

A high profile global technology brand in Silicon Valley urgently needed senior communications talent to augment its issues and crisis team. The in-house executive search team had been active in recruiting, but a combination of an increased sense of urgency, a shifting job specification, and heavy internal workloads led them to bring in Patino Associates to identify the successful candidate for this critical role.

Client Challenges

The globally recognized technology brand in Silicon Valley was under pressure. The Corporate Communications team was already strained with its lean structure and a constant barrage of media attention. In addition, there was a shift within the wider organization to expand Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), an initiative that would be led largely through Corporate Communications. A new position was created to lead both the CSR initiatives and several categories of high-profile media relations for the company, including supplier relations, manufacturing, and environmental issues.

The Client had initially turned to its highly skilled internal search team to complete the search. The team struggled to find the right fit, as the job specification shifted and the team did not have deep level contacts across the corporate communications domain. Two months into the search, pressure increased when it became clear that another senior member of the corporate communications team would be headed out on maternity leave in five months, leaving the already overtaxed team with even less hands.

Each passing day without the leadership role filled left the company exposed to breaking news and a reactive market position. Simultaneously, the internal executive search team faced heavier and mounting workloads.

Role of Patino Associates

The search team turned to Patino Associates for help. In the few instances when the company's internal search team had sought outside support, it was always with boutique executive search firms with specific functional or industry expertise. They knew the team at Patino Associates well and it was a natural selection for this role.

Patino engaged methodically to kick off the search, first listening closely to all perspectives, including the Senior Director, Corporate Communications and the Internal Search team and by examining the past research and candidate pool. The team wanted Patino to introduce them to new talent from outside the technology sector, with deep experience in CSR. Patino Associates pulled together a list of globally

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renowned CSR brands, developed a list of potential candidates, and initially presented seven profiles with varied backgrounds to discuss and provided calibration on what would be the ideal candidate.

It soon became clear that the right experience was not enough. The candidate needed to come from an “exciting” brand considered aspirational to the company’s culture, those elite enterprises making news and very active in the media. The hire was not just about the role, but also a hiring decision that would add cache to the company’s industry image. Furthermore, as the organization began to see strong talent outside the technology sector, it became clear that issues and crisis experience within the technology sector trumped the desire for CSR experience. These were two critical insights developed during the Patino Associates process that helped drive the search to a close.

Client Results

Patino Associates was able to bring independent and objective market data back to the client as to their perceived position in the marketplace and the

viability of the position. While the company had an enviable brand, the role still needed to be sold to candidates, because of pre-existing notions about the company culture, and its flat organizational structure with little hierarchy. The culture fit for the role would be critical.

Patino recruited a number of promising candidates and worked closely with the internal search team to negotiate the offer, successfully completing the search under the high-pressure timeframe. The company is now proactively driving media agendas that bring exposure to many positive company sustainability efforts that were formerly overlooked by global media. In addition, the internal search team was freed up to perform on-going internal searches versus focusing all efforts on this one critical hire.

Before Patino Associates was engaged, candidates were brought to light, but a lack of consensus and limited understanding of the real needs prevented the company from making offers. Through the partnership and guidance by Patino Associates, the company recruited a superstar with broad experience and a strong technology background, who is partnered with the Chief Sustainability Officer and helping to drive the company’s reputation as a world-class technology leader.



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