

# NPS Interview Transcript

**Interview Date:** 01.12.25

**Jeanette:** Jeanette Rooms, Ocorian

**Project:** ES

**Score:** 6

## FULL TRANSCRIPT

Jeanette 0:14

Hi, I'm well you.

Interviewer 0:18

Yeah, good. Thank you. Nice to meet you. You too. Thanks for agreeing to take part in the interview. No problem. I'll try and keep it as brief as possible, especially on a Monday morning, just to give you a little bit of context. So I am the managing partner at a consultancy. We've been working with Korn Ferry for the last five years, so we know their business well, and we're running these as a third party. So you can speak more freely to encourage to to encourage that. Are you all right if I record this so my team can help me make notes? Excellent, great. So we'll jump straight in, if you could just start by explaining your role in the business and your relationship with Korn Ferry to date.

Jeanette 1:06

So I'm Chief People Officer I've been here 14 months, 15 months now, and I work very closely with the CEO. So when we are looking at recruiting senior roles, I get heavily involved in that. And hence my involvement with Korn Ferry. I've known Korn Ferry over too many years of experience for various things, actually, generally, generally headhunting for execs, though, to be fair. Jeanette were appointed by Chantal on this occasion because, I think she had just recently been chatting to Stuart. I think it was and so when she was looking, I think she reached out to them, and the conversation had kind of started before I was even involved in it, really. So they were pointed. I'm just trying to remember if I got involved in the contract I did at some stage, actually, although we have a habit head of talent here, and so Shane, Shane will Holland will have, he's actually left the business now, he will have gone through the detail of the contract rather than me. Great.

Interviewer 2:21

Okay, so it wasn't a competitive pitch. It was just given straight to them based on existing relationships. Yeah, okay, great. And you gave it a six, I believe. So talk me through your experience. Kind of where, where didn't it meet your expectations?

Jeanette 2:39

We had two roles with them, working them at the same time, Chief Digital Officer and group capability centers, head, oh, I think I've frozen. Think I froze there. I can hear I can hear you. I'm going to turn my camera off just for a few, few minutes, if that's all right, to help with the quality. Yeah, great.

Interviewer 3:02

I'll do I'll do the same. And then thank you. So

Jeanette 3:06

we were running with two roles. There were a couple of things that stand out in my mind, really, and it's unfortunate for them that they were near the end, because then they stick with you. So the first thing was, our CEO is very keen on having a mixed slate. So we had to remind the guys a number of times that we want to see women as well as men. So it was quite difficult to get them to bring women to the short list. And in addition to that, we noticed that all the consultants from Korn Ferry were all men. So it's very difficult to actually not. I'm not going to make a judgment on it. I think it would be easier naturally to attract more women into these roles, if there were more women actually doing the profiling and doing the shortlisting. It's just one of those things, and it just means that the people picking the short lists are all male rather than female. So that was one thing for us that didn't really sit very well. And then the more impactful thing for me was the fun and games around the compensation. So for both of the roles, although particularly for the Chief Digital Officer role, trying to get out of them what current comp was, was impossible. And the fact that actually it was left until we were at office

stage, before they had even providing us with any information. And even then, they kept having to go back and forth to the candidate all of the time, which put us on the back foot for negotiating. Yeah, so you know it was, it was really not good that it took until my asking them, can you find current compensation? Can you really identify what that meant? So when they say it's this kind of fancy title bonus, what does that actually mean? So is it, is it a guaranteed? Was it based on performance? Was it based on the fact they'd only just joined? Was it based on is it something that's accrued throughout the year? Is it a guaranteed? I mean, all of these things that I would expect then to have understood we had to keep going back and forth and back and forth, which means it took us forever to put an offer together. We nearly lost the one of the candidates because of it, because they had another offer. And so I don't know whether the other organization was just quicker to put an offer together or whatever it was, but the the timing around finding out what the person's actual compensation was took forever, and in the end, we didn't actually end up bagging the candidate that we wanted, because actually what our offer was looking like in the end ended were up just not being good enough what they were after. So I don't believe that would have been as difficult. I mean, as it happens, I actually believe we ended up with a better candidate. And I'm I find them knowing that, although the guys would have known that, because this, the guy we've ended up with was my, my preferred candidate, as it happened. But that whole back and forth about compensation, and then not really understanding some of the compensation that we people were being paid, I was just, I was very disappointed with

Interviewer 6:22

that, okay, did they give you, I mean, going in terms of, obviously, you know, having that visibility of their current compensation, but in terms of benchmarking, what your offer was, did they, did they offer any insight there, using their benchmarking Tools? Or was that?

