GOOD SOUL HUNTING

Building Your 2026 Wellness Dream Team

The Wellness Leader's Guide to Finding and Keeping Impact Players Who Drive Growth

You already know the difference a truly exceptional leader makes. The VP of Sales who doesn't just hit targets but builds a culture where your best people want to stay and grow. The Director of Operations who doesn't just manage locations but opens new ones while keeping member experience flawless. That's what we call an Impact Player — and settling for anything less costs you far more than an empty seat.

Executive mis-hires don't just disappoint. They derail initiatives, damage culture, and drain momentum — with some studies estimating the true cost at 10 to 15 times their annual salary once you factor in severance, lost productivity, and the A-players who quietly leave when leadership doesn't match their standards.

Here's what makes 2026 particularly high-stakes: the U.S. wellness market has reached $2.31 trillion and is growing toward $3.70 trillion by 2034. Fitness employment is projected to grow 14% over the next decade — significantly faster than average — creating roughly 69,000 openings every single year. And 37.3% of the workforce? They're passive candidates. They're not scrolling job boards. They're delivering results for someone else, and they won't see your posting no matter how well you write it.

If your hiring strategy starts with posting and waiting, you're missing the talent that will transform your organization.

This guide is your playbook for changing that.

Inside You'll Find:

- **The 7 Deadly Sins killing your wellness hires**
  And how to avoid every one of them.
- **The 5-Step Impact Player Framework**
  A repeatable system for identifying and securing wellness leaders who actually deliver, before your competitors even post the job.
- **How to reach hidden passive talent that represents over a third of the workforce**
  The good souls who would consider the right opportunity but will never find you on Indeed.
- **How to spot the "industry circlers"**
  Candidates who rotate through wellness brands collecting titles without delivering meaningful results, and how to tell them apart from genuine performers

One more thing worth knowing: the best candidates are off the market in 10 days. The average hiring process takes over 60. The gap between those two numbers is where great hires are lost.

Let's make sure the next one signs with you.

[TL;DR] The Good Soul Summary

For leaders who'd rather be on the gym floor than behind a desk — here's what this guide covers in under two minutes.

The talent crisis is real

The U.S. wellness market is growing toward $3.70 trillion by 2034. Fitness employment is projected to grow 14% over the next decade. And the best candidates? They're passive — not looking, not on job boards, and off the market within 10 days of interviewing. If your hiring process takes 60+ days, you're consistently missing the people who would make the biggest difference.

Timing changes everything

Proactive hiring costs 30 to 40 percent less than urgent mid-year searches. The brands building the strongest leadership teams aren't waiting until they're desperate. They're building pipelines now and moving with purpose when the right person appears.

The 7 Deadly Sins are costing you

Waiting for the "perfect" candidate. Moving too slowly. Undervaluing compensation. Overlooking cultural alignment. Skipping thorough reference checks. Neglecting onboarding. Treating hiring as someone else's problem. Every one of these is a pattern we've watched experienced leaders fall into — and every one is avoidable.

The 5-Step Impact Player Framework

Gives you the system. Define success beyond the job description. Access the hidden passive talent pool. Assess for competency and cultural DNA. Sell the opportunity, not just the job. Secure your Impact Players through the counteroffer danger zone and beyond.

The specialist advantage is measurable

Generalist recruiters can't tell your story with authenticity, recognize the industry circlers, or access the passive talent that only responds to someone who speaks their language. Our 80% one-year retention rate and 75% interview-to-submission ratio reflect what deep industry knowledge makes possible.

Ready to go deeper? Keep reading for the full frameworks, data, and strategies behind each of these — or jump straight to the section that matters most to you right now.

The Wellness & Fitness Talent Crisis

Every wellness leader we speak with knows what their organization looks like when the right people are in place. Growth feels purposeful. Culture holds under pressure. Expansion happens without sacrificing the member experience that defines the brand.

Now consider the inverse — what happens when you lose those leaders? The VP of Sales who's driven 30% membership growth. The Director of Operations who opened five new locations last year. The Marketing leader who built your brand presence from the ground up.

That kind of loss isn't hypothetical. In a market where demand for wellness leadership is outpacing supply in ways the industry has never seen, it's the challenge more organizations are facing than will openly admit.

