

# STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES

an executive search and consulting firm

*"To survive you have to know where to hunt."*

- Valley Headhunter



***As a boutique executive search firm, Strategic Alternatives specializes in senior executive and mid-level searches for venture backed startups to mature companies pushing the leading edge in high technology. We are located in Silicon Valley & Orange County CA and have been performing searches for clients in the U.S. and abroad since 1986.***

***Strategic Alternatives***  
***an Executive Search Firm Located in***  
***Silicon Valley & Orange County CA***  
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*"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do."*

- Henry Ford

## Company Profile

**At Strategic Alternatives**, we understand how enterprises function and have the requisite business acumen, insight and tenacity to find qualified candidates for companies throughout the U.S. and abroad. We bring to clients practical hands-on expertise in engineering, sales and marketing, research & development, software and hardware product development, and operations.

We're well equipped to perform searches from CEOs to CTOs, from General Managers to Directors of Sales. We do our own research (this includes comprehensive reference checks, screening and interviewing) and have the same access to candidates as the largest executive search firms nationwide. Our seasoned principals directly manage and conduct the executive search in order to effectively network and identify candidates in the manner most effective for each search assignment.

Our relationship with clients is analogous to that of player-coach. Because of our background and experience, we can easily comprehend any complex business, marketing and technical requirements and articulate the opportunities and benefits of each position. We can also help potential candidates look at new positions and help them evaluate the overall opportunity in light of their experience, career goals and personal situation if they accept the position our client is offering.

*President/Chief Executive Officer. Senior Vice President Sales & Marketing. Vice President Business Development. Vice President Engineering. Vice President Networking and Internet Technology Research...*

Just a few examples of core positions we regularly find for clients. At Strategic Alternatives, we deliver to your company highly qualified candidates that can make a difference.

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*"The only way round is through."*

- Robert Frost

## Our Markets

### Strategic Alternatives focuses on these principal markets:

Computer & Networking Systems  
Emerging Products, Peripherals & Imaging  
Enterprise, Applications, & System Software  
Internet & e-Commerce  
Lasers & Optronics  
Medical Devices / Bio / Pharma / Healthcare  
MEM's & Micro Device Technologies  
Semiconductor Process / Capital Equipment  
Storage Systems  
Wired / Wireless Networking & Communications

### Examples of positions filled from these markets include:

President/CEO  
CTO  
SVP Sales & Marketing  
SVP Mobile Computing  
VP Internet Architecture  
VP Marketing  
VP Sales  
VP Operations & Customer Care  
VP Business Development  
VP Software Development  
VP Engineering  
VP Internet Technology & Ecommerce Operations  
Director PDA Development  
Director Business Development  
Director Content  
Director Information Systems  
Director Technical Services

*"Everything should be made as simple  
as possible, but not simpler"*

- Albert Einstein

## ***Partial Client List***

Since the company's inception in 1986, **Strategic Alternatives** has performed senior executive and midlevel searches for a blue chip roster of Fortune 500 clients, as well as start-ups that have become multi-million dollar corporations. Some of these have included:

***Adobe***

***Arteris- Networking on a chip***

***Amalfi Semiconductor-RFIC***

***AT&T Research Labs***

***Apple Computer***

***Aurigin Systems***

***Borland***

***Claris***

***Correlate***

***Dupont Photomasks, Inc.***

***EoPlex***

***Equator Systems***

***GigaSpaces***

***Globespan Capital Partners***

***Good Technology***

***IBM***

***Imedia Corp. (acquired by Terayon)***

***Imedia Chip Business Unit***

***Integrated Materials Inc.***

***Integrated Telcom Express(Itex)***

***K2Optronics***

***Laplink.com (Traveling Software)***

***Lifemasters (formerly HiLife)***

***Lighwave Electronics***

***Logitech***

***Magnifi.com***

***Mercado Software***

***Mobius Microsystems***

***Microfabrica***

***MicroUnity Systems Engineering***

***More.com (GreenTree Nutrition)***

***NanoNexus***

***Natel Engineering***

***NEXT Computers***

***NextNet Wireless***

***Novellus***

***PocketScience***

***Quartics***

***Radius***

***SeeRun***

***Silicon Graphics***

***Spectrum Labs***

***SunAmerica***

***Sun Microsystems***

***Surgient Networks***

***Symbian (United Kingdom)***

***TecStar***

***Terayon Communications***

***Touchdown Technologies***

***Tularik***

***ViaFone***

***Winbond Electronics***

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*"Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."*

