

Business club pulls off a King-sized coup

BANK of England Governor Mervyn King is scheduled to be guest speaker at the December meeting of the Crawley & Gatwick Business Lunch Club.

Mr King is by far the most influential speaker to attend any of the three lunchtime business clubs founded and organised by EMC and Cobb PR.

He is due to give a 30 minute speech outlining the economic challenges facing the country, followed by a 20 minute question and answer session. The whole meeting, held at Gatwick's Crowne Plaza Hotel, is being conducted under Chatham House rules to allow the Governor to be as candid as possible.

Just 50 places were available with Crawley & Gatwick club members receiving priority in the booking process.

EMC chief executive Nik Askaroff said: "It is an amazing coup having somebody of Mervyn King's stature to speak at one of our business clubs. It demonstrates the clubs' growing reputation as a platform to reach some of the most

influential business leaders in the South East."

Nik and Sussex PR guru Tim Cobb launched their first business lunch club in Brighton & Hove in January 2008. The Crawley & Gatwick club followed 18 months later and Tunbridge Wells just over a year ago.

Each of the clubs is deliberately elitist, being open only to the bosses of companies with a turnover of more than £2 million or who employ at least 10 staff. Numbers from each of the professional services are also

strictly limited to ensure a great mix of people.

Membership of the three clubs now stands at 150 representing businesses employing more than 10,000 people in Kent, Sussex and Surrey.

Candid comment from the BofE Governor



Find out more about the clubs on their websites at:
www.brightonandhovebusinesslunchclub.co.uk
www.crawleyandgatwickbusinesslunchclub.co.uk
www.royaltunbridgewellsbusinesslunchclub.co.uk



Checking your business pulse

EMC has linked up with *South East Business* magazine to carry out a health check on the region's businesses.

Our people are currently visiting selected companies throughout Kent, Sussex and Surrey to find out how they're faring in these difficult economic times, uncovering the issues that are bothering them, and ascertaining their readiness to face what many believe will be another tough 12 months.

Their findings will then be reported in *South East Business* which is one of the region's most widely distributed and read business magazines. More than 13,000 copies are mailed out monthly to named senior executives.

EMC chief executive Nik Askaroff said: "Everyone accepts that the

country's economic recovery will be driven by its SMEs. But how ready are they to assume that role? How damaged are they by the buffeting they have already received? How prepared are they to ride out any fresh economic storms? And are the banks really being as unhelpful as we are led to believe?

"These and several other questions are what our team of experienced business people have been, and are, putting to a broad cross-section of the region's major private businesses in a series of face-to-face interviews. The results will hopefully give us all a better understanding of the opportunities and threats that lie ahead."

An interview with Nik Askaroff, will appear in the January 2011 issue of *South East Business*.

Marketing strategy wins top marks

SET in 32 acres of the Sussex Weald at Five Ashes, near Mayfield, Skippers Hill Manor is a leading preparatory school catering for children aged 3-11. Established in 1945, the school prides itself on providing individual learning, enabling children to develop their own natural talents.

Following the sudden death of her husband, Sydney, in 2009, owner Maxine Assayag made the decision to sell the school. Through EMC, she engaged the services of Gill Levett to develop an effective marketing strategy and assist with brokering a deal.

In consultation with Mrs Assayag, teaching staff and parents, Gill developed and initiated strategies to build the brand and pupil numbers within the South East in order to attract prospective buyers. Between February and September 2010, the school roll rose from 101 to 135.

In September, the school was acquired for an undisclosed sum by Mark Malley, owner and



Skippers Hill Manor School can trace its origins back to 1945

EMC provided thorough and clear information to assist me in my acquisition

headmaster of Norfolk House Preparatory School, North London.

Mrs Assayag commented: "I thoroughly enjoyed working with Gill throughout the process of marketing and selling Skippers Hill. Her professionalism and

judgement was, at all times, faultless. Gill's contribution to the marketing aspect in particular was invaluable and she made the process easier in every respect."

New owner, Mark Malley, who also owns Weston Green School in Thames Ditton, Surrey, and sits on the Board of the Independent Schools Association, was equally impressed with the support and guidance he received. Indeed, he has retained Gill's services on an on-going

basis to support the further development and growth of the school.