The Wellness Opportunity

The U.S. health and wellness market reached $2.31 trillion in 2025 and is projected to expand to $3.70 trillion by 2034, growing at a compound annual rate of 5.4%. According to McKinsey, 82% of U.S. consumers now consider wellness a top or important priority in their everyday lives. Globally, the wellness economy hit a record $6.8 trillion in 2024 and is forecast to reach $8.5 trillion by 2027.

This growth is extraordinary — and it creates extraordinary demand for the leaders who can drive it.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects fitness employment to grow 14% from 2022 to 2032, significantly faster than average, translating to approximately 69,000 openings every single year. Many of those openings exist because talented people leave the industry entirely. The fitness sector is growing at 8.7% annually, with global club memberships projected to reach 230 million by 2030.

Meanwhile, the Global Wellness Institute notes that staff retention remains a critical challenge, particularly in roles where compensation lags behind other service industries. You're not just competing with other wellness brands for talent. You're competing with tech companies, financial services firms, and corporate roles that can offer higher salaries and more traditional benefits packages.

The talent is out there. But reaching them — and giving them a reason to choose you — requires a fundamentally different approach.

The Real Cost of Getting It Wrong

Research from the U.S. Department of Labor estimates that a bad hire can cost up to 30% of the employee's first-year earnings. Other studies place that figure between 50% and 200% of salary depending on role complexity.

For leadership positions, the stakes climb dramatically. According to research from Gartner and Harvard Business Review, a failed executive hire can cost 10 to 15 times the executive's annual salary once you account for severance, lost productivity, team morale, and derailed initiatives. A Leadership IQ study found that 46% of newly hired executives fail within 18 months — and the primary reason isn't technical incompetence. It's poor cultural alignment.

The compound effects matter just as much. Research shows that poor hiring decisions cut productivity by 40% and raise turnover by 54%. One leadership vacancy doesn't stay one vacancy for long.

The "Industry Circler" Pattern

There's something we see often enough in wellness hiring that it deserves its own conversation. Certain candidates rotate through companies every 18 months, accumulating impressive titles without delivering the results behind them. They know the language. Their resumes read well. They interview confidently.

But when you look closer, they've never actually built membership growth from scratch. They've never successfully scaled an e-commerce product or brand. They've never developed teams that stayed and thrived.

The pattern is easy to miss because hiring managers naturally equate familiarity with performance. They see "Director of Operations at [Well-Known Brand]" and assume competence without digging into whether that person inherited a stable operation or genuinely built something.

What makes this particularly costly is the ripple effect. When a B-player leader joins your organization, your A-players notice first. Top performers won't stay where leadership doesn't match their standards. They move on to stronger teams. What began as one questionable hire quietly becomes three open positions — in a market where finding even one great leader takes months.

The talent crisis is real. But it's also solvable when you approach hiring with the same strategic thinking you'd bring to any other part of your business.

Why Timing Is Everything

There's a useful analogy for how most organizations approach hiring: it's like grocery shopping when you're starving. Everything looks good, you'll pay whatever it takes, and you end up with choices you wouldn't have made on a full stomach.

The wellness brands that consistently build strong leadership teams don't hire reactively. They hire before they're desperate — and that single shift changes everything about the quality of talent they attract, the decisions they make, and the price they pay.

The Proactive Advantage

The data here is compelling. Research shows that proactive sourcing reduces time-to-fill by 37%. Strong employer branding reduces cost-per-hire by 43%. Early recruitment typically costs 30 to 40 percent less per role than urgent mid-year searches, because when companies rush to fill positions during peak periods, they pay premium rates across the board — recruiting services, expedited background checks, and higher candidate salaries driven by urgency rather than strategy.

But the financial savings, while meaningful, aren't the real advantage. The real advantage is clarity. When you're not hiring under pressure, you make strategic decisions instead of emotional ones. You choose the best person for the role rather than the best person who happens to be available.

The Speed Gap

Here's where timing becomes particularly critical: top candidates are off the market in 10 days or less once they begin actively interviewing. Data from Employ Inc.'s 2025 Hiring Benchmarks Report shows that the average time from job posting to accepted offer is 63.5 days.

Think about what that means in practice. By the time most hiring processes reach the offer stage, the strongest candidates have already committed elsewhere. If your process takes two months while the best people disappear in two weeks, you're consistently arriving after the window has closed.

This isn't about cutting corners or rushing decisions. It's about building a process that moves with purpose and intention so that when the right person appears, you're ready to act.