- Will Rogers

## Management Team

### IRA M. MARKS

Ira Marks has over 35 years of broad business, marketing and technical management experience. His experience spans 14 years of employment at IBM, from managing scientific programming, design and development of Graphics CAD programs and distributed processing systems to Senior Program Manager reporting to IBM's Senior Vice President of Information Systems. He has also chaired numerous IBM inter-divisional task forces to resolve issues in areas of design automation, network security, and preparedness of IBM to manufacture a new computer generations. Experience includes working for IBM Sales & Marketing groups, where he led numerous studies for customers to help them understand and harness the latest Engineering Development Technologies available and help them meet and exceed their mission requirements.

His tenure at IBM is followed with 2 years at Benson, Inc., a printer/plotter and controller company, as Executive Vice President Business Planning and Development. Mr. Marks then founded his own company, Synergy Computer Graphics Corporation, a venture capital financed firm, where he was Executive Vice President and a member of The Board of Directors. The company was sold to Nippon Steel.

In 1986 Mr. Marks founded Strategic Alternatives, initially providing business and technical consulting to large and small companies. He developed the executive recruiting business as a result of customers needing his assistance to develop new organizations in a very targeted and timely manner.

### BOB WHITE - Director of Search

Moving through successive technology waves in the Valley from 1970's to high-speed broadband and wireless networking, Bob has accrued 28+ years of experience in executive recruiting. He successfully recruits in all functional areas of high technology firms, from individual contributors to Vice Presidents. His industry experience includes being Corporate Staffing Manager at both Advanced Micro Devices, and Atari where he managed ramp up staffing activities. He has successfully built and directed large teams of recruiters.

Expanding on his successes in professional recruitment, Bob personally took on the position of National Sales Manager/founder in a startup. He built a team of regional sales managers, system engineers, VARs, and reps in the U.S. and Far East markets for both data communications and CAD software products.

With hands-on experience in semiconductor, communications, and software firms, in both recruiting and sales management, Bob brings a clear vision of how teams fit together and operate in profitable high tech enterprises. A passionate "tekkie", Bob submerges himself in technical materials and business models to effectively engage himself with his clients' markets, products, and candidates. He brings a unique human resources perspective to his clients having worked both as a provider and a consumer of various recruitment services during his career.



## **KAREN SAUCIER**

Karen joined Strategic Alternatives as executive search consultant in 1997, after working for a Silicon Valley global search firm. She specializes in placing executive management professionals in all functional areas, with a particular focus on enterprise and emerging technologies and services. Karen is instrumental in new business development and strategic planning for the firm.

Karen received her BA in Industrial Arts from San Jose State University. She is an affiliate of the Software Developer's Forum and the Silicon Valley Association of Software Entrepreneurs (SVASE). She held positions in various tech search firms and has a diverse background involving both corporate and medical sales, marketing and advertising/design.



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*"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work."*

- Thomas Alva Edison

## FAQ

### ***What is your procedure for interviewing candidates?***

After the client has approved the position description, Strategic Alternatives starts to identify potential candidates through pursuing three channels simultaneously:

- *Looking through our own extensive database for potential qualified candidates.*
- *Networking with our industry contacts for reference to qualified candidates.*
- *Targeting companies in similar and directly competitive businesses where potential qualified candidates may exist, and identifying those people.*

Once we contact potential candidates, we present the opportunity to see if they would be interested in exploring it, and filter their qualifications against the position requirements.

