

# Headhunter firm builds loyal clients

**Local  
Spotlight**

## Qualigence specializes in finding managers

By Neal Haldane

Special to The Detroit News

**LIVONIA**-Qualigence changed Stacy Byers' life.

Byers was all set to take a promotion with her employer and move out of Michigan when she received a call from a Qualigence recruiter about a position with Fifth Third Bank in Southfield.

Byers accepted the position as senior vice president for human resources and now uses Qualigence to help her recruit candidates for positions in commercial banking and wealth management at Fifth Third in this region.

"I have used them for a least 50 positions in the last year," Byers said. "I use Qualigence because of their expertise in the industry and level of professionalism. I use other executive recruiters to supplement my work with Qualigence, but they are definitely my primary recruiting partner." Building strong partnerships with clients is one reason Qualigence expects to reach \$6 million in revenues this year, a 50 percent increase over 2003, according to Stephen Lowisz, president and CEO.

Qualigence specializes in recruiting managers and directors for positions that pay more than \$70,000 annually, but the firm also recruits people for jobs with salaries that start at \$30,000 and those that reach into the millions, Lowisz said. "We go after the passive candidate who is not looking and is employed somewhere else," he said.

The company does not receive a commission for filling a position, which is a typical arrangement with many headhunters, Lowisz said.

"I don't mind being called a headhunter because the ultimate result is we're going to get you the best person," he said. "The big difference is the way we do it and how we charge for it. We're paid as a consultant for the hours we work. Our clients use us because they want to, not because they signed a contract and they have to."

The company has found success in all types of economic climates by providing services that can be bundled or separated depending on the client, according to Molly Wilson, its senior vice president and chief operating officer.

Some clients may use Qualigence to handle the entire recruitment process, while others may just need research about a position, Wilson said.

"In a down industry, where a client has a compressed HR division, we can come in and support them," she said. "When the economy turns around, we can supplement them when they are overwhelmed. We can come in as frequently or as involved as needed."

Last year, the firm handled about 2,600 assignments and Lowisz expects that to reach 3,500 to 4,000 this year. To handle those assignments, Qualigence plans to add researchers and recruiters to its 35-member staff.

"We'll probably double our staff in the next 18 months," Lowisz said. "Our clients have continued to bombard us with new projects, new assignments, new positions. We need good people to do research, to do recruiting to keep up with the demand. We need to grow."

Qualigence also would like a higher profile in the Detroit area. More than half its work is done west of the Mississippi river and in other countries.

"We want to have a bigger presence in southeast Michigan," Lowisz said.



Ricardo Thomas / The Detroit News

**Qualigence President and CEO Stephen Lowisz considers building strong partnerships with clients the main reason he expects the company to reach 6 million in revenues this year.**

## Qualigence

**What:** Recruitment research and executive search firm

**Founded:** 1999

**Headquarters:** Livonia

**Anticipated 2004 Revenues:** \$6 million

**Clients:** Fifth Third Bank, Intel, Oracle, Staples, Bank of America, Lockheed Martin

**Information:**

[www.qualigence.com](http://www.qualigence.com)