



“WE ARE LOOKING FOR A ROCKSTAR.
THAT'S THE ONLY WAY IT'S GOING TO WORK!”



PEAK PLACES VP SALES AT SODEXO OVERSEEING GROWTH IN 80+ COUNTRIES

In the event you're not consciously familiar with Sodexo, you've almost certainly been touched by the global food services and facilities management behemoth.

Headquartered in France, Sodexo has nearly half a million employees and a presence in 80 countries. Beginning as a supplier of services to hotels three decades ago, the company's ever-growing buffet of offerings now encompasses everything from food service to security to full facilities management.

SITUATION: Five years ago, office workers on break would go to a central location like a food court or cafeteria to get a coffee. With the advent of restaurant delivery services like Door Dash, Sodexo needed their new VP to be technologically adept, evaluating or developing apps and other digital services that would enable the company to maintain engagement and revenue from these office workers by allowing them to preorder from their phones. Sodexo engaged PeakSales to help them find a VP Sales/Corporate Services for all of Canada.

SOLUTION: Their human resources head is located in Montreal. HR did a video call with each candidate and made extensive notes on each one to make sure that the intangibles and cultural requirements for the job were met. A few candidates went on to do a video interview with the VP/Sales for all of Canada, and then an in-person interview with him at the headquarters in Burlington.

RESULTS: In the end, Peak's team had a list of 68 potential candidates, and spoke to 31 of them who were pre-screened and about half were interesting enough to be vetted. Ten of those candidates were passed on to Sodexo. Despite the steep requirements, Peak got their player/coach with strong sales skills, experience in facilities management and food services, and the energy to find and develop new clients. Together with three business development managers — all direct reports — the VP is responsible for new client acquisitions and partnership agreements with businesses.

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We worked closely with their executive leadership team to develop a profile. They felt it was critical to find someone who'd had exposure to facilities management, and they were hoping to find someone who could uncover new opportunities to expand that part of their portfolio.

Chris Currie

Client Manager at Peak Sales Recruiting

Currie and his team quickly developed their strategy. When you're hunting elephants, you need to look where the elephants hang out. For Currie, that meant poaching someone from another behemoth — a Cintas, or an Aramark or one of the newer co-working space companies. Sodexo's national headquarters are in Burlington, in the Toronto metro and that figured prominently for Currie: “They were looking Canada-wide, but I knew it was a better fit if we could find someone within a 45-minute drive of headquarters,” he adds.

We needed a player/coach. A sales leader probably wouldn't want to go back to selling. And an individual contributor might not be a leader right away, they might not be able to create a strategy, then meet it themselves while also leading others to do the same.”

In the end, Currie's team had a list of 68 potential candidates, and Currie spoke to 31 of them. Those 31 were pre-screened and about half were interesting enough to be vetted by PeakSales. Ten of those candidates were passed on to Sodexo.

“Sodexo was very, very thorough,” Currie recalls. “Their human resources head is located in Montreal. She did a video call with each candidate and made extensive notes on each one to make sure that the intangibles and cultural requirements for the job were met.” But that wasn't the end of the process. A few candidates went on to do a video interview with the VP/Sales for all of Canada, and then an in-person interview with him at the headquarters in Burlington.

Since the job was located in Ontario, being bilingual wasn't a requirement, but it was a big plus. The final interview was with the global head of human relations for all of Sodexo, who's located in France.

Despite the steep requirements, PeakSales got their elephant — or in this case, a unicorn: A player/coach with strong sales skills, experience in facilities management and food services, and the energy to find and develop new clients.

“The person they eventually offered accepted the job and he's been a great contributor,” Currie notes. “He's even followed up with us post-hire to tell us he's exactly where he wants to be. It was a great move up in responsibility for him and he's absolutely hit the ground running.”

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Targeting southwest Ontario, Peak Sales began looking at companies in the facilities management space. Currie identified both counterparts — people at the same level as the open position — and those one level below who were capable of stepping up. “This person also needed to be a leader, a mentor and coach for the three business development managers,” Currie says, “so the search became a bit unique. There are lots of excellent sales professionals who are strong individual contributors, but leading others is a different skill set, and not everyone has that.

Chris Currie

Client Manager at Peak Sales Recruiting



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