EXECUTIVE SEARCH

THE WIRE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL, INC.
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Client:	The Wire Association International, Inc. (WAI)
Role:	Executive Director
Location:	Madison, Connecticut; hybrid arrangement
Reports To:	Board of Directors; works closely with President and Executive Committee
Structure:	501(c)(6) international technical society
Website:	wirenet.org
Target Start:	April 2027, ahead of Interwire May 4–6, 2027
Compensation:	$180,000–$230,000 base salary, plus benefits

SEARCH OVERVIEW:

Sterling Martin/ZRG is partnering with The Wire Association International (WAI) to identify its next **Executive Director**. The appointment follows the planned August 2027 retirement of WAI's longtime Executive Director and offers an opportunity to guide an established international technical society through a significant period of renewal. WAI seeks a visible, commercially astute, collaborative leader who can combine strategic direction with hands-on management of a lean, experienced staff.

The incoming Executive Director is expected to join before Interwire 2027, allowing an introduction to members, industry partners, and volunteers at WAI's flagship event and a thoughtful transition with the incumbent.

WAI is approaching a consequential leadership transition as it prepares to celebrate its centennial in 2030. The organization is financially established, deeply connected to the manufacturing community, and engaged in a substantial evolution of its education, events, publications, and membership model. The next Executive Director will inherit a clear strategic framework while bringing the judgment, energy, and execution discipline needed to convert ambitious objectives into measurable results.

ABOUT THE WIRE ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL:

Founded in 1930, WAI is a worldwide technical society serving professionals in the wire and cable industry. Its mission is "To serve the technical, manufacturing, and general business segments of the global wire and cable industry." Its members and customers

span ferrous and nonferrous wire, electrical and fiber-optic cable, equipment suppliers, and related manufacturing sectors.

Based in Madison, Connecticut, WAI provides specialized technical education, convenes manufacturers and suppliers, supports industry networking, and distributes authoritative publications. Its work touches industries as varied as energy, infrastructure, automotive, aerospace, telecommunications, medical technology, and defense. WAI will mark its centennial in 2030.

WAI serves an industry essential to modern infrastructure and commerce. Wire and cable products support electrical power generation and transmission, transportation, communications, medical technology, aerospace, defense, housing, and industrial manufacturing. The Association connects the manufacturers, equipment suppliers, technical specialists, and business leaders whose expertise supports these markets.

WAI is a 501(c)(6) organization with a committed volunteer leadership structure and an experienced professional staff. Its Board includes senior industry executives, and approximately 100 volunteers contribute to committees, technical programs, publications, and member activities. This combination of industry expertise and a relatively small staff enables WAI to deliver a broad portfolio of services.

PROGRAMS AND PLATFORMS

- **Interwire and Wire Expo:** Major North American industry trade events, alongside technical conferences, educational workshops, demonstrations, and international programs. Interwire 2025 welcomed 3,386 attendees and 350 exhibiting companies.
- **Education Center:** Online learning, manufacturing fundamentals, extrusion training, webinars, technical papers, and in-person education focused on workforce development and manufacturing excellence.
- ***Wire Journal International*:** A monthly global trade publication, supported by the *WJI Reference Guide*, industry news, advertising, and a growing digital presence.
- **Membership and Chapters:** Approximately 1,600 individual members, with a broad international network of volunteers, corporate partners, and regional chapters.

THE OPPORTUNITY:

The **Executive Director** will serve as WAI's chief staff executive, responsible for organizational performance, strategic implementation, financial stewardship, staff leadership, and external representation. The role combines the expectations of an

association chief executive with the practical demands of running a relatively small enterprise whose programs include a major trade show and a publishing operation.

WAI's Centennial Strategic Plan, "Evolving the Operation to Serve the Industry," provides the roadmap to 2030. Its four integrated priorities are education and training; trade shows and conferences; *Wire Journal International* and digital media; and membership, users, and customers. The next Executive Director will translate these ambitions into measurable results while preserving WAI's reputation for technical credibility and industry relationships.

In particular, the next Executive Director will help WAI become a truly international association, expanding its reach among wire and cable manufacturers and across the broader supply chain, and position WAI as the definitive resource for foundational education on manufacturing processes, industry standards, safety, and maintenance.

The position requires a leader equally comfortable in the boardroom, on a trade-show floor, and in direct conversation with plant managers, suppliers, and technical professionals. The Executive Director will translate the Board's strategic direction into annual operating plans, realistic budgets, staff assignments, and performance measures. The successful candidate will respect WAI's technical heritage while challenging established approaches when industry needs, member expectations, or economics warrant change.

An important dimension of the assignment is business-model evolution. Interwire remains a major financial contributor, while digital education, membership, publishing, and partnerships offer opportunities to broaden revenue and engagement. The Executive Director will balance near-term event execution with the longer-term investment and organizational change required by the Centennial Strategic Plan.