He said: "I found dealing with EMC through my recent acquisition of Skippers Hill Manor School to be incredibly professional. Their guidance and helpful advice was appreciated, as was their intimate knowledge of the sector.

"EMC provided thorough and clear information to assist me in my acquisition. They are ethical, incisive and add significant value to their clients. I highly recommend them and will certainly use their services again."



KCFA launch new website

THE Kent Corporate Finance Alliance, of which EMC is a prominent member, has launched its new website.

The KCFA brings together professional services firms providing lead advisory, legal, private equity, banking and transactional accountancy services, all of whom operate locally but have vast national and international experience of deal making and financing.

Speaking at the website launch, KCFA chairman Robert de Fougères said: "Our members have a common aim – to provide direct, consistent and dependable business advice to organisations of all sizes across the region.

"In the wake of the demise

of the Regional Development Agencies, we believe that our commitment to best practice will improve Kent's economic growth and financial stability and establish the county as a hotbed of transactional activity."

To see the new website, visit: www.kcfa.co.uk

Avast there you lubbers!



WELL, shiver me timbers! This motley crew hauled away the treasure for the best dressed team at EMC's annual sailing challenge in the Solent. But despite having six boat owners and a veteran of the Fastnet and Sydney to Hobart races on board, they weren't the first across the line. What you might call 'all looks and no action'! Pictured (left to right) are Miranda Chapple, Gill Levett, Dave Holligon, The Skipper, Giselle Barrowcliffe, Karen Jacques and Mike Camps.

Firms represented among the eight six-person crews included Posturite, Cole Jarman, Push Studios, Carpenter Box, Estel Office, Finger Print Kent, Venture Metal Products, David Lock Associates, Willmott Dixon, Hallam Land, Eastbourne Car Auctions, Chitter Chatter, JRP Ergonomics, Bestport Ventures, Thomas Eggar, Dryad Maritime, Chitty Foods, the HS Group and Centre4 Resources.

GENESIS GOES 'DOWN UNDER'

THE Eastbourne-based Genesis Forwarding Group has been acquired by the giant Australian Toll Group in a A\$150 million double deal also involving the WT Sea Air Group based in Harmondsworth, Middlesex.

Both companies now form part of the Toll Group, the Asian region's leading provider of integrated logistics, which generates revenues in excess of A\$6.5 billion and employs more than 35,000 people in 55 countries.

Genesis, which was formed in 1986, was advised on the sale by EMC Corporate Finance chief executive Nik Askaroff who has had a ten-year relationship with the company as both a non-executive director and mergers and acquisitions adviser.

He said: "Having been advising Genesis for so long on its acquisitions and group strategy, it was very satisfying to see the shareholders exit to such a strong buyer. The deal not only gave excellent value but also secured the business and its staff."

Doug Currie, chief executive of Genesis, said: "A deal like this, with its trans-continental and tri-lateral complications,

EMC chief executive Nik Askaroff (right) celebrates with (from left to right) Genesis Forwarding Group chairman Roy Tricker, managing director Ken Howell and chief executive Doug Currie.



needed great skill and experience to negotiate and complete. Nik and his EMC colleagues have been a huge support to our business over the years and their advice throughout the sale process was invaluable."

Both Genesis and WT Sea Air Group now sit within the Toll Global Forwarding (TGF) Division in Europe. Between them they are expected to generate revenues this year of A\$250 million, helping to place

TGF within the top half dozen forwarders in the UK.

Toll Group managing director Paul Little commented: "Genesis specialises in the provision of complex and mission-critical international multi-modal freight, predominantly in the defence, aerospace, and oil and gas industries across Europe, the USA, Asia Pacific and the Middle East. These market segments are very attractive additions to the general TGF business."



Small Deal Award is a big deal for EMC

EMC chief executive Nik Askaroff (left) presents the Small Deal of the Year Award to Tottel Publishing representative Jonathan Gregory at the 2010 M&A Awards held in London.

EMC is a main sponsor of the awards which were hosted this year by ITV news presenter Katie Derham. Tottel, an independent professional and academic publisher, was acquired by Harry Potter publisher Bloomsbury in 2009 in a deal worth £9.96m.

