



Case Study

An aerial photograph of a large-scale solar farm. The solar panels are arranged in neat, parallel rows across a green field. A line of trees with yellow and orange autumn foliage separates the solar farm from a body of water on the left. The sky is clear and blue.

“CFO Recruit ran a very thorough process to find a CFO for us. We were astounded by the large number of candidates screened and interviewed.”

**Tom McCalmont, Founder,
McCalmont Engineering**

Key achievements

- Partnered with McCalmont Engineering on a retained basis following a recent shift to an ESOP structure and the Founders' decision to bring in their first CFO.
- Reviewed close to 150 candidate profiles and conducted detailed competency-based interviews with 27 potential candidates.
- Delivered a shortlist of 10 highly qualified finance leaders, narrowed to 7 for first stage interviews and 3 for final round.
- Identified a clear front runner with local market knowledge, relevant sector experience and proven record administering ESOP structures.

The Challenge



Finding a First-Time CFO for a Growing ESOP Business

McCalmont Engineering needed more than a finance executive with a strong resume.

A privately owned, Bay Area engineering company specializing in green energy projects, McCalmont had grown steadily since its founding. Following a recent transition to an ESOP, the Founders recognized the business had reached a point where a dedicated CFO was essential to sustaining that growth.

The right candidate needed to:

- Bring proven CFO level experience within a project focused business.
- Understand the mechanics and governance of ESOP structures.
- Be based locally to work closely with the leadership team and add value quickly.

McCalmont interviewed several search firms before selecting CFO Recruit on a retained basis.

Our recruiter at CFO Recruit reflected on the search:

"What stood out from the initial briefing was how seriously Tom and Darlene take employee engagement. They have built a business that genuinely values its people and customers, and that gave us a compelling story to present to candidates."

An aerial photograph of a vast solar farm. The solar panels are arranged in neat, parallel rows across a green field. A dirt road runs through the middle of the farm, and a small blue truck is visible on it. In the background, there are some buildings and more solar panels. The text "The Search" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font in the upper right quadrant.

The Search

The Recruitment Process

CFO Recruit structured the search to move quickly, recognizing that finance leaders with relevant ESOP experience are rarely on the market for long.

- **Discovery and Alignment:** Conversations with Tom and Darlene McCalmont covered the ESOP transition and the experience needed to add value quickly.
- **Market Mapping:** Close to 150 candidate profiles were reviewed across the Bay Area finance market, with particular attention paid to project based and employee owned business backgrounds.
- **Competency Interviews:** Detailed interviews were conducted with 27 potential candidates, assessing technical grounding, leadership style and familiarity with ESOP governance.
- **Candidate Shortlisting:** A shortlist of 10 was presented to the client, with 7 candidates progressing to first stage interviews and 3 reaching the final round.
- **Final Interviews and Placement:** A clear front runner emerged: a locally based candidate with relevant sector experience and a record administering ESOP structures.

A rigorous, multi stage process gave McCalmont Engineering confidence in their final choice, backed by one of the most thorough searches CFO Recruit has run.

Why CFO Recruit?



Why CFO Recruit?

A retained, consultative partnership gave McCalmont Engineering confidence that every candidate presented had been properly assessed against both the technical demands of the role and the realities of operating within an ESOP structure.

Reflecting on the process, Tom McCalmont said:

"The team has a tremendous work ethic and we were astounded by the large number of candidates screened and interviewed to present a shortlist of highly qualified individuals for consideration. We appreciated the support throughout the entire recruitment process and we would highly recommend CFO Recruit for finance leadership recruiting."

The candidate response was equally strong throughout. Tom stayed responsive and engaged with candidates at every stage, and the appointed CFO proved a pleasure to work with, leaving both sides confident the match was right.



We'll help you find the perfect candidate

If you are looking for an exceptional CFO, or another Senior Executive, please talk to us about your requirements.

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