



Position Specification



Executive Director

Our Client

U.S. Figure Skating is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with the mission, “We create and cultivate opportunities for participation and achievement in figure skating.” The organization operates in a complex environment where structure and support are provided for more than 600 member clubs across the country, serves as the U.S. federation in the International Skating Union (ISU), and serves as the national governing body (NGB) for figure skating in the United States, as recognized by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC).

U.S. Figure Skating (“the Association”) serves nearly 200,000 members nationwide. Operating with an annual budget of approximately \$20 million, U.S. Figure Skating provides a wide range of programs for all its members, runs major televised events, partners with Fortune 500 companies, selects the U.S. World and U.S. Olympic Teams and much more.

The Role

This Executive Director is responsible for working with the Strategic Planning Committee and Board to develop and implement the strategic and operating plans of the Association consistent with the goals and objectives established by the Board of Directors and its bylaws. He/she is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Association, structuring the headquarters staff, overseeing its IT infrastructure and operations, and managing a staff of approximately 60 FTEs.

U.S. Figure Skating has a long history of producing Olympic and World Champions and many of those athletes are household names. It is imperative that the Executive Director embrace and represent the skating heroes of yesterday while supporting development of our next generation of athletes. This position reports to the President and the Board of Directors, works with volunteers in leadership positions and frequently interacts with the general skating community. The position requires a dynamic leader who can respond to events and challenges on a real-time basis.

U.S. Figure Skating has adopted a new board structure as of May 2022. While not changing the overall responsibilities of the Executive Director, this will require flexibility and a willingness to adapt to the new structure and execute a successful transition requiring a high level of transparency.

Candidate Profile

US Figure Skating is looking to bring in a new executive with a bold vision for how to modernize and rejuvenate figure skating in a dynamic, highly competitive sports industry. This transformational figure will not only be expected to execute her/his vision about how to grow the sport’s audience and visibility in media and among sponsors, they will also energize and engage elite and non-elite athletes and professional and volunteer staff alike.

The responsibilities of the Executive Director are wide ranging and include, but are not limited to, the following:

Athlete Development and Safety

- Oversees all efforts to promote the safety and health of our athletes and continue the organization’s strong commitment through SkateSafe, its safe sport program.
- Operates and leads with the understanding that the Association exists because of and for the athletes. Speaks to athletes and volunteers in a way that demonstrates they are understood and that gives them a voice.
- Develops and implements strategies to expand participation in the sport.

Position Specification

Ref: Executive Director
United States Figure Skating Association

- Supports strategies and programs developed by the High-Performance department to optimize athlete performance. Establish and monitor performance metrics to measure success vs. goals and holds the department accountable for delivering results.
- Support athlete leadership initiatives.
- Oversight of Team USA and preparations for international events, including the Olympic Winter Games.

Financial Management and Information Technology

- Works closely with the CFO and the Treasurer to develop an annual budget and manage expenses against that budget.
- Work closely with the Board to develop a quadrennial business plan and budget forecast to support longer term strategic goals and objectives.
- Allocates financial resources across departments and monitors spending in accordance with the respective goals and objectives of each department.
- Manages the sales effort to acquire, maintain and retain sponsorships. Develops strategies, activities, and events to diversify revenue sources.
- Negotiates all commercial transactions, including media rights, sponsorship agreements, vendor contracts, etc.
- Oversees and monitors information technology and application development to ensure reliable delivery of planned capabilities against the forecast budgets and timelines.

Human Resources and Staffing

- Creates an organizational climate that encourages and supports innovative thinking and problem solving and encourages team members to suggest better ways of working.
- Effectively delegates responsibilities to optimize both personal effectiveness and support staff development.
- Recruits and leads a team with diverse perspectives and talents while creating a great place to work, making sure everyone is held accountable for delivering results.
- Leads by example the organization's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion commitment by recruiting and developing a diverse staff in the headquarters workforce.
- In conjunction with the Board of Directors, creates a succession plan for his/her position and all senior managers within the headquarters organization.

Risk Management and Legal

- Identifies risk factors to the organization and proactively takes action to manage and avoid consequences of those risks. Communicates potential risks to the Board of Directors on a timely basis.
- Leads and coordinates with expert resources in resolving legal issues. Is willing to contract with appropriate external legal resources as needed.

Promotion and Representation

- Energizes and inspires staff to promote all events, programs and activities hosted by U.S. Figure Skating and encourages innovation to create new opportunities to promote the sport.
- Represents headquarters leadership on the U.S. Figure Skating Foundation Board of Directors and strategically utilizes Foundation financial resources
- Oversees the fundraising and allocation processes of the Memorial Fund.
- Represents U.S. Figure Skating to the US Olympic and Paralympic Committee and the International Skating Union, as well as other affiliated organizations.

Background, Experience and Key Attributes

Position Specification

Ref: Executive Director
United States Figure Skating Association

The Executive Director must be an experienced nonprofit/for-profit professional who is skilled as a strategic leader and can identify and develop opportunities for increasing the Association's membership and visibility in a highly competitive sports market. Areas of primary responsibility include strategic planning, marketing and communication, personnel, volunteer management, fundraising and development, sponsorship development, financial administration, information technology and program development.

