



JK Executive Strategies

Real Estate Case Study

Real Estate Investment & Management Firm
Rochester, NY



Background Information



Lead Recruiter

Miranda Leo | Recruiting Manager

✉ miranda@jkexec.com

📍 1349 University Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607

☎ 585.505.8939

Notable Attributes

History | Founded in 1997, this company started as a small, family-owned business and has since grown into a major real estate operator with a substantial portfolio spanning multiple states. The company has expanded through organic growth and strategic acquisitions, often targeting underperforming or undervalued properties with significant appreciation potential.

Size | The company employs approximately 100 people and manages a portfolio of 100 parks totaling 6,500 pads.

Diverse Portfolio | The company manages a variety of assets, including multi-family residential units, commercial office spaces, retail centers, and mixed-use developments

Value-Add Strategy | The company is renowned for its value-add investment approach, acquiring properties that require renovation or repositioning. By enhancing the physical condition and operational performance of these assets, the company drives value appreciation and generates higher returns.

Sustainability and Innovation | Committed to sustainability and innovation, the company integrates eco-friendly practices such as energy-efficient building systems and sustainable materials into its projects. This approach not only reduces environmental impact but also attracts environmentally conscious tenants and investors.

Geographic Reach | Initially focused on a specific region, the company has expanded its footprint to key markets nationwide. This geographic diversification enables them to capitalize on growth opportunities in different areas while balancing market-specific risks.

Search Context

I have partnered closely with members of the C-suite, including individuals we placed, to develop the infrastructure of their leadership and director-level teams. Through our collaboration, we've conducted several searches for leaders capable of advancing the company's mission, vision, and goals. Notable positions we've worked on include:

Continued on next page.



- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Operating Officer
- Sr. Human Resources Manager
- Accounting Manager
- Accounts Payable Specialist
- Investment Analyst
- Staff Accountant
- Director of Operations
- Director of Sales
- Insurance Account Manager
- Director of Construction Development

Many of these roles were newly created, while some had been the culmination of promotions or natural turnover.

Position Details

A few key positions were:

Chief Financial Officer: This role was the first key hire in the accounting and finance department. Working closely with the CEO, the CFO provides real-time reporting and strategic financial oversight to support the company's growth and expansion goals. While a significant investment, bringing accounting and financial functions in-house ultimately resulted in substantial cost savings, enabling the company to reallocate resources more effectively.

Chief Operating Officer: As a newly created role, the COO was essential for building efficiencies and streamlining processes across the organization. The hire was critical during the integration of a newly acquired business, which doubled the company's size. The COO also drove sales, measured operational effectiveness, and contributed to both revenue generation and cost reduction efforts.

Sr. Human Resources Manager: This role consolidated the company's HR function under one umbrella. The HR Manager ensured compliance with employee regulations, supported the company's expansion plans, and focused on cultivating a positive organizational culture. This position also tracked key metrics such as employee retention and drove initiatives to strengthen workforce engagement.

Challenges Faced

Market Conditions

During this period, the real estate market saw significant shifts. Residential real estate boomed, with limited inventory for consumers, while commercial real estate faced increased vacancies as the workforce transitioned to remote work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The client needed to make intentional hiring decisions that aligned with their long-term goals and addressed immediate needs, particularly within the context of affordable housing shortages.



Understanding the company's aggressive growth plans was pivotal for our searches. We focused on hiring individuals who could address present challenges while evolving alongside the company to avoid the need for repeated recruitment within a short timeframe. Our strategy prioritized building a strong C-suite and leadership team first, enabling them to construct their respective teams with our continued support.

Institutional Challenges

This firm faced a handful of internal challenges as they began to grow and build out their teams:

Natural turnover – This is something we often see in growing companies as new hires begin to impart their plans.

Location – The firm had an in-person working model, which made it challenging in an ever-evolving WFH conversation in the real estate and development industry.

Budget constraints – Because of the company's drive and plans for growth, the company had to be incredibly intentional about every dollar spent, which came down to benefits and compensation to pinpoint the right hires for the positions.

Search Strategy

Research & Planning

Understanding the company's plans for growth was the heaviest lift for the searches at this firm. Because they were in such growth mode, we needed to be acutely aware of their goals to make sure the hires we were recruiting for now only solved today's challenges, but could also evolve with the company to ensure we weren't recruiting for the same roles in 6-9 months. Our focus was very strategic from a skillset, dollar, and overall impact perspective. We felt it was most critical to hire the C-suite and leadership team first, so each hire could begin building out their teams, with our assistance, to ensure we were not hiring duplicate skillsets.