The annual event, organised by Mergers and Acquisitions and Business XL magazine, recognises the achievements of management teams, advisers and financiers involved in company disposals, acquisitions and mergers.

Around 500 CEOs, MDs, FDs, advisers,

venture capitalists and other financiers attended the awards dinner at the Millennium Mayfair Hotel in Grosvenor Square.

Nik Askaroff, who was joined on the evening by EMC colleagues and guests, said: "We're delighted to be associated with such a prestigious event. It's one of the biggest nights of the year in the corporate finance calendar and a great way to celebrate the achievements of the star performing firms and individuals.

"The only downside of being a sponsor is that we can't enter the awards ourselves. We've been involved in quite a few transactions in the past year that might have interested the judges. But for now we're just happy to play a part in the awards' enduring success."

Kent stars help kick off Ashes series in style

EMC Kent team members and their guests were bowled over to join past and present Kent and England cricketing stars Derek Underwood, Geraint Jones and Rob Key at a dinner at the County Ground in Canterbury.

More than 150 people attended the EMC-sponsored event in November and stayed on to watch the morning session of the first Ashes Test live from Brisbane.

Director Desmond High, a lifelong Kent supporter, said: "It was a great way to kick off what promises to be an electrifying series of test matches Down Under.

"Derek Underwood was my cricketing hero and is one of the all-time greats. It was fantastic for us all to hear first hand some great stories from 'Deadly' who played in 29 Tests against Australia, taking 105 wickets, as well as from 2005 Ashes star Geraint Jones and current Kent captain Rob Key who toured Australia in 2002/03."

MEET THE EMC TEAM



Nik Askaroff



Peter Aves



Giselle Barrowcliffe



Justin Caffrey



Desmond High



Stephen Milton

Beatrice joins our 'mobile boardroom'



CHARTERED accountant Beatrice Veerasingham, whose career has included spells as a director within some international giants in the entertainment and media industries, is the latest recruit to EMC's 'mobile boardroom' of professional business advisers.

Beatrice has held senior operations and finance positions with companies such as Viacom, NBC Universal and United International Pictures and has been responsible for implementing major projects and meeting tough corporate objectives.

Russian office

These have included co-ordinating the setting up of the first Russian office of a major US motion picture distributor; carrying out a major operational cost review to deliver \$1m savings; executing a multi-million pound property review; and implementing new accounting and business systems in complex regulatory markets such as Turkey, Poland, Greece and Hungary.

Having also worked for many years with smaller satellite operations, Beatrice has experience of a broad cross-section of business sizes and cultures. She is now looking forward to using that experience to help SMEs in the South East.

EMC chief executive Nik Askaroff said: "With her experience both in the UK and across many international markets, Beatrice has shown that she is not afraid to get to grips with complex

issues and provide practical, relevant solutions across the areas of financial reporting, business planning, business processes and controls, strategy implementation and business change. She is, therefore, a welcome and valuable addition to the EMC team."

Beatrice can be contacted through the Eastbourne office on 01323 410144 or by email: beatrice.veerasingham@emcltd.co.uk

Specialist teams help two hard

EMC has formed two specialist teams to support businesses involved in the construction and media/marketing services industries.

It is the first time that the firm has pulled together groups of people with complementary experience and expertise to advise businesses in specific sectors, although individuals often work together informally on specific projects.

The building, construction, publishing and marketing services industries have been hard-hit by the recession, and EMC believes that many companies could benefit from the practical, hard-nosed advice of people who have long and successful track records of running and managing companies in their sectors.

A WEALTH OF EXPERTISE AT Y

EMC chief executive Nik Askaroff said: "We have several people in our team who have vast experience of working at a very senior level in businesses involved in both the construction sector and in publishing and/or the creative services. It made sense to group them together so that they could offer businesses in those industries the benefit of their combined wisdom.

"Whether it is acquisition, merger, disposal, additional funding, operational, strategic or technical support that business owners and managers require, our specialist teams are perfectly equipped to help."