The Compound Effect

The real cost of delayed hiring isn't the individual vacancy. It's what happens next.

In the first month, a missing Director means the team stretches to cover. By month two, overtime is creeping up and energy is wearing thin. By month three, your strongest manager — the one who's been absorbing the extra load — starts exploring their own options. By month four, you're down two positions instead of one, operating in reactive mode. By month five, you're paying premiums to fill both roles simultaneously. By month six, new hires are still finding their footing while growth has stalled.

What began as "we'll wait for the right person" became a six-month spiral that cost five times what proactive hiring would have prevented.

There's a budget reality worth acknowledging here as well. Approved headcount that sits unfilled doesn't stay approved indefinitely. Every day that position goes unused is another day finance questions whether you truly need it. The organizations that treat open headcount with urgency aren't being impatient — they're being strategic.

The wellness brands leading their markets aren't doing anything mysterious. They build pipelines when others wait. They move with confidence when others hesitate. And they secure the good souls who will shape their future while the opportunity is still there.

Avoiding the 7 Deadly Sins of Wellness Hiring

Every hiring mistake in this section is one we've watched smart, experienced wellness leaders make. These aren't rookie errors — they're patterns that emerge when talented people are under pressure, short on time, and trying to do the right thing for their organizations. Recognizing them is the first step toward building a hiring process that consistently delivers.

Sin #1: Waiting for the "Perfect" Candidate

The search for a unicorn is one of the most common reasons great roles stay open far too long. Founders and hiring managers reject strong candidates over minor gaps, holding out for someone who checks every single box. The challenge is that the perfect candidate rarely exists — and if they do, they're almost certainly thriving where they are and not looking.

Meanwhile, competitors hired someone who was 90% of what they needed and invested in developing the other 10%. Those 60+ day vacancies don't just delay progress — they stall growth plans, push back expansion timelines, and burn out the team members covering the gap. We've seen brands miss entire busy seasons because they couldn't commit to a candidate who was genuinely strong but not flawless.

The Fix

Outline your interview process clearly from the start — and stick to it. Define what "great" looks like before you begin, distinguish between must-haves and nice-to-haves, and commit to a decision timeline. If someone is 80% right and shares your values, hire them and develop what's missing.

Sin #2: Moving Too Slowly

The best candidates are off the market within 10 days of actively interviewing. When your process takes two months, you're consistently losing your top choices to organizations that moved faster. We've seen it happen repeatedly — a client connects deeply with a candidate, schedules a third interview two weeks out, and learns they've already accepted elsewhere.

Every additional week in your hiring process increases candidate drop-off. Strong leaders have options, and they're not going to put their career decisions on hold while you schedule a fourth round of conversations.

The Fix

Streamline decision-making. Empower your hiring managers to move with confidence. Use scorecards to replace endless debate with structured evaluation. Most importantly, maintain candidate engagement and excitement throughout the process — communicate clearly, provide feedback promptly, and remember that the candidate experience reflects your brand. The good souls you want to hire are evaluating you just as carefully as you're evaluating them.

Sin #3: Undervaluing Compensation

Trying to secure A-player talent at B-player prices creates a predictable outcome: you hire someone who uses the role as a stepping stone. They join, learn what they can, and leave for market rate within 18 months. Then you're back where you started, having invested months of onboarding and development in someone who's now contributing to a competitor's growth.

The math is worth considering. A-players consistently deliver multiples more value than average performers, yet they typically cost only 15 to 20 percent more. That's significant return on a modest investment. Yet organizations will resist an additional $20,000 in salary while absorbing $150,000 in mis-hire and replacement costs without connecting the two. The U.S. Department of Labor estimates bad hires cost up to 30% of first-year salary — and for leadership roles, that figure climbs to 200% or higher.

The Fix

Pay market rate for top performers. The perceived savings disappear with the first round of turnover.

Sin #4: Overlooking Cultural Alignment

One misaligned leader can unravel a high-performing team faster than any process failure. Technical skills can be developed. The ability to lead with empathy, bring a founder's mindset to growth challenges, and build trust across a team — that's much harder to teach.

Wellness culture demands something specific from its leaders: genuine care for the member experience, collaborative instincts, and the drive to hustle when it matters while understanding that culture isn't a nice-to-have — it's the product. The best wellness leaders balance heart with hunger. A brilliant operator who lacks that balance will drive your best people out within months, regardless of the results they deliver.