The Executive Director of the Association must be professionally and ethically unwavering, a self-starter, and highly motivated. He or she must have a proven track record as a transformational leader, a skilled facilitator with outstanding interpersonal skills and abundant savvy including the ability to read an audience and pivot as needed. The successful candidate must be an excellent communicator who can convey positions, issues, risks, and opportunities in a clear and professional manner. Possession of strong strategic planning and problem-solving skills is vital.

Key attributes and experiences of the Executive Director position include:

- Minimum of 10-12 years' experience with significant leadership experience. Minimum of 5-7 years' experience in sports marketing, licensing, sponsor relations, sports media, or other relevant areas would be a plus.
- Proven ability to build a staff including the hiring and managing of senior level executives. A skilled team builder with a proven ability to develop staff from within for promotion/succession possibilities.
- Proven ability to delegate responsibility to staff while leveraging the talents of a large, well-informed, and involved volunteer base.
- Proven ability to build positive relationships with the board, the staff and volunteer leadership.
- Must be able to handle pressure and demonstrate a sense of humor while operating in a challenging environment where not everything is always completely under their control.
- Must demonstrate an understanding of today's youth and the next generation while relating to several generations of skaters simultaneously. Must be able to relate to and promote the sport of figure skating to a future audience as well as potential figure skating athletes of tomorrow.
- Demonstrates an understanding of how to make U.S. Figure Skating more relevant to today's youth and parents in the highly competitive sports industry.
- Must be able to communicate and work with athletes at all levels across all disciplines, from Learn to Skate through Olympic level athletes.
- Has experience developing and implementing a strategic plan in a dynamic environment, preferably with a sports-related organization.
- Has experience dealing with complex legal issues and risk management processes.
- Has the ability to quickly develop relationships with international skating federation leaders as well as leaders from other sports, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), business CEOs, etc.
- Possess excellent communication abilities, including written, verbal and presentation skills. Must excel in presenting/representing athletes of all levels.

Setting Strategy

- The ability to create and articulate an inspiring vision for the organization, not only for the areas s/he is directly responsible for, but the enterprise as a whole.
- The inclination to seek and analyze data from a variety of sources to support decisions and to align others with the organization's overall strategy.
- An entrepreneurial and creative approach to developing new, innovative ideas that will stretch the organization and push the boundaries within the industry.

- The ability to effectively balance the desire/need for broad change with an understanding of how much change the organization is capable of handling, to create realistic goals and implementation plans that are achievable and successful.

Executing for Results

- The ability to set clear and challenging goals while committing the organization to improved performance; tenacious and accountable in driving results.
- Comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty; the ability to adapt nimbly and lead others through complex situations.
- A risk-taker who seeks data and input from others to foresee possible threats or unintended circumstances from decisions; someone who takes smart risks.
- A leader who is viewed by others as having a high degree of integrity and forethought in his/her approach to making decisions; the ability to act in a transparent and consistent manner while always taking into account what is best for the organization.

Leading Teams

- The ability to attract and recruit top talent, motivate the team, delegate effectively, celebrate diversity within the team, and manage performance; widely viewed as a strong developer of others.
- The ability to persevere in the face of challenges, and exhibit a steadfast resolve and relentless commitment to higher standards, which commands respect from followers.
- A leader who is self-reflective and aware of his/her own limitations; leads by example and drives the organization's performance with an attitude of continuous improvement by being open to feedback and self-improvement.

Relationships and Influence

- Naturally connects and builds strong relationships with others, demonstrating strong emotional intelligence and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively.
- An ability to inspire trust and followership in others through compelling influence, powerful charisma, passion in his/her beliefs, and active drive.
- Encourages others to share the spotlight and visibly celebrates and supports the success of the team.
- Creates a sense of purpose/meaning for the team that generates followership beyond his/her own personality and engages others to the greater purpose for the organization as a whole.

Driving Sustainability

- Firmly believes that both sustainability and profit are in the organization's best long-term interest.
- Integrates economic, societal, and environmental factors into a purpose-driven strategy, turning sustainability into a competitive advantage.
- Understands and incorporates viewpoints from all key stakeholders to drive decision making and share the benefits.
- Delivers breakthrough innovations and business models that create value for all stakeholders, continually challenging traditional approaches.
- Sets audacious business and sustainability goals, driving concerted action and investments, and stays the course in the face of setbacks or push-back from short-term oriented stakeholders.

2207-132NA

Position Specification

Ref: Executive Director
United States Figure Skating Association

Contact

Libby Naumes

Russell Reynolds Associates

277 Park Avenue, Suite 3800

New York, NY 10172

Direct: +1-212-351-2514

Mobile: +1-631-875-1705

libby.naumes@russellreynolds.com

Nada C Usina

Russell Reynolds Associates

2 Alhambra Plaza, Suite 660

Coral Gables, FL 33134-5202

Direct: +1-212-351-2182

Mobile: +1-469-441-7089

nada.usina@russellreynolds.com