



**CASE STUDY**

**STRATEGIC INTERIM PARTNER –  
EUROPEAN INDIRECT CATEGORY  
MANAGEMENT**

*1st* Executive

### URGENT RESOURCING CHALLENGE RESOLVED

A leading international energy business, headquartered in the Netherlands and operating across multiple European markets, faced an urgent resourcing challenge when a key member of their procurement team was unexpectedly placed on extended sick leave.

The individual held responsibility for indirect category management across a number of business-critical projects.

### CHALLENGE & OVERVIEW

Based on the individual's responsibilities within the company, the sick leave proved difficult to fill. No internal cover was available and several high-priority workstreams were already in motion. The organisation needed to act quickly to protect project continuity and avoid operational disruption.

**The requirement was clear:** source an experienced interim Category Manager with

strong indirect expertise, capable of integrating rapidly into a complex stakeholder environment and taking immediate ownership of live projects.

Given the circumstances, speed was the overriding priority. Any delay risked stalling key initiatives and creating reputational and financial exposure across the procurement function. A six-month interim engagement was agreed as the initial scope.

### APPROACH, SOLUTION & DELIVERY

1st Executive responded immediately, arranging a detailed briefing with the hiring manager within hours of the initial approach.

Rather than running a standard search process, we focused the briefing on understanding the specific projects at risk, the stakeholder landscape the interim would need to navigate,

and the personal attributes required to hit the ground running in a fast-paced, internationally operating business.

This intelligence allowed us to move directly into our network, bypassing a lengthy open search and targeting individuals we already knew had the right combination of:



- Indirect category management experience at the required level
- Familiarity with the European energy or infrastructure sector
- The commercial acumen and stakeholder credibility to operate with minimal onboarding time

- Availability to start within days, not weeks

Three pre-qualified profiles were identified and presented to the client within 48 hours of the initial briefing.

Each candidate was personally known to us and assessed as a strong fit against the brief.

## CAMPAIGN OUTCOME

The process moved at pace throughout, with full alignment between 1st Executive, the hiring manager and senior leadership at every stage:

- Three suitable interim profiles presented within 48 hours of briefing
- Two candidates invited to interview the following working day
- Preferred candidate progressed to final-stage






meeting with the CFO two days later

- Offer made and contract signed within a further 48 hours
- Successful candidate in post within 12 working days of initial brief

The end-to-end process — from first conversation to candidate start date — was completed in **under three weeks**, with zero downtime on the client's key projects.



### KEY METRICS:

-  48-hour turnaround from briefing to candidate shortlist
-  12 working days from initial brief to candidate starting
-  Zero project downtime during the transition
-  Three pre-qualified profiles presented, two immediately progressed to interview
-  Initial six-month contract subsequently extended by a further six months

### BENEFITS TO CLIENT

#### Operational Continuity

By moving at pace, 1st Executive ensured the client experienced no disruption to their live procurement projects.

Key work streams continued without interruption, protecting both internal deadlines and external supplier relationships.

#### Speed Without Compromise

Despite the urgency, the quality of the shortlist was not sacrificed.

All three profiles presented were pre-vetted, personally known to 1st Executive and assessed as genuine fits — not simply available candidates. The client was able to make a confident hiring decision quickly because the groundwork had already been done.

#### Stakeholder Confidence

The structured process, which included a CFO-level final stage, gave senior leadership full visibility and buy-in.



The successful candidate arrived with executive-level endorsement and was able to build credibility across the organisation from day one.

### Long-Term Value

The impact of the interim appointment extended well beyond the initial six-month scope.

The successful candidate delivered sufficient value to the organisation that their contract was extended by a further six months.

Thus proving a clear indication of the quality of the match and the tangible contribution made to the business.

#### IF YOU ARE:



Facing an urgent interim requirement with no time to lose



Managing unexpected resource gaps within your procurement function



Looking for a partner with the network to respond in hours, not weeks

**1ST EXECUTIVE DELIVERS HIGH-IMPACT LEADERSHIP  
TALENT, ALIGNED TO YOUR STRATEGY.**

# 1st Executive



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