

With their Network of Executives, Boardsi is providing Board Members and Board Advisors for Companies looking to Fuel Growth



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Interview conducted by:
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CEOCFO: *Mr. Rowinski, what was the vision when you started Boardsi?*

Mr. Rowinski: Our vision was to create an executive network that creates a win-win situation for both executive and the companies that are in search of growth, and they feel like they need that extra help of either a board member, or a board advisor.

CEOCFO: *Is it the same vision today, same focus today?*

Mr. Rowinski: It is the same focus, the same vision, maybe just a little bit bigger. We have grown quite a bit; we are expanding into other countries. We have a great success rate and are just pouring on the fire to continue the growth.

CEOCFO: *How do boards typically look for new members? Does there come a point when they realize they should be seeking help?*

Mr. Rowinski: In general, yes, 100%. Usually, in every country the process is a little bit different, but boards do partake in a third-party evaluation process, just to see how the board is doing, how its performance is doing, and checking on each. Member. Usually from that, they come to a conclusion of whether certain board members need to be replaced, or certain committees need to be created. The board of advisors is a little bit different. There is much more flexibility there, so those usually come about with companies that are about to or are experiencing growth and maybe have hit a speed bump that they do not have the expertise to get through, so they might bring in a board of advisors to help them through that process.

There is also diversity in that many of the states and California, where you basically have to have a diverse board and there are still many companies out there that lack diversity on their boards, which obviously creates opportunities for diverse executives to be able to grab those positions. They do reach out if you have that experience and expertise, certification and so forth, to get those positions, but it definitely creates more opportunities out there.

CEOCFO: *When a company is looking to add to their board, and the turn to Boardsi, what do you ask for? What do you need from them? How do you make a match?*

Mr. Rowinski: We typically pretty much have the same process on both sides. On the executive side, we add executives to our network, and when we bring on a company, we have an onboarding process, which is a phone call, where it is typically an interview process. We explain to them what we do and how we do it, how we create, how we are the match makers, and we will create their connections for them. Once we create the connection, they take that away from us and they do the interview process.

At the end, ultimately it is their choice, which executive they are going to pick. As far as prior to the connection and the onboarding call, we basically figure out exactly who they need, what type of board member they need, what is their experience, expertise, we even try to fill out or feel the personality that they may be seeking, make sure that the personality matches, make sure that the mission and vision of the company also matches, and the values also match the executives.

Since we have that information on both the executive side and the company, it makes it much easier having all of those data points in our system, makes much easier to come up with the executive that would be a good fit. We then send that over to that company, let them review it, and wait to hear back from the company that they have an interest in this person, and then we go ahead and set up the interview process.

"I think that Boardsi is super important to both companies and executives. One, we all know that executive life or entrepreneur life can be stressful, can be very beneficial, can be very rewarding. It has all the ups and downs. However, at the end of it, especially on the entrepreneur side, or even on the executive side, these days you do not really have "where they retire and they do nothing," but they would like to stay busy or engaged, even if it is part time. What better way for an executive to utilize all the skills that they have gained over the years, to be able to give back and help with a startup or midrange company, or publicly traded company, step and be that leader role, to really help other businesses. Therefore, it is really beneficial for executives. They do not have to be retired. They can have a job or they can be a board member." Martin Rowinski

CEOCFO: *Do you typically work with companies repeatedly? Might a company turn to you, and then when they need new people, or is it often one-and-done? What is the relationship?*

Mr. Rowinski: We have been doing this for 5 years, but I would say safely, 3 years later, we have had companies come back, and either ask for more board of advisors members. We have also had publicly traded companies come and ask for board members, then ask for an additional one. Most recently, we had a company come back and ask for a chairperson.

Once we have a successful recruitment and they have benefited from it, there is no reason why they would not come back to us. As I said, the do evaluation. Some do it every year. Some do it every 3 years. They might wait for the term of the board members to expire, but either way yes, we have seen people/ companies come back to us asking for more or different board members.

CEOCFO: *How do you get at what might be under the surface?*

Mr. Rowinski: There are many executives out there that are very strong, very good at what they do. What they lack is branding themselves. We all know Bill Gates and what he has done. We all know the big names in just about any industry you can think of, Elon Musk, and of course, who would not like those people as their board members. However, the bottom line is that there are many executives out there that, maybe are not at that same standard, but in an industry niche, they are the key players. The only problem is that maybe they have not got a good job of branding themselves, and really expressing that they are the lead in that industry. Therefore, we are engaging with a few different companies right now, to try to put together a plan so that our members can actually partake in executive branding, and really go out there and brand themselves.

They write articles about their industry, maybe some of the have written their book, but have not talked about it, maybe some of them need to write a book or at least explore that idea, but branding is a big key for the executive to really stand out. That includes a proper board document verses a resume. A board document really focuses on the executive's

leadership versus management style, because the difference between a board member and a CEO or any other high C suite position is your stepping away from being a day-to-day manager, to being an actual leader and a board member, so you have to show and display different types of skills and experience.

CEO CFO: *What is your business model?*

Mr. Rowinski: We are definitely a for-profit company. Board space is very different than any other recruitment space. A lot of your typical headhunters or recruiters will go out there and they will work with the executives and try to place them a position where that might be a high-powered position, and they will usually take up to 30% of the first years' salary, which usually comes out from the company, which can be very lucrative. The problem with board space is that much if the time it is driven by equity, so you can get a position as a board advisor, but all you are going ever going to receive is equity in return. Obviously, for an executive, that could be great if the company grows, and maybe there is an exit strategy, and then they get to experience a nice check at the end. The problem with that is that we would attempt to take some kind of a percentage of that equity of the company, which would be a kind of odd situation.

