

4C's Emma Kieran, Gary Irvine and David Winterburn



President of Europe for the European Confederation of Search and Selection Associations (ECSSA). He remains a board member of ECSSA and has been recognised by the REC for his Outstanding Contribution to the UK Recruitment Industry.

Winterburn comments: "I have been involved in search and selection for a long time now and have seen many changes over the years. Having been involved in both traditional agency recruitment and search and selection, I can advocate for both. They will both deliver results in terms of recruiting the right person for an organisation, but search is a much more methodical, scientific process and, in my opinion, is the better of the two when recruiting someone at senior managerial or director level.

"If we look at how people in very senior roles move across various organisations, we see that these roles are very rarely advertised – perhaps because there is an element of confidentiality and privacy involved, with the best executives feeling that they shouldn't have to reply to an ad, or because an organisation doesn't want to promote the fact that it is making significant changes to its leadership until someone is appointed. So it is generally expected that these people will have been head hunted or 'searched' in some way."

He explains the importance of getting it right when engaging the services of a search consultant, saying: "What you must remember is that, as well as fulfilling an operational function, a search consultant also plays an

important ambassadorial role, since he or she will be generally be the first contact a potential candidate will have with an organisation.

"So it's absolutely essential that you enlist the services of someone genuine and credible – someone with integrity and with whom you can place your trust to truly represent your organisation in an accurate light – and, with Gary, you have that.

"Essentially you are investing in one of the UK's most experienced consultants – someone who has been behind the wheel of the industry through the REC – and, as the principal search consultant, you are investing in the most senior possible person at 4C Executive to conduct this business-critical process for you."

Irvine believes that the time is right to launch 4C Executive in Northern Ireland. "There has never been a greater need for search and selection in Northern Ireland than now," he says. "We are seeing tentative signs of economic uplift and what we need now is excellent leadership in our indigenous firms.

"More and more we are seeing our indigenous companies compete on a global stage, which is fantastic. If we are to continue in the same vein, though, we need to attract new talent to drive this success, and this is where many of our companies are struggling.

"We have to accept that, while we are lucky to have a strong pool of talent in Northern Ireland, finding the best person for the job can entail looking further afield, to GB, Europe or the States, for example and a search consultant

is best placed to go out and find potential candidates in these markets. This internalisation of Northern Ireland business by bringing in executives from foreign markets will play an important part in developing our place on the world stage.

"Our 4C Executive motto is 'local knowledge, global reach' and that is exactly the case. Whilst we have local expertise on the ground in Northern Ireland and in London, our reach will extend internationally through our team of partner researchers based around the globe and this means that we are well-placed to find that best person, no matter where they are in the world.

"Executive search, when done correctly, should pay for itself ten times over. The opposite is often the case, however, when an organisation chooses a more traditional, less methodical process to fill a business critical role."

He says that in order to find the right person, however, the process must be right as well: "Search is a very exact science – from the identification of the role and agreeing the assignment brief in collaboration with the client to the initial approach to potential candidates through the team of researchers, the initial meeting with 4C Executive and then psychometric assessments – all before the interview stage.

"In launching 4C Executive I am committing to getting it right from the start, ensuring that our clients experience the best, and find the best. The search begins and ends here." ■