

Your Guide to Recruiting a Work Winning Growth Director

What to look for when hiring a senior growth
leader for an infrastructure consultancy





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Introduction

Market Director, Business Development Director, Growth Director: consultancies use different titles for the people responsible for bringing in work. The remit depends on the business. One appointment may focus on growing established client accounts; another may be asked to build a presence in a new sector. In either case, the person needs to understand the market and turn opportunities into work the consultancy can deliver.

These roles can be difficult to recruit for. A candidate may have an impressive network and a record of major bid wins, but that does not tell you how much they personally contributed or whether their approach will work in your business. You need someone who can make sound choices about which work to pursue and earn the support of specialists who will help win and deliver it.

This report looks at what makes a good business development leader in an infrastructure consultancy. We assess how the demands of the role change between businesses, what to explore when assessing candidates and provide some useful salary benchmarking information taken from real conversations with senior business leaders.

Newsom Consulting has worked in infrastructure executive search for over 27 years. Our assignments in this area include:

- Strategic Growth Director for Major Programmes – Global Engineering Consultancy
- Market Director for Energy & Water – Engineering Consultancy
- Client Director, Rail – Project Management Consultancy



What makes a good work winning growth leader?

The right person depends on where the consultancy wants to grow. A firm with established infrastructure clients may need someone who can develop those accounts and bring more of its services to them. A firm entering a new market needs someone who knows the buyers, understands the competition and can judge how much credibility the business already has there.

Market knowledge

A good growth leader knows how investment plans turn into consultancy work. They understand which programmes have funding and which ones are likely to procure support soon. They can judge when to invest time in a relationship and when an opportunity is still too uncertain.

They should know the senior people in their market, but a list of names only gets you so far. What matters is who they have worked with, what they learned from those relationships and whether they were able to influence an opportunity over time. They should also understand the competition well enough to explain where your consultancy has a realistic chance of winning.

A track record they can explain

Results matter, but a headline growth figure needs a story behind it. We want to know what a candidate inherited when they joined a business: the existing clients, the team, the pipeline and the firm's position in the market.

Then we can establish what they changed.

A convincing candidate can take you through a few pieces of work in detail. They can explain how the opportunity arose, who else was involved, what they personally did and what was eventually instructed. They should be comfortable discussing the commercial result, including work that was won at a lower fee than expected or did not develop into the account they had hoped for. Clear answers give you much more confidence than a long list of contract values.

A plan for growth

A growth leader needs to be close to the numbers. They should know what is in the pipeline, how likely it is to convert and what the business must do to deliver the work. At the same time, they need to look beyond the next bid. Developing a new market or becoming established with a major client takes sustained effort.

We would expect a senior candidate to have a view of where they could take the business over the next five years. That plan should be grounded in its existing strengths and honest about what would need to be built. It might involve developing particular client accounts, adding expertise or changing where the firm spends its bid effort. The important point is that they can explain why those choices make commercial sense.

What makes a good work winning growth leader?

How they work with other people

Growth in a consultancy is rarely the work of one person. Technical Directors shape the offer, bid teams prepare the submission and delivery colleagues have to fulfil what has been promised. We look for examples of how a candidate has worked with those people, particularly when they disagreed about whether to pursue an opportunity or how to price it.

We also ask candidates about their biggest failures. It tells us how they respond when a bid is lost or a relationship stalls. Someone who can speak plainly about their part in a setback, and what they did afterwards, is easier to assess than someone for whom every unsuccessful outcome was somebody else's fault. Those conversations help us judge how the person would work within the client's business as well as what they might win for it.





Key Competencies

When we interview potential candidates, we assess them according to competency-based questions. These will differ for every role we recruit but these are the common key competencies we use when interview Work Winning Growth Directors.

Developing Strategy

- Developing and implementing insightful strategies to drive efficiency and growth
- Translating organisational objectives and strategies into meaningful operational plans
- Taking a long-term view of problems and opportunities
- Standing back and looking at the broader impact of actions – taking a holistic view

Developing Future Capability

- Inspiring and enabling people to be the best they can.
- Coaching people – sharing own knowledge and experiences.
- Providing others with opportunities to try new things and to take on new challenges.
- Fostering a culture of continuous personal development.

Commercial Thinking

- Analysing competitor activity and considering market trends
- Maximising revenue and margin
- Identifying opportunities for reducing costs
- Identifying opportunities for growth
- Developing a competitive advantage

Delivering Change

- Identifying opportunities for change and improving business processes.
- Outlining and presenting a clear and compelling case for change.
- Mobilising resources across the business so that change can be initiated at pace.
- Leading others through change – communicating clear project plans.

