



Strategic New CFO Opens Growth Opportunities for Family-Run Company

RefrigiWear®

Objective: On the Inside Looking Out for a New CFO

RefrigiWear is a 65-plus-year-old, privately-owned company providing innovative gear for workers in cold weather or other extreme temperature conditions. The company had transitioned its longtime family leaders to positions on the Board and day-to-day operations to their successors, and they needed a strong CFO who would complete their restructuring and blueprint plans for moving forward in the business market. For this family-run company, bringing in another leader from the outside was a necessary but big decision, and they knew consulting with a search expert would be their best bet for a role so critical to the future of the company.

The new CFO would need to possess the business acumen to help the company excel in growth strategy and also fit well into their existing dynamics and size. RefrigiWear's culture is team-oriented and people-centric, and the new leader would need to embody their non-hierarchical value system of putting their own people on the same level as customers. Bell Oaks came highly recommended in a referral, and RefrigiWear vetted them against other firms and felt they were the best choice to find just the right leader.

Process: In Good Hands for a Hands-Off Experience

Bell Oaks Partner Todd Warshaw and the team first approached the search by spending ample time getting to know the company and its individuals and gaining a thorough understanding of the criteria RefrigiWear needed in their new CFO. They then set out into the market, screening over 100 candidates and ultimately introducing the company to the top 5 who stood out most to interview. While there was no great disparity between what the Board and operations leaders were each looking for, there was a slightly different profile, and Todd was able to counsel both sides throughout the process and keep them fully informed.

"We had never been through such a sophisticated search process; in fact, previous searches with other firms had been overwhelming," says Dean Breakstone, Principal & Chief Operating Officer for RefrigiWear. "With Bell Oaks, we felt comfortable enough to let them run the show, where all we had to do was interview candidates. They were so organized and transparent, did their due diligence getting to know us, and did what they said they'd do. We also appreciated using their CRM technology to stay updated on progress in between our weekly meetings."



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Strategic New CFO Opens Growth Opportunities for Family-Run Company *(cont'd)*

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Results: All “Geared” Up for the Future

The search was completed on schedule for RefrigiWear to begin the year with their new CFO, who brings direct leadership experience with companies of similar size and a perspective and skillset that will help them accomplish their strategic goals. Equally important is the fact that the hire is an ideal culture fit for their organization who can work well with people across the whole company. The Bell Oaks team was able to consolidate what the Board members and operations leaders wanted for a mutual and unifying decision.

RefrigiWear is excited about what lies ahead for the company because the outcome of the search went so well. “Bell Oaks introduced us to multiple qualified candidates to interview and identified the person who checked every box we needed,” Dean says. “This will change the dynamic for our company going forward, so the choice had to be right, and we couldn’t be more pleased with the search or the candidate we hired.”

“In trusting a third party to help us fill a critical high-level position, our faith in Bell Oaks’ process and unparalleled ability to source the market proved to be well-spent. We feel confident about the future of our company and could not have found our new CFO without the Bell Oaks team.”

Dean Breakstone, Principal & Chief Operating Officer



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