



EXECUTIVE SEARCH

CASE STUDY

A Chief Operating Officer
A Fast-Growing UK Retailer
Salary band: £175k-£200k

ZACHARY DANIELS



THE BRAND. THE ROLE.

THIS IS A BUSINESS THAT HAS GROWN ON ENTREPRENEURIAL INSTINCT AND FOUNDER-LED DRIVE

A staple of retail parks across the UK, the business had grown through bold trading strategies and, more recently, through acquisition.

Now, it needed a **COO** who could help it navigate the next stage of growth, address some underlying operational issues, and build on its record to create a **slick, customer-focused operator**, while retaining its entrepreneurial heart.

RESHAPING A MARKET LEADER

There were lots of challenges facing the successful candidate. First, this was a **founder (and founder's family)-led business**, and that will always create challenges for any new leader joining the team. It required a strong figure, someone with the **strength of character** to challenge what needed challenging, but who also respected the successful organisation the existing family team had built.

IT NEEDED SOMEONE WILLING TO RELOCATE TO WORK FROM THE ORGANISATION'S HQ

Crucially, it needed someone who could address the operational **elephant in the room**. Increasingly, the business had become **buyer-led**. The successful candidate would need to rebalance the situation, so that customers and the operational needs of the business had a stronger voice in the boardroom, and the buyers could respond to those needs, rather than lead them.



A CANDIDATE WHO COULD DELIVER VALUE

Over several conversations with the founder of the business, it became clear that the key to success was simple: find a candidate who would deliver **more value** to the business than they took from it.

On paper, lots of people could have fit the requirements of the role. But sitting behind the job description was a need for the successful candidate to:

- Display the sort of dynamism the business needed to take it forward.
- Introduce a level of corporate thinking that was right for the business.
- Demonstrate real accountability in driving change.
- Tactfully incorporate the ideas and suggestions of the owner and be able to push back when necessary.
- **Be on the upward curve of their career, with potential to become the group's CEO in time.**



FINDING THE RIGHT FIT



HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY THE ESSENTIAL TRAITS IN SUCH A COMPLEX HIRE?

It starts by working from recommendations, describing to the wider ZD team the ideal candidate and asking for suggestions that leverage the team's expertise.

We conducted cultural profiling on our longlist of CVs to identify experience in organisations requiring resilience and strength of character.

Most importantly, we spent time getting to know the candidates, their experience, their preferences, goals, leadership styles and characters. This was vital in ensuring client and candidate were the right cultural and strategic fit. We sent the resulting shortlist of 12 to the client, who interviewed a handful, including our clear frontrunner.

How long did this take?

The successful candidate was in place within three months of the initial instruction.

EXEC SEARCH WITH ZD WORKS



AFTER A YEAR IN-POST, THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE HAS:



Brought a new level of operational excellence to the business, while maintaining its entrepreneurial edge.



Moved the culture and values of the organisation to a much stronger place.



Repositioned operations to be customer and organisation led, rather than buyer led.



Driven turnover across the business portfolio to £1.7 billion.

RECRUITMENT PARTNER

WHAT MAKES THIS BRAND CONTINUE TO CHOOSE ZACHARY DANIELS?

- We secured a candidate who continues to deliver more value than they take.
- We demonstrated real thoroughness in our search for the right person with the right qualities.
- For client and candidate alike, we made the hire personal and we worked in genuine partnership.

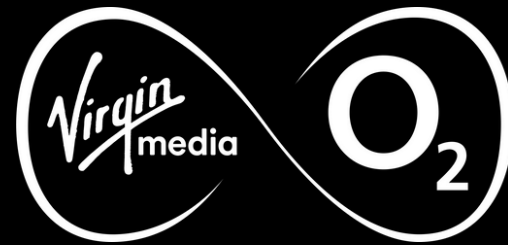
Since appointing the COO, we've carried out executive search for **three further roles** with the client, a clear statement of trust in the way we work and the results we achieve.



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