Those involved in the building and construction team are:

- Peter Aves – a professional Quantity Surveyor with more than 40 years experience in the construction sector including more than 25 years in house building.
- John Packer – a Chartered Engineer who worked in both the public and private sectors - the latter at Director level - prior to establishing his own engineering design practice in 1991. He has been at the forefront of the sustainability movement in this country.
- David Smith – a qualified accountant who has more than 30 years experience of working within the construction sector both in the UK and in Africa and the Middle East.

Five people make up the Media & Marketing Services team. They are:

- Crispian McCredie – a veteran of the publishing business who has spent the last 10 years as the Divisional Director of the Energy Publishing Division at

COMMUNICATIONS

HIGHLY experienced communications and marketing professional George Grammer has joined EMC.

George has more than 20 years marketing communications experience as a consultant working at a senior management level. He has particular experience of working with clients in the professional services (especially legal services) and automotive sectors.

Prior to this he spent 11 years with Vent-Axia as director of publicity and public relations where he was responsible for corporate affairs as well as product marketing in international markets, with particular emphasis on the USA and Europe.

Before that he held sales and marketing positions in the retail motor industry, with Castrol Ltd and with business-to-business and consumer advertising and marketing consultancies.

George, who lives in West Sussex, can be contacted by email at: george.grammer@emcltd.co.uk or by phone on: 07774 235998.



AND MARKETING



Rod Muir



John Packer



Michael Pay



Terry Rainback



David Smith



Ryan Smith



Martin Stanton

Teams formed to re-enter hit sectors

EXPERIENCE AND YOUR DISPOSAL

Euromoney Institutional Investor plc, a FTSE 250 company, and Managing Director of the prestigious Petroleum Economist Magazine.

■ George Grammer – a highly experienced marketing professional who has run and developed both large and small consultancy businesses including his own public relations consultancy.

■ Michael Pay – a qualified accountant who has been an interim FD with several printing and publishing companies, advised a leading international marketing company on growth strategies, and is currently Non-Executive Director of digital

agency Leapfrog Limited.

■ Martin Stanton – a marketing and sales professional who has spent more than 20 years working in and with various media businesses. He specialises in the TV and film sectors.

■ Beatrice Veerasingham – an experienced chartered accountant who has a deep knowledge of the entertainment and media industries having held senior financial and operational roles within Viacom, NBC Universal and United International Pictures.

Profiles of all those involved in the specialist teams can be seen on the EMC website at: www.emcltd.co.uk For more information, call Julie Foster on: 01323 410144 or email: julie.foster@emcltd.co.uk



Crispian, back

with us for a

third time

CRISPIAN McCredie has rejoined EMC after ten years working with Euromoney Institutional Investor Plc, the FTSE 250 media company, where he was the Divisional Director of their Energy Publishing Division.

He helped to build the prestigious Petroleum Economist Magazine, of which he was Managing Director, into a global brand, speaking at conferences on alternative fuels, and

developing product ideas.

At the strategic level, Crispian was closely involved in evaluating, buying and selling businesses for the Group's energy publishing, training and conference businesses, which included the substantial acquisition of Gulf Publishing Company in Houston where he was a board director from 2001-08.

Crispian began his career with Shell-Mex and BP as an undergraduate trainee in their management training programme before spells as a sales rep, marketing executive and finance manager.

Bank of America

On graduating, he joined Bank of America where, after a spell in financial planning, he worked within the investment banking arm on mergers and acquisitions before becoming part of the board of the management buy-out team that acquired Bank of America's overseas asset management business.

He originally joined EMC in 1991, but was lured back to the City in the mid-1990s for a three year spell with Swiss Bank Corporation as European Marketing Director of their asset management practice, travelling extensively in Northern Europe before rejoining EMC.

Having returned to EMC for a third time, he is determined not to be tempted back to the City again. He said: "I want to concentrate on helping business owners, company boards and investors to generate new ideas and turn them into reality, creating new, profitable lines of business."

EMC helps to bring entrepreneurs together

THE man who led Capita to become an FTSE 100 company with profits in excess of £200m has been sharing the secrets of his success with Sussex entrepreneurs.

Rod Aldridge OBE was the keynote speaker at Kleinwort Benson's Sussex Entrepreneurs' Dinner at Brighton's Hotel du Vin in November.

