Crown Commercial Service
Supplier

MINERVA

RM6290 Executive and Non Executive Recruitment Services

Lot 1

MINERVA PROSPECTUS

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About Us

Minerva was founded in 2013 and has developed a leading reputation in our sectors. We set out not to become the largest firm, but to be the most interesting, committed to a holistic and human approach that separates us out in our industry.

We see our work as a professional service, not a commodity approach to recruitment.

We have always been committed to re-investing a significant proportion of our profits back into the sectors we support. Since we started, we have sponsored numerous activities in the cultural sector, grass-roots sport, diversity and inclusion initiatives, professional development activities and supported refugee academics completing PhD programmes.

We place great emphasis on our approach to client and candidate care: we commit to being responsive, honest and warm in our interactions with anyone who engages with the firm. We set high standards for ourselves and are confident that we come close to realising them without fail.

Our team really matters to us – and we work to ensure that all our team members are included and supported, able to develop and enjoy their time at the firm. Our commitment to our colleagues is a central part of delivering our objectives in quality and integrity.

We help our clients, candidates and partners navigate change, hire the best people, and shape the future.

Driven by our people-focused approach and commitment to quality, we provide executive search and leadership services to clients and individuals who are seeking to make positive impact on society.

Our clients span the government, educational, cultural and third sectors, and a third of all our work is at non-executive / governance level.

As well as our focus on supporting outstanding executive and non-executive appointments, our energies are invested in:

- Doing whatever we can to make the world of employment fairer and to reduce inequality;
- Supporting leadership development and governance effectiveness;
- Developing partnerships that help us support change.

Our ethos is central to all we do. Our team is diverse, honest, approachable, supportive and fun, and this informs all our work and enables us to strive for excellence.

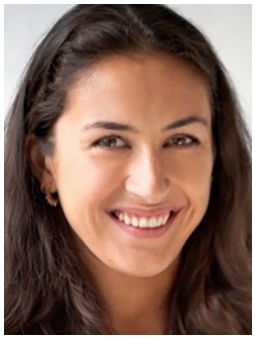
Senior Team

Kerry Shepherd, Partner

I am an experienced search consultant. Before co-founding Minerva, I spent nine years at Heidrick and Struggles. I have led searches to fill senior leadership positions for a wide range of organisations primarily in the Education, Global Development and Charity sectors. I spent the first five years of my career as a Translator, first for a small agency in Bonn and then at Cartier International in Paris.

Ben Tucker, Partner

I have over twenty years' experience in search, focused on organisations with a social mission. I worked for over seven years' with both Saxton Bampfylde and then Heidrick and Struggles, where I was Partner in the Education and Social Enterprise Practice, prior to co-founding Minerva.



Juhi James, Associate Consultant

I joined Minerva after completing my undergraduate degree in Classics from Murray Edwards College, Cambridge.

Before joining Minerva, my interest in education led me to tutor both in the UK and abroad. This experience in primary and English as a second language teaching has further grown into an interest in widening participation in Higher Education.

Outside of work, I enjoy playing squash, running and reading.

Search

We undertake search in both Executive and Non-Executive areas. All leadership takes place in the context of change, whether it be adapting organisations to external factors and funding pressures or fostering cultural change to ensure fitness for the future. How things are done matters as much as what. More than ever, leaders need to be values-led and resilient.

Our primary commitment is to provide you with the strongest and most diverse possible shortlist in this context, and we have a rigour of resourcing and approach to enable it.

We take pride in our agility. We flex what we do and our approach to meet your needs, often adapting our resourcing and process to ensure the best outcome. We do not oversell candidates but present a rounded view of them, recognising that the most complete picture will help you make the best decision.

Diversity

A core purpose for us is to do our bit to reduce inequality in the workplace, change the composition of top teams over time, and to push for better representation of candidates coming from typically under-represented backgrounds.

It is very easy to talk, undertake research, produce reports and provide statistics that tell us what we already know. Our focus has always been on developing practical initiatives that are grounded in what we know about and that seek to make a real difference.

We see selection bias in recruitment processes; we see organisations unconsciously or consciously failing to adapt cultures and processes to be more inclusive; we see challenges in individual confidence and imposter syndrome; and we see anxiety about tokenism. BUT on a more positive note, we equally see a clear recognition that things have to change and a genuine commitment to strive for greater representation at all levels.

