

## A COMPREHENSIVE CASE STUDY

# Strengthening Teams in Transition: Filling Five Pivotal Roles

## Client Demographics

**Nonprofit HR Practice Area:** Search

**Location:** Washington, D.C.

**Sector:** Nonprofit

**Mission Type:** Arts, Culture & Education

**Staff Size:** 140-150 employees

**Annual Budget:** \$18 million

**Type of Engagement:** Professional Search

**Search Duration:** Three months for the Executive Assistant and Head of IT searches; two months for each Development search

## Engagement Scenario

A premier institution dedicated to arts, culture and education engaged our Search advisors during a critical period of organizational transformation. After a three-year closure necessitated by extensive construction and renovation, this D.C.-based organization approached its grand reopening with the imperative to rebuild its leadership and operational teams. To navigate this period of complexity and heightened expectations, the organization partnered with us to conduct five pivotal professional searches.

## Engagement Details

The identified roles were instrumental to the organization's success and encompassed a broad and complex range of responsibilities: Executive Assistant to the Head Librarian, Head of IT, Associate Director of Development, Institutional Giving, Associate Director of Development, Operations, and Associate Director of Development, Major and Planned Gifts.

The development roles were envisioned to rebuild relationships with the organization's donor base and foster a culture of philanthropy within the organization. The Head of IT would lead an ambitious, multi-year digitization project, while the Executive Assistant would provide critical support to the Head Librarian, who was also serving as Interim Executive Director.

## Considerations

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**Development Searches:** The development team had experienced significant turnover, resulting in a lack of continuity and stability. Compounding this was the recent appointment of a new Director of Development and a new Executive Director, which brought a fresh perspective but also necessitated careful alignment of leadership styles and priorities. Additionally, rebuilding relationships with the donor base was a key priority, requiring candidates with strong relationship management skills and a strategic approach to donor engagement. Candidates were also required to demonstrate proficiency in Tessitura, a specialized software essential for development operations.

- 2 **Executive Assistant Search:** The Executive Assistant role demanded exceptional adaptability, as the candidate would need to navigate a fluid environment marked by evolving responsibilities. They were tasked with supporting the Interim Executive Director during a period of heightened organizational activity, requiring a unique blend of interpersonal acumen and administrative expertise.
- 3 **Head of IT Search:** The Head of IT position required a candidate with both technical proficiency and strategic vision. Essential qualifications included system expertise, cross-departmental collaboration skills and the capacity to lead a transformative digitization project. This role was central to advancing the organization's operational capabilities in a rapidly changing technological landscape.
- 4 What made this set of searches unique was the interconnected nature of the roles — all newly placed candidates would be working closely together. Beyond meeting the technical qualifications outlined in their respective job descriptions, it was essential to identify individuals who could collaborate effectively and contribute to building a cohesive, high-performing team culture.

## Search Placements

Our Search team successfully identified and placed candidates who met the technical and professional requirements of their respective roles and demonstrated a commitment to advancing the organization's mission.

### Development Roles:

The Director of Development expressed profound satisfaction with the caliber of candidates placed in development roles, which were critical to shaping the organization's philanthropic strategy for 2025. With an average search timeline of two months, these placements started following the reopening reinvigorated the development team and provided a strong foundation for donor engagement and long-term fundraising success.

### Executive Assistant:

Given the pivotal role this position played in the reopening process, the search was conducted within a carefully structured three-month timeline. The selected candidate, with significant experience in nonprofit administration and executive support, played a key role in coordinating the logistics, fostering operational efficiency and organizational confidence.

### Head of IT:

With a similar three-month timeline, the search for a Head of IT was strategically aligned with the organization's reopening plans. The appointed leader, bringing over two decades of experience in nonprofit technology and operations, ensured that essential digital infrastructure — including guest check-in systems, Wi-Fi and interactive exhibits — was fully operational ahead of the opening. This placement positioned the organization to embark on an ambitious digitization initiative, significantly enhancing global accessibility and operational effectiveness.

The successful completion of these searches underscores Nonprofit HR's dedication to supporting organizations through periods of significant transformation. By securing exceptional talent with the support of our Search team, the institution was equipped to transition seamlessly into a new chapter and achieve both its immediate and long-term objectives.