



**COMPLETE GUIDE  
FOR RECRUITING  
SENIOR MANAGERS  
FOR  
SMALLER BUSINESSES**



Whether it's now or in the future, you and your business may find yourself in need of new members of senior management. When you're looking to bring onboard a new Senior Manager you need to make sure you're getting the right person.

In case of big companies this process may be well structured based on past experiences and might seem easier to attract quality candidates. But what a small business could do to attract C-Suite candidates and how to select them?

When a smaller business is ready to grow, it makes sense to try to attract someone with experience in a larger business which has already achieved that growth. The volatility of last years (COVID crises and now Ukraine war) has introduced an extra level of complexity to talent attraction at all levels but has also had some positive impact in proving that smaller businesses can be a better place to work.

Below we will address the main challenges to overcome and the key qualities to look for when recruiting a senior manager for your business.

## **MAIN CHALLENGES**

### **"Lack of security in a smaller company "**

Usually, smaller businesses can be more agile and adapt quicker to changing business conditions. While many large, corporate businesses have furloughed massive numbers of staff across the board, many smaller businesses have been able to keep staff working in more creative ways.

In a smaller business, it is easier to be closer to the key decision makers and the senior management team will reasonably expect to be involved in the strategy and decision making while in larger businesses, individuals become a "number" and decisions are often taken at corporate level which can make little sense to even senior members of the team operating the business day to day.

The last 2 years proved that a smaller business could provide much greater flexibility and creativity to adapt to new situations as well as enabling a candidate to be an integral part of the decision-making process.

### **"Lack of employer brand awareness"**

EVP's (Employer Value Propositions) are the focus of corporate HR departments now, but also a smaller business could compete with a large business on the strength of its employer brand. The main differentiator comes from the fact that smaller businesses offer the chance to be a big fish in a small pot, giving senior managers a broader scope in a role, more opportunities for collaboration, and more individual recognition. Positioning your business in the right way can ensure any reservations can be overcome and any good headhunter should be able to convey what a great opportunity working for your business offers a top-quality candidate.

### **"Less opportunities to progress own career."**

In a smaller business, roles don't tend to be as clearly defined and everyone is expected to wear several different "hats", giving people the opportunity to make more impact and gain broader experience. This is likely to ensure a candidate is in a much stronger position for future career opportunities.

### **"Lower pay than in bigger companies."**

This is one of the most common objections we hear but, from our experience, it is easier for a small business to create remuneration packages which include employee benefits with real value to the individual rather than needing to appeal to the masses. Could be true that in a smaller business the fixed remuneration might be hard to match for a candidate coming from a larger business, but this is usually overcome by offering performance-based bonuses, profit share schemes, or share options which, based on our experience, are more attractive than in bigger organizations.

## KEY QUALITIES

Hiring a Senior Manager is a difficult decision, so of course you're going to want to make sure you hire the perfect individual for the job. By taking these **QUALITIES** into account during the searching and recruitment process, you can help narrow down your potential candidates and select the people who are best fit to take your business forward.

There are of course many additional qualities and features that make an ideal manager, here we have listed just a few of the core things to consider when making a potentially huge decision.

### People Skills

Managerial roles involve interacting with and managing lot of people, both inside and outside of your company being responsible for dealing with several highly important individuals, including colleagues, board members, and shareholders.

To be successful in such a role, it is essential that your management team have a high level of people skills. This not only includes communication skills, but also relatability and understanding. Successful people managers can not only manage and lead, but build authentic and empathic relationships with their colleagues, as well as those outside of the business such as clients and partners.

Good people skills allow strong, meaningful, and dependable relationships to form, which are beneficial in the long run because they not only help in building trust and confidence within the team, but also help when communicating and negotiating with clients and business partners.

It's always useful to have strong connections within the industry, and by bringing in individuals with a large, healthy network, you can use this to expand your businesses connections and reach. This also demonstrates your candidates networking and socializing ability.

### Leadership & Inspirational Ability

When bringing a Senior Manager into your team they are expected not only to manage but primarily to lead. The ideal candidate for such a role is an individual who can inspire not only those that they manage, but also their management colleagues and other senior members of staff. By hiring managers with natural inspirational and leadership ability, other business members can benefit from this because they bring a positive change in how teams function, and how staff work together.

Inspirational ability generally stems from an individual's general charisma, people skills, and confidence. You need someone who can lead from the top, but who's also not afraid to get their hands dirty and motivate employees to achieve their very best. They need to ensure employees throughout the organization will feel engaged in their work and motivated to achieve their goals.

During the recruitment stage, leadership and inspirational ability can be identified in two ways; experience managing and leading teams to success, and charisma along with personality. Ideally, your candidates will have proof of strong experience leading teams of people in projects and achieving strong results.

