



## **Just 31% of Tech Executives Qualified For Positions in Renewable Energy**

*Results based off in-depth interviews of 122 senior technology executives by executive search firm's Cleantech practice group*

**Cleveland, OH – May 08, 2009** – Just 31 percent of executives are qualified to migrate from technology to renewable energy, according to in-depth interviews of 122 senior technology executives. The interviews were conducted from July 2008 through March 2009 by the Cleantech practice group of ON Search Partners, a retained executive search firm which identifies and finds leaders that bring sustainable growth and stability to organizations.

According to ON Search partner and manager of the Cleantech practice group, Tim Conti, “Hiring companies in Cleantech are very vulnerable to making hiring mistakes as they try to implement next-generation energy technologies. While it may be natural for tech executives to have a real impact, they must understand that their ‘go to’ operating methodologies and principles may not apply. Winning in New Energy requires a nimble executive capable of creating new business models which acknowledge the industry’s past but redirect its future. It takes executives who can coordinate product development and market acceptance, driven largely by government activity, to produce a commercially differentiated product.”

ON Search Partners has identified what it takes to make the crossover. Conti notes that technology execs are typically adaptable to market shifts, and many are working to update their skills to help them make the jump to energy. Conti believes that those who succeed must have these five skills and traits:

1. *Passion for capturing the market and environmental opportunity.* If executives do not have incredible drive and passion to make change happen they can’t be considered. In this case, change is not simply new market development but also positive impact to the environment. While executives will need to learn at a faster pace than ever before – it is only step one.
2. *Can’t simply rubber stamp what you’ve done before.* Executives are expected to apply best practices from the sector each left and at the same

time define new practices for an industry that's just beginning. Fundamental skills cross over but simply applying previous operating principles will not work. New Energy requires new ideas, so leverage your experiences but do not be married to them.

3. *Unbounded creativity/unabashed confidence.* Cleantech companies as a whole are learning as they go, so failures will occur more often than successes. As such, it is imperative that executives develop strategies that not only win in a market, but also help define it.
4. *Scaling know-how.* If executives have significantly grown a company at some point on the continuum from startup to maturity, they could be in demand regardless of the tech sector they came from. Those who have transitioned new products from the lab into high-volume manufacturing could have particular value to solar, battery, lighting, and biofuel companies.
5. *Use what fits.* Executives with backgrounds in electrical engineering, device physics, and materials science can be valuable in energy. So can experience in project financing, government policy, and manufacturing. As executives map the requirements of the New Energy sector, they may find an unexpected fit. And leadership ability often trumps the details in the job description.

Conti adds, "The most commonly asked question of executive candidates is, 'Tell me your experience.' It is also the wrong question. Especially in hiring for renewable energy where few have industry experience. This is a true case where the hiring executive must dig below the surface to see if a candidate can drive a company and an industry forward. Companies must hire the athlete, because these positions by and large have never been filled before."

### **About ON Search**

**ON Search Partners** is a retained executive search firm, which partners with Fortune 1000 and emerging growth organizations to identify and find leaders that bring sustainable growth, stability and measurable results in creating new markets. For more information and to speak to practice group leaders go to [www.onpartners.com](http://www.onpartners.com).