

WHEN DEREK CARTER RECRUITS minority candidates for Minnesota companies, he nearly always hears two reasons for hesitation. First, that it's too cold here. Second, that the dominant Scandinavian and German heritage of Minnesota means that snow isn't the only thing that's overwhelmingly white.

Although Carter can't change the winter temperatures, he's determined to transform the look of local companies by helping them to foster diversity. The firm he co-founded in 2002, Minneapolis-based JB Scott Search, specializes in finding and recruiting minority candidates for top-level positions. He has successfully placed professionals for companies such as Honeywell, Ecolab, Ernst & Young, American Express, 3M Co. and General Mills.

"There's a bigger need here for diversity recruiting than in a place like Chicago or Detroit," Carter explained, "because it's not just difficult to find good candidates, it's also difficult to get them here." He relishes the challenge, and his persuasive style has worked well to make JB Scott an up-and-coming force on the recruiting scene.

One way that Carter is able to woo candidates into the area is to share his own experiences as a self-admitted "Midwestern kind of guy." Born in Grand Rapids, Mich., he moved to Minnesota after graduating from the University of Michigan in 1986. As part of his work with Golden Valley-based General Mills Inc., he lived in southern California for five years, and it was there that he got a glimpse of a truly diverse population.

"When I moved back to Minnesota, I finally saw what everyone was talking about," he said. "When you look at local TV and newspapers, you'll see that it's mostly Caucasian individuals that are prominent."

Carter decided to help companies attract more minority employees and boost diversity in the state, so he went into recruiting, working first for Robert Half International, then as an independent agent under Recruit Masters. Even though he increased placements by 20 percent each month at Recruit Masters, he still felt that there was a need for a firm dedicated to diversity recruiting.

"Some of the bigger recruiting companies might have a division that focuses on diversity," he said, "but up until now, companies have been afraid to focus on it, because it's a niche." With their established networks, Carter and his partner are able to find candidates across the country, and in their first year, have generated revenue of nearly \$200,000. Carter consults with other diversity specialists across the country to help corporations address multicultural work-force awareness as well as diversity recruiting.

The business isn't without its challenges, however. JB Scott Search focuses on helping Fortune 500 firms with their recruiting



## MINORITY BUSINESS OWNER

# Attracting diverse talent

Recruiting also helps companies with retention

BY ELIZABETH MILLARD CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Derek Carter has mastered the art of persuasion, melting fears of snow and Nordic iciness in the land of lakes, needs, and large companies tend to gravitate toward more established, better-known recruiting companies. "It's hard when you're a new business," Carter noted. "People don't even know you exist. Our reputation doesn't precede us."

But even if the company's name isn't well known yet, its work is certainly getting noticed. Calvin Klitz, senior human resources representative at Fridley-based Medtronic Inc., has come to appreciate Carter's recruiting style.

## JB SCOTT Search

City: Minneapolis

Business: Minority recruiting

Founded: 2002 Employees: 2

Web site: [www.jbscottsearch.com](http://www.jbscottsearch.com)

"There are several search firms in the Twin Cities that one could use," he said. "It is the straight forward, dependable style that differentiates Derek's organization from the others." For the future, Carter has an ambitious goal: He wants companies to think of JB Scott Search when they're looking for minority candidates. To achieve that, he foresees continuous growth that will eventually make the firm a national company rather than just a local one. He's also looking forward to providing expertise to Under One Sun, a consortium of senior-level business owners who are dedicated to diversity. The group is just finding its feet, but Carter is eager to see it gain some momentum, since he feels it will be beneficial for the community and the business climate.

"Under One Sun will give companies an entire diversity strategy, so they can address diversity issues effectively," he said. Carter and JB Scott Search will provide consultation on recruiting and retention practices.

Neil Lapidus, a partner at accounting firm Lurie Besikof Lapidus & Co., has no doubt that Carter will reach whatever targets he sets for himself and JB Scott Search. "He exemplifies leadership," Lapidus said. "He's successful at what he does because of his work ethic and his business integrity." Carter helped Lapidus find six diversity candidates that were then recruited.

"It's easy to find candidates," Lapidus noted. "What's hard is finding the correct candidate, someone who's appropriate for your company. Derek Carter finds those candidates, and that's what makes the difference."

Elizabeth Millard is based in St. Louis Park