Leadership IQ found that 46% of newly hired executives fail within 18 months, and the primary driver isn't a lack of competence. It's poor cultural fit. They had the skills. They didn't have the DNA.

THE TEST: Would you want this person building your franchisee culture? Would your best managers want to work for them? If the answer to either question is no, trust that instinct.

The Fix

Assess values alignment, leadership style, and team chemistry with the same rigor you bring to evaluating competency. Look for the rare balance of empathy and drive — leaders who care deeply about people and push relentlessly for results.

Sin #5: Skipping Thorough Reference Checks

Thorough reference checking means going beyond the surface. It means investing the time to speak with former colleagues, previous supervisors, and people who can speak to how a candidate actually operates day-to-day — not just how they present in an interview setting.

This is where the industry circler pattern becomes clear. A curated reference list will offer positive feedback — that's the nature of a selected group. The people who worked alongside them daily, who saw how they handled pressure, managed conflict, and delivered on commitments, tell a more complete story. We've helped clients avoid deeply costly hires by investing in one additional conversation that revealed a consistent pattern of overpromising and underdelivering.

The Fix

Make thorough reference checking a non-negotiable part of your process. Do your due diligence. Ask the right questions, listen carefully to what's said and what isn't, and invest the time upfront. Ninety minutes of thoughtful diligence can save you from a mistake that takes months to unwind.

Sin #6: Neglecting Onboarding

You invested months finding an exceptional VP or COO. They accepted the offer, navigated a counteroffer, and chose your organization. And then they arrive on day one to no plan, no structure, and no clear path to early wins.

The first 90 days shape whether your new hire becomes a long-term asset or an expensive question mark. Strong onboarding is a meaningful part of what drives our 80% one-year retention rate.

Day one essentials: Workspace or virtual workspace ready. 30-60-90 day plan documented. Mentor or onboarding partner assigned. Early wins identified. Weekly check-ins scheduled. For remote and hybrid leaders, ensure the same intentionality applies — technology set up, virtual introductions planned, and clear communication rhythms established from the start.

For VPs and above: Strategic priorities, cross-functional relationships mapped, board or investor context where relevant, and clear expectations for first-quarter deliverables.

For Directors: Team introductions with context, operational priorities review, key stakeholder meetings, system access and training — all prepared before they walk in the door.

A note for startups and growth-stage brands: Being early-stage doesn't exempt you from onboarding — if anything, it makes it more important. Your first leadership hires are shaping the culture and systems that everything else will be built on. Even a lightweight, intentional onboarding plan signals that you take this person's success seriously. That first impression sets the tone for everything that follows.

The Fix

Build a structured onboarding program with clear milestones and genuine support. Senior leaders are experienced, but every organization has its own rhythms, relationships, and unwritten rules. Don't assume they'll figure it out alone.

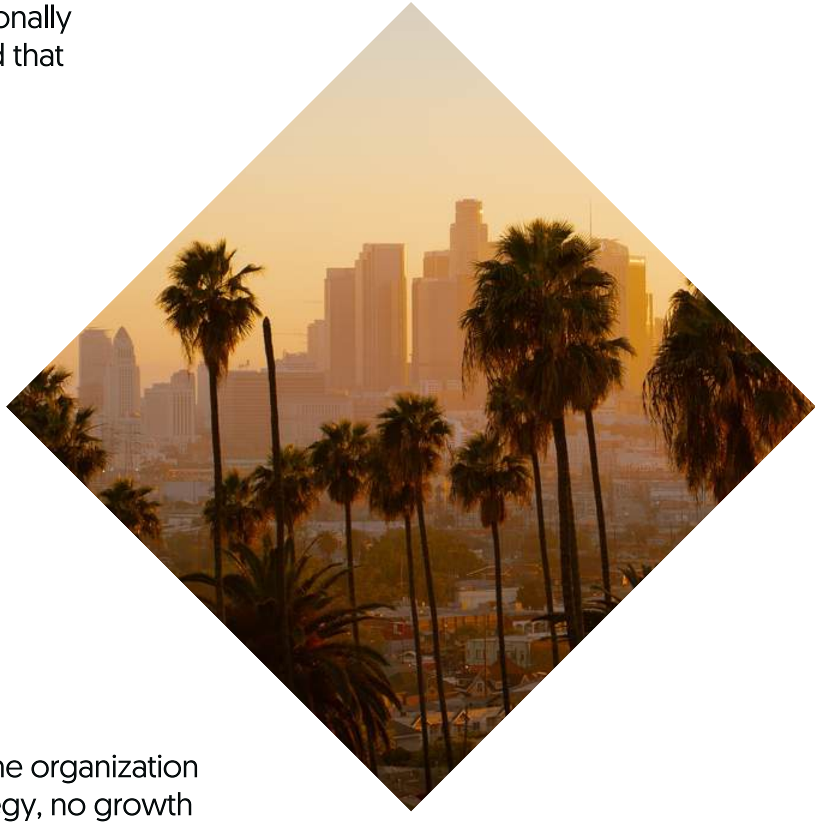
Sin #7: Treating Hiring as Someone Else's Problem

