

Executive Search Firm Starts Franchise Division

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During a time in which the unemployment rate in California broke records – in May joblessness jumped by 0.6 percent – executive search firm Management Resource Solutions has doubled its staff, found hundreds of jobs for clients and spun off a franchise division called Saker Executive Resources Inc.

Company officials say the key to the Thousand Oaks-based company's success is that it has focused on serving the nation's fastest growing industries, such as health care since its founding in 2001.

"We do a lot of executive nurse placement," explained Steve Finnick, who heads the company's Saker division. "There are 700,000 nurse positions throughout the country."

Now, franchising will allow the company to have a presence in other growing industries, such as financial services, engineering and technical consulting and computer systems design.

"By franchising, we're allowing (the company) to grow externally into these different areas," Finnick said. "We can help support them and work together, growing their business... They can branch out into any specific area. What we do is provide the guidance and experience. We can help them with orders and candidates. We want to do whatever it takes to get them the training they need."

The first franchise is slated to open in August in Anaheim Hills. "We're very selective on who we bring on as partners," Finnick said. "We've interviewed several people who are interested. So far, we've only awarded one franchise." And even it will have to complete a month's worth of training.

Finnick has been in the executive search

industry for about 20 years. He started Management Resource Solutions with partner Kevin Harley. During the past year, he's been pleased to see the company, which he describes as a multimillion dollar enterprise, grow from about 10 recruiters to 23 recruiters.

According to Finnick, MRS recruiters are motivated by the fact that the company works on a contingency basis. "We don't get paid unless we fill the position," he said. "We fill about 80 percent of the positions that we take on."

For clients, who are scattered throughout the country, MRS searches for upper level executives, most of whom make between \$80,000 to \$500,000. Positions to be filled could be anything from a director of nursing position to the chief executive of a health care organization. Finnick said that MRS has a database of job candidates that reaches into the hundreds of thousands. Candidates are found through referrals and by networking, as the positions that MRS fills are usually not advertised.

"We search for passive candidates, candidates you're not going to find on Monster or Career Builder," Finnick explained. "We knock on the door. We solicit them about our clients."

For example, a recruiter might ask a candidate about what they like and dislike about their current career and then sell the candidate on the opportunities an MRS client can provide to them.

"When I talk to a potential candidate I want to find out what their career growth plan is," Finnick explained. "Ninety-nine percent don't really have a career growth plan. They'll spend more time planning their vacations than their careers."

Finnick said that he'll point out to candidates that it is possible to achieve career growth immediately rather than wait two to three years for a breakthrough.