A position description is then forwarded to candidates we feel are promising. At the same time, we obtain their resume for review. We then either personally meet with these candidates, or spend time on the phone thoroughly interviewing them reviewing their qualifications to make sure they are a fit for the position, and answering their questions regarding the company's opportunity and position.

References are requested and preliminary reference checks (two or three) are conducted. If we feel we have an excellent candidate that is interested and meets the criteria, we move forward to present them to the client and a meeting is arranged.

If the client feels comfortable with the candidate, we continue the reference checking and present the results in writing for our client to review. Since we are pursuing multiple candidates, the search, review, and client interview processes overlap as the search moves forward.

Once the client indicates which candidate they prefer, we work closely with them to present an offer that would be appealing to the candidate.

During our initial interview process we learn what the candidates' compensation requirements are, and we also discuss housing and relocation issues and requirements.



***How long does it normally take to fill a position?***

From a planning perspective, allow at least three months to bring someone on board. It takes about 30 days to target companies, perform the research, contact initial candidates, qualify, obtain resumes, conduct reference checks and introduce them to the client. We continue from there until the search is filled.

***What experience do you bring to my industry?***

We have dealt with thousands of candidates, representing a wide variety of vertical markets. These include applications and systems software; computer and network development; consumer products and peripherals; hardware and software systems; Internet and e-commerce; and telecom/wireless. We're comfortable performing senior executive and mid-level searches in many different industries.

When hiring a search firm, it's important to establish a level of communication and trust with the search firm, since they will become an extension of your organization while they are recruiting. It's vital to make sure that the senior members of the recruiting firm are your key day-to-day contacts.

At Strategic Alternatives, we wear a number of hats –serving as senior level consultants, investigators, sales people, even as 'coaches' during the recruitment process. We're able to effectively handle any type of executive level search for our varied clients.

***What do you expect from us?***

You and your management team need to be available to review and interview candidates in a timely manner, as well as deliver a consistent message to the prospective hires.

***Are you involved in the negotiation with the candidates?***

We recommend to you what type of package would be required to attract the candidate, but the company extends the offer. We work on the sideline to foster closure by helping resolve any differences or concerns, and help negotiate any items to complete the hire. We stay in touch with client firm and hired candidate to make sure the transition is a smooth one.

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"Well done is better than well said."  
- Benjamin Franklin

## TESTIMONIALS

"Our company fulfills a unique industry niche – Imedia develops and markets products that enable cable operators to select and customize their program lineup for viewer preferences, while maximizing video capacity and quality over standards-based set-top boxes. Our products are used for cable, satellite and terrestrial television operators to manage compressed digital video. We needed a President/CEO as well as a Senior Vice President of Sales & Marketing, both of whom had the specialized knowledge and expertise to help our business grow.

Strategic Alternatives found qualified individuals for both positions very quickly for us. They also mediated all compensation issues. Their work was insightful and comprehensive and we couldn't be happier with the senior executives now on board."

***Efi Arazi, Chairman, Imedia Corp. (Chairman EFI & founder of Scitex Corp.), San Francisco, CA***

"We needed a CEO who had extensive enterprise software expertise, was experienced in doing IPOs and had helped nurture companies from their very first basic steps, developing them into a successful revenue making operations. The task was daunting, but Strategic Alternatives found our ideal candidate. What really helped us were two major factors – Strategic Alternatives investigated dozens of candidates and screened them well so we didn't have to waste any time talking to a lot of unqualified individuals -- we had very specific requirements. The firm attracted some big names for us to interview, which was a real coup, because at the time, we were a young company with no track record.

Secondly, Strategic Alternatives was very flexible with their payment terms. We didn't have a lot of money, so they were amenable to a payment plan that included a combination of cash and stock. The CEO we now have on board has been exceptional, and has already achieved some of our initial corporate objectives. I would highly recommend Strategic Alternatives to any company looking for a senior executive – they came through for us!"

