



**Role:** Supply Chain Lead

**Sectors:**

Sporting Goods

Consumer Products

International Distribution

## Building the Supply Chain Capability Behind Ambitious Growth

### The Challenge

Sonik Sports is a fast-growing international business designing and distributing specialist fishing equipment and accessories. With strong product innovation and expanding global sales, the company had already grown by 50% in two years and had set an ambitious five-year plan to double turnover again.

Commercially, the business was thriving.

Operationally, however, the leadership team recognised that its supply chain function had not kept pace with growth. Inventory management, fulfilment, systems, and operational processes all needed significant development if the business was to continue delivering exceptional customer service while scaling internationally.

The challenge was made more sensitive by history. An earlier appointment to a similar role had ended within just a few months, leaving the position vacant for almost two years while the leadership team carefully considered the right long-term solution.

This wasn't simply a replacement hire.

It was a business-critical leadership appointment that would create the operational platform for the company's next phase of growth.

# Stephenson Stappard.

### Our Approach

The assignment began with consultation, rather than recruitment.

Having maintained a relationship with the Finance Director over an extended period, we already understood the organisation's ambitions and the internal discussions surrounding the supply chain function. Once the leadership team was ready to move, we were able to launch a retained executive search immediately and present a shortlist within just a few weeks.

Importantly, the brief extended far beyond supply chain expertise.

The successful candidate needed to be equally comfortable operating within an evolving, hands-on environment while also designing the systems, processes, and governance required for a much larger business. The role would lead the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics ERP, improve inventory management and build a more structured supply chain function without disrupting day-to-day operations.

Although supply chain was the specialism, industry experience wasn't the priority.

We deliberately searched beyond the fishing and sporting goods sector, focusing instead on experienced supply chain leaders with the resilience, commercial awareness and operational judgement to modernise a growing sporting goods business. Alongside established industry contacts, we conducted a comprehensive market search to ensure that no suitable candidates were overlooked.

Throughout the process, we invested significant time consulting with candidates as well as the client, providing complete transparency about the opportunity, the organisational culture and the challenges they would inherit.

## The Outcome

The retained search produced two exceptional finalists, each capable of leading the transformation.

After careful consideration, Sonik Sports appointed an experienced supply chain leader who was looking for the right opportunity. The candidate immediately recognised the scale of the challenge and the opportunity to build a function with genuine strategic influence.

For the client, the appointment delivered more than operational expertise.

It gave them confidence that the business had recruited someone capable of earning trust across the leadership team, influencing colleagues responsible for customer relationships and gradually introducing the systems and processes needed to support sustained growth.

## Why This Matters

Growth often exposes the parts of a business that need to evolve next.

For Sonik Sports, commercial success created the need for stronger operational infrastructure. The challenge wasn't finding someone who could simply manage a warehouse or oversee inventory; it was identifying a leader who was capable of designing the future supply chain, whilst bringing people with them.

This assignment demonstrates the value of retained search when a business is making a genuinely strategic appointment. By combining deep market knowledge with objective search, thorough candidate consultation, and a detailed understanding of the client's culture, Stephenson Stappard helped Sonik Sports appoint a leader who could support both today's operations and tomorrow's ambitions.

## Key Results

**Challenge:** Recruit a Head of Supply Chain to build the operational capability required for ambitious international growth.

**Approach:** Retained executive search combining market mapping, extensive candidate consultation and assessment of cultural fit alongside technical expertise.

**Outcome:** Successful appointment of a senior supply chain leader following a competitive search completed within weeks of project launch.

**Added Value:** Helped the client move beyond filling a vacancy to recruiting someone capable of modernising systems, influencing stakeholders, and creating a scalable supply chain function.

"Working with Peter and Stephenson Stappard was a great experience from start to finish. They took the time to understand what we were looking for, communicated clearly throughout the search, and consistently presented high-quality candidates. What we particularly valued was their proactive approach, responsiveness, and ability to quickly grasp our business needs, making the recruitment process smooth and efficient."

**Craig Whitfield, Finance Director**