Candidate Sourcing

Our sourcing methods included leveraging our national network of thousands of candidates, utilizing LinkedIn Recruiter for outreach, and employing Indeed for additional sourcing. We posted roles on multiple platforms, including our website and real estate-specific job boards.

Transparency was key in our candidate interactions. We took the time to understand each candidate's needs, strengths, and requirements for considering a move. We discussed salary in the initial conversation to ensure alignment with the firm's budget, given the competitive compensation landscape in the real estate sector.

Screening & Evaluation

Our process began with thorough due diligence to understand the firm's needs. Each role had specific must-have and preferred qualifications, which guided our evaluation.



Candidates underwent a multi-step screening process, including a phone interview, a written assessment, and a video call with me before being presented to the client. This approach narrowed the candidate pool to 3–5 top candidates for the firm to review.

Execution

Timeline

The search timeline varied based on the role. On average, searches took 80–100 days from initiation to placement. However, some roles closed in as little as four weeks, while others required more time due to evolving criteria and market conditions. Our focus remained on finding the best fit for the company.

Communication

I maintained regular communication with the firm, providing weekly status reports and frequent updates via email, phone, or video calls. This consistent interaction ensured alignment throughout the process. It was common for senior leaders to reach out after hours or over the weekend to discuss candidate feedback, offer negotiations, and interview debriefs.

Adaptations

Several searches required adjustments in response to evolving client needs. For example, the Director of Sales role proved challenging as it was more development- and construction-focused than a traditional sales position. We adjusted criteria, such as location flexibility and travel requirements, and reassessed the importance of experience in manufactured housing. These adjustments, while time-intensive, ultimately led to successful placements, including increased salary ranges to remain competitive.

Outcome

While we have made numerous impactful placements with this firm, the placement of the COO stands out as a particularly significant success. This candidate, who had been part of our network, was local to Rochester, where the company is headquartered, and brought a robust real estate background. Their experience included working with lower-income and manufactured housing communities, managing high-volume environments, and growing real estate portfolios. The candidate's ability to thrive in a dynamic, ever-evolving company made them an ideal fit for a role requiring the creation of efficiencies, processes, and driving strategic change. This hire ultimately played a pivotal role in the company's growth strategy.



Lessons Learned

Key Takeaways

Throughout my partnership with this firm, I've been consistently reminded of the value of a strong working relationship between our team and the clients we serve. Our in-depth understanding of the company's growth plans, team dynamics, and long-term goals has enabled us to approach each new search with efficiency and precision. Whether launching a new position or finding a replacement for a promoted team member, we don't need to reinvent the wheel every time. Instead, we've established a seamless, well-oiled recruitment process that streamlines hiring and onboarding.

At JK Exec, our goal is to build long-term relationships and partnerships with our clients. As we continue to manage future real estate and development searches, we remain committed to aligning our search model with clients who value collaboration and a deep-rooted relationship. This ensures that every hire complements their broader hiring and growth strategies. Open communication and alignment are crucial to ensuring that the candidates we recruit reflect each client's goals and long-term vision.

Conclusion

The partnership between this firm and JK Exec has been instrumental in driving the company's growth and success. By leveraging JK Exec's expertise in talent acquisition, the firm has consistently secured top-tier leadership and management professionals aligned with its values and strategic goals.

Through this collaboration, the firm has improved operational efficiency, strengthened its leadership team, and expanded its diverse portfolio across multiple markets. The partnership has also enabled the firm to remain agile and competitive in a rapidly evolving real estate landscape.

This case study highlights the value of partnering with a dedicated executive search firm like JK Exec. Our tailored recruitment strategies, deep industry expertise, and commitment to finding the right fit have significantly impacted the firm's growth and evolution. We are proud to contribute to their continued success and look forward to fostering similar partnerships with other forward-thinking organizations.

Call to Action

If you are looking to build a strong, dynamic team to drive your company's success, JK Exec is here to help. Contact Miranda Leo, Recruiting Manager, to learn more about how our tailored executive search solutions can benefit your organization. Let us help you find the leadership talent that will elevate your business to the next level.