



We firmly believe that to achieve the best results when working with a recruitment business, the relationship between client and consultancy must be an equal partnership. One built on respect, understanding and ideally, consistent success.

In this client story, we speak with Dave Cheesman, the Regional Sales Director for The Vitec Group - about his history and relationship with Caspian One.

Our engagement with The Vitec Group started in 2011, with numerous international placements achieved to date. Dave Cheesman has made 6x hires through us since 2018, having received 28 CVs and interviewed 20x unique candidates.

Placements made have included:

- Nordic Sales Manager
- Channel Manager, UK
- European Sales Manager
- European Sales Manager, France
- RSM, Dubai
- Strategic Sales Manager, UK

Dave, you've worked with Caspian One for a few years now, both at Sony and Vitec. Where would you say, has the value been in that relationship?

It's kind of two-pronged. One is obviously the recruitment work you do. Then, it's not gossip so to say, but the relationship I have with Caspian One is a good way to get a feel for what's going on in the wider market.

There's a quid pro quo in that. I tell them how life is in my little bit of the industry and Lee shares his insights – so actually, having a partner with who we can discuss how we're seeing, not specifics [not to betray any confidences], but what are we seeing in the market, is very, very useful. It genuinely is, or at least I feel this way, more of a partnership than a client/supplier relationship.

What are your typical needs and expectations from Caspian One?

I'm always on the lookout for talent even if I don't have a role – and I think that's where Ralph has been particularly good. In that, he keeps me advised of people that are looking for new opportunities in the market, unsolicited. If it's a no, it's a no, but there have been a couple who've been of interest – even if we've not been able to move quick enough. That aspect of, know someone reasonable, give Dave a call... that's priceless.



Historically we've had success building regional sales teams and similar. How would you describe the experience of working with us, across different locations and requirements?

I think international work is always harder. If I'm brutally honest, the challenge for both Caspian One and potential employers is the quality of the candidate. So, my challenge is, and Ralph's and Lee's challenges are, no matter how many times we brief candidates they still turn up and do what they want to do at the interview – not what we've asked them to do. Or, they haven't done their homework, they just rock up to interview saying "I've been in the industry 15 years, the current guy is paying me x amount, you need to pay me more and I'll come work for you" - no, it doesn't work that way.

Ralph and the team have done a pretty good job screening candidates to the best of their ability – even if you still get the occasional lemon, that's just a particularly challenging aspect of international assignments, because there's always the language barrier.

In terms of working in partnership, do you think that having a relationship and history together helps with aspects like the screening process?

Yes, absolutely. They know my pet hates; they know the things that I like too, and part of that is largely down to some really good qualification work from Lee when we started the relationship.

What's particularly useful for me with Caspian One is the absolute drilling down to find out what exactly it is I'm after, because sometimes that's really hard for us to articulate... really hard.

Working with someone who knows me as a character, knows me as an individual, that personal engagement is a big plus for me.

My relationship started with Lee, and I know he can't do everything, he needs to pass it off to the team but with a guiding hand in the background. Ralph has come on leaps and bounds which is great – but what it does mean is that, if they're not quite sure, they'll come back and ask questions a different way.

Sometimes you have in your head what it is you're looking for, but you can't explain it. To have somebody to say, "Is that really what you want, is this actually what you want?" - that really helps and it's something that can only come from working together over time and being open and honest in the feedback, both ways.

Would you say that approach is found with other recruitment agencies you work with?

No. From time to time somebody will come and suggest another agency and I'll say, "I'd really rather not", but we end up doing it for one reason or another. Invariable though, we end up coming back to Lee and the team at Caspian One.

Are you also using internal resources for hiring or do you tend to externally outsource?

It tends to be externally outsourced. I think, like every organisation, we'd like to have our own talent teams, but unless you're going to put a lot of resources into that space (and you tend to then be recruiting in an echo chamber), my personal view is that in-house recruitment doesn't necessarily give you a wide enough search.

We've spoken about our recruitment skills and relationships, but do you see much value in our knowledge of the industry – or is it more about who we're connected with?

Knowledge of the industry is more on an informal basis. I have a reasonably wide network but sometimes, having someone who's not a manufacturer or a dealer or an integrator, can help verify what everyone is telling me, as a healthy middle ground.

Looking at placements we've made, one of particular interest recently was the hire of a UK-based Strategic Sales Manager. Could you tell me a little about what happened on that occasion?

The UK is a great example of a market where the Broadcast industry has a lot of reasonable salespeople, but very few whom I'd call exceptional. In this case and others, I don't think we've made a hire in the past four years that I've looked back and regretted. We go through quite a thorough process, and I know I drive Ralph up the wall ensuring we have three candidates minimum; we likely have the right one in the mix already but giving people choice is important.

The way we do it is quite different; I tend to get Ralph to select the candidates and do the initial screening. Then I have an informal 30- 60 minutes call or video call with them, which gives us the chance to have the 'not interview' where we can dance around each other and see if we're a good fit. There's no point going down the full interview process if one party is just wasting the other's time.

I've been quite pleased, and the UK hire mentioned has been particularly successful – they all have. The other thing is, I give a point for expediency. I look at other organisations who are advertising a point for three months and I think they're mad, just holding out for the right candidate. When you're gapped it's hard work for a business, particularly in sales because you have to turn round to the rest of your team and say, "I know you're already working hard but I need you to cover this also", which is less than ideal. On the flip side of that my team has come to understand it's worth putting up with a little bit of extra work now, because the next person will be the right fit when they land.