



BiS has three strong USPs: extensive high-level experience in our profession; constant communication with clients; and a particularly complicated coffee machine. Who can resist such a service?

The BiS offices at Grange Park, Northampton

BiS



Whichever way you look at it, I am now in the latter part of my career and not even Grecian 2000 could convince my clients that my main value is anything other than experience. Thankfully, experience is important, both in working in recruitment and in helping companies recruit the right staff.

Andy Kaye and I established BiS in 2000 after the dot.com boom failed to make us rich. Trading under the names BiS Interim and BiS Exec, we have now built a company with 12 excellent staff, and are firmly on the path of get rich slow. It only seems like yesterday that we were thumbing through paper files of CVs, searching for someone who matched the brief, or ringing someone we had met 20 years earlier and re-acquainting ourselves again, in the hope they had a position to fill. Today we have a sophisticated IT search system, seven Consultants, two Researchers, a Marketing Manager, an Accounts Manager, a part time Finance Director, a continually updated website, a new office in Northampton and a complicated coffee machine.

What hasn't changed, however, are the four basic principles Andy and I established for the business back in a small room in Milton Keynes in July 2000. We had both worked in supply chain for virtually our entire careers and had both experienced the difficulties of recruiting good staff for roles where experience and potential were essential. The recruitment dilemma was intensified as we explained some of the increasingly technical aspects of supply chain and logistics to a bright and well-presented Recruitment Consultant who did not know their WMS from their ERP. The first principle was therefore easy. We would leverage our supply chain knowledge and work only in that field.

The second principle followed, as we would recruit staff that also understood and had worked in supply chain. Victoria Mountain, now a Director of BiS, is an experienced Headhunter with 16 years experience recruiting senior level positions in the sector. Gary Sewell MILT, a Consultant with us, was a Business Unit Director for TDG and previously held general management positions in other 3PLs. Jo Macartney, Ryan Harris and Rebecca Wilson, our other three Consultants, also have a strong working knowledge of the industry.

Unfortunately, deciding what field to work in hardly gave us a unique selling proposition (USP), we needed something more. We recalled our retail training from a few years earlier that emphasised staff behaviour when in contact with the customer says more about a company than any process, service or product that they may offer. So principle three was that we would be a recruitment company that gave a personal service, so we would constantly communicate with clients and candidates. We would keep them

informed about progress and feedback on candidate performance, good and bad. This third principle effectively positioned us in the market as offering a serviced recruitment process, rather than the cookie-cutter approach that was growing fast through internet recruitment companies.

The fourth and last principle was that we would properly interview candidates to establish experience and fit against the role brief and the company culture. Our short lists would be short, but we would still try to leave our clients spoilt for choice. Following on from this, we would not be the cheapest in the market on quoted fees, although the good service would still leave the customer more likely to have long-term success with the candidate.

With our Interim Management business, we did discuss pricing in detail. Both Andy and I had experienced somewhat greedy margins from suppliers we had used in the past. It is our philosophy that we are totally transparent on rates with the Interim Executives and clients, and we ensure our Interims are paid on time and in full, irrespective of our financial position with the client.

Seven years after setting up we are sticking to our core competency of supply chain and logistics management, and are expanding well outside the areas of retail and third-party distribution recruitment where we started. We are now operating in manufacturing, utilities, defence, telecoms, technology and e-commerce; and 2008 will see a move into supply chain IT recruitment... watch this space. Andy is now starting to price the Grecian 2000.

Simon Hughes – Executive Chairman, BiS

Note: BiS Interim and BiS Exec were set up by Simon Hughes and Andy Kaye in 2000. Simon was a former CEO of Mothercare, and Supply Chain Director of B&S and Somerfield. Andy was Head of Logistics at Storehouse, and a Director of Brandfever.com. For more information, visit website: www.bis-uk.com