The motto that we have chosen, since there is a lot of marketing, as we are putting together branding and education for the executive; we are doing everything we can to really prepare them to stand out from the crowd. We have a subscription model where the executives' pay us for marketing them, for branding them, for the education. It is an all-inclusive package, all in hopes to obviously help them to establish what they need to establish, so that they can have an easier time to get themselves prepared for the interview process.

On the company side, what we have done is we have a flat fee, and it really depends on the type of executive they are looking for. Is it a board member versus advisor, it is a small company versus a big publicly traded company that is very picky, and they are looking for that certain type of an executive, which obviously would be a longer process and take a lot more of our time and much more team effort to get to that executive, to get him in front of that board? We charge a flat fee for every executive that a company recruits. It is 50/50 as far as the model.

CEO CFO: *You mentioned being international. Would you tell us about how that works and what might be different in various geographies?*

Mr. Rowinski: When we started, we were definitely focused on the US. What kind of sparked the interest in going international was, a long time ago, we had a company that came to us, and it was a US based company and they themselves were going international, and the first country that they were looking to get into was actually the UK. They said that what they needed was someone that was familiar with the UK, someone that lived in the UK, someone that was in their industry.

That opened up opportunities for us to start looking in the UK for executives to fill that position. What we found is that it ended up being a situation where there are companies in the UK looking for US executives, or companies in the US looking for, as I said, UK based executives. Therefore, we started seeing each other, so we basically entered that space that way, and it has been very beneficial. However, sometimes it is a UK company looking for a UK executive, just as they do here in the US.

CEO CFO: *How do you reach out, both to companies and individuals?*

Mr. Rowinski: In the beginning it was a little tough, but as I said, we have been in business for 5 years now, and we have been able to establish brand names, so we do have a lot of companies that are actually coming to us now. They know who we are. They know we exist in the market. It has gotten easier. We do utilize LinkedIn as well, to find executives, to find companies that may be searching for board members. I would say that over the years we have established a network of companies that we work with. We reach out to them once in a while.

Sometimes we will find an executive that really stands out, and we might send them an email saying, "We have this executive," and leave their information. Then if there is any interest, they will let us know and we will set up the interview. Therefore, it is a lot of communication back and forth, whether it is emails with established companies in our network, companies that have told us they are not ready yet, but if the right executive comes along, they might be ready, and of course, utilizing LinkedIn.

CEO CFO: *Would you tell me about your book, *The Corporate Matchmaker*?*

Mr. Rowinski: Yes. I wrote a book, The Corporate Matchmaker. Chapter one is actually a personal chapter that describes me, my life, and where I came from, and what led me to be in this industry, and what led me to be a co-founder of Boardsi. Then from there, it basically takes off into different chapters that describe our detailed process of what we do. It can be beneficial to both executives that are looking for board positions, but it can also be beneficial to companies that are seeking executives, because it really guides them on what to look for, and how to communicate with executives. Therefore, you really see both sides of the formula.

CEOCFO: *How did Covid affect Boardsi? What did you learn during that time period that perhaps changed the way you do certain things? Is it over now, as far as your business arena is concerned?*

Mr. Rowinski: Is it over? Of Covid is over, something else will pop up, I am sure. However actually, like most businesses, we took a hit in the very, very beginning. I do not think there are too many businesses or even people that did not take a hit. I think big retail took the biggest hit. As far as our day-to-day, it was definitely not too big of a hit, because as a company, we have already been doing remote work. With the systems that we use in place, you can be in an office, or you could be a remote worker, and nothing really changes. Our reporting on the back, whether it is a remote working or whether it is an office person, we can track everything that we do, from phone calls to emails. Therefore, it was not a big hit to us as far as day-to-day.

The biggest we experienced, for a maybe two-to-three-week time period, was just companies really stressing out, not knowing where this is going to go, how long it is going to last. We all know it did not last for 14 days or 15 days, or whatever they said. That kind of slowed things down, where companies that were ready to move forward and bring on advisors, they slowed down. However, what did happen, very, very positive, and actually spiked our growth, was that after about 3 weeks, when companies realized that they were not set up for remote work, so the first step that they did was remote work possibilities, a lot of Zoom calls, all different types of technology that they used, but a lot of different conference calls, video calls, and they realized that the work environment can continue. They can still be very profitable.

The thing that they realized, that helped us out, is that when they are looking for a board member, they used to try to find someone local or somewhere nearby where they can maybe have a face to face. What turned out is that instead of focusing on finding someone local, they started focusing more on skill sets, abilities, and it really opened up doors for many executives to be able to work remotely, from longer distances, and now their skill set became more important than their location. It really opened things up for us.

CEOCFO: *Why is Boardsi an important company?*

Mr. Rowinski: I think that Boardsi is super important to both companies and executives. One, we all know that executive life or entrepreneur life can be stressful, can be very beneficial, can be very rewarding. It has all the ups and downs. However, at the end of it, especially on the entrepreneur side, or even on the executive side, these days you do not really have "where they retire and they do nothing," but they would like to stay busy or engaged, even if it is part time. What better way for an executive to utilize all the skills that they have gained over the years, to be able to give back and help with a startup or midrange company, or publicly traded company, step and be that leader role, to really help other businesses. Therefore, it is really beneficial for executives. They do not have to be retired. They can have a job or they can be a board member.

It also gives people a little bit of extra, so they can start engaging in other things. Maybe you are looking to retire in two to three years, and this is their start into leading into that role. For companies, it is obvious a no brainer there. They are struggling with growth, or they are looking to grow, or they feel like they have peaked in their industry, and they need to really explore growth strategies. Again, what is better than bringing on an executive that has been there and done that, and that can really lead the way for them to go to the next level.

