

Customer Centricity: NPS Interview Report

Client	Luke Dale, Kone
NPS	7
Engagement	ES
Interview Date	18.12.25

Interview Report

Overview	<p>Luke Dale is the Executive Acquisition Manager for executive recruitment and acts as the client-side project manager for director-level and above hiring within Kone internationally. Luke joined the organisation in June 2025 and inherited an already-running, confidential executive search engagement with Korn Ferry that began in December 2023 to appoint a new leader for a major European business unit.</p> <p>Luke described the assignment as inherently sensitive and complex due to confidentiality requirements and a tightly defined profile at the outset.</p> <p>Overall, the process ultimately concluded successfully after a change in direction mid-way, and Luke expressed appreciation for Korn Ferry's persistence and delivery model, while noting that rapport-building and confidence dynamics were more difficult to establish given the handover and the challenging phase of the search.</p>
What Went Well	<p>Successful outcome following a broadened approach. Luke shared that once the scope widened, Korn Ferry introduced stronger options and the process landed well. <i>"From there, Korn Ferry did introduce two new candidates that were very high quality." "We interviewed both of them, took them through the process, and one of them was successful." "The end result has been pleasing, good conclusion in the end."</i></p> <p>Resilience and persistence through a long and difficult assignment. Luke recognised the endurance required to sustain a confidential, extended process and credited the Korn Ferry team for continuing through challenging phases. <i>"The resilience of the business and the people that I was working with to keep going is greatly appreciated." "They are very challenging, and you do need a lot of resilience to keep going and to make sure that you get the outcome for your customer and your client, no matter what, in the end."</i></p> <p>Regular reporting and strong depth of updates. Luke noted consistent communication and found the reporting to be substantive. <i>"There were reasonable updates." "There was regular reporting. The depth of the reports was good as well."</i></p> <p>Delivery model and team coverage supported responsiveness. The three-tier structure (lead, research, administration) was viewed as a practical strength that helped maintain continuity and responsiveness. <i>"Having there's three tiers of people that you're dealing with at all times, which means that there's always somebody that is able to actually respond." "You don't have, if somebody's off for a day or whatever, you don't have information falling into a pit and nothing happening." "The team setup works very well."</i></p>

	<p>Clear appreciation for the combination of process and insight. Luke valued both the infrastructure and the “human” element of search, describing them as complementary. <i>“What’s more important, the science or the art? and I wouldn’t be able to give you an answer on that, because it’s honestly both.” “You actually want to have the people that know how to extract insights from data, create narratives, stories, and give you insights, and also influence people as well.”</i></p>
Challenges/ Pain Points	<p>Early constraints limited the initial search runway. Luke’s perception was that the original guidance may have been too narrow to generate sufficient options, particularly given the complexity of a confidential mandate. <i>“There had been a decision to be very precise about the type of person that the business wanted to appoint, and I think that made it more challenging.” “I think it’s possible that the guidance from Kone at the time didn’t give Korn Ferry the breadth of scope to actually find enough people to actually run the process.”</i></p> <p>Mid-process change created a sense of lag before momentum rebuilt. Luke described a period where the search did not feel like it was “quite hitting,” influenced by change in stakeholders and a shift in approach, though Luke emphasised the recovery and strong finish. <i>“There was a huge amount of change that occurred, plus the realization in the project that it wasn’t quite hitting.” “There was a bit of a feeling of lagging.” “My massive credit would be that actually picked up again and they pulled themselves back from that and it finished very strongly.”</i></p> <p>Confidence and energy felt tested during the more difficult phase. Luke sensed visible fatigue and frustration as options narrowed, noting that they were personally attuned to it given their recruiting background. <i>“It was obvious to see that there was a bit of frustration.” “I could tell that it was getting challenging and tiring, and there wasn’t a lot left.” “It is natural to start to wonder, where else can we actually go? What else can we do?”</i></p> <p>Rapport-building with the lead consultant was harder than it might normally be. Luke suggested the inherited nature of the assignment made it harder to build a fresh working rhythm with Carolyn, the lead, and that a more explicit “reset” could have supported collaboration sooner. <i>“It was a little bit challenging to build rapport with the lead person that I was dealing with.” “I inherited it, I sort of was parachuted into it halfway through.” “Recognize that there’s been a cut and that the new person is different, or that, you know, you’ve got a blank slate.” “Maybe it wasn’t enough of a blank slate towards myself.”</i></p>
Gaps Identified (raised by interviewee)	<p>Need for earlier collaborative re-alignment when client-side stakeholders change. Luke implied that when a new internal lead steps in mid-stream, there is value in consciously rebuilding the relationship and re-contracting ways of working. <i>“We could have gone aside a bit more together as colleagues.” “We could have shaped it a bit better, a bit earlier between us, just a little bit more collaborative.”</i></p>
Key Themes	<p>A challenging, confidential assignment that strengthened once the scope widened.</p>

	<p>Strong delivery infrastructure and reporting, with momentum influenced by mid-project change.</p> <p>Practical resilience through difficult phases, alongside some visible strain as options narrowed.</p> <p>Partnership and rapport mattered, with a “blank slate” reset seen as helpful when new stakeholders inherit an engagement.</p>
Actions & Recommendations	<p>Reinforce early calibration on scope where confidentiality and precision create natural constraints. Where an assignment is both sensitive and narrowly defined, it may help to build in deliberate early checkpoints to confirm whether the search has sufficient breadth to sustain momentum over time, particularly if initial options begin to narrow.</p> <p>Create space for a “reset” conversation when client-side ownership changes mid-engagement. When a new internal lead joins part-way through a process, it can be helpful to pause briefly to re-establish working preferences, decision dynamics, and what “good” looks like going forward, so rapport and collaboration can build more quickly.</p> <p>Maintain steady confidence signals during the most difficult phases of a search. As a search becomes more complex and option sets reduce, it may be worth paying attention to how frustration or fatigue might be experienced by the client, and finding small ways to reinforce shared direction and progress while continuing the work.</p> <p>Use structured course-correction moments when the search feels like it is “not quite hitting”. If a process reaches a point of lag, a short, explicit recalibration on market reality, candidate pools, and alternate angles may support earlier re-energising of the search and help the team move forward with renewed clarity.</p>
Additional Insight	<p>Confidentiality fundamentally shaped the assignment experience. Luke emphasised that the confidential nature of the search introduced unique constraints and sensitivities, distinct from a typical open process. <i>“It was being conducted confidentially because the incumbent of the role had been in the position for many years and was looking to transition into another position.” “The conversations obviously were very confidential and sensitive, and were going to take a long time.” “This obviously created massive different challenges to the problems that you would have if it wasn’t confidential.”</i></p> <p>Continued willingness to work with Korn Ferry, with a preference for clarity on circumstances. Despite the mid-process challenges and relationship dynamics, Luke indicated they would work with Korn Ferry again, with careful consideration of context. <i>“I would, I would do.” “I would be very specific about circumstance and everything and all of that.” “Yes, overall, I would work with them again on a case by case basis.”</i></p>