Jeanette 6:41

No, I mean, we have our own benchmark, as you can imagine, and there is only so much. And of course, at this level role, you're not only talking about bone, but you're talking about equity levels. And so therefore future compensation, we didn't get any support. As far as that was concerned, we got a very blanket the expectation is around about half a million, or whatever the number was, you know, which is fine, but it's very, yeah, yeah. You know, it was like we, he expects the value of his future equity to be around this much, right? Okay, and what about, how would he, what would he take in terms of balance of what's fixed and what's variable, we had to ask all of those questions. So they were constantly going back and forth. Okay, did they? Did they negotiate on your behalf with the candidates? Yes, they did. And we got right to the very, very end. And then by the stage we were, we were a little fed up of going back and forth that, frankly, in the end, Chantelle just said, I'm going to ring him directly. And so in the end, she ended up speaking to him herself, right,

Interviewer 7:49

which moved it along. Yes, okay, and going back to your kind of wanting that mixed slate and not having enough women in terms of the other candidates that they did put forward, how was the quality and quantity of those

Jeanette 8:08

and the quality was? The reality is, and this is not, I don't think this is at Korn Ferry's feet, to be fair, is there are simply less women in that very senior CDO role, the ones they put forward were in one layer down. So we, I understood that, but we had to ask them for them.

Interviewer 8:34

Okay? So they, they so they weren't necessarily meeting your expectations in seniority, because there weren't essentially that many available

Jeanette 8:43

for that CDO role. Yes, the GCC role, we believe there probably could have been more. But there is also mitigating circumstances, in fact, that we're placing the role in Mauritius, but the issue of it was the fact that we had to keep requesting more than once, that they also put females in front of us to consider, to consider, not just males, right? Okay? And again, our made up story about that is the fact that it's because they were all men looking for females rather than females looking for females.

Interviewer 9:19

Yeah. I mean, would, I mean, did you get a sense in, you know, if you don't know, you don't know that the people, the candidates, they put forward, were coming from them doing a kind of an out and out search, or was it from their network? Majority?

Interviewer 9:37

Differently, I don't know.

Interviewer 9:39

Okay, we can pick up with them, yeah, in terms of the experience of, like, just, you know, day to day communication and project management did, how did that work for you?

Jeanette 9:53

Um, it's not the best I've worked with. I've worked with better headhunters in terms of efficiency, and, you know, getting reports to us, we were having regular calls, and the reports would often land an hour or two before the call, with seven new CVS and everything on you have no hope in hell of getting to it. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 10:15

And in terms of, like, the communication style, I'm assuming there's multiple stakeholders making these senior decisions. Did, was that something that they did, they managed to kind of get, get a collective decision from you all. How did that work?

Jeanette 10:28

Do you know, do you mean? Do you mean the ultimate decision, or do you mean who we're going to take forward on?

Interviewer 10:36

Yeah, I mean and just general, I'll be honest

Jeanette 10:40

with you. We ended up running the calls. Okay? It always felt very hesitant, is the way I would describe it. And you probably don't know Chantelle, but Chantelle is, is fairly high energy and ready to go, and must talk about it, and blah, blah. So in actual fact, she ended up saying, Well, talk me through those then, you know, he they would say, here's the report. Fine. And then write, yeah. And they would always assume what they'd always assume we'd have chance to read everything, which I don't know how, because, as I said, it never arrived early enough, generally. And then it was a case of, okay, so who do you want to talk to us about? Then, you know, we were asking them, rather than saying, coming forward and saying, here are the seven, which is what I would have done, here are the seven. You can look at the seven in your own time. However, these are the three that we highly recommend. Let's talk about these three. You know that it just wasn't assertive enough. Yeah, yeah. And with someone like Chantelle, and they know Chantelle, you need to be quite on the front foot, right?

Interviewer 11:46

Yeah, absolutely. Well, I mean, these, yeah, like all of you, are very seedy people and very busy time, and it costs money. There's a million dollars of Yes, done, and

Jeanette 11:56

it is what we're paying them for, ultimately, that they put forward. You know, they see these people all of the time, and we briefed them. I know we did a really good job on briefing them. I know we did, and yet they always seemed a little kind of hesitant. I mean, look, don't get me wrong, right? Chantal is all over it. She'll ask you really difficult questions. She wants to get into the detail, but if you step forward and say, let's just talk about these three today, then that's really going to help the call to

Interviewer 12:25

go, Well, yeah, yeah, just I get it, owning it, okay, yeah. In terms of, I mean, what did anything? Did anything kind of stand out for you in terms of, or, or just met your expectations? That went, Okay,

Jeanette 12:42

look, we got there in the end. Let's, you know, let's be clear, we did actually find two very, very good candidates in the end. And ultimately, you know, that's what we were looking for. It just took way, way longer than we thought we were at it for the best part of, what, five months, six months, yeah, it took a long time.

Interviewer 13:04

Did you have an expectation of when you wanted the role filled?

Jeanette 13:08

When the first day we met them, they came into the office and Chantelle said, we really need to get an offer two to three months. We're really, really in a hurry. Okay?

