russia), or contact smw-interim.com.



3. Look for candidates in pandemic-affected industries

As you know, industries such as non-food retail, passenger transportation, etc. have suffered more from the pandemic than others - from there, you can now attract highly skilled managers who are ready to switch industries.

Be sure to use specialized groups and communities: business school alumni clubs, professional communities on project tasks. For example, on Facebook there are a lot of different groups such as CFO club, HR hub for community of HR managers, PMO club for a group for project managers from various industries.

4. Do not be afraid to hire a nonresident top manager on a completely remote basis

During the pandemic, some top managers and owners left for their country houses and decided to sit out for a year or two, living on their savings, in order to return to business when the market starts to grow.

Some of them will definitely be ready to take on a short-term project, especially if they do not have to return to Moscow or St. Petersburg.

5. Lead a campaign to find an Interim Manager.

The company owners personal involvement is very important; they should not delegate all the negotiations to HR director. If the owners of the business contact directly potential candidates on LinkedIn and Facebook and invite them to projects, such approach always speeds up the process.



What can you do to make it easier to find an interim manager in the future?

1. Give your HR department the task of monitoring strong potential candidates in order to catch the moment when they will end their contract at the current place of work, and will be open for a new opportunity, a new role. This is right moment to offer such candidates to lead a short-term project, while they are looking for permanent employment options.
2. Pay attention to employer brand development. Tell everyone on social networks and at different business events like conferences, webinars, business parties about your company: what an innovative, dynamic, effective business you have and what a wonderful corporate culture you created. For example this CEO who writes about all new projects in social networks in an exciting and humorous way. He has over 10,000 followers in Instagram and over a thousand in Facebook.

To summarize, interesting tasks, clear goals, decent remuneration, real delegation of authority and trust helps to attract best of the best Interim Managers. Even if you are not ready to offer them a long-term career within the company.

