

A Unique Model in Executive Recruitment Designed to Meet the Needs of Life Sciences and Healthcare Companies of All Sizes: **Bench International**



Denise (DeeDee) DeMan, Chairman & CEO

Meet the leader behind the success of Bench International

Denise (DeeDee) DeMan is the **Chairman** and **CEO** of Bench International. With an indefatigable, pioneering and entrepreneurial spirit, DeeDee has taken Bench from its founding in 1974 to its eminence today as one of the most successful companies “shattering” diversity ceilings bringing women, people of color, as well as those who “think” and “do” differently to leadership roles in life science companies. DeeDee built Bench International from a single-person executive search and advisory firm to a global firm with unwavering commitment to provide Bench’s clients with Best in Class “Athletes” who bring them closer to changing the course of diseases. DeeDee is as passionate today about the business as the day she founded it. She loves that she and her team make a difference for their clients and organizations. She is driven to continually deliver her clients a unique, high quality experience.

In the fast-paced world we live in, the life sciences industry is on the front lines developing and commercializing lifesaving and transformative innovations. Beyond the biological and technical expertise necessary to revolutionize healthcare, companies also require visionary leadership in their C-suites. Without transformative, diverse and enlightened direction, these firms will not convert on the vast opportunities that lay ahead in the life sciences field.

Globally, there are various companies specializing in delivering excellent executive search services for the life sciences segment, but Bench International stands out from the rest. Bench International is the oldest woman-founded executive search firm serving the Life Science and Healthcare sectors. The firm is also one of the most renowned experts in diversity recruitment at the board and executive level, as well as in R&D leadership. Bench’s scorecard reflects over \$150 billion in successful client exits, a 98% project completion record, with 75% retention for five or more years. 33% of all leaders placed in Bench’s 45+ year history have been gender and ethnically diverse. With headquarters in San Diego, California, and satellite offices in -, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, The United Kingdom, and Switzerland, Bench is One Global Team, No Borders, No Boundaries, and One Global Budget, thus mitigating internally competitive offices.

In conversation with, Denise (DeeDee) DeMan Chairman and CEO of Bench International

What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the life sciences industry today?

One of the biggest challenges facing the life science industry is closing the diversity gap with talented leaders, who also happen to be female, Black, Latinx, LGBTQ, and other historically underrepresented groups. At the inception of Bench International we recognized the value of diversity in the C-Suite and boardroom and built a company, without borders, boundaries or bias, equipped to recruit the best talent. We recently announced the launch of our proprietary Bank of Women®, a program that features 550+ executive women leaders for board seats and the C-suite. Empowering female leaders has been a career-long commitment of mine. As a result, Bench has been building this cohort of exceptionally qualified female leaders for over 30 years. The introduction of Bank of Women® represents a unique and innovative opportunity for the life sciences industry to recruit experienced women leaders for their C-suite and board of director positions. Our commitment to diversity also includes building key local alliances and creating a partnership with specific platforms that contribute to the life sciences industry. Our memberships and sponsorships include New England Healthcare

Executive Network, Life Science Cares, Women in Bio, Massachusetts Biotechnology Council, BIOCOM, as well as BioNJ.

How do you prevent mis-hires and maintain the efficiency of your services?

We do a lot of upfront work in vetting for organizational and cultural fit before we recommend a leader for placement. We must understand how the candidate handles stressful situations, works within teams, etc. To that end, we also leverage third-party assessment tools that assess working and communication styles and how a candidate remains constant, or may be negatively impacted in a pressurized situation. We have built a database of over a 150,000 active candidates around the world, and we supplement this talent pool with primary research for our engagements.

Diversity and inclusion are more of a challenge today than ever before. With an increase in laws and regulations focused on workplace diversity, how do you help your clients drastically alter their recruiting and HR policies to keep up and meet the strict compliance standards in place today?

First, we are selective as to which clients we work with. They must be committed to diversity and inclusion and recognize the organizational benefits of a diverse leadership team versus just checking a box on diversity. Next, we work closely with our clients to identify the unmet needs within the organization and find the best candidate. Over the last 5 years, Bench has averaged 50% diversity in our placements. In 2020, the company achieved 64% diversity

in placements, of which 32% were women.

How do you market your services?

The majority of our business comes from word of mouth. We have over 30,000 LinkedIn connections. As a team we believe strongly in being active and giving back to the life science community. We also participate in coaching opportunities and pro-bona.

How is Bench International evolving to meet industry needs?

At the beginning of the year, we launched the Bank of Women®. The introduction of Bank of Women represents a unique and innovative opportunity for the life science industry to recruit experienced women leaders for their C-suite and board of director positions. Bench International’s Bank of Women® is positioned to meet the growing demand for women in the boardroom. NASDAQ filed a proposal in late November with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) that would require listed companies to have at least one woman on their boards, impacting nearly 3,000 corporations listed on its exchange. If approved by the SEC, companies would have to disclose board-diversity statistics within one year. We recognized an unmet need for board-ready and C-suite women executives. We explored and prudently developed a program to provide coaching, mentoring, and sponsoring of women leaders to meet the growing demand. Today we have over 550 women who are ‘banked’ and ready for placement. Substantial research demonstrates that diversity brings many advantages to an organization, including increased profitability and creativity, stronger governance, and better problem-solving abilities.

According to a recent Boston Consulting Group study, companies with more diverse management teams have 19% higher revenues due to innovation.

The Bank of Women is a powerful resource for both life science organizations and women pursuing their first board position. Many talented, qualified women are just not being recognized to the detriment of many companies. The Bank of Women and Bench International will help guide their development and promote their talents as highly qualified board members and C-suite executives.

What does the future hold for your company and its customers? Are exciting things on the way?

We are in our 5th generation and have a high level of exuberance and confidence regarding the future. We are growing steadily and keeping our focus on the client and maintaining our performance-driven, personal touch. We recently launched Bench Animal Health, and we are in the process of creating, “*The Diversity Bank.*”^{SR}

“Our Team’s values and commitment require that we are more than recruiters. We are dedicated members in service to the Life Science and Healthcare Communities.”