

Customer Centricity: NPS Interview Report

Client	Michael Baker, Cargill
NPS	9
Engagement	Executive Search
Interview Date	23.09.25

Interview Report

Overview	<p>Micheal, who leads executive recruitment at Cargill, has worked with Korn Ferry on several senior searches. While they do not use Korn Ferry exclusively, they view them as a trusted partner who consistently delivers high-quality results. In this case, Korn Ferry successfully placed a Chief Accounting Officer from a leading global oil and gas company, a hire described as “an awesome human being” and the right fit for Cargill.</p> <p>Strengths highlighted included Korn Ferry’s bold but expert guidance, seamless compensation process, and exemplary communication. Michael praised their ability to provide high-calibre candidates and to secure options late in the process, ensuring choice for stakeholders.</p> <p>Areas of opportunity included clarifying assessment expectations early (to avoid overlap with Cargill’s own intensive process) and ensuring candidate pipelines feel broad enough throughout.</p>
What Went Well	<p>High-calibre appointment. Korn Ferry successfully secured a top candidate, delivering a critical hire. <i>“they did a really phenomenal job on this search...Cargill ended up getting an awesome human being who is...the chief accounting Officer of one of the largest oil and gas companies in the world, and he’s here, and he’s great,”</i></p> <p>Expert, confident guidance. The consultants acted as thought partners, advising on scope and process. <i>“They were [a] really good thought partner on process, like who the candidate should interview with. In fact, they were, they were bold and said, hey, you really should have your audit chair from the board meet with this candidate... it was obvious that they were experts. They had command.”</i></p> <p>Compensation and offer handled smoothly. The process was efficient and problem-free. <i>“The offer negotiation part was as smooth as I’ve ever had it... they did a bang up job. There was no back and forth, there was no we don’t understand...they understood our comp. We understood the candidates comp, and they did a really good job. Great.”</i></p> <p>Exemplary communication. <i>“We met every week. I would text with Ashley regularly about certain matters... their communication was exemplary.”</i></p> <p>Strong internal handling. Internal candidates were treated respectfully, avoiding negative perceptions. <i>“I think they handled our internals really, really well too, which I think matters...I think they did as good of a job as you possibly could. And they did come back and share that they were wildly impressed with some of our internals”</i></p>

Challenges & Gaps Identified (raised by interviewee)	<p>Assessment overlap. The automatic inclusion of Korn Ferry's 30-minute assessment created slight friction with Cargill's own intensive six-hour process. Michael emphasised the need for proactive discussion early. "<i>my only recommendation, is make sure you have a very clear conversation with your client about your assessment, whether they have one, and whether it makes sense to do both. Yeah, upfront.</i>"</p> <p>Pipeline continuity. At one stage the search felt too dependent on a single finalist, creating concern about having options for stakeholders. This was later resolved when Korn Ferry introduced an additional strong candidate. "<i>There was some stress at one point that, like, man, are we putting all our eggs in one basket... at the 11th hour, Korn Ferry pulled a rabbit out of their hat with the candidate that ultimately got this job. He came in late. He was fantastic... and then everybody kind of collectively exhaled.</i>"</p>
Key Themes	<p>High standards, strong delivery. Michael, a former headhunter with high expectations, felt Korn Ferry excelled. "<i>I'm pretty tough on search firms... I hold them to a very high standard... I'd say they...did a really phenomenal job on this search.</i>"</p> <p>Expert guidance and thought partnership. The team was confident in advising on scope and process, giving clear direction. "<i>They weren't bullish or rude, but they were never shy about, like, hey, we think you guys should do this. Or, you know, we think this process is taking too long</i>"</p> <p>Effective engagement with senior talent. Korn Ferry demonstrated command of the senior accounting officer market and secured a top-tier hire. "<i>They did it very well...I have high expectations...you should know who the Fortune 100, Fortune 200 CAOs are... You should be able to get some of them to the table</i>"</p> <p>Performance stands above competitors. A client-led five-year audit confirmed Korn Ferry's stronger outcomes across hires, retention, and diversity. "<i>I did a five-year audit... the data, no matter what way you cut it, their performance is the best compared to the three that we work with regularly... When I look back at the data, they had the most people that are still here, that are doing well</i>"</p>
Actions & Recommendations	<p>Clarify assessment approach upfront – Discuss with clients at the outset whether Korn Ferry's assessment should be used, to avoid duplication with potential internal processes.</p> <p>Sustain pipeline confidence – Maintain visible options through late-stage sourcing to reassure boards and executives.</p>