It was the first time Kleinwort Benson had brought its successful entrepreneurs' forum to Brighton, and EMC had played a key role in helping to make it happen.

Fergus Caheny, Kleinwort Benson Executive Private Banker, said: "We have hosted a dedicated forum for entrepreneurs at our London offices, on a quarterly basis, since 2001. Earlier this year we decided to take the show 'on the road' to regionally-based entrepreneurs, and we are delighted with the response we have had here in Brighton.

"Rod Aldridge has enjoyed an incredible career, and the knowledge he was able to impart around his success at Capita and ambitions for the Aldridge Foundation were perfectly suited to the accomplished entrepreneurial guests."

EMC Chief Executive Nik Askaroff added:



Pictured at the entrepreneurs' dinner (left to right) Garry Pettit of InnBrighton, Rod Aldridge, Nik Askaroff and Fergus Caheny

"We have worked with Kleinwort Benson for a number of years and it was a real pleasure to help them bring their entrepreneurs' dinner to Sussex. Rod Aldridge and his leadership of Capita are an example to all businesses. Kleinwort Benson are market leaders in wealth management and we like to think that EMC are the leading corporate finance and interim management firm in the South East, so this association has worked particularly well."



Spotlight on EMC

M&A Magazine, one of the country's leading publications for dealmakers, featured EMC on the front cover of their September issue.

It's not the first time that the magazine has written a major article about us. We were also featured heavily in their June/July 2006 issue.

This time, reporter Chris McIntyre focussed his two-page report on our growth over the last year, and our prospects for the next 12 months.

He spent a morning in Crawley talking to chief executive Nik Askaroff and other members of the corporate finance team, and was obviously impressed with what he saw and heard.

Nik said: "For a regional boutique like EMC to be featured prominently

twice in a major national magazine like M&A must mean we're doing something right.

"We punch well above our weight in the corporate finance field which is why an increasing number of owner-managed businesses, SMEs, international buyers and private equity firms trust us to help them sell or buy businesses.

"We've seen a 40% increase in corporate finance work this year, particularly in acquisition searches and owner-managed sales. And with the private equity boys and international players taking a much closer interest in the UK market, 2011 promises to be just as good if not better."

To read the full M&A Magazine feature visit: www.emcltd.co.uk

Online lottery scheme should boost your sports club funds

EMC client ClubDraw is just what sports clubs of all sizes across the UK have been waiting for. Every club can now have its own online lottery providing great prizes and rewards for fans and members, and generating valuable revenue for the club.

After months of hard work preparing this exciting new venture, the ClubDraw team was assisted in the latter stages by EMC's Terry Rainback to close its funding and bring ClubDraw to market.

The brainchild of Mark Jones, an ex-Football League club manager, it was originally designed to help football clubs combat the decline of the traditional weekly football ticket lotteries and draws

in the face of the National Lottery and other modern draw options.

However, it was soon recognised that the ClubDraw online lottery could offer sports clubs of all types and sizes a unique new solution to fund-raising with supporters and members.

Mark comments: "I always knew that we had a great idea with my original ClubDraw concept, but I have been overwhelmed by the sheer size and breadth of response we have received from right across the sporting spectrum.

"In addition to the football clubs we have signed up and are working with, we will be

going live any time now with our first County Cricket Club, and by the time this goes to press, rugby clubs as well."

Mark recognised at an early stage the need to provide ClubDraw with the kind of high level financial regulation and pedigree to be the leading sports lottery service and decided to partner with the UK's leading independent lottery company, Sterling Lotteries. Between them the combined team has an unrivalled level of experience in sports and lottery management.

One of the benefits of ClubDraw is that it can provide its lottery services to

clubs of all sizes, so it's not just Premier League Clubs that can benefit, but smaller clubs as well.

Terry Rainback adds: "Crawley Town Football Club is a member of our monthly Business Lunch Club in Crawley and so we took the opportunity to introduce them to ClubDraw at an early stage. As a result Crawley Town became one of the first clubs to join ClubDraw and is looking forward to generating valuable funds for, amongst other things, its youth team development."

ClubDraw looks set to be a popular new option to help sports clubs of all sizes raise valuable funds and is another success story emerging from the South East.

