



# The new face of wind leadership

James Lindemann, Director at JL Executive Recruitment, shares insights into how executive hiring trends are evolving across the global wind energy sector and why cross-sector experience, diversity and digital fluency are now must-haves at the leadership level.





**PES:** Welcome to PES Wind, James. You've been placing executive talent in the wind sector for over 20 years. Let's start with the big picture: how have executive hiring trends shifted post-COVID and in response to the accelerating energy transition?

**James Lindemann:** Thanks, it's great to be here. The changes we're seeing are really quite profound. What we're witnessing is a redefinition of what a 'wind executive' looks like.

There's been a significant shift towards hybrid leadership profiles: people who can bridge

technical engineering backgrounds with commercial, regulatory or financial expertise. New titles like Chief Commercial Officer or Chief Project Development Officer are emerging, especially in developers and utilities that need leaders who understand everything from PPAs and permitting to land acquisition and community engagement.

Another major trend is the premium on offshore wind experience. As projects scale, particularly in the US, UK and Asia-Pacific, there's strong demand for people with deep expertise in marine logistics, interconnection

and HVDC infrastructure. We're also seeing many firms tapping into talent from adjacent industries like offshore oil & gas and naval engineering.

**PES:** What other roles or skill sets are in high demand right now?

**JL:** Supply chain leadership has come to the fore. The pandemic exposed real fragility in global turbine and component supply chains, everything from blades and gearboxes to rare earth materials. Now, companies are investing in Chief Supply Chain Officers and looking for talent with localisation strategies, especially to meet regulatory thresholds in the US Inflation Reduction Act or EU Green Deal.

Similarly, we're seeing increased hiring of grid and system integration experts. Wind is no longer just about generation; it's about integrating into the grid, managing curtailment, and playing a role in system stability. Executives with experience in system planning, ISOs or transmission operators are in high demand.

And finally, project finance experience is more important than ever. Companies want leaders who can structure complex finance packages, manage green bonds or lead M&A and joint ventures. We're seeing many developers recruiting from infrastructure funds or investment banks.

**PES:** You mentioned talent from adjacent sectors. How are oil & gas, maritime or aerospace executives being received in wind?

**JL:** Very positively, especially offshore. Wind is maturing rapidly and beginning to resemble large-scale, capital-intensive industries. Leaders from oil & gas or aerospace bring systems thinking, EPC risk management and a level of operational discipline that's incredibly valuable.

For example, an executive who's managed multi-billion-dollar oilfield developments is well equipped to lead a gigawatt-scale floating wind project. Similarly, maritime sector leaders understand subsea cabling, vessel logistics and port planning, all crucial for offshore buildouts.

There's also cultural value. These sectors embed safety, compliance and risk mitigation deep into their leadership DNA. That translates well to wind, especially offshore where operational risk is significant and investor scrutiny is high.

**PES:** What about engineering innovation and digital tools? Do leaders from those sectors bring useful skills there?

**JL:** Absolutely. Aerospace, for instance, excels in digital twins, predictive maintenance and systems integration, all of which are now being deployed in wind. Leaders from those backgrounds understand how to create digitally enabled asset management strategies.



And let's not forget capital markets. Oil & gas executives often have deep experience with investor relations, public listings and navigating volatile commodity markets. As wind transitions away from subsidies into merchant risk, this knowledge becomes critical.

**PES: Let's talk about diversity, global mobility and digital fluency. Are these becoming board-level priorities?**

**JL:** They absolutely are and rightly so. These aren't just 'nice to haves' anymore. They're strategic imperatives.

Starting with diversity, there's increasing pressure from ESG-conscious investors for real, measurable progress. Diverse leadership teams bring cognitive diversity, which enhances innovation and decision making. That's vital in a fast-changing industry like wind. We're also seeing younger talent expect more from their leaders in terms of inclusion and transparency.

Then there's global mobility. Wind is a global business. Developers, OEMs, and service providers are working across Latin America, India, Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe. They need leaders who understand local regulatory frameworks, can build cross-cultural partnerships, and are comfortable relocating.

Finally, digital fluency is now a core leadership requirement. Today's executives need to understand SCADA systems, remote diagnostics, AI and cybersecurity, not just from a technical perspective but also from a governance and risk lens.

**PES: With all of that in mind, what are developers, OEMs and service providers looking for from their top executives hire in 2025?**

**JL:** The mindset has shifted from 'growth at all costs' to disciplined scale, integration and margin protection.

For developers, there's a real need for commercially savvy executives who can structure deals, navigate merchant markets and manage portfolios across multiple jurisdictions. These leaders need policy fluency, financial acumen and the ability to build investor confidence.

In OEMs, it's all about operational excellence and product innovation. They're facing cost pressure and intense competition, so they need leaders who can drive efficiency, lead digital transformation and deliver localisation strategies.

Service providers, on the other hand, are looking for growth-oriented execs with a platform mindset: people who can build recurring revenue streams and scale safely across geographies.

**PES: Are there traits that cut across all these segments?**

**JL:** Yes, several. In 2025, the most sought-after leaders will share a blend of strategic agility, global perspective, digital fluency, policy insight, strong people leadership and commercial sharpness.

The wind market is moving fast, and leaders must be able to pivot while maintaining clear focus. Given the international nature of supply chains, regulations and partnerships, global experience is essential.

Equally important is digital competence: data and automation are now central to asset management and revenue optimisation.



James Lindemann

As incentives and permitting frameworks evolve, executives must demonstrate a deep understanding of policy and regulatory dynamics.

With talent becoming increasingly scarce, strong people leadership is critical, particularly in areas like diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), safety culture and retention. And finally, as margins tighten across the sector, commercial acumen is vital. Leaders must be able to connect strategic vision to tangible, bottom-line value.

**PES: So, how has the profile of a successful wind executive changed in just a few short years?**

**JL:** It's night and day. A few years ago, companies were hiring primarily on technical wind experience. Now, they're looking for multi-disciplinary, commercially aware, tech-savvy leaders and they're open to hiring from other sectors.

What's also changed is the risk landscape. Wind firms are facing merchant exposure, grid constraints, localisation rules and cybersecurity threats, all while scaling globally. That requires executives with broad shoulders, deep networks and the ability to navigate complexity without losing clarity.

It's an exciting time, but it's also a challenging one. That's why getting the right executive team in place has never been more important.

**PES: James, thanks for sharing your insights. For companies navigating this transition, or leaders looking to make their next move, how can they get in touch?**

**JL:** Thanks, it's been a pleasure. If you're facing a critical executive hire or looking to explore new leadership opportunities in the wind sector, feel free to reach out at [james@jler.co.uk](mailto:james@jler.co.uk). We work globally and understand how to align leadership with strategic impact.

[jler.co.uk](http://jler.co.uk)

