

## Vice President of QA & Food Safety – Bento Sushi

### Client Needs

Bento Sushi required a **Vice President of Quality Assurance & Food Safety** to lead and strengthen its food safety and quality programs across a complex, high-volume production and distribution network. With operations spanning multiple facilities and a strong presence in both grocery and foodservice channels, the company sought a senior leader with deep expertise in regulatory compliance, quality assurance systems, and food safety standards specific to the fresh and ready-to-eat food sector.

The ideal candidate needed to bring proven experience managing **multi-site QA operations**, implementing and maintaining programs aligned with HACCP, GFSI, and CFIA/USDA regulations, and fostering a culture of food safety excellence. Additionally, Bento was looking for someone who could lead large cross-functional teams, collaborate closely with operations, R&D, and supply chain, and drive continuous improvement across all production channels. Given the pace and scale of Bento's business, the role demanded a **strategic, proactive, and hands-on leader** who could align quality initiatives with broader organizational objectives while ensuring operational compliance and customer confidence.

### Taplow Solution

To support Bento Sushi in their search for a Vice President of Quality Assurance & Food Safety, MacDonald Search Group launched a targeted and consultative executive search strategy, focused on identifying senior-level QA and operations professionals within the food manufacturing sector. We prioritized candidates with experience in ready-to-eat, frozen, and fresh food production; leadership in multi-site QA environments; and demonstrated success working in unionized settings and with large retail clients. We expanded the search to include professionals in adjacent operational roles who had advanced from regulatory and QA backgrounds.

Leveraging our national food industry network, we identified and engaged senior QA and food safety leaders with a proven track record in fast-paced, high-volume production environments. Our team conducted detailed screening interviews, reference checks, and provided ongoing updates and market insights throughout the process to ensure transparency and alignment. This rigorous, insight-led approach enabled us to deliver a highly qualified shortlist of candidates who not only met Bento's technical and operational requirements but also aligned with the company's culture and pace of growth.

# Executive Search

## Outcome

Within two months, we successfully placed a high-impact candidate with over 17 years of progressive leadership experience in QA, food safety, regulatory affairs, and operations. This individual had led multi-site quality programs, authored foundational food safety systems still in use, and held full P&L responsibility across manufacturing plants serving major North American retailers. Their leadership approach—grounded in daily team engagement, succession planning, and strategic alignment between QA and business goals—made them a seamless fit for Bento's culture. The successful placement highlights the power of a focused, insight-led search process and a strong understanding of the food manufacturing industry's specialized talent landscape.

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