

https://members.aesc.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?webcode=RegionalInterview&wps_key=ac62f265-3382-4f79-843c-3cd97d6b1551

The Middle East: The State of Executive Search: Then, Now & The Future

[posted on 10/05/2010]

The AESC talks to **Nairouz Bader** Founder and CEO of retained search firm **Vision Executive Search**, to gain her insights into the current developments within the search industry.

What happened to executive search in the Middle East during the recession of 2008–2009?

The worst thing to happen was the sheer amount of businesses that simply stopped hiring overnight, or even worse, let many of their staff go overnight in an immediate knee jerk reaction. Truthfully, there was a panic in the market, with many companies drastically downsizing as a defence mechanism against the global economic turmoil, which admittedly, the Middle East region was late to encounter. The biggest industries that were affected during this time were real estate and financial institutions, with lending freezes affecting customers and recruitment freezing affecting the staff and morale. Smaller, local entities were better shielded during this time as opposed to multi nationals, but it depends on the sector. Many local businesses had over hired and over reached themselves in answer to the real estate boom that had occurred in Dubai in particular, and when the buyers credit dried up – so did the business as a whole, and many small businesses related to these sectors went under.

In terms of hiring, what is happening in the Middle East right now?

The Middle East has always been well placed to weather the economic storm, and now we seem to be coming out the other side, this is even more the case now. Emerging markets are the key markets for growth, as all business leaders seem to recognise, and are placing confidence within the region. The Middle East is in healthy economic growth mode – always optimistic and positive, the market in the Middle East is now looking for leaders and managers with quite specific competencies. Skills in change management, and even crisis management, forecasting and more are top of recruiters list, as no one wishes to be 'caught short' should the economy ever take another turn.

From a life science and energy industry perspective – both sectors are in strong growth mode, so there is a real battle for the right talent ongoing.

What do you think is on the horizon for the rest of 2010 and beyond in the Middle East?

The Middle East has always been an attractive option for international talent, and it will continue to remain so. Companies are however, being more cautious with packages and remuneration, however, the previous hiring freeze appears to have ended. Budgets and HR plans for 2011 are being finalised right now, but there is a definite shortage of C calibre candidates within the talent pool, as many who became available during the crunch, have found alternative employment right. These are still challenging times and we have a long way to go, as a region economically, and a different skill set is required from our senior managers/candidates than previously. A 'good fit' in previous times, may not suit a company today, so it is an industry (recruitment) where the goalposts are most definitely malleable, and will continue to be so. More so, the skills required are more thus a CEO of a certain company in the past may not be the right fit for the same company under the current market challenges.

About Nairouz Bader

Nairouz is the Founder & Chief Executive Officer of Vision Executive Search (VES).

In her role, Nairouz serves her clients in the recruiting of Board of Directors, Chairman, Chief Executive Officers, Division and Subsidiary Presidents and Vice Presidents.

This broad base of commercial & business experience has covered markets in North America, Europe, the Middle East and North Asia.

She has started her career in the pharmaceutical and life science industry starting with Hoffman La Roche, Glaxo Wellcome and moving on afterwards to the graduate education sector, followed by another move to the Executive Search Business where she found her passion.

Nairouz is a pharmacist by profession and has several post graduate degrees including a Masters in Managerial Leadership from U.S.A.

The Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC) represents the best in retained executive search consulting worldwide.

BlueSteps, the AESC's career management service, helps [connect senior executives with 6,000 executive search consultants around the world](#).

Visit the AESC's home page to [subscribe](#) to receive SearchWire highlights via email. Join the Executive Search Network on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#) for the latest search industry news.