Your team, your responsibility. HR plays a vital role in the hiring ecosystem, but you're accountable for your results.

You are the person that candidates need to feel confident in and excited to work with. And you're the person who can see the nuances in the day-to-day business operations and assess whether the candidate is the right fit.

The best founders and CEOs we work with personally engage with finalist candidates. They understand that talent decisions determine everything else — growth trajectory, culture, competitive positioning, all of it.

If you're not dedicating meaningful time to talent, you're managing for the present rather than building for the future.



The Fix

The leaders you bring in today shape the organization you'll have tomorrow. There is no strategy, no growth plan, no brand vision that succeeds without the right people behind it. Own your hiring process the way you own your business — because that's exactly what it is. The good souls you choose to surround yourself with will define what you build.

Avoid these seven patterns and you'll hire better than the vast majority of your competition. More importantly, you'll build leadership teams that stay, deliver, and elevate everything around them.

The 5-Step Impact Player Framework

This is the framework behind our 75% interview rate and 80% one-year retention. It's built on a simple belief: hiring well isn't about luck or gut instinct. It's about applying the same strategic discipline to talent that you'd bring to any other critical area of your business.

Whether you implement this yourself or partner with a specialist, the principles hold true.

1 Define Success Beyond the Job Description

Impact Players don't respond to laundry lists of duties. They respond to challenges worth solving.

The shift is straightforward: stop describing what someone will do, and start defining what success looks like when they do it well.

Instead of "Manage membership sales," try "Grow membership 25% while improving retention within 12 months."

Instead of "Oversee studio operations," try "Scale from 5 to 12 locations while maintaining member satisfaction scores above 90%."

This isn't just better copywriting — it's a fundamentally different way of thinking about the role. When you define the KPIs that matter, the problems this person will solve, and what success looks like at 30, 60, and 90 days, you attract people who are energized by outcomes rather than tasks.

Identify the DNA You Need

Beyond metrics, consider the qualities that matter for your specific context. Ownership mentality. Resilience under pressure. The ability to balance strategic thinking with hands-on execution.

For boutique fitness: Can they handle New Year surge intensity while building the culture that retains your best people? For health clubs: Can they drive efficiency without eroding the member experience? For wellness tech: Can they scale operations without losing the human touch that defines the brand?

The clearer you are about what you need, the easier it becomes to recognize it when you find it.

2 Access Hidden Passive Talent

137.3% of workers are passive candidates. They're busy delivering value at their current organizations, and they won't see your job posting no matter where you place it. But here's what makes this group so important: over half of them would consider the right opportunity if it were presented by someone they trust.

These are often your strongest potential hires — and they're invisible to job boards.

Build Your Competitor Talent Map

Start by identifying 10 wellness brands in your market. Map the top VPs, Directors, and executive leaders by role. Track expansion and contraction patterns. When a competitor announces restructuring, leadership changes, or a strategic shift, you want to know who might be open to a conversation — and you want that list ready before the news becomes public.

Go Where Talent Gathers

Industry conferences like the Health & Fitness Association show. Innovation-led events like the Athletech Innovation Summit. Boutique fitness masterclasses. Wellness leadership networks. Local fitness industry meetups. LinkedIn communities focused on health club operations and boutique fitness growth. These aren't just networking events — they're where relationships begin that lead to extraordinary hires months or even years later.

Be the Call That Matters

The best wellness leaders receive recruiter calls regularly. Most of those calls come from generalists who can't speak credibly about the industry — who don't understand the difference between boutique fitness culture and traditional health club environments, or why mission alignment matters more in wellness than in most sectors.

