



A MAVERICK'S BID TO LEAD THE PACK IN EXECUTIVE SEARCH

• *Seeking strategic leadership solutions for client partners*

Nosal Partners LLC

Headquarters:

San Francisco

Additional Offices:

Atlanta, Chicago, Houston,
Miami, Minneapolis, Silicon
Valley, São Paulo

Founded: 2005

Practice Concentration:

Serves a variety of industries
and functional areas



Founder:

David Nosal
Chairman and Chief Executive

David Nosal, the chairman and chief executive of Nosal Partners, has developed a reputation as a maverick in the business of executive search consulting.

And he doesn't pull any punches when it comes to sizing up the opportunities ahead of his firm and the challenges that continue to hamper the competition and the growth of executive search.

"I think there's a lot of lip service given to being a real consultant or business partner to client organizations by a lot of people in the executive search industry," Nosal says.

"Where the industry continues to need to go is toward a consistent process, a method of business owners working together for the client organization. It goes so far beyond a tactical need where the client picks you up like a pencil and uses you," he adds. "That's sort of where we're trying to pull the search industry."

Nosal says his firm is also engaging client hiring organizations in discussions that go far beyond the traditional search-focused dialogue that has pigeon-holed executive search for much of its history.

"We can bring insight to a specific organization and industry issues and can sit with the CEO and board and talk holistically about the business. A search might pop up as a result, but it's being

able to brainstorm far beyond the immediate management needs of the business," Nosal says, that is critical in building trust that leads to true partnership.

It's the kind of approach, he says, that landed search assignments such as those to find a new CFO for Hitachi Data Systems Corp., a president and COO for UTStarcom and a president for BT Americas, all of which were recently closed in the hiring of new executives to those posts.

Part of the executive search profession's deficit as a true partner to hiring organizations is its inability to staff its own ranks effectively, Nosal says. "Search firms don't know how to hire people who can operate in the boardroom," he opines.

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*– David Nosal, Chairman and Chief Executive,
Nosal Partners LLC*

"We go in and talk to them about their business," Nosal adds. "We discuss business issues and we talk about the narrow spectrum of individuals who have lived in similar environments that we have 100 percent access to."

And there are a lot of moving parts to modern-day executive talent assessments that lend themselves ideally to strategic business discussions and the decisions they force from business lead-

ers, he says, “From accessing the talent to working with a variety of businesses and having sat in their shoes.”

The head of Nosal Partners says his firm is able to credibly add to corporations’ strategic discussions because his firm is not just a one-trick pony.

“We don’t talk about executive search. We talk about executive leadership solutions...strategic succession planning, their operations globally, their pressure points and pains, strategy, compensation and the pains they’re feeling with the board,” Nosal says.

“Where we differentiate ourselves is we’re not doing it because the public markets are demanding 20 percent incremental revenue increases year over year,” Nosal says. “Whatever level of resource our clients need, we’ll bring dedicated Nosal Partners or outsourced resources around CEO succession planning, coaching, assimilation, organization design and assessment. We can draw on any number of resources to help them solve those business problems.”

Nosal says he’s building the firm to eventually have 60 to 80 partners, which he believes will position it strategically between thousands of very small search firms and the biggest firms that have hundreds of partners. Today, Nosal Partners has about 21

partners, each of whom, he says, is compensated in part based on their ability to work together.

“We incent our team to collaborate on every single search,” Nosal says, adding that the bulk of its search assignments are completed within 80 to 90 days.

Nosal says some of the resources the firm can also bring to clients’ management challenges come through his firm’s recent global alliance with Alexander Hughes in Europe and Strategic Executive Search (SES) in Asia.

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“We have three very strong brands in three different regions with unparalleled access to talent, compared to the competition,” Nosal says. “And we are proactive in building global client relationships. Ours is the most unique and dynamic three-firm alliance in the business.” And it doesn’t market its size as a key driver of client outcomes.

Bigger global competitors, Nosal says, “use size as a success metric.” To that approach, Nosal offers to his former big-

firm colleagues: “Get over yourself and get off of that metric. Size does not matter in executive search consulting. It’s about content and quality.”

Nosal adds: “I ran a CEO search practice. I was the biggest biller at a much larger firm and ran part of North America for them. Consultants are denied access to top talent because of the size and scope of their business.”

When he heads into a discussion with a client, Nosal points out that “I can call every one of these candidates” and advises them that if they’re working with the largest firms, “You might want to raise a discussion of blockage issues.”

What’s more, “The world’s small, medium and large companies have to wake up and understand that hiring one of the biggest search firms in the world isn’t in their best interests. There is a critical mass issue in our business, and this is not to say they don’t have great people. There are great people at the big firms,” Nosal says, but, he adds, “you have hundreds of partners in those firms.”

“We can put together a target list and then we can and will access these companies. We’ve got to be able to convey that and share that message,” Nosal says. “That’s the most compelling reason why we’re being hired.” ☒

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