CASE STUDY / PRODUCT LEADERSHIP

Head of Product hire for a YC-backed AI recruitment startup

CLIENT	SECTOR	ROLE	SEARCH TIME
Spott	**AI recruitment software (SaaS)**	**Head of Product**	**34 days**

The CEO was running product on top of running the company. We found a technical Head of Product who wasn't looking, and he signed 34 days after the brief.

THE CHALLENGE

Spott is a YC-backed Series A company in Leuven building an AI-native ATS and CRM. The CEO was also acting as CPO, running product for close to 20 engineers and doing customer calls on top. They needed a Head of Product to work alongside him on the leadership team, and someone the engineers would respect.

Their own job ad brought in mostly non-technical applicants, so the people they wanted weren't applying. The brief was tight:

- A technical background, ideally as an engineer
- Product experience at a startup or scale-up, not a corporate
- In the Leuven office five days a week
- Happy to stay hands-on, doing the day-to-day product work while owning the roadmap
- Ready to grow into leading a product team as Spott scales

THE SOLUTION

On our first call we went through the brief line by line and separated essentials from desirables. Startup experience was essential. Being in the Leuven office was essential. Technical depth was a strong preference. The pool of potential candidates was incredibly narrow, so the outbound approach and messaging had to be precise, personalised and considered.

I sent Spott five CVs in total, including one standout. This individual had not been looking, and neither Spott's job ad nor their network had reached him. His first reaction was that whilst the role sounded interesting, he wasn't looking to make a move at this time. I talked through the leadership structure, roadmap, comp, why their product is the right product for right now and growth in equity as Spott progresses to Series B.

His background:

- Started as an engineer, then moved through engineering management to CTO
- Founded an AI product and sold it to a larger software company
- Took a product and engineering team from 1 to 8 people with no recruiter or HR

THE OUTCOME

After a first call, a second interview and a final round with the founders and engineers, he signed on 4 November. Total search time: 34 days.

He takes on:

- Product vision and roadmap, working directly with the CEO
- Hands-on product work, including the tickets and customer conversations that had been sitting with the CEO
- Building the product team as Spott grows

> **“The team are excited to onboard him, he’s a great find.”**
>
> **MANU VANDERVEEREN / CO-FOUNDER & COO, SPOTT**

STILL RUNNING PRODUCT YOURSELF?

If you're a seed or Series A founder doing the CPO job on top of everything else, a founding product hire is the search I can add the most value to.

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Alder Search recruits product leaders for VC and PE investors and their portfolio companies.