To reach passive talent, you need to be the call that feels different. That requires either deep personal networks built over years of industry involvement, or partnership with specialists who've cultivated those relationships and earned that trust.

3 Assess for Competency and Cultural DNA

Gut-feel hiring has roughly a 50% success rate. Strategic assessment gets you above 90%. The difference comes down to structure.

Use Scorecards

Create scoring criteria before meeting candidates. Score immediately after each interview. Then compare scores — not impressions, not feelings, not "who did I like best." Scorecards bring objectivity to an inherently subjective process, and they give your entire hiring team a shared language for evaluating talent.

Design Role-Specific Scenarios

For VPs of Sales: Walk through a membership growth strategy. Explore a market expansion scenario. How would they build a sales culture that develops and retains top performers? For Directors of Operations: Present a multi-location operations challenge. Where do they identify bottlenecks in a scaling scenario? How would they design improvements while protecting the member experience?

For Marketing Leaders: Discuss a brand-building campaign. Explore community engagement strategy. How would they differentiate your brand in a market where everyone claims to be purpose-driven?

These conversations reveal far more than traditional interviews. You're not asking candidates to tell you what they've done — you're watching how they think.

Conduct Thorough Reference Due Diligence

This is where the industry circler pattern becomes visible. A candidate's selected references will say positive things — that's why they chose them. The real picture comes from doing your due diligence: speaking with former colleagues, asking the right questions, and listening carefully to what's said and what isn't.

Ask "If you could hire them again tomorrow, would you?" and listen carefully — not just to the answer, but to the pause before it. Probe on development areas. A 90-minute investment in thorough reference checking can save you from a deeply costly mistake.

4 Sell the Opportunity, Not Just the Job

Compensation gets you into the conversation. But winning an Impact Player — truly earning their commitment — requires something more.

Top performers have options. They're confident they can find strong roles when they're ready, so they're rarely in a hurry. Research confirms that the best candidates can afford to be selective. You need to give them a compelling reason to choose you.

The Four Motivators That Move A-Players

Autonomy: "Own the growth strategy for the region." The freedom to lead, not just execute.

Mastery: "Build best-in-class operations that become the model for expansion." The chance to do the best work of their career.

Purpose: "Your work directly impacts thousands of members living healthier lives." The knowledge that what they do matters beyond the balance sheet.

Recognition: "Your innovations become company best practices." The assurance that their contributions will be seen and valued.

Build a Compelling Picture

Go beyond the job description. Share the real strategic initiatives they'd lead. The actual problems they'd get to solve. The growth trajectory over 18 to 24 months. The team they'd build.

For boutique fitness, show mission impact, community building, and leadership visibility. For health clubs, show scale opportunity, operational excellence, and clear career advancement.

For consumer products, show product market fit, financial runway, and growth channels. For all, be honest about the challenges — and then show why those challenges are worth solving.

The best candidates aren't looking for easy. They're looking for meaningful.

5 Secure Your Impact Players

The offer isn't the finish line. It's the beginning of the most vulnerable phase of the hiring process.

Here's the reality: approximately 50% of candidates who resign receive counteroffers from their current employer. And research suggests that 80% of people who accept counteroffers leave within 6 to 12 months anyway. The underlying issues that prompted them to explore new opportunities don't disappear with a salary increase.

Have the Counteroffer Conversation Early

Before your candidate talks to their current manager, have an honest conversation about what's likely to happen:

"Your current employer will probably offer you more money to stay. That's natural — they value you. But it's worth asking yourself whether more money changes the things that made you open to this conversation in the first place. The growth limitations, the cultural frustrations, the lack of strategic opportunity — a raise doesn't address those. It delays them."

This isn't about pressuring anyone. It's about helping them think clearly through an emotional moment so they can make the decision that's genuinely right for them.

Then Move with Purpose

Secure verbal commitment before the written offer goes out. Address concerns immediately and directly — don't let questions linger. Connect them with future teammates before their start date. Begin onboarding conversations right away so that by day one, they already feel like part of the team.

The Impact Player Checklist

- Success defined as KPIs, not just duties
- Competitor talent mapped
- Opportunity presentation created
- Scorecard criteria established
- Interview team aligned
- Role-specific scenarios designed
- Reference strategy with thorough due diligence
- Offer strategy documented
- Counteroffer discussion prepared
- 30-day onboarding plan ready

This framework isn't theory. It's the process behind every successful placement we make. Whether you run it yourself or bring us alongside, it works.