Communication, Influence & Impact

- Communicating with passion and belief
- Delivering messages clearly and concisely
- Influencing stakeholders and overcoming resistance
- Thinking about the audience when planning messages and presenting ideas
- Raising own profile across the business – seen as credible and inspiring individual

Results Orientation

- Taking accountability for meeting key business priorities
- Setting and working towards ambitious goals and quality standards
- Removing obstacles that threaten success



Key Competencies

Here are a few example competency questions we have used when recruiting for Work Winning Growth Directors at consultancies:

Tell me about a major client account you grew. What was its annual revenue when you took responsibility, and what was it when you handed it over?

Give me an example of a client need you spotted beyond the work your firm was already doing. How did you involve colleagues, and what came of it?

Describe a growth remit you inherited. What was already in the pipeline, what did you change, and which results can you attribute to your work?

Tell me about a growth target or important bid you missed. What was your part in the outcome, and what did you do afterwards?

Tell me about a time you had to bring people from different disciplines together to win work. Where did they disagree, and how did you get them working together?

Describe an opportunity where the timing of your approach mattered. What told you the client was ready to buy, and how did you position your firm?

Take me through a new client you won. How did you secure the first instruction, and what annual revenue followed?

Tell me about a significant opportunity you advised your firm not to pursue. What led to that decision, and what happened next?



Salary Benchmark

Basic Salary		
Low	Average	High
£124,000	£158,000	£170,000

The salaries in this benchmark were shared with us by senior leaders during our searches for business development and growth roles in UK infrastructure consultancies. They provide a view of what people in this market are currently earning, rather than a recommended salary for every appointment.

The remit behind each figure varies. Some individuals are responsible for winning work across a national business or several sectors; others lead growth in a particular market or client account. The size of the team, the level of revenue responsibility and any wider operational duties also affect pay. These differences are worth considering when comparing a proposed salary with the average.

The figures show basic salary only. They exclude bonuses, car allowances and long-term incentive plans, which may form a substantial part of the overall package for some directors.



Example Job Description: Growth Director

The Role

The Growth Director will lead the consultancy's approach to winning work and developing client relationships. They will identify where the business can make the strongest contribution, turn that insight into a focused growth plan and help teams pursue the right opportunities.

The role calls for someone who can work across different services and bring colleagues together around a clear approach to clients. They will be active in the market, understand what clients need and help shape opportunities before formal procurement begins. They will also play a leading role in major bids, from early positioning through to final submission.

Success will be measured by the quality of the opportunity pipeline, stronger client relationships, profitable new work and progress against agreed growth targets.

Key Responsibilities

Growth strategy and market insight

- Develop and deliver a growth plan based on the consultancy's strengths, target clients and market opportunities.

- Monitor client priorities, competitors and procurement plans to identify where the business should focus its efforts.
- Recommend new services, partnerships or capabilities where there is a clear client need and commercial case.

Client and business development

- Build relationships with existing and prospective clients, understanding their challenges and where the consultancy can help.
- Support client account teams in developing plans for priority relationships.
- Identify and qualify opportunities, bringing the right people into client conversations at the right time.
- Represent the business at relevant industry events and in professional networks.



Example Job Description: Growth Director

Winning work

- Lead the approach to significant opportunities, including capture plans, partner selection and bid strategy.
- Work with technical, operational and bid teams to develop proposals that respond clearly to the client's requirements.
- Review major bids for quality, commercial soundness and a compelling account of the consultancy's value.
- Use feedback from clients, wins and losses to improve future pursuits.

Leadership and commercial oversight

- Bring teams together across services and locations to pursue opportunities that draw on the full range of the consultancy's expertise.
- Help develop colleagues with the potential to lead client relationships and growth activity.
- Maintain a reliable view of the pipeline and report on progress against agreed targets.
- Work with operational and finance leaders to ensure that growth plans support profitable, deliverable work.

What we would look for

- Senior experience in business development, client leadership or growth within a consultancy or other professional services business.
- A record of developing client relationships and winning complex work.
- Sound commercial judgement, including the ability to decide which opportunities are worth pursuing.
- Experience bringing specialists together to develop and deliver a growth plan.
- The credibility to work with senior clients and colleagues, and the ability to turn market insight into practical action.



Executive Search Process

This is an overview of our executive search process. We would follow this method to find a successful [X] Director/Leader:

1. Research

We agree the role requirements, search strategy and remuneration. Our in-house researchers then map the market to develop a longlist of relevant candidates.

