



# INTERMEDIATE CAPITAL GROUP & THE RETURN HUB CASE STUDY

JULY 2021



## Background

ICG are a diversified global alternative asset manager, founded in 1989 investing across a number of different strategies, including private equity, private and public debt, real estate and infrastructure. They have a strong entrepreneurial culture which is collaborative, solutions-orientated, ambitious and driven. With integrity at its core, the firm encourages new ideas while also taking a considered approach.

As a fast-growing firm, ICG was keen to broaden its access to talent and increase the representation of women in the firm. They look for highly-skilled, talent to help innovate and deliver for their fund investors, shareholders and people.

Attuned to the business case for diversity and the need to do more, Executive Board Director, Antje Hensel-Roth and Head of HR Business Partnering, Gill Freeman-Smith approached The Return Hub. As part of their commitment to Diversity & Inclusion, the firm had set a target with the Women in Finance Charter (WIFC) to have 30% females in senior management by 2023. ICG was very clear from the start that their strategy needed to be built on a fundamental cultural shift and include measures for recruitment, retention and development.

Wanting to take positive action and reach as broad an experienced candidate pool as possible, they partnered with The Return Hub.

## The Return Hub

The Return Hub is an executive search consultancy that places professionals (mainly women) who want to relaunch or transform their careers with employers in the financial services sector. They advise on and implement practical strategies that companies can use to target, assess, hire and support diverse and returning talent. They network and support this untapped, diverse talent and offer an ongoing acquisition strategy for organisations to hire, promote, develop and retain more women.

Their candidates are:

- **Returning from career breaks: any length and for any reason**
- **Have returned but to a role below their potential**
- **Looking to transition or pivot from their current role**

There are an estimated 427,000 professional women looking to return to work - traditional search or recruitment does not find these people. 61% of professional women are considering a career change. 75% of women rate career development as being a top of the agenda when assessing what is important to them in an organisation - an agenda that has slipped for many companies in the pandemic.

**“Firms that are leading the way are taking a thoughtful and sustained approach to attracting diverse talent. There is no shortage of incredible women who can bring knowledge, expertise, charisma and help culture change. Uncovering, attracting and retaining them is the key.”**



Dominie Moss,  
Founder of The Return Hub





## You can't be what you can't see

As a first step to kick-start the membership with The Return Hub, ICG identified one particular role which they wanted to ring fence. They were looking for a candidate with product expertise who would support and develop into a marketing and client relations role. The hiring manager for this role was identified as a champion of change within the organisation; open to assessing for potential and transferable skills.

From beginning to end the process took just over a month to reach offer stage. A shortlist of 8 highly impressive and skilled individuals was presented over a 2-week period and 5 were brought back to interview. To complement the interview process, all candidates had free access to career development tools, and coaching options via The Career Academy (a digital career development platform provided by The Return Hub).

The successful candidate, Hannah Wilcock was returning to work after a 7-year planned career break from JP Morgan in equity sales.

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**"The Return Hub were really supportive with my return. We had some really helpful conversations and I was prepped well for the interview process with an extra level of insight on what to expect. Since joining, they have also been following up with me as part of my onboarding process."**



Hannah Wilcock,  
Marketing and Client Relations,  
Associate Director

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ICG take a tailored approach to their L&D interventions, so when Hannah was in the process of joining, they took into account her time-out and adjusted the onboarding plan accordingly. Before starting, she was enrolled on to a course with the BVCA for a refresher and an overview of key terms and industry dynamics. On starting she received further in-depth training covering IT applications, technical courses as well as in-house training sessions.

A very strong network of women at ICG have been incredibly supportive, helping Hannah to assimilate into ICG. As she networked through the organisation, she has identified a number of sponsors who have helped her onboarding process including her direct manager, Vesna Sipp, Head of Client Relations who championed her hire, a portfolio manager who was approachable and responsive, and more broadly

the team she works with always make time to help her whenever needed - particularly vital during lockdown.

## Promote and Develop

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**"Hannah serves as a fantastic case study demonstrating both internally and externally the success that can be achieved with this deliberate approach to finding gender diverse talent. She is an excellent role model for others to aspire to and will no doubt be part of our overall strategic intentions to diversify the culture of our organisation".**



Antje Hensel-Roth,  
Executive Board Director

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In her first year, Hannah has exceeded expectations, receiving the 'sprinter' award for her ability to so quickly 'get up to speed'. Not long after joining (and during the pandemic), she took efficient charge of a fundraiser, taking it to its successful conclusion and helping to exceed the set targets. She has built strong relationships with internal stakeholders across the firm. Her previous professional and personal experience combined has given her a solid understanding of what was necessary to be successful in her role.

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**"Hannah's time-out meant that she came to the role with a fresh pair of eyes that has led to ideas, improvements and progression - a progression which benefits both Hannah and the organisation from a developmental perspective"**



Vesna Sipp,  
Head of Client Relations

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As part of their talent attraction and employer brand strategy, ICG showcases the organisation via The Return Hub's website which is regularly promoted on social media and via newsletters. Regular account management meetings help them to keep their strategy under constant review and they are planning a sponsored panel event with The Return Hub to explore the topic of diversity within corporates, helping to ensure their diversity targets remain at the top of their agenda.



### Long-Term Strategic Intent

Alongside this targeted search, ICG's chosen approach with The Return Hub employs a longer-term strategy to sustainably embed women in senior roles. Their membership with The Return Hub means that they have ongoing visibility of a broader talent pool for suitable business-as-usual roles increasing their likelihood of interviewing and hiring more women.

There is also an accompanying toolkit provided to members to help them to understand and communicate the strategy within the organisation, and more practically, to help hiring managers bust some myths around the talent pool and learn how to interview and assess for potential.

### ICG's Advice

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**"We know that there are no shortcuts to creating a more diverse culture. The demands of a fast growing, successful business means we are constantly juggling priorities; but establishing an ongoing strategy to positively address our challenges means that we can evolve, assess and improve. The simple fact is that organisational culture stems from its people. By putting recruitment at the heart of our strategy and effectively mobilising cohesive support from the business, HR, L&D and marketing, we can continue to attract a greater range of talent and enrich our culture and continue to build on our success".**



Gill Freeman-Smith,  
Head of HR Business Partnering

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