HODD'S THE TOP GUN IN SUSSEX CRICKET SHOOT-OUT



SUSSEX cricketers celebrated their promotion to the first division of the county championship with a day's clay pigeon shooting organised by EMC at the Southdown Sporting Gun Club at Findon, near Worthing. Wicketkeeper Andrew Hodd proved to be the top gun with spinning all-rounder Ollie Rayner finishing runner-up. EMC is a long-standing supporter of Sussex cricket and is once again a headline sponsor of the county's Christmas lunch which forms part of Mushtaq Ahmed's testimonial year.

How is your business measuring up?

RECENT UK general growth figures have been surprisingly strong which will have hopefully enabled many businesses to meet budgets and put some money in the bank. But what are you doing to either benefit from this demand or protect your business from any fall-off in sales or margin?

We all know that proper planning prevents poor performance, but I am continually amazed at how many businesses do not have any plan at all.

You should have a detailed plan in place for all of your staff and their departments. Rather than just setting targets for your sales team, you need to creatively help them to build business. This must start by knowing who you want your customers



By Nik Askaroff

to be and where those companies are.

We recently reviewed three local businesses in the £2m to £15m turnover range. I asked all three for their top 20 target customers. Two looked at me blankly and the third gave me the lists his sales manager had produced that, on research, had two insolvent

companies on it.

However, it's not just the sales team who need a plan. Production, buying, warehouse, accounts should all have targets and benchmarks that recognise how well or poorly they are doing. If you don't have these, how will your staff improve and how do you measure how good they are?

You should then have visual measures that your staff can see and recognise. Keep it simple and make it understandable. Hours invoiced, parcels despatched, debtor days outstanding, stock turnover, margin generated, back-orders are all simple and effective, and there are many more that can be tailored to every business.

Most importantly, you need to understand the cause as

well as the effect, e.g. if I telephone a target customer, I may get an appointment. It is as important to target and measure these activities ('causes') as it is to record the 'effects'. By increasing and carefully thinking about the activity, you will increase the outcomes and, as a result, improve your business. Again, this can be just as easily tailored to a warehouse team as it can to a sales team.

Most employees want positive management and the majority would love to be told how well they are doing. Profit and cash in the bank are, of course, the final result of this, but as your business grows you should be refining how you 'keep score' and how you manage and reward your staff.

ACQUISITIONS: HANDLE WITH CARE!

IT'S acquisition time again! Difficult times create opportunity for others. For every subsidiary that becomes non-core, or owner-managed business that runs out of steam, there is someone looking for cheap assets or to benefit from someone else's misfortune.

As happens in all recessions, first-time buyers are emerging. They face a challenging path because they rarely appreciate the risks involved. That applies as much to buying 'cheap' assets from an Administrator or Liquidator, with no warranty or comeback, as to buying shares in a live, underperforming company. The corporates who are regular acquirers have dedicated teams with clearly defined deal parameters. In contrast the new acquirer has to learn 'on the hoof'. They should consider the following:

- What is the real business case for this acquisition?
- Do I actually need to outlay hard earned cash or will organic growth do the job at less risk?
- What am I buying – the customer list, the trade, the key people? Do they bring things I haven't already got?
- Are impulse purchases always the best? And if they are "cheap" assets, why are they for sale?
- What went wrong and how will I manage those assets or do things better than the last owner?
- Where is the hub of the business? Will I have to spend a day travelling to sort out problems when I've bought it?
- Am I in control of this deal? Who is making the timetable? Am I being forced to move quicker than I'm comfortable with?

By Desmond High

- Who is running my business while I'm out shopping?
- What sort of due diligence must I do? HINT – There is no correct answer but a key element is identifying what is really important. Easy to throw money at expensive accountants who write works of art but tell you nothing of value. Use hard-nosed commercial types and your own judgment.
- How do I fund advisers? What happens if the deal aborts? Few will work purely on contingency, so there may be costs but no deal. But if they will, how objective will they be if the deal is wrong? Will they tell me? Or take the fee and leave you to the consequences?