The Specialist Advantage

There's a meaningful difference between a recruiter who knows your industry and one who's lived it. That difference shows up in every candidate they present, every conversation they have on your behalf, and ultimately in whether your next hire transforms your organization or becomes another expensive lesson.

Understanding Your World from the Inside

A specialist wellness recruiter doesn't learn your industry from a briefing document. They carry it with them.

With our combined 45+ years in wellness and fitness leadership, we understand the nuances that only come from direct experience. We know why a VP of Sales who spent five years at a legacy health club chain isn't automatically the right fit for a high-growth boutique fitness brand. We can distinguish between a Director of Operations who managed a stable 20-location footprint and one who opened 15 new studios in 18 months. We grasp the difference between driving membership growth in an emerging market and maintaining retention in a saturated one.

When you tell us you need someone who can "scale operations," we know you mean someone who's actually opened locations, built teams from scratch, maintained member experience during rapid growth, and navigated the inevitable chaos that comes with expansion. When you mention "sales leadership," we understand you're looking for someone who builds culture — not just someone who hits numbers.

That fluency changes everything about how we search, how we screen, and how we present your opportunity to the people who might be your next great leader.

The Knowledge Gap with Generalists

Generalist recruiters offer broad capability across diverse markets. But recruiting for wellness leadership comes with inherent challenges that only direct industry experience can address.

They haven't encountered the industry circler pattern. They can't assess whether someone's health club background translates meaningfully to boutique fitness, or vice versa. They don't know your rhythms — that January through March is when your team is buried under New Year membership surges and can barely find time for internal meetings, let alone candidate interviews.

They can't speak credibly about the cultural differences between boutique fitness and traditional health club environments. They don't understand why mission alignment matters more in wellness than in most industries, or how to identify candidates who genuinely care about helping people live healthier lives versus those simply pursuing career advancement.

The result is mismatched candidates who look strong on paper but don't survive the first conversation with your hiring team. Every mismatched interview costs time you don't have — and erodes confidence in the search process itself.

The Network That Makes the Difference

37.3% of workers are passive candidates. They won't respond to job postings. But they will take a call from someone they trust — someone who understands their world, speaks their language, and has earned credibility through years of genuine relationship building.

Our industry relationships span decades of combined experience in wellness and fitness leadership — relationships that were built long before Good Soul Hunting existed. Over the past six years as a dedicated search firm, we've deepened those connections exclusively within wellness and fitness.

When we reach out to a passive candidate, we're not making a cold call. We're reconnecting with someone who trusts our judgment because we've demonstrated that we understand their career, their industry, and what a meaningful next step might look like for them.

That trust is the difference between a candidate genuinely considering your opportunity and politely declining another generic recruiter pitch.

Our Results

Our metrics tell the story of what a specialist focus makes possible:

- 80% retention rate at one year
- 75% of submitted candidates receive interview requests, compared to a 20-30% industry average
- 3 to 5 vetted candidates delivered within 10 days, compared to 60+ days as an industry norm
- 95%+ successful placement rate for engaged searches

What Our Clients Say

“We were initially hesitant to outsource the search for such pivotal leadership roles, knowing how important cultural and value alignment is to our fast-scaling business. But working with the Good Soul Hunting team was a game-changer.

The GSH team took the time to truly understand our brand, our standards, and what makes someone a good fit at our brand. Their process was thoughtful, collaborative, and relentlessly committed to getting it right. We couldn’t be happier with the outcome.“

CEO, Scaling Pilates Franchise

“Working with Good Soul Hunting has been a great experience. We were hiring for several key leadership roles that required both strong capabilities and the right cultural fit.

They listened and had a clear sense of what was needed both on paper and in personality. They moved quickly, communicated throughout the process and delivered strong candidates.

Their partnership is thoughtful, efficient, and aligned with how we work. I’d absolutely partner with Good Soul Hunting again.”

COO, Leading Biohacking Brand

“I was delighted to partner with Good Soul Hunting on an executive-level search within the marketing team. This was a business-critical role with the added difficulty of being based in our HQ location.

Good Soul Hunting took on the challenge and quickly delivered a wide variety of highly qualified candidates. The team was really easy to work with - they were communicative, organized, responsive to feedback and persistent.

Most importantly, they truly understood our business, the industry, and the nuances of the profile we were looking for. Thanks to Good Soul Hunting we found an amazing candidate. I highly recommend working with the Good Soul Hunting team.”