Types of Roles

CEO / Executive Director	COO / Operations	Principal
Director of Human Resources / Organisational Change	Chair and Non-Executive Director	IT / Procurement / Finance
Change and Transformation Director	Marketing / Communications / Strategy	Leadership / Governance
Director / Deputy Director	Principal Officer	Divisional Director
Head of Service	Corporate Director	Strategic Director
Executive Director	Assistant Director	

Senior Level Experience

Our recent track record of clients for whom we have recruited senior roles includes:

Cambridge Assessment
CUP
Museum of London
Donkey Sanctuary
Dance City
University of Oxford
RNIB
University of Cambridge

Case Studies

Senior NHS / Joint University appointment – North-West England:

Breckenridge Chair of Clinical Pharmacology and Head of the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics, University of Liverpool

We worked recently on a strategic appointment with the University of Liverpool where our approach to candidate care was vital in delivering results. A refined field, and with the requirement that the appointee be a qualified Clinician, it very soon emerged that, in the context of an international shortlist, one candidate was miles ahead of all others. Reecha Sofat was recommended to us by nearly everyone we spoke to. The challenge was that she had never personally lived outside of London and was deeply ensconced in UCL and the London health sector. Over at least twenty conversations and a four-month period we coached her through the process. By the end she was highly excited and can see that the opportunity to join things together with health partners in the Liverpool region offers her something that London and UCL could not. We partnered well with Liverpool in ensuring that we opened up all necessary appropriate conversations with partners for her to build and see the potential.

National association CEO:

Chief Executive Officer, Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA)

We worked with the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) to search for the next CEO. During the course of this work, we spoke with some 415 individuals. (58% women and 42% men).

This was an undeniably challenging search. Our initial focus was HR directors and chief operating officers within Higher Education; for a variety of reasons, the role proved less attractive to this centre target. We concurrently searched in complex and heavily unionised public sector organisations. We have encountered a challenge in that the need for gravitas and credibility when dealing with vice-chancellors and unions alike led us to senior-level operators often in large organisations with substantial ambassadorial and strategic responsibilities. The salary and scale of the role at UCEA were disappointingly off-putting for these individuals, although they universally found the role's remit fascinating. We have striven to identify candidates who sit at a comparable salary point without compromising the need for a strategic operator and effective relationship-builder.

Our conversations with sources within Higher Education revealed a divided opinion about UCEA. Sources prevailingly felt that the organisation serves an essential purpose and does this well. They value the benchmarking and consultative work that UCEA provides. There was a marked difference in the opinions of those who have experience inside versus outside the HE sector. Those from outside felt that UCEA would benefit from a Chief Executive who could bring best HR practice from a different sector. There was a general opinion that HR in HE is relatively outmoded. Those with a solely HE background predictably felt that only someone with an extensive working history in universities could excel as Chief Executive.

When our conversations inevitably turned to the future of UCEA, there were several comments suggesting that collective bargaining may break down due to local concerns and priorities. It was felt that a move towards a more consultative mode of operating might counteract this. Almost all HE sources touched upon the burgeoning storm with the UCU over the next twelve months. It was clear that this shall be a priority for UCEA and the wider sector. One interesting line of thought was that UCEA does not leverage its weight enough and certain vice-chancellors still are unaware of its strategic importance. It was felt that the next Chief Executive has a window of opportunity to address this.

We presented 6 candidates for consideration of which 4 were taken through to the final interview process. Our successful candidate was Raj Jethwa. Raj was previously the Director of Policy at the BMA (British Medical Association) where he led its professional activities, policy development and collective bargaining functions.

CFO for complex public/private organisation, North-East England:

Executive Director of Finance, Newcastle University

Minerva undertook briefings for the assignment in March 2021.

We spoke with some 309 individuals throughout the course of our work. Of the total individuals, we spoke to 40 (12%) global majority contacts and 141 (41%) women contacts. Out of the 17 candidates presented in the longlist, five were women candidates and three were global majority candidates.

Our search was broad and wide-ranging. We spoke with sources of advice who are finance leaders in the following sectors: Higher Education, Civil Service, utilities, the Big Four professional services firms, banking, NHS, third sector and FTSE 500 organisations. Many of these individuals have challenged us as to the University's commitment to look beyond the sector. They have been keen to understand the appetite for change within Newcastle and the support for greater business partnering.

The stronger candidates on this list have worked in a diverse range of sectors. The strongest have both corporate and public-sector experience. They were best placed to articulate how to drive greater commerciality and entrepreneurialism within a large complex University. Excellent candidates were drawn to the civic mission of Newcastle University and the inclusive culture of its top team. They were keen to understand some of the challenges and opportunities ahead.

In our interviews with candidates, we have asked them about the following key areas: scale and seniority of financial leadership experience, experience of driving a culture of business partnering and enablement, development of large teams, breadth of operational experience and their external engagement experience. For almost all candidates, this role at Newcastle would either be a step-up in scale or in complexity.

Of the 13 candidates presented at the shortlisting stage, 6 candidates were invited to participate in the final stages. The successful candidate was Nick Collins. Nick is an accomplished finance professional with experience across a range of sectors. Nick trained with PwC where he worked with a range of businesses before then holding a number of senior roles within Virgin Money plc.