KEY STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

- Build partnerships across manufacturers, suppliers, technical experts, and related associations, including opportunities for international collaboration.
- Expand WAI's international reach among wire and cable manufacturers and across the broader supply chain.
- Accelerate membership growth and engagement through relevant benefits, company-level offerings, and stronger participation by emerging generations of industry professionals.

- Scale the Education Center into the definitive resource for foundational education on manufacturing processes, industry standards, safety, and maintenance for the global wire and cable workforce.
- Sustain and refresh Interwire, Wire Expo, and technical conferences, strengthening attendance, exhibitor value, strategic partnerships, and financial performance.
- Advance digital transformation of *Wire Journal International*, the WAI website, communications, and member services, using AI and analytics where they add value.
- Prepare WAI for its 2030 centennial and the next chapter of service to the industry.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Executive Director will be accountable for the overall effectiveness of the Association, its programs, and its commercial activities. Working with the President, Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and staff, the Executive Director will provide leadership across the following areas.

STRATEGY, GOVERNANCE, AND EXTERNAL LEADERSHIP

- Serve as a highly visible ambassador for WAI, building trust with member companies, volunteers, sponsors, exhibitors, allied organizations, and international industry leaders.
- Partner with the Board, President, and Executive Committee to establish priorities, implement the Centennial Strategic Plan, and report progress against defined measures.
- Support sound association governance, effective volunteer engagement, and productive committee relationships; fulfill the Executive Director's duties as Secretary under the bylaws.
- Prepare clear Board and Executive Committee agendas, decision materials, financial and operating dashboards, and timely follow-up on approved actions. Advise volunteer leaders objectively on priorities, risks, resource allocation, governance practices, and emerging industry developments.
- Lead periodic assessment of the Centennial Strategic Plan, translating its four pillars into achievable milestones and key performance indicators. Coordinate committee contributions and maintain alignment among volunteers, staff, and strategic partners.

OPERATIONS, PEOPLE, AND FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

- Lead and develop an experienced staff and appropriate outside partners, establishing accountability, collaboration, and a service-oriented culture.
- Oversee budgets, reserves, risk management, financial reporting, and the operating performance of WAI and its publishing subsidiary.
- Ensure effective execution of events, educational programs, publications, membership services, technology, and commercial activities.
- Remain engaged in day-to-day problem solving and execution when required by the scale and operating rhythm of the organization.
- Direct the annual budgeting and forecasting process, monitor results against plan, and identify corrective actions when revenues or expenses vary from expectations. Work with finance leadership and the Treasurer to support accurate reporting, audits, internal controls, reserves, and responsible management of the Association's assets.
- Oversee hiring, supervision, performance management, succession planning, and professional development. Establish clear expectations while recognizing the practical demands of a small organization, including a willingness to work directly with colleagues during intensive event and project periods.
- Provide executive oversight of contracts, suppliers, sponsorships, exhibitors, event partners, technology vendors, and other material business relationships. Assess financial and reputational risks, negotiate sound terms, and ensure high standards of service.

INNOVATION, GROWTH, AND MEMBER VALUE

- Develop sustainable earned-revenue opportunities and diversify income beyond the biennial trade-show cycle.
- Use digital tools, data, and practical applications of AI to improve products, operations, engagement, and member experience.
- Evaluate new partnerships, alliances, and delivery models without compromising WAI's mission or financial discipline.
- Lead efforts to expand membership recruitment, retention, and engagement, including bundled company offerings and programming for emerging professionals and production personnel. Use data and regular member feedback to refine the value proposition and measure outcomes.

- Oversee the Education Center and its digital training platform, ensuring that course development, industry expertise, marketing, pricing, and delivery support workforce recruitment, training, and retention. Evaluate opportunities to expand content into new technologies, automation, safety, and international markets.
- Guide the continued evolution of *Wire Journal International* and the WAI digital media platform. Work with editorial, technology, and commercial staff to strengthen content quality, audience reach, advertising value, and the integration of publications with education, membership, and events.
- Ensure that Interwire, Wire Expo, and technical conferences deliver compelling educational content, valuable networking, exhibitor return on investment, and sustainable economics. Evaluate programming formats, partnerships, sponsorships, and international collaboration opportunities.
- Champion effective use of technology, including association management systems, digital communications, analytics, and artificial intelligence. Balance innovation with sound governance, information security, staff capability, and measurable member benefits.

CANDIDATE PROFILE AND QUALIFICATIONS:

WAI welcomes accomplished candidates from association leadership, wire and cable manufacturing, adjacent industrial sectors, and other relevant organizations. Deep familiarity with the industry is valuable, but equally important are the capacity to learn quickly, establish credibility with technical and business leaders, and lead a complex portfolio of programs.

- Significant senior executive leadership experience, ideally with full operating, financial, and people-management accountability.
- Strong strategic judgment coupled with an entrepreneurial, hands-on management style appropriate for a small professional staff.
- Experience in revenue generation, commercial partnerships, membership or customer growth, events, publishing, education, or related service businesses.
- Demonstrated ability to work effectively with a volunteer board and to build durable relationships across diverse stakeholder groups.
- Financial acumen, including budgeting, forecasting, investment oversight, and prudent stewardship of organizational resources.