CMO, Global Boutique Fitness Brand

The specialist advantage isn't about having a bigger database or a faster process. It's about deep wellness knowledge, cultivated relationships with passive talent, and the ability to identify the leaders who will genuinely elevate your organization — its culture, its impact, and its commercial performance.

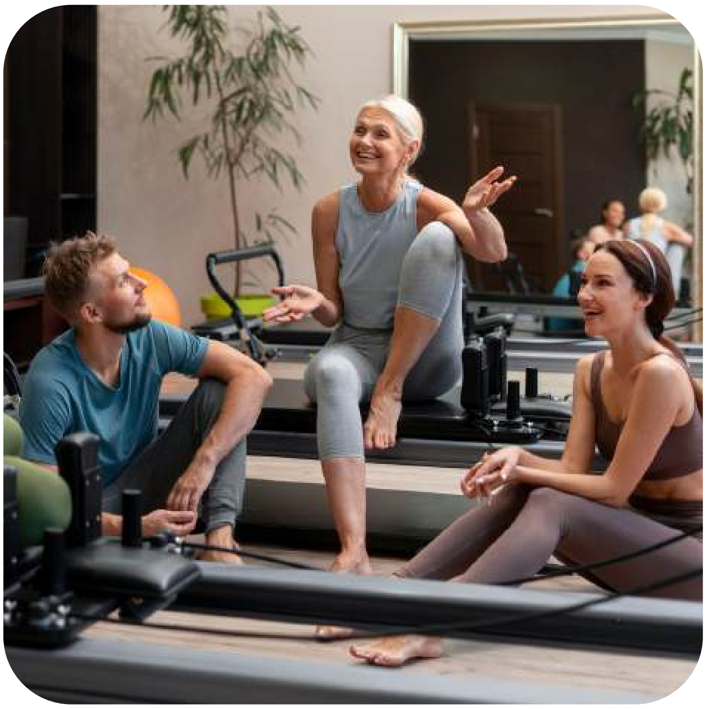
Your 2026 Talent Advantage Starts Now

The wellness and fitness industry is entering its most competitive talent market in a decade. The brands that come out ahead won't necessarily be the ones with the biggest budgets or the most impressive facilities. They'll be the ones who moved first, moved with intention, and built their leadership teams while others were still deciding whether it was the right time.

You now have the framework to do exactly that.

The talent crisis is real — top candidates disappear within 10 days, the talent shortage isn't easing, and waiting consistently costs more than acting.

Timing is everything — Q1 hiring sets the trajectory for your entire year, and the strongest candidates are evaluating their options right now.



The 7 Deadly Sins are avoidable — every hiring mistake in this guide is one we've watched experienced leaders make. Now you know what to look for and how to build a process that protects against them.

The 5-Step Impact Player Framework gives you a repeatable system for identifying leaders who genuinely deliver — not just candidates who interview well.

The specialist advantage matters — generalist recruiters can't access wellness-specific passive talent, tell your story with authenticity, or recognize the industry circlers who look strong on paper but won't deliver the results behind the title.

Great talent isn't found by accident. It's found by the brands who go looking with purpose, who tell their story with conviction, and who move decisively when the right person appears. That's what separates the organizations that grow from the ones that get stuck.

We built Good Soul Hunting to help wellness brands do exactly that.
Help first. Hunt second. Always.

GOOD SOUL HUNTING

Ready to Build Your Dream Team?

Good Soul Hunting specializes exclusively in wellness and fitness leadership recruitment. We deliver qualified candidates within 10 days, maintain an 80% one-year retention rate, and have built leadership teams for brands ranging from boutique fitness studios and health club groups to wellness tech companies, fitness equipment brands, wellness consumer products, and national franchises.

Book a Talent Strategy Call

We'd love to hear about your 2026 hiring priorities and explore whether we're the right fit to help you build the team your brand deserves. No pitch, no pressure — just an honest conversation about your talent challenges and how to solve them.

BOOK YOUR CALL

Good Soul Hunting is a boutique search partner for purpose-driven wellness and fitness brands. Founded by Lucy and Matt Adey, we combine 45+ years of industry experience with a candidate-first approach to hand-pick the good souls who elevate culture, impact, and commercial performance. We get to know your story so we can tell it as well as you do. Learn more at goodsoulhunting.com.

GOOD SOUL HUNTING