***Ron Neumann, Chairman, Correlate Technologies, a San Francisco, CA company that develops and markets dynamic information integration products allowing Web surfers, market researchers and enterprise application integrators to conquer 'information overload.'***

"I hired Strategic Alternatives to recruit a Vice President of Internet Technology and Electronic Commerce Operations for our venture-backed e-commerce start-up. The candidate I was looking for was quite literally, Superman! Strategic Alternatives delivered an exceptional individual with whom I am very with today. I wouldn't hesitate to use the firm's services again. The firm was extremely diligent and provided helpful insights along the way in how to deal with candidates, preparing offers and negotiating relocation packages."

***Don Kendall, Chief Executive Officer, More.com (formerly GreenTree Nutrition), a San Francisco, CA e-commerce online drugstore.***



"We are a provider of value-added extranets for marketing professionals within Global 2000 companies, their ad agencies and business partners. Magnifi acts as a comprehensive source of content, communications and collaboration. Our firm needed a Vice President of Engineering who would be technically at home with the latest Web technologies, e-commerce and rich content, and also have the management skills to work at a senior strategic level with customers, partners and staff. We wanted an individual who not only had previous expertise in working for a large company but also knew the difficulties of being at a start-up.

With the job market tight in Silicon Valley we thought finding someone with all of these skills would be impossible, but Strategic Alternatives found the ideal candidate for us. They did the research and sent us detailed summaries of each candidate's accomplishments prior to our conducting any interviews, which saved us a great deal of time. They also pointed out to us key employment issues that weren't immediately noticeable to us. Bottom line – we're currently contemplating creating and filling a number of senior level positions, and we'll use Strategic Alternatives again – in a heartbeat!"

***Eric Hoffert, Chief Technology Officer, Magnifi, Inc., Cupertino, CA.***

*"What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure."*

- Samuel Johnson

## Press

***Executive Express In-Flight Interview for American Airlines & Delta Airlines, hosted by Ron Kilgore.*** (below)

***Headhunting 101*** ([read it](#))

## In-Flight Interview

**Announcer (Ron Kilgore):** One of the most significant recent trends in the executive search arena has been a shift from large firms to smaller and mid-sized firms, especially at the CEO and senior management levels. Here to share his perspective on this is Ira Marks, President and founder of Strategic Alternatives. Ira has over a 20+years of experience in the field. His company, Strategic Alternatives, is a retained, boutique executive search and consulting firm in Silicon Valley and Orange County that specializes in performing searches within the high technology industry. Ira, thanks for being with us today.

**Ira:** It's nice to be here in the friendly skies.


**Ron:** Tell us about this trend. Why are so many mid-sized and boutique agencies getting these high level searches? The large firms have all the connections and services. So why would a company choose a boutique agency like yours?

**Ira:** Ron, there are a number of contributing reasons why this is happening:

One, is that executive recruiters do not solicit candidates from their clients for other searches they are performing. The larger multi-office firms have accrued many more clients , and as a result, have substantially diminished their pool of potential candidates from which they can draw from.

Second, is that in larger firms, the Managing Partners sell the searches to clients, but then delegate the actual search work to the back office subordinates, where as in boutique firms, the principals of the firm sell and conduct the searches, using their seasoned years of experience.

They develop relationships with the potential candidates, and evaluate their experience, management skills, and achievements against their clients requirements, as well as take a close look at the chemistry fit.



***"...our experience allows us to understand our clients business, and where helpful, guide them building their organization, defining the position requirements, and finding and recommending the best candidates...."***

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Thirdly, in a search firm like Strategic Alternatives, you are hiring the experience of the Principals of the firm, and not the name or size of the organization.

***With the advent of the internet, the boutique firm has the same access to the available candidate pool and people network, but what differentiates them, is their seasoned years of experience that allows them to carefully aim for and select the best candidates and the fact we are committed and need to be successful to develop the reference base for our next searches.***

***In essence, you are hiring the specific surgeon, not the institution and its interns.***

**Ron:** Strategic Alternatives performs searches in the high tech market. I understand that this evolved out of your years in the technology industry -- IBM; then you founded your own company that you subsequently sold to Nippon. How has this background helped you?