Interviewer 13:19

And was that because, I mean, obviously you've talked through the issues with the compensation, slowing things up, but before that, so say, if you hit the two month mark, did you have any options on the table that, or was it that you just wasn't there wasn't the right candidates there. Yeah, it

Jeanette 13:36

just, yeah, they just weren't hitting the right brief. Okay,

Interviewer 13:40

on that brief. I mean, how much did they help craft it, or push back on it, or ask questions, and how much, I mean, did they, if they're two months in and they weren't hitting the right brief, what was the kind of I suppose, your understanding of their understanding

Jeanette 13:54

of it. So the initial brief was done with Chantelle, largely, I was in the room, but she was definitely briefing. She had a very, very clear view about what she wanted. I hadn't really been around overly long, and I wasn't really involved in recruitment. I dived in then at that stage, just to help push it all along, really. But I think after a couple of months, we did have very clear conversations with them. Said this, these just don't feel right, guys, this is what we think we're missing. And it was on one of our regular weekly calls, and they were invariably three or four of them on the calls. We're just not it's not just they didn't seem to instinctively pick up that it wasn't quite right, right? They just kept pushing forward. Yeah, it did feel a little bit like that. Whereas I would have liked a little more insight to say, you know, to come forward again and say, Look, guys, this doesn't feel like it's quite right. Let's really nail it down as to what's missing. What is it you want more of? What is it you want less of? We instigated those conversations, right? Okay, that's really helpful.

Interviewer 15:07

You mentioned, obviously, having experience of working with other Headhunters, where it's gone better is, I mean, is there anything apart from, obviously, what we've discussed that's been standout, that you would, that would, for you be, you know, a good experience,

Jeanette 15:25

I think, for me, with these things, right? They, I mean, they're in a very difficult position. Let's be clear, no one likes to pay a lot of money to these guys to find them someone. They just don't, right, so it's very, very difficult. I do get that. But when we do appoint someone, and the rates, you know, we you end up paying these guys a lot of money for people, because we're looking for very senior people. And I, the expectation for me, and I've certainly received it elsewhere, is the pace and the assertiveness and being on top of data and knowing everything about comp and I and I just didn't I it was the sense of pace and urgency and assertiveness that I think Chantelle and I found really frustrating throughout the process, as well as the profiles not being right. But it really exacerbated itself at the end, though, when we just had so much problem trying to get details out of comp, right?

Interviewer 16:24

Okay, in terms, I mean, you've obviously said you've used Korn Ferry before. How is this experience compared to your previous ones?

Jeanette 16:36

Not as good. Oh, yeah, it was a different team, yeah, to be fair, I can't it's a while ago, right? I've been doing this way too long. It's a while ago, and I don't even remember the last time I use them, but I when Chantel said to me, we're using Korn Ferry, I didn't have any concerns about it. I thought, good. She's gone to a good company, you know, so the reputation goes before them, and my previous experiences led me to believe it was okay, yeah, yeah. Did you feed

Interviewer 17:10

any of this back to them? Do you think they got a sense of your frustration? We definitely did. We definitely did, yeah, yeah,

Jeanette 17:15

in numerous emails and occasional calls with Stuart and I think Adam was the guy dealing with the comp. It was like, come on. You know, guys, this isn't okay. We really expect this to be quicker. I thought you would have known this. Why did you not know about this? Have you asked about this? Have you asked about this? And we fed back on calls numerous times. We need to see more women's profiles numerous times so they they couldn't have been in any doubt.

Interviewer 17:43

And what was their response when they didn't put

Jeanette 17:47

them forward? It's really hard to find females in these positions. And Chantal was like, No, I don't accept that. Yeah, just not looking hard enough. And then that. It was then that Chantelle said, Could it be because there are no women to look actually looking for women.

Interviewer 18:02

Yeah. Okay, interesting. I mean, obviously you don't sound like you've had a great experience at all.

Jeanette 18:13

It was fine to start with, I have to be honest and the gut, don't get me wrong, the guys are all really personable and lovely guys. Of course, they are right. It was just it didn't go anywhere near as quickly. And I would say the frustrations got worse as we as we gradually went through it. And then when you get to the very end, and you just on the closing line, I think when we were left with a little bit of a Whoa, you know, I'm not sure we'll go back there again, because that was really hard work at the end.

Interviewer 18:43

Yeah, okay, great. Well, I think probably that's everything I need to know, unless there's anything else that you think would be good to share. Nope, I think that's probably it. Okay. Well, I mean, I do appreciate your honesty. There's lots of beautiful thought there. Then I will, and if you're comfortable, I will write this up and be quite direct and feeding it back to them and where you can improve in the future, happy to and it might mean, I mean, would if somebody, if one of their managers, wanted to reach out and follow up to you, would you be open to that?

Jeanette 19:18

I would actually, I think Stuart has already reached out and tried to book breakfast or something with me. My diary is like a lunatic asylum, so Jen does her best, yeah, to try and accommodate stuff like that, but he definitely has already reached out, so I acknowledge them for that I really do great.

Interviewer 19:36

Okay, well, what I'll do is I'll write this up and I will, I'll speak to him myself and talking through it, and then he can make a plan of best fit forward. Bye.

