

⌘ DistillerSR
**Case
Study**



The Search for a CFO to Fuel the Next Chapter

Why This **High-Growth** Team Needs a CFO Who's Been There.

Scaling a bootstrapped company is a rare kind of challenge—and success. But with rapid growth comes a new inflection point: how do you evolve from startup grit to operational excellence? When does a contract CFO stop being enough? And how do you find executive talent that not only brings big-company experience but also fits a collaborative, fast-paced culture?

The Leadership Agency (TLA) recruits for the most impressive companies of our generation. Our mission is to help high-growth companies make their best hires. We are a women-led company and believe in diversity, inclusion & belonging - diverse teams are strong teams.

We do it differently.

We're not just recruiters—we're your partners in building the teams of tomorrow.

Where to find us:



/theleadershipagency



@theleadershipagency



leadershipagency.com

3000+
placements

300+
clients

50%
women and/or BIPOC
placements

30%
clients Seed-C

Search Statistics

Numbers tell us a lot about a search. They not only provide us with real-time data but also insights into the talent market.

Timeline



Candidates



Interviews



Placements



DistillerSR, headquartered in Ottawa, Canada, is a leading provider of AI-enabled literature review automation and enterprise evidence management software. Since its founding in 2008, the company has been instrumental in transforming how research organizations conduct systematic reviews. DistillerSR's software is highly configurable and supports various workflows and protocols.

Serving over 300 clients—including 60% of the largest pharmaceutical and medical device companies

By automating the literature review process, clients have reported reductions in review times by 35% to 50%, enhancing efficiency and transparency. The company's commitment to innovation and compliance has solidified its position as a trusted partner in evidence-based research.

How we helped DistillerSR

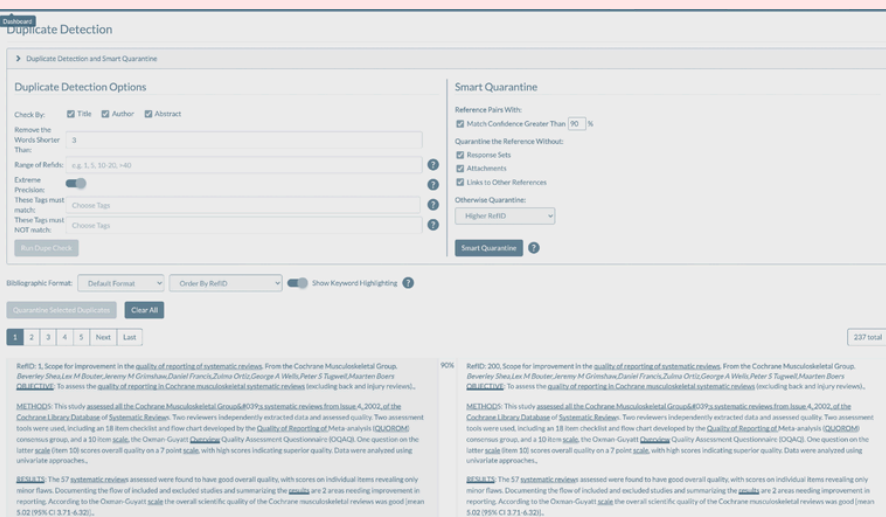
DistillerSR's platform is built for flexibility, making it easy to adapt to the unique workflows and regulatory needs of industries like pharma, medical devices, academia, and government.

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It's official and we're so pleased. Many thanks for your assistance on this critical role for our organization.



Helen Huang
VP of Human Resources



1

Discovery with the CEO

2

Meeting to understand the criteria of the exclusive search

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Search project launched within 1 hour of approval

4

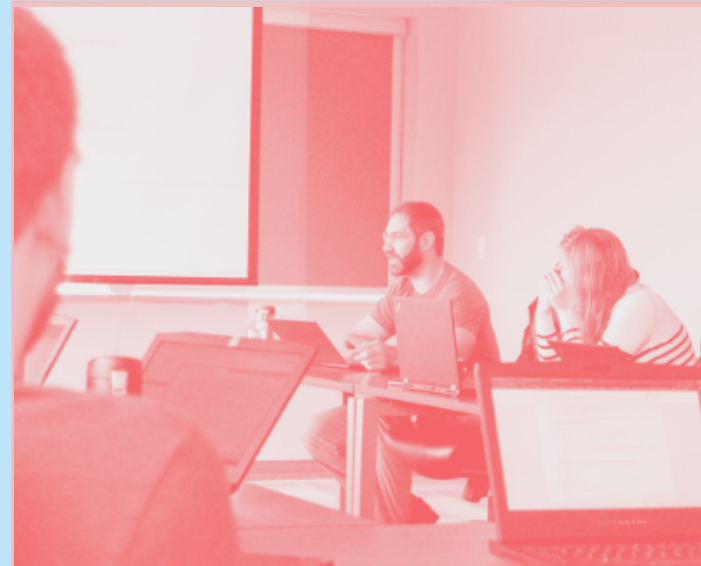
Weekly sync meetings with CEO. Data, full transparency and visibility into the search provided

5

1 CFO hire made

The Challenge

After scaling successfully through bootstrapping and building out key departments, they had historically relied on contract CFOs, it was clear they had outgrown interim support. Finding a finance leader with M&A experience, large-scale operational know-how, and the cultural alignment to thrive in a fast-paced, collaborative, and values-driven environment.



The Solution

The Leadership Agency was highly referred to their CEO through Pender Ventures. The first step in TLA's unique sourcing process began with a debrief call with their CEO to fully understand their requirements and gain in-depth knowledge of the company, the culture, and the brand.

Our Process

Everything starts with a discovery.

Discovery with ELT

Our team began by connecting with Pender Ventures to gain deeper insight into DistillerSR and this critical phase of their growth. We then met with DistillerSR's CEO to fully understand the scope of the role, the business challenges at hand, and—most importantly—the 'why' behind the hire.

Finance Function Deep Dive

To truly align with the goals of a business – and identify and attract the best candidates for the role – requires an understanding of the financials. The Leadership Agency acquires comprehensive knowledge of a company's revenue model by asking the right questions: Are they looking to grow current contract revenue, acquire net new business, lower their churn rate, increase monthly recurring revenue, expand into new markets, or go upmarket and get to the enterprise?

Setting Timelines

The Leadership Agency set up transparent and aggressive timelines in advance so that DistillrSR would know what results to expect and when. DistillerSR understood and approved the precise dimensions of the search.

The Result

Within an hour of its initial consultation, The Leadership Agency launched the search. Key deliverables included...

- Search launched within an hour of approval.
- Within five business days, DistillerSR was presented with vetted, qualified candidates and a talent market analysis.
- The Leadership Agency team held detailed conversations with the CEO and COO to find just a few who would be great fits for the DistillerSR's goals and team.
- The Leadership Agency has now helped DistillerSR find and hire a CFO and a CRO.

The End!



Ready to see where we can take you?