- Can I afford it? If it takes more than three years to get your money back through operational benefits, improved margins etc you will probably be paying too much.
- If you are taking on people (and the TUPE obligations), and IT systems, do not underestimate the pain and heartache involved in integration. How will you deal with pay scale differences, or having two people vying for one role?
- And what if it goes wrong? What if key staff leave? Will the business walk as well?

Acquisitions can work, but lots don't. Handle with care. Have someone objective working alongside you who has bought and sold businesses and knows the traps – not to stop the deal, but to make sure it is the right one at the right price.

Golfers do their bit for rugby club



EMC fielded a four-man team at a golf day to raise funds for Hove Rugby Club and the Wooden Spoon charity which helps disadvantaged children and young people. EMC is a previous sponsor of Hove who gained promotion last season to the London One South division. Pictured at the East Sussex National course are (left to right) Terry Rainback, Tim Dawson, Simon Briggs and Ken Touhey.

Desmond puts his 'back into it' for charity causes

WELL done to our Maidstone director Desmond High who contributed a magnificent £1,500 towards an overall total of £3,200 raised for Guide Dogs for the Blind via a 24-hour indoor rowing marathon.

In addition to raising funds, the event also helped to celebrate the charity's new partnership with the Adaptive Squad of the GB Rowing Team which encourages visually impaired athletes to consider rowing as a potential sport and provides support for their development.

Desmond undertook to row two 15-minute stints and was given tremendous support by family, friends and business contacts who contributed generously to the cause by way of sponsorship.

As well as raising the most money, Desmond also covered the furthest distance for a non-rower. In his two sessions, he went an impressive 7,814 metres. Overall, more than 380,000 metres were covered in the 24 hours.

There's still an opportunity to support Desmond and the Guide Dogs charity via his Just Giving website at: www.justgiving.com/desmond-high



Des piles on the effort and, inset, the strain is proof he gave his all

PROJECT FILE

RECENTLY completed or ongoing projects include the following:

- Appointment as Non-Executive Director for a leading digital marketing agency.
- Review of well established local printer with a view to improving profitability and identifying possible acquisition/merger targets.
- Advising a leading national repair company on strategy, operations and finance.
- Developing and implementing a strategic sales and marketing plan for a supplier in the security industry, with resultant increases in new business sales.
- Operating as interim sales director for a company in the computer peripherals sector and advising on the subsequent appointment of a highly-qualified permanent candidate.
- Finance director and strategy board member for a rapidly expanding digital media firm based in London.
- Advice and assistance on valuation, sale options and sale process for companies in the private school, distribution, software, fashion and transport sectors.
- Advice, assistance and project management of a £20m start-up healthcare project including project finance and implementation.
- Working with fast-growing software business and advising on customer contracts, share options, cash management etc.
- Providing ad hoc business advice to another software business in the forensic market including renegotiating its agreement with its main UK distributor.
- Business consulting and executive coaching for a highly profitable SME in Hampshire.
- Carrying out a client satisfaction survey for a

professional firm, resulting in the retention of a £20k per annum (unhappy) client, and an on-going non-executive role within the marketing department.

- Working with directors of a software company to create a strategic business plan which included grooming the sales operation for eventual sale of the company.
- Non-Executive Director role for a fast-growth on-line hotel booking company.
- Advice and assistance with two significant private equity deals including valuation, targeting, and bid process through to final negotiation.
- Managing the conversion and reletting of a building in West Kent previously occupied by a replacement windows company.
- Head of Finance and 'Board grown-up' for a maritime intelligence company in Portsmouth which has doubled turnover in the last 12 months.
- Finance Director and equity fund raising for a South Coast-based green tech start-up.
- Tailored sales mentoring for a business operating in the charity sector resulting primarily in an increasing development of close client relationships and repeat business.
- Advising the leading insurer to under-25 drivers on its growth strategy.
- Carrying out a product development survey for an IT services company, resulting in a £30,000 cost saving.
- Non-Executive Director services provided to three growing businesses in the healthcare, PR and engineering sectors.
- Ad hoc advice to a hotel interior design business.
- Non-Executive Director for a fast growing outsource consultancy.



EMC is the South East's leading independent provider of interim management, corporate finance and operational support to SMEs across all business sectors.

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