**Ira:** I have a technology education from Brooklyn Polytechnic in Systems Science Engineering dealing with a lot of unknowns in black box theory. At IBM, I handled many functions, coming up from the development ranks starting in East Fishkill developing hardware and software systems, advanced Graphic CAD and ECAD Systems and then crossing into Headquarters Management and Sales and Marketing, where I was a special consultant to the field force applying the latest information technology solutions within IBM to Customer businesses.

I was then recruited to Silicon Valley to lead business development and advanced development in a privately held peripherals spin off company, called Benson-Varian

Later, I started my own venture funded peripherals company, Synergy Computer Graphics, which produced the first Wide Format single pass 400 dpi Color Printer using very advanced technologies for the time. The company was later sold to Nippon with 3M being closing involved because of their unique substrate for large format color printing .

This experience was invaluable, providing me with a first hand perspective of the types and qualities of people who are most apt to be successful in different sized companies.

This led to creating Strategic Alternatives, where we focus 100% on high tech markets; such as, systems & application software,



hardware systems, electronic-commerce, communications & networking, semiconductor capital equipment & process engineering, MEMs, as well as bleeding edge technology development.

We search for CEOs, CTOs, General Managers, Vice Presidents, Directors, and Senior Contributors across all functional areas for companies ranging in size from small venture-backed startups to larger corporations, each pursuing new technologies and markets.

We are not limited by specific technology area, functional area, or discipline; and frankly, we like to move across areas so we don't over fish the markets and disciplines we work in.

***Our experience allows us to understand our client's business, and where helpful, guide them in building their organization, defining the position requirements, and finding and recommending the best candidates.***

**Ron:** Another trend in the search industry: the Internet job boards, electronic searching and so on. Do you feel that this is truly going to revolutionize your field?

**Ira:** The Internet has had a positive impact on executive level search in that it is a powerful tool for researching and facilitating global communications. It gives us incredible reach and ability to identify candidates for our clients. The larger search firms no longer have any edge because resources or their network of offices.

**But executive search is about finding people. High quality, well-challenged people do not have the time to surf the web looking for job opportunities.**

**Seasoned executive recruiters still must take careful aim to look for companies and passive candidates who are not actively looking for jobs may exist that fit the requisite skills and experience our clients need.**


**You cannot just rely on people responding to bulletin board notices or filling candidate banks! You need to be pro-active in today's competitive environment!**

**We identify and contact potential candidates, both to get their attention and to attract them, and to be able to discuss the opportunity with them personally.**

**We have the expertise and ability to handle a broad range of assignments for companies, each pushing the technology envelope in their markets.**

**Ron:** So what do you see as the future trends in executive search?

**Ira:** Well, we are in a time of information overload.



There are many online databases and new search firm configurations emerging trying to manage this flow. But the Internet by itself or artificial intelligence is not a replacement for an executive recruiter. It is a tool to leverage and solve the executive search challenge.

**Our role as executive recruiters is information interpretation. *The Seasoned Years of Experience* is what ferrets out the well-qualified individual to fit our client's needs.**

If your listeners have a position to be filled, and want a team that can effectively understand and leverage technology, just call us!

**Ron:** Ira, thanks.

Ira Marks of Strategic Alternatives. To learn more about executive search or Strategic Alternatives, check out our listing in the entertainment guide in the seat pocket in front of you.

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## Press

**HEADHUNTING 101** *Software Forum*, Vol. 14, No. 11

For those uninitiated, there are two types of executive search firms, contingency and retained, both of which respond to the needs, and have their fees paid by the hiring companies seeking qualified candidates. This differs markedly from agencies, hired by candidates, who only provide guidance on how candidates should market themselves to find a job.