2. Approaches

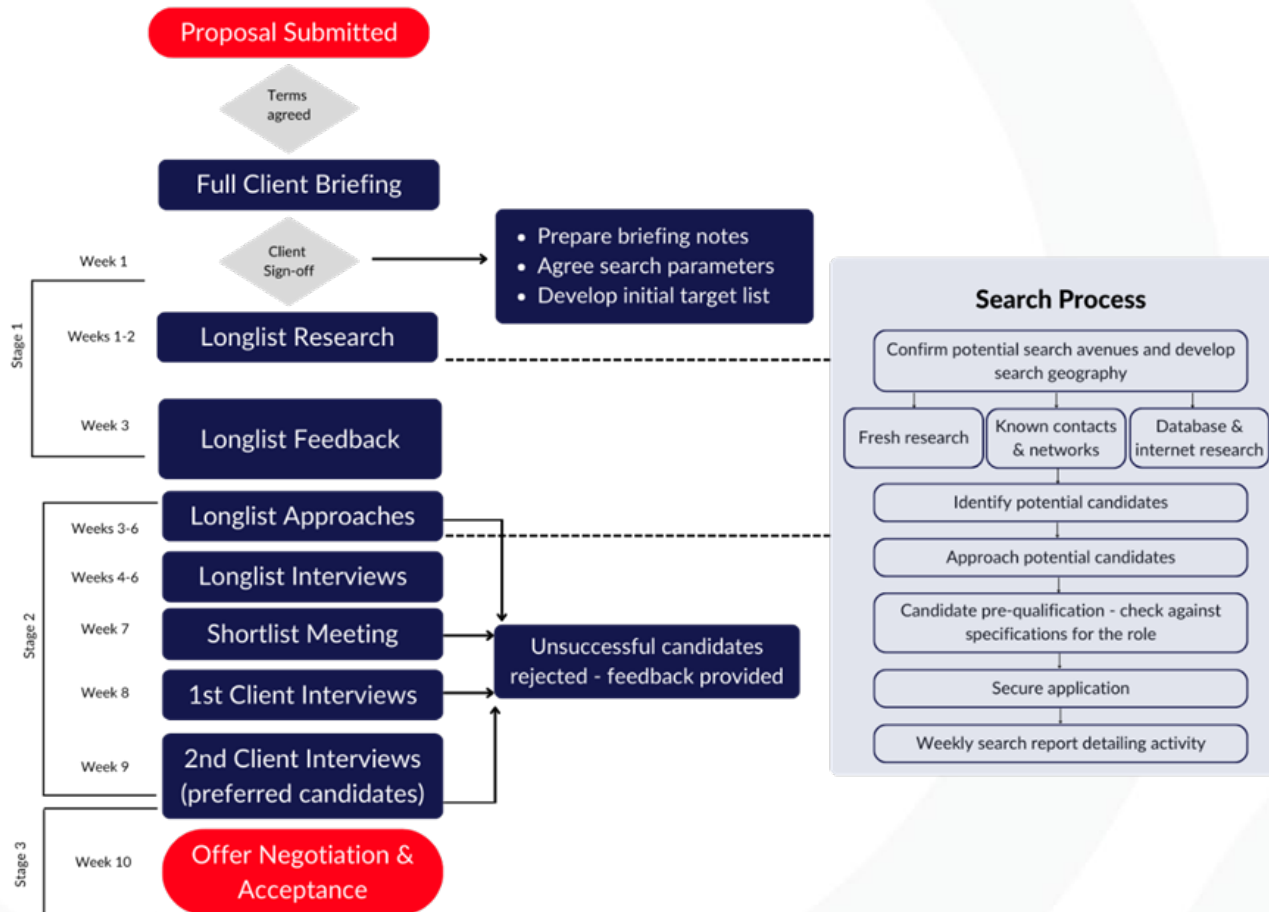
We approach potential candidates directly and advertise the role. A detailed briefing document explains the opportunity, business and remuneration to generate informed interest.

3. Assessment

We assess selected candidates through competency-based interviews, with personality profiling and ability tests available where required.

4. Shortlist to Offer

We present a detailed shortlist report, including market feedback, search statistics and candidate CVs. Individual candidate reports summarise our assessment and competency ratings, supporting your decision on whom to interview.





Conclusion

A good appointment starts with an honest brief.

Before going to market, be clear about the work you want this person to win and what they will have at their disposal. Which client relationship already exist? Where does the business have credible experience? Will technical leaders have time to help develop the opportunities the new director identifies?

Experienced candidate will ask those questions too.

They will want to know what authority they have to make decisions, whether the firm is prepared to invest in a new market and long it expects growth to take.

Clear answers make the opportunity more attractive and give both sides a better basis for deciding whether the fit is right.

A business growth director can open doors and bring focus to work winning.

Their best results will come when the consultancy is ready to back the plan they have been hired to deliver.



Let's shape the
leadership team that
will deliver your
strategy.

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