

# NEW BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

## STOUT EXECUTIVE SEARCH

BY SUE MORRIS ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

SPRINGDALE — When Marvelyn Stout worked for a Wal-Mart supplier, she used recruiters to help build her team. However, she saw there was a need for another approach in recruitment for the Wal-Mart supplier community and thought she could provide what was needed when she decided to start a new business.

“We are committed about getting to know each of our candidates and our clients — one at a time. This business is about building relationships,” said Stout, 45. She owns Stout Executive Search, which opened in November.

She sees the firm’s focus as connecting the best and the brightest among executive candidates and companies in the consumer goods industry that currently sell to Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and Sam’s Clubs.

Stout Executive Search is looking for the top-tier talent currently selling to the world’s largest retailer. Positions might include vice president, team leaders, national account managers, category advisers, category managers, consumer insights, sales analysts, and supply chain and replenishment managers.

“Most of the Wal-Mart suppliers in this community do require previous supplier experience or are not willing to use a recruiter for this type of candidate,” Stout said.

That practice leads to a policy at Stout Executive Search: Candidates must be currently working for a Wal-Mart supplier to seek services from the firm. Candidates can e-mail their resumes to [resumes@stoutexecutivesearch.com](mailto:resumes@stoutexecutivesearch.com). Fees are later paid by the employer once the candidate has been engaged.

Stout or a staff member first sets an appointment to talk with the candidates in the attractive office overlooking the fountains at Har-Ber Meadows. The staff of four can input keywords describing each candidate’s experience and background into the computer database to link their particular strengths with the needs of the companies. That specialized computer software was the most expensive element of the firm’s November startup, but it allows special attention to individual needs.

“They sell us on selling them,” Stout said of the initial candidate interviews.

Stout Executive Search must get specific permission for a particular position and company before sending out a candidate’s resume. That’s one of the practices that leads to the firm’s assurance: “Your placement. Our passion.”

The face-to-face relationships developed with candidates and companies establish a true fit that is right for both, Stout said.

Her own background gives her particular insights on those supplier companies and their

employment needs. Stout has 18 years' experience in sales and marketing, including 10 years as a brand manager with the Kimberly-Clark Corp. and she served as Wal-Mart team leader for the largest manufacturer of private label U.S. pet food, Ol' Roy.

"When you call on Wal-Mart, you learn to appreciate the Wal-Mart culture and this firm is strongly influenced by that culture," Stout said.

For anyone without supplier experience on his resume, she recommends the marketing analyst program at Northwest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville as preparation for work as a category manager.

"This is a great place to start. The candidates also must be willing to get out there and knock on doors to find their first position with a supplier," said Stout, the first woman to lead an executive search firm in Northwest Arkansas.

"Everybody wants to get into the Wal-Mart supplier community, but you have to earn your position there," Stout said. "The skill set of the traditional salesperson is not enough anymore. Now they need higher-level analytics, strategic thinking and a mastery of consumer insights."

If you recently opened a business or know of a new business in the area, please call Sue Morris at (479) 770-8468 or e-mail:

**[smorris@arkansasonline.com](mailto:smorris@arkansasonline.com)**

#### DETAILS

LOCATION: 6878 Isaacs Orchard Road, Suite E (Har-Ber Meadows), Springdale

PHONE: (479) 361-1114; fax (479) 361-1125

WEB SITE: [www.stoutexecutivesearch.com](http://www.stoutexecutivesearch.com)

OWNER: Marvelyn Stout PRODUCTS/SERVICES: Executive placement

HOURS: 8 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays or by arrangement

START DATE: November 2006

START-UP COSTS: Would not disclose

FUNDING: Would not disclose



Arkansas Democrat-Gazette/BOB COLEMAN Marvelyn Stout, owner of Stout Executive Search, examines resumes from executives currently working for Wal-Mart suppliers who are seeking employment with other vendors.