

CAREERS

New firm focused on recruiting China's best business leaders

Roger Wong

A CHINA-BASED executive search consultancy firm recording rapid growth despite a global economic downturn has launched a signature business that will focus on leadership acquisitions.

THE JACE-KELLY (www.jace-kelly.com) says the new business which is just two months old is already winning work that would previously have gone to the "big five" global firms. The service places chief executives and functional heads in positions offering salaries of more than 1 million yuan a year (US\$146,024).

Kelly Qian, well-known in the executive search industry, has teamed up with Jace Ho -- a strategic thinker and former high flyer with multinationals -- in founding this new business.

"Our clients are now asking us to help them recruit a 3-million CFO and an expatriate MD," said Kelly. "Previously, they would have gone to the big five firms."

Jace explained: "But the global firms do not always have an in-depth knowledge, understanding or appreciation of the China situation. For us, being based here is a real advantage."

"We know about personal details as well as local customs which are critically important as consideration for key executives (mostly foreigners) to switch between jobs."

"It is often more difficult than expected to land a new job. Career is two-thirds of most people's time before age 55."

While J-K has China knowhow is one, it is offering more. Their staff are very international. An average consultant has 1.8 nationalities, speaks three languages and has lived in 2.6 different countries.

Jace emphasized: "Our competitors often know the candidates on paper. Our services are more private and professional. We know them as respected friends."

"Most bankers seem to accept that China does not lack capital or opportunities -- but the capable and charming leaders who can deliver confidence and see through success. It's our honor to help bridge this gap."

"Five percent of leaders are unemployed and 25 percent are not happy with their current employment. You don't need a search firm to find these candidates because they are actively networking and advertising."

"But what most people seem to forget is that 70 percent of the leaders are happy with their current position, earning good bonuses, being promoted and very well thought of by their companies."

"These people are not networking, answering ads, or even considering leaving their current employer. These are the best candidates and the best shot for hiring them is with the help of THE JACE-KELLY."

Kelly said businesses seemed excited about using THE JACE-KELLY to recruit their executives. "The excitement comes from foreigners. It is all about market knowledge and understanding our clients' needs in China."

"Many of the candidates (including foreigners) coming forward for positions are based here and we are the China-based search firm they can go to," she said.

Kelly and Jace concurred: "We have a strong belief in this leadership segment in China. It is just starting. We have had a record month and are currently in the middle of our own recruitment drive."

Roger Wong is a freelance journalist