
Headhunter bulking back up

Crist looks to triple partners, expand to NY

By Steven R. Strahler

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Headhunter Peter Crist, who built and sold one executive recruiting boutique, is bulking up again.

Hinsdale-based Crist Associates named Thomas R. Kolder, a Russell Reynolds Associates Inc. managing director, as president and is in the market to do more hiring, both executives say.

But Mr. Crist says he's not aiming to repeat the cycle that culminated in the 1999 sale of a previous firm, Crist Partners, to Korn/Ferry International.

"There isn't going to be another window like there was in '99," when newly public headhunting firms went on a buying binge, he says.

Instead, Crist Associates, which conducts searches for CEOs, chief operating officers and chief financial officers, plans to triple the number of partners to six over the next year or two and likely open a New York office next year, according to Mr. Crist.

"We actually turned away a little bit of business in '03, because we just didn't have the arms and legs," he says.

The hiring of the 39-year-old Mr. Kolder is designed to complement Mr. Crist's financial-services focus with an operations veteran. At Russell Reynolds, Mr. Kolder oversaw recruiting of manufactured-products executives.

"We'll be even better-positioned to do COO and senior-level supply chain searches for manufacturing based companies," says Mr. Kolder, a General Electric Co. alum who was at Russell Reynolds for eight years.
