Subway: From UK Operations to an International Recruitment Partnership

From supporting Subway's UK Operations team in 2022 to delivering specialist and senior appointments across the UK, US and EMEA.

The challenge

Recruiting for a major franchised, multi-site brand calls for more than matching a job description to a CV. Different functions need different skills, but the people appointed must also understand the pace, complexity and culture of the business. Having a recruitment partner who knows the organisation can make that process considerably simpler.

Where the partnership began

In 2022, Subway appointed SP Exec as its sole recruitment agency for UK roles, initially to support the build-out of its Operations team. We worked closely with the business to understand the leadership capabilities, commercial priorities and personal qualities needed to succeed in its environment.

Growing beyond Operations

As the partnership developed, Subway continued to trust SP Exec with increasingly varied appointments across Operations, corporate functions and specialist disciplines. Roles successfully recruited have included:

- Director of Operations
- Head of Operations
- Director of Franchise Development
- Head of Sustainability
- Development Specialist
- Area Manager
- Reward Partnerships Manager
- Inclusivity & Diversity Manager
- Senior Marketing Manager
- Marketing Manager
- Consumer Insights Manager
- Field Trainer & Senior Field Trainer
- Instructional Designer
- Development Manager
- Infrastructure Manager
- Test Lead
- Head of Supply Chain Transformation
- Supply Chain Manager
- Process & Systems Administrator
- Head of Property
- Property Manager
- Leasing Manager
- Design & Construction Manager
- Other specialist and corporate appointments across a wide range of disciplines

Having demonstrated our capability across multiple specialisms in the UK, Subway then invited SP Exec to support recruitment in the US and wider EMEA markets. We have successfully made appointments in these markets too, extending the partnership beyond its original UK remit.

Instead of briefing different recruiters for each discipline, Subway could work with one trusted recruitment partner who already understood its business, culture and priorities. Each brief still received a targeted search and the specialist attention it required.

Working as an extension of the internal team

Our partnership went beyond identifying and introducing candidates. SP Exec worked within Subway's existing HR and recruitment processes, using its CRM and reviewing applications alongside our own proactive search activity. By integrating with the internal team and its established ways of working, we provided additional recruitment expertise and capacity without creating a separate, disconnected process. Subway benefited from one trusted recruitment partner across multiple disciplines, while maintaining consistency in how candidates were managed and assessed.

The value of a long-term partnership

The relationship has evolved from an initial UK Operations requirement into a wider recruitment partnership spanning different functions and international markets. It demonstrates what a boutique, relationship-led approach can deliver: continuity, commercial understanding and a consistent, personal service from one appointment to the next.

Our roots are in Hospitality and multi-site Operations, but our work with Subway illustrates the breadth of our capability—from functional specialists to senior leaders—and the value of having one trusted partner who gets to know the business over time.