



Building an Executive Team for a Cannabis Start-Up

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Many start-ups struggle to secure the talent they need to take their business to the next level. This is especially true for cannabis start-ups in Canada, as there is not only a [war for top talent](#), but many established executives are hesitant to work in the industry for various reasons.

We recently provided search support for a start-up company that provides greenhouse growing solutions for both medicinal and recreational cannabis for the Canadian market. Although the company had operated in agricultural production for many years, they had only relatively recently become a Health Canada Licensed Producer of cannabis. While the company had a board, a founder, and investors, they required top executives to build the company's cannabis infrastructure, secure personnel, and grow the business.

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The Challenge

When the company's Board of Directors contacted Farber's Interim Management & Executive Search practice to help build their executive team, they had no human resources (HR) department, no processes, no job descriptions, and no compensation information for the executive positions they would like to create and fill.

While there are difficulties that come when building a team from the ground up, there are also immense opportunities—something both the B. Riley Farber team and the company's Board of Directors recognized.

The Solution

Farber's team met with the company's key stakeholders multiple times to establish their short- and long-term needs and discuss how these aligned with their vision.

During these conversations, they established the need to hire a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Head of Sales, and a Head of Marketing. Working closely with the Board and management team, the B. Riley Farber team built the job descriptions and set out candidate expectations and the competencies needed to meet the company's cultural needs.

Over a couple of months, the B. Riley Farber team assisted in creating the shortlist of candidates and the client conducted each of their interviews in Farber's downtown office.

The Result

Within the first month of the search mandate, the company hired their CEO. Shortly after, both a Head of Sales and a CFO were successfully hired. Following this, a Head of Marketing was referred to the company directly.

Within a few short months, the new executive team built the company's infrastructure, hired teams, secured additional funding, and launched and ran the start-up successfully.

After nine months, the company's cannabis production business was sold to a publicly traded cannabis organization at increased value and continues to operate successfully within that entity.

While Canada's cannabis industry is still quite young and going through 'growing pains', it is full of opportunity. With the right leadership team, a start-up in this industry has great potential.

Recommended for you:

Building strategic and organizational operations in an emerging cannabis company [Learn more.](#)