

Interim CFO Brings Stability and Strategy to High-Growth Vision Care Platform, Earning Trust as well as the Permanent Position

Brought valuable insights and accountability to start transitioning the finance office as a true service organization capable of partnering with other business areas to foster more growth

Our Challenge

Within four years of acquiring an optometry practice management business, which tripled in size, the PE sponsor made efforts to top-grade much of the former C-suite team with executives more experienced at running platforms generating over \$1 billion in top-line annual revenue to support the massive growth.

To complete this wholesale executive upgrade and continue the upward growth trajectory, the PE sponsor and Founder/CEO agreed they needed an experienced CFO with a proven record in the following:

- CFO leadership at a high growth, \$1B+ company
- PE-backed ownership
- Multi-site consumer or healthcare services

This combination of skills is a tall order, so the PE sponsor sought an interim leader to bridge the gap while the full-time CFO search took place. The executive team, board members, and A/F staff were picking up too much slack, so investing in an Interim CFO enabled each team member to get back into their own seats.

Our Solution

Not only did our interim candidate have over 10 years' experience as a sitting CFO for entities in the public equity and fixed income capital markets, but he had taken two companies from different industries public, one PE-backed and one founder-led. With his background in insurance and consumer lending, he was also well-versed in third-party collections, allowances for uncollectible accounts, and insurance applications, all imperatives in healthcare.

On days one and three of his interim engagement, this veteran CFO joined already-scheduled leadership and board meetings, respectively. In both, he presented himself as a seasoned financial leader, who was willing to listen carefully and express genuine curiosity about the healthcare industry, the platform, his peers' key responsibilities, and everyone's needs from finance. This laid an early and critical foundation for the trust-based relationships that he built with the key stakeholders of the business.

Our Outcome

In short order, our consultant relieved his peers of the finance responsibilities they had assumed, freeing them to return their full attention to their respective areas. At the same time, his work to upgrade the monthly close and financial reporting re-focused his team on what was most important for the company.

He was so productive that he tackled another imperative not originally within his engagement scope: updating the five-year strategic model to identify the key organic and inorganic growth levers to pull over the next two to three years to allow the investor to reach its exit goals.

- Met weekly with the CEO and regularly with peers to strategize and collaborate on things like cash management and capital deployment
- Added an Executive Summary to the board package that the members welcomed
- Built a good working rapport with the audit partner, rating agencies, and lenders
- Managed the completion of the 2022 audit and identified areas of improvement for the 2023 audit
- Ensured compliance with all debt covenants
- Partnered with key colleagues to restructure the existing equity plan and hurdle rates based on the updated five-year strategic plan
- Hired a consultant to address finance weaknesses

“It became apparent that Focus Search Partners' interim CFO was the type of executive we wanted to replace the former CFO. He stabilized the finance office while demonstrating an ability to be a strategic thought partner to the founding CEO in driving the platform's next phase of growth.” Private Equity Managing Director

Key Relationships Forged

HR to restructure bonus/equity plans

Marketing to fund campaigns that drive more revenue

Operations to deploy capital in the most logical places

Technology to complete the finance transformation