

Real estate industry demands more than just capital

Having the right people is increasingly important to beat the market

The crisis has had a huge impact on the real estate industry. Companies have become smaller in terms of people, but larger in terms of capital. The value of property will continue to rise if the company has the right people on board. As a result, additional skills are required in real estate, say Jacques Craenen and Jeroen Schuur, managing partners at boutique executive search firm Escalier International.

New talent

'The industry needs people who not only are highly educated and can easily be retrained and employed in different areas, but who also have the right attitude,' Craenen stresses. Wanting to have a career in real estate, regardless of the firm they work for, is no longer enough. 'Companies are looking for people that are intrinsically motivated, and dedicated to the company they work for.'

New talent does not necessarily mean very young talent. Highly-skilled people often gradually find out which sector appeals most to them and decide to opt for real estate upon their second



Jeroen Schuur, Managing Partner
Several management positions before starting a career in real estate executive search in 2005. Joined Escalier International in 2014.

or third career move, when they are aged 30 to 35. Craenen: 'An investment manager covering all asset classes chooses to focus on real estate only.' Today, the real estate sector needs highly-skilled people in a variety of fields - whether it be analytics, econometrics, sales, due diligence or project management, Schuur adds. Ideally, he and Craenen are in touch with these people long before they make a move. 'They become interesting candidates once they have opted for a serious career in real estate and if they have been advised well on their personal development and that of their skills to fit demands of the sector.'



Jacques Craenen MRE, Managing Partner
Over twenty years of experience in real estate investment & asset management before founding Escalier International in 2005.

Headhunter wanted

The role of the headhunter has also changed, Schuur and Craenen have found. Human capital remains high on the CEO's agenda, but the focus has shifted towards positions where Escalier has a clear added value compared to companies' own corporate recruitment division - for example, positions that are difficult to fill because they cover a larger geographical area or sector. Schuur: 'Say a client wants

the best fundmanager in logistics or the best pan-European operations manager. One has to know where the right candidates are located, sell them the proposition and bring the best ones to the company.'

Being a solid sparring partner for the company as well as for the candidates involved is essential, as is confidentiality, Craenen adds. 'Obviously, a candidate has to have the right skills and ambitions, but one also needs to check the candidate's reputation. Certain things are not on LinkedIn; one has to be part of the right network.'

Increasingly international

Another change is the increase in cross-border activities, especially outside the Benelux. Foreign parties that are buying real estate need a platform to manage their business abroad. Schuur: 'Their ambitions are high, and therefore so is the demand for the right people.' Escalier can already service its foreign clients through its partnership with Ferguson Partners Europe Ltd in London and Kollmannsperger ESC in Munich. Craenen: 'We expect to announce a new partnership in Paris this autumn.'

Boutique executive search firm

Escalier International is a boutique executive search firm, specialized in search for professionals and senior management in the international real estate market. Clients include investors, asset managers, developers, private equity and end users. Based in Amsterdam area. www.escalier.nl