- Digital fluency, intellectual curiosity, and a willingness to use technology and artificial intelligence thoughtfully.
- Excellent executive presence, communication skills, cultural awareness, and readiness to represent a global technical community.
- An authentic interest in manufacturing, workforce development, and the future of the wire and cable industry.

A bachelor's degree is required; advanced education and relevant association credentials may be advantageous.

The Search Committee seeks a strategic and commercially astute executive with a record of leading people, managing resources, developing relationships, and producing results. Experience in an association, professional society, manufacturing enterprise, trade-show business, or other membership- or customer-centered organization may be relevant. The determining factors will be leadership capability, sound judgment, demonstrated execution, and the ability to earn credibility within the wire and cable community.

EXPERIENCE AND CAPABILITIES

- Demonstrated responsibility for operating plans, organizational budgets, financial reporting, and the development of diversified revenue streams; an ability to evaluate business opportunities using sound financial and operational analysis.
- Experience working with boards, executive committees, volunteer leaders, or comparable governance stakeholders; the diplomacy to build consensus and the confidence to offer independent professional advice.
- Knowledge of the economics and execution of trade shows, conferences, technical education, publications, sponsorships, or digital subscription offerings, with direct experience in several of these areas strongly advantageous.
- Ability to lead a seasoned, multifunctional staff, set priorities, coach colleagues, make difficult decisions, and build an accountable, collaborative working environment.
- Facility with technology and digital business models, including practical AI applications, data-driven marketing, learning platforms, and member or customer relationship systems.

LEADERSHIP ATTRIBUTES

- A visible and persuasive communicator who is comfortable engaging senior manufacturing executives, technical specialists, international partners, volunteers, and staff.
- A pragmatic strategist who can connect long-term vision to execution, manage competing demands, and maintain focus through the demanding production cycles of major industry events.
- An approachable, resilient, ethical leader with high emotional intelligence, intellectual curiosity, cultural awareness, and a genuine willingness to learn the complexities of wire and cable manufacturing.

ORGANIZATION, FINANCES, AND REPORTING:

WAI operates with a lean, long-tenured staff, supported by approximately 100 engaged volunteers. The **Executive Director** leads the staff team and works closely with the Board and its active Executive Committee. The Executive Director also serves as publisher of *Wire Journal International*, produced by WAI's wholly owned subsidiary, Wire Journal Inc.

WAI's consolidated 2027 budget projects approximately $4.3 million in revenue and nearly $500,000 in net income across the association and its publishing subsidiary. Interwire is a particularly important contributor to the organization's two-year operating cycle. WAI also reports financial reserves of more than $5 million.

Under WAI's bylaws, the Executive Director is an officer of the Association, serves as Secretary, and is an ex officio member of committees. The Executive Director works with the President and volunteer leadership while providing day-to-day direction to the professional staff. Success requires clear role boundaries, candid reporting, and the ability to help volunteers focus on policy and strategy while staff delivers operational results.

LOCATION, TRAVEL, AND COMPENSATION:

The position is based in Madison, Connecticut, where WAI owns its office suite. A hybrid arrangement is anticipated, and strong candidates outside the region will be considered; relocation support may be discussed. Travel is estimated at approximately 10% of the year, including industry events and occasional international travel.

The base salary range for this position is $180,000–$230,000. WAI offers a competitive benefits package that includes medical, dental, and vision insurance; life insurance; a

401(k) retirement plan with employer match; a flexible spending account; paid time off; a flexible, hybrid work schedule; and professional development opportunities. Any relocation arrangements will be finalized with the selected candidate. An employment agreement is anticipated. The desired start date is April 1, 2027, ahead of Interwire in Atlanta on May 4–6, 2027.

APPLICATION PROCESS:

The Wire Association International is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

To apply, please include a cover letter and current resume (Microsoft Word® format preferred) through the online portal:
https://jobs.crelate.com/portal/sterlingmartin/job/wyr7ueaq7me9bqo3ngpttqijnr

The cover letter should outline how your experience fits the requirements of the position as this will be an important factor in considering your candidacy.

WAI will consider qualified applicants based on their experience, capabilities, and alignment with the responsibilities of the position.

Sterling Martin Associates is conducting the search for WAI's next Executive Director. Confidential inquiries, expressions of interest, and referrals of qualified candidates may be directed to:

Tammy Cassidy
Senior Associate
tcassidy@smartinsearch.com

ABOUT ZRG PARTNERS:

ZRG is a global talent advisory firm that is changing the way companies find, hire, and manage talent through its data-driven approach to executive and professional search. The company's digital Zi platform combines talent intelligence, candidate insights, and process improvement to dramatically deliver executive searches quicker and with proven better results.

Sterling Martin, now part of ZRG, specializes in chief executive-level searches for associations and nonprofit organizations. For two decades, Sterling Martin has partnered with mission-driven organizations to identify and recruit transformative leaders, with deep expertise in scientific, academic, and professional associations.