### **Communication Skills**

One of the key features of a successful Senior Manager is the ability to clearly and effectively communicate their ideas and leadership with all stakeholders. It's important that information is passed through your business efficiently and with as little confusion as possible.

This includes all forms of communication, so not just when speaking in person or presenting, but also when sending emails and making phone calls. Great communication leads to a more informed management team and a more streamlined business strategy.

A Senior Manager who is not able to effectively communicate with all members of their business, whether they're senior management or admin staff, will struggle to be seen as an effective and motivational leader.

### **Confidence & Decision-Making Ability**

Two features of an ideal senior management candidate that go together are confidence and the ability to make solid, reasonable decisions. Successful managers tend to be confident in themselves and their decisions, and they certainly aren't afraid to put their foot down and assert themselves when a decision needs to be made. The senior management of a business is someone to whom the team members know they can turn to. It's likely that when a business-critical decision has to be made, the last thing you'll want is indecisive management staff, arguments, and disagreement. The chances are your new senior managers will encounter new problems and challenges daily. As such, it's essential that the candidate you choose possesses exceptional problem-solving skills and the ability to think critically about every decision and face challenges head-on in a timely manner. Taking risks is part of the job of business leaders, so you need to make sure the leader you appoint can take a sensible approach to big decisions. Risk evaluation is more than just a solo task though, so the senior managers should have the right skill set to assess risks themselves as well as take outside input into consideration in their decision.

### **Industry Knowledge and Specific Market Awareness**

When bringing new Senior managers into the business you want someone who can stay on top of the market and who's ready to implement and deliver the highest-quality service and stay ahead of the competition. At the same time, the ideal candidate will know how to filter their knowledge of new industry technology trends and how to identify game-changers and avoid fleeting buzzwords and concepts that add no value to the business.

It can be tempting to immediately focus your attention on the candidate with a strong management track record, but you have to assess how transferable is this if they don't have strong experience in your sector. Knowledge and, better said, understanding of the market and the detailed ins-and-outs of your industry are essential to good decision making and business growth. Therefore, the best fit candidate, even if does not come from a similar industry has to have an excellent understanding of the sector and be confident in their knowledge of the market and competitors. With this they can successfully drive your business forward, making informed decisions and constantly keeping up to date with market trends and rival companies' status.

### **Reliability**

This should be top priority when recruiting for senior management positions; before anything else, the one quality that stands out before anything else is reliability. Without a team of individuals who are consistent, reliable, and trustworthy, your business output and productivity could suffer majorly.

According to Elena Botelho and Kim Powell, authors of the book "[The CEO Next Door](#)" who base their statements on a study of 2,600 leaders, reliability is most important trait because it shows that they can deliver consistent results. "Of all the behaviors that lead to executive success, reliability is the only one that both increases a candidate's odds of getting hired and his or her odds of excelling in the job," write the authors.

### **Drive & Ambition**

Recruiting senior management candidates with drive and ambition is incredibly important moving business forward. Ideal candidates for senior level managers are willing and able to motivate themselves, set themselves ambitious but achievable targets, and strive to reach them. Regarding ambition, the key to success lies in achieving the right balance because too much ambition can lead to false expectations and disappointment. Before the selection process it is very important to define what drive and ambition mean. Could be strong drive for success, for challenging status-quo, thinking beyond conventions and striving to achieve excellence or just achieving and deliver results.

Be aware that ambition is good if it doesn't cross the line of ethics or cause harm to others.

### **Self-management**

The ideal candidate would not just oversee managing others, but also themselves and other aspects of the business. For this reason, it's important that in addition to people management skills, the candidate also displays strong organizational skills. Planning makes organizing easier, but not always there is the chance of being able to plan which might lead to disorganization and more pressure on the leader. That is why the candidates should be able to get the most out of existing resources, and this too requires organization. Even knowing when to use those resources is important to prevent them becoming exhausted or used at incorrect times.

### **Collaboration**

Last but certainly not least, in addition to being a solid, independent leader, best managers are also open-minded team players. The ability to take other stakeholders' input into consideration and form decisions around this is valuable in business. Managers should have a passion about working as part of a team when needed in addition to leading teams. This will help with people development as the new manager fits into the team, as well as help to bridge the management gap if there is one.

Your hire should also be able to efficiently collaborate and work alongside individuals outside of your team, for example clients, shareholders, and board members. This is very important for maintaining company image and strengthening business relationships to nurture business development.

## Thank you for Reading

Hopefully this eBook has helped you to understand the journey that you will embark on when recruiting your next management role for your business.

If the option of hiring a headhunting agency sounds attractive to you, don't hesitate to get in contact with us at Pendl & Piswanger to find out how we can help you find the best matching candidate.

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Send us an Email at **[office@ppromania.ro](mailto:office@ppromania.ro)**

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