

The World's Most Influential Headhunters

BusinessWeek brings you the Top 100 within the business world

By [Joseph Daniel McCool](#)

You can't get to the top without the headhunters. That's as true for businesses as it is for established and emerging leaders. The world's top headhunters control access to the lion's share of C-suite succession and leader-replacement searches for the world's largest corporations. Their influence also extends to the top ranks of the most ambitious smaller companies, which understand how crucial top talent is and are willing to pay for it.

That's why *BusinessWeek* has introduced its exclusive database of the world's most influential headhunters, with comprehensive information on 100 of the top global executive recruiters. So what is it that separates these executive recruiters from the rest? *BusinessWeek* considered a number of factors in selecting these 100, including their individual reputations; their years of headhunting experience; the global scope of their recruiting practices; their accessibility and responsiveness; their high visibility within the client markets they serve; the recognition they enjoy within their firms and/or global executive search communities.

Matchmaker, matchmaker

It is important to note that their individual reputations are often the most important reason that corporations engage these headhunters. And while these 50 include some of the world's best, given the global influence and size of the \$10 billion executive headhunting market, more will soon be profiled by *BusinessWeek* to expand this already impressive list.

Who are the most powerful talent brokers? They include former management consultants, corporate human resources executives, authors, boardroom advisers, graduates of the world's most elite business schools, entrepreneurs, philanthropists, and trusted confidants of the world's most powerful business leaders. They are almost universally workaholics and globetrotters with a passion for the business of executive matchmaking, an affinity for socializing and peering deep into the human psyche, and a finely honed instinct for fitting candidate and company.

Thirty-one of the first 50 headhunters profiled herein hail from North America, the world's largest market, for their refined talent-spotting abilities. Many of them recruit for industries—such as financial services, consumer goods and services, technology, retail, and manufacturing—that have long relied on external talent to drive performance and fulfill senior leadership functions including the most prized C-suite posts.

Wide range of influence

And given its recent recruitment of two especially influential headhunters from competing firms, NYSE-listed Korn/Ferry International ([KFY](#)) takes the lead with seven headhunters on this initial list of executive recruitment power brokers.

If they hadn't pursued the business of corporate headhunting and weren't busy recruiting the most powerful business leaders, they say they would have otherwise pursued careers as venture capitalists, musicians, lawyers, politicians and teachers, among other professions.

Together these 100 headhunters recruit the lion's share of CEOs, presidents, and board members at the world's largest and most prestigious corporations. They exert massive influence the world over.

What to look for in a leader

Even though the recruiters have a number of traits in common, they have fascinatingly different perspectives on what they're looking for in leaders, what advice they would offer, and what global business trends will influence corporate performance. "Be exceptional and we'll find you" is what Senior Chairman [Gerard R. "Gerry" Roche](#) of Heidrick & Struggles ([HSII](#)) tells today's emerging corporate leaders.

"Focus on and balance what is good for stockholders, clients, and the talented people in your organization, and do what is right for them," advises President and CEO Christopher J. Clarke of [Boyden World](#). Do that, he contends, and "Your rewards will follow."

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Advice: Pay more attention to strategies and corporate culture. Being a global leader means being effective and efficient in different environments and cultures.

Qualities sought in emerging leaders: Strategic vision of the business with a clear comprehension of the current and future industry trends. A balanced development of the emotional intelligence. A true senior leader doesn't conduct the company's operations, and is able to anticipate the future of the market, the social tendencies, and client expectations. A leader is able to "translate" that future into the internal language of the organization and motivate people to reach it.

Sector specialization: Financial services

Job function specialization: C-suite, directors, upper management

Geographical Focus: Argentina, Uruguay

Companies I often recruit for: Toyota Credit; Amadeus; [NCR-Teradata](#); [Prosegur](#); BNP Bank

Favorite historical figure: Mahatma Gandhi

Education: Universidad Argentina de la Empresa, BBA, CPA

Languages: Spanish, English

Employment history: Stanton Chase, Regional VP, Latin America, 2004 to present, and Managing Director, Argentina & Uruguay, 1998 to present; Fernaud & Asociados, Partner, 1984-2001; Harte, Fernaud & Asociados, Partner, 1976-83

Experience in executive search consulting: 30 years



High Profile Placement: CEO, Bolsa de Comercio de Buenos Aires, 2003

Other paths I might have pursued: Corporate finance

The global business trend that will most influence corporate performance in the future: Technology progress and the market's changes are proving faster than corporate adaptation processes. The big challenge for organizations will be how to fill those gaps.