

Case Study:

Delivering Niche Sales and Marketing Expertise for HR Wallingford



Securing Senior Leadership for Global Water Innovation

HR Wallingford is a global leader in water-related research and consultancy. Working at the intersection of science, technology and engineering, they specialise in creating smart, sustainable solutions to the challenges of living and working with water. From major port infrastructure to climate resilience and environmental protection, their work underpins vital systems across the natural and built environment. With a focus on innovation, intelligent data and long-term impact, HR Wallingford supports clients worldwide to navigate the increasingly complex relationship between people, infrastructure and water.

Allen Associates first partnered with HR Wallingford in 2009 and has since supported them with a range of hires, from PAs and Project Administrators to HR and Internal Comms professionals.

When they approached us with a brief for a senior business development position - one requiring a rare blend of technical expertise, commercial acumen and strategic vision, we knew our understanding of business development roles, combined with our market knowledge and consultative approach, would be key to finding the right candidate.

The Challenge

HR Wallingford was seeking a Head of Business Development, Sales and Support, a uniquely hybrid role in their specialised manufacturing group requiring:

- A strong engineering background, ideally with sector-specific knowledge of water infrastructure.
- Experience of business development, technical sales, and stakeholder engagement.
- A strategic mindset capable of presenting and implementing a clear growth plan.
- A cultural fit for a values-led, technical organisation with a mission-focused approach.



Although they had explored direct recruitment and were open to agency support, their efforts had so far fallen short. Candidates applying often lacked the precise mix of skills: either strong engineers with no commercial track record, or business development professionals unfamiliar with the technical depth required.

This complexity was further heightened by location flexibility, with operations between Wallingford and Manchester and a desire to attract someone who could influence not just sales outcomes, but HR Wallingford's brand, positioning and reputation in the marketplace.

Our Approach

Recognising the need for a different approach, we tailored our strategy accordingly:

- **Targeted outreach**
While we advertised through relevant channels, our focus shifted to proactive headhunting and strategic networking, rather than relying on our existing database.
- **Refined screening**
We conducted rigorous pre-screening to ensure candidates had the right blend of commercial and technical expertise, as well as an affinity with HR Wallingford's values and operating style.
- **Candidate insight**
The standout candidate was identified through our network and submitted to the client on the day of registration. He brought extensive engineering experience paired with a proven commercial track record, as well as a clear understanding of the brand and strategic sales direction required.
- **Hands-on support**
From coordinating multi-stage interviews to preparing the candidate for a strategic presentation, we supported both sides through every stage of the process.



Results & Impact

From briefing to offer, the process took just two months, with the candidate securing the role following a series of interviews and a formal presentation on his strategic approach to growth.

The client was delighted with the outcome and not only did the candidate meet the complex brief, but he also brought clarity and momentum to their business development and marketing strategy.

By appointing a candidate with both technical authority and brand-building capability, HR Wallingford now has a senior hire who can enhance visibility, foster client relationships and support long-term commercial success.

Why Work with Allen Associates?

- **Proven experience**
With over two decades supporting Oxfordshire's leading employers, we understand how to deliver results - even in highly specialised sectors.
- **Strategic recruitment**
Whether it's a technical hire with commercial flair or a leadership role that requires both brand and business acumen, we adapt our search to your needs.
- **Hands-on partnership**
From initial briefing to final interview, our consultative approach ensures clients and candidates are guided and supported every step of the way.
- **Unrivalled local knowledge**
As an Oxfordshire-based consultancy, we bring deep insights and long-standing networks that allow us to unearth exceptional talent.

For more information on how we can support your temporary or permanent hiring needs, contact us at:

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