



RECRUITING WIZZARD

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE ACCESSORIES INDUSTRY'S LEADING RECRUITER ANDREW PHILIP OF EXECUTEAM RESOURCES

For the past eight years, Execu-Team Resources has been the leading source of recruitment for a growing list of satisfied clients. Specializing in the Accessories industry, this boutique firm has been highly praised by clients for its ability to find and recruit innovative accessories executives...quickly and professionally. In an exclusive interview with Accessories Magazine, Andrew Philip, president and founder of this successful New York City-based search firm, shares his views on the challenges of accessories talent-hunting.

What led you into the executive search business?

"I spent more than 25 years within the fashion industry, having served as president of Shiseido Cosmetics for 10 years, and subsequently was recruited to be president of Trifari/Monet Jewelry. After several years in that role, I became aware that the accessories industry was under-served by recruiters, particularly in the marketing, product development, and sales areas. I always felt that the key to my company's success was a commitment to its human assets, so I created Execu-Team Resources, whose mission is to help companies find outstanding, value-adding, talent."

What type of clients do you serve?

"We have a fast-growing and diverse client roster. We serve several large, publicly held accessories firms, as well as smaller, entrepreneurial, family firms. We also perform search assignments for some of the premier European luxury goods companies."

What are the major challenges facing you in your search assignments?

"We specialize in recruiting general managers, sales, merchandising, product development, and sales executives. We work with all levels—from senior management down through junior account managers, planners, and merchandisers. Our major challenge is matching a candidate to our client's unique 'culture.' We personally interview each candidate in-depth, and

based on our extensive sources in retail and wholesale, perform thorough reference checks. Experience and competency are the initial search criteria, but it is really chemistry and fit with the culture of the client that we look for. Another challenge is finding the industry's up-and-coming talent and rising stars, while also constantly updating information in our extensive database."

Your clients have praised your unique ability to identify and attract talent for their companies. What do you look for in a candidate?

"A candidate needs to exhibit enthusiasm and passion, and must have well-developed interpersonal skills. I always ask for evidence of performance. For a sales manager, what did he or she do to turn around a down-trending account, or what process was used to open a new account? Sometimes, in order to evaluate their quantitative skills, I will even ask a salesperson to do a specific open-to-buy plan or an assortment plan for a store. We seek out proactive sellers, who can analyze and can uncover growth opportunities, and who are in control of their business with a retailer. The other quality we seek out is leadership potential. Many of our clients have very strong upper management, but not much bench-strength."

Do you see any changes or trends in recruitment?

"With the expansion of companies into new trade channels, additional product classifications, and new brands, the demand for innovative merchandisers, brand-building marketers, and financially-oriented, multi-channel sales managers is already exceeding the supply. Retailers are more demanding of their vendors; therefore, analytical, and planning skills are paramount competencies for salespeople. As for merchandisers, trend-spotting requires individuals with well-developed antennae, combined with an understanding of the consumer target and brand positioning. Market share will go to those companies who can attract sourcing and product development experts who are innovators, globally-oriented, and can work at lightning speed."