

CASE STUDY:

Establishing First-Time CFO Leadership to Support Global Scale-Up in a Specialist Manufacturing Business



Overview

A fast-growing UK-based advanced manufacturing business, operating in a highly specialised manufacturing sector, needed to strengthen its senior leadership team as part of ambitious long-term growth plans. With operations expanding across the UK, US and Europe, the business required a senior finance leader to support scalability and drive strategic decision-making.

Challenges

- **The existing part-time CFO was approaching retirement**, and following a successful funding round, the business had reached a size and complexity that required a permanent, full-time finance leader.
- This was **the organisation's first full-time CFO appointment**, creating the need for someone capable of establishing and embedding a modern finance function.
- The role demanded **a rare combination of experience** - both manufacturing and venture capital/fundraising expertise - which significantly narrowed the available talent pool.
- The position needed to be within **commuting distance of a specific town** rather than a major city, adding further complexity.

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Headstar did an **outstanding job of identifying top-tier candidates**, and the chosen individual was the standout choice. They bring a fantastic blend of experience in larger organisations and start-up environments within both PE and VC-backed companies, and we're delighted to welcome them to the team. As we continue this journey, their commercial and strategic capabilities will be instrumental in helping us to realise our ambitions and steward us along the way.

Chief Executive Officer

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Our Approach

- Headstar led a **targeted executive search** focused on identifying senior finance leaders with the niche blend of manufacturing and VC/fundraising expertise.
- **A combined headhunting and advertising campaign** was delivered to maximise reach and attract suitable candidates.
- Produced a **shortlist of six high-calibre candidates** from an extensive longlist. Two candidates emerged as strong front-runners, and Headstar recommended additional personality profiling and further investor meetings to ensure the right cultural and strategic fit.
- The search was complex due to the **highly specific skillset required**, alongside geographical constraints, requiring deep market knowledge and targeted sourcing activity.

Strengthened Senior Leadership

A new CFO was appointed to lead finance, procurement, IT and Facilities during a critical phase of global expansion.

Strategic Finance Capability

The successful hire brought deep experience of high-growth, PE and VC-backed environments to support the company's long-term scaling plans.

Enhanced Decision-Making Support

The CFO now partners directly with the CEO to drive financial planning and key strategic initiatives across the organisation.

Future-Proofed Operations

By taking ownership of multiple operational and administrative functions, the CFO has freed up the CEO to focus fully on driving commercial growth.

Ready to transform your business?

Contact us today to find out more about how Headstar can help.



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