

Case study:  
AstraZeneca

# Global Recruitment challenge, One Unique Solution

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When Jon Kirby joined global pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca as Chief Procurement Officer, he inherited a global procurement function spread across a range of international locations. As part of a major change initiative to develop a world class procurement function by 2010 and deliver bold savings targets, AstraZeneca needed an innovative recruitment solution to attract the best and the brightest candidates across all geographies.

“AZ is a global organisation and we wanted to attract and recruit the best talent requiring the need to access multiple markets but to do so with a consistent approach to communicating the AZ “story and vision” and a comprehensive assessment and screening of individuals. Working with one recruitment organisation would ensure that we were able to maintain a high degree of integrity and application of those principles. Whilst not without challenges the benefits to this approach would be significant and in working with Purcon we had a partner who had proven experience within the Procurement recruitment field and a team who were absolutely committed to deliver for AZ.

The programme has proven to be a success for our Transformation resulting in the recruitment of high calibre individuals across our organisation. The level of rigour applied by Purcon throughout the process ensured that we achieved high levels of performance against our measurement ratios e.g. “qualified candidates:interview/hire”. The pre-screening completed by Purcon was of a high standard ensuring that our hiring managers were not presented with a high number of poor quality candidates ensuring core line management and leadership time was not unduly wasted. The quality of briefing notes and pre-interview materials was high, greatly improving the ability of the hiring manager to focus on key areas during the interview.

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ensure that we were able to deliver success against our global Procurement recruitment programme. There have certainly been some learnings on both sides, but the strategy has helped us to achieve our overall goal”.

Jon Kirby, Chief Procurement Officer, AstraZeneca.

The Purcon team worked hand in hand with AstraZeneca HR and the Procurement Leadership Team across the UK, US, Sweden and Europe to understand the individual requirements across each business area. These covered Corporate Services, IT, Research and Development, Operations, Process and Compliance and Business Process Outsourcing. In just 12 months Purcon has successfully placed 23 permanent candidates and 4 interim managers across four international regions in mid and senior management positions. The relationship continues to deliver excellent candidates for on-going roles as the programme moves into its “business as usual” phase.

## A Unique Solution

Purcon’s success in delivering a global solution comes down to their extensive candidate network and excellent research capability to identify and target individuals with the specific skills required by AstraZeneca, regardless of their location. Candidates were sourced from a wide range of industry backgrounds including manufacturing, finance, consulting, retail and automotive as well as pharmaceuticals for some of the more specific requirements for R&D. Much of the research activity was also focused on finding the “hidden” talent, those candidates not actively looking for a career change.

In such a competitive market for talent it was important to set the AstraZeneca brand apart from the rest. Various marketing activities were undertaken including editorial articles in specific

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procurement press as well as the development of a specific Microsite within the Purcon website to profile AstraZeneca as an Employer of Choice. All contact and communications with potential candidates focused on looking beyond “just another job” to highlight the broader challenges and career progression on offer as well as the chance to be part of a hugely exciting and career enhancing change programme. This resulted in candidates being excited at the prospect of joining AstraZeneca before they had even had an interview.

### Working in Partnership

Whilst following a clear brief from the CPO of his vision of a talented procurement professional, it was also critical to form individual relationships with the hiring managers in each business unit and geography. This ensured delivery of not only the corporate objectives but the in-country requirements. Understanding quickly the cultural differences, the mechanics of the local recruitment process and candidate mentality were crucial to the success of the project.

### Candidate Experience

Of course, the success of the project also depends on the candidates themselves.

“In my most recent job search, I have had the opportunity to speak with many recruiters from multiple companies. Purcon are by far the most well-informed, honest, and thorough recruiters I have ever had the pleasure of speaking to. With their diligence, I knew that I would have a great chance at success if given an interview. I have never felt more prepared for an interview. Consequently, I was offered and I accepted the position at the AstraZeneca”. Sourcing Manager R&D, AstraZeneca, Philadelphia.

If you would like more information on how Purcon can support your recruitment needs please contact Lucy Harding, Head of Recruitment, [lharding@purcon.co.uk](mailto:lharding@purcon.co.uk) or telephone +44 1494 737319.

For 30 years Purcon has led the way in permanent recruitment and interim management for Procurement and Supply Chain, with offices in the UK, Belgium, Poland and operations across Europe. [www.purcon.com](http://www.purcon.com)

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### ABOUT PURCON