

Finding Diversity

JB SCOTT SEARCH CARVES ITS NICHE AS MINORITY RECRUITER.



Derek Carter (left) and Brady Hoag serve a growing corporate market looking for executives with minority backgrounds.

Executive recruiters Derek Carter and Brady Hoag were hearing a similar message from clients—they needed help finding good minority candidates willing to relocate to the frozen north. Sensing a business opportunity for their new Minneapolis-based executive search firm, JB Scott Search, the partners decided to specialize in finding and placing minorities in executive positions with companies in Minnesota.

Founded in late 2002, JB Scott Search's revenues hit \$200,000 in 2003 and the duo expects them to reach a half-million dollars this year. Their client list includes Microsoft, Medtronic, Ecolab, and 3M. The firm now

is looking for larger quarters.

Besides specializing in diversity placement, having a common background in finance gives Carter and Hoag a second specialty area—filling finance positions—because only about half of their placements fall under the diversity heading.

“Clients are usually interested in us because we specialize in diversity placements,” Carter says. “But we get many financial positions to fill because of our background.” The partners say specializing makes them more credible and cuts the time clients spend explaining what they want. “They use us for our resources and networks,” Carter says. “Finance and diversity are the areas where we can find good candidates.”

The partners' success is also due to a shared business philosophy. “We don't see this business as transactional the way some companies in our field do,” Hoag says. “If you want to be in it long term, it needs to be about relationships.” Carter adds that “volume isn't what's going to build our reputation—quality is. We're so committed to bringing only the most truly qualified candidates to our clients that if we can't find someone who's right for the job, we won't present anyone at all. That's how you build relationships—not by presenting dozens of candidates and hoping one fits.”

Both partners followed similar career paths, beginning at General Mills before switching to the recruiting industry. Carter worked at Big G for 12 years, rising in the company's sales and diversity marketing divisions. He switched to recruiting, first with Robert Half International and then as an independent agent for Recruit Masters before co-founding JB Scott. (The name comes from a third partner who left the firm.) Hoag spent seven years in finance positions at General Mills before joining Robert Half and rising to division director of Half's Twin Cities office.

“We don't want to be all things to everybody,” Hoag says. “We think we have two very nice niches.” ■

—Jim Bohan