## Contingency vs. Retained Search

Contingency firms generally handle individual contributors to mid-level management positions. Their fees are paid only if their candidate is hired and, as such, they can only invest their time on the easier to fill positions, forwarding a number of resumes of candidates to a company, no matter where they appear within the target area. The bulk of these candidates may be unqualified for the specific position, thus putting a greater demand on the hiring manager's time and resources to filter through. Good people are well challenged and not looking for new positions. A hiring firm needs a recruiter to not just submit the easily identifiable candidates, but to seek out, contact, qualify, and attract the best candidates. In contingency recruiting, neither the hiring firm nor the search agency are making a commitment. And a hiring plan without a commitment is just a wish.

Retained search firms are used to fill special individual contributor and more senior level executive positions. These firms are hired to seek a specific profile for the company. The retained search firm is guaranteed a part of the placement fee at the initiation of a search. These firms perform a targeted and thorough search, first investing time in analyzing their client's needs, and then in parallel: researching companies where the talent they seek may reside, reviewing their database for candidates, and also contacting individuals to network with, to help identify additional candidates. Recruiters share their client company's opportunity with a likely candidate and discuss how it may fit and benefit their career. Potential candidates are interviewed and qualified as to the appropriateness of their skills and experience, their interest level, as well as chemistry match.


Retained search involves a greater understanding of client needs, culture, direction and opportunities, plus a much more in-depth search and background check to arrive at a short list of qualified candidates. To a business, this translates into a difference in depth of expertise, level of commitment, and type of service. To a candidate, it can mean the difference in level or quality of a position and the company's seriousness and financial commitment to find a candidate with the right fit. It's important that the proper time is allotted to define the search criteria and that it is well understood between the client and the search firm before initiating a search, since a search firm may speak with over a 100 executives before recommending just a few.

## Where do you start?

It is advisable for emerging companies to first hire through their own network of contacts before seeking out the services and expense of a search firm. In selecting a search firm, there are a number of very good resources such as Kennedy's Directory of Executive Recruiters ([www.kennedypub.com](http://www.kennedypub.com)) or The Industry Standard ([www.thestandard.com](http://www.thestandard.com)). Find a search firm that specializes in your industry. Search firms are either national chains (which are usually generalists), or smaller boutique firms that specialize in an industry. Advantages of a boutique search firm are: they don't have a long list of companies that are off-limits for their candidate search due to contractual obligations of another office in their chain; and they are generally more aggressive in the overall search process.

## You're the Product

Your resume is a product description of you, your strengths, experience, and value you could be to a business. It should describe you in terms of your features, functions, and benefits to a



company. Have a clear objective which defines appropriate positions that you are best suited for. If you are too vague, those reading your resume will have to make assumptions that may be right only 50% of the time. Include a professional summary that briefly conveys your years of experience, strengths, breadth and depth of experience, and successes. Follow with a detailed work history in reverse chronological order. Don't be too concerned about length. If the objective and summary is of interest, the rest will be read! For the recruiter, a brief cover letter outlining your goals and your current compensation range gives them a clearer snapshot of your situation. It's fine to distribute your resume to multiple search firms but keep track of where each firm is sending your information and make certain you indicate that your resume may only be submitted with your permission.

**When to begin a relationship with a recruiter?**

Establish contact with recruiters before you need one. Search firms seek candidates out when they have a given position to fill that might be appropriate for you. Your resume is added to the database, tracked, and you are called if there is a potential fit for their current search, or when they need your suggestion of others who may be a fit. Stay in the loop by networking.

Corporations benefit by establishing ongoing relationships with search firms who can not only find them top level talent as needed, but who can also act as an advisory partner providing business insights.

More executive failure is attributed to a poor fit than to a lack of competence. A strong and clearly developed company/recruiter liaison can do much to facilitate a company's growing pains.

*Ira M. Marks & Karen Saucier of Strategic Alternatives in Portola Valley, a high tech, boutique, retained search firm assisting in mid- to top-level management placement since 1986.*