

EMC

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
CORPORATE FINANCE

BUSINESSES FOCUS 2020

INSIDE:

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2020, IS IT THE YEAR TO CONSIDER CHANGE AND RISK?

By Nik Askaroff

After three years of Brexit uncertainty and political turmoil, most businesses will be relieved to have weathered the storm. If at the same time they have achieved some growth, no matter how small, so much the better.

“If the future is to be more rosy, any ambitious business owner must look to exploit the opportunities which will involve change and risk – and now might be exactly the time to take them.”

Our new Government has started well with positivity and certainty, and that's mostly all we want. Many hurdles are still to be jumped, but the economic position, both globally and nationally, is about as good as we have seen it for a number of years.

Fears of a Corbyn-led government undoubtedly caused many businesses to batten down the hatches in the second half of 2019, with investment decisions put on hold and inward investment slowed. Surprisingly, deal volumes and the flow of funds hadn't been too disrupted by Brexit, although

the political unrest and global questions around Trump and China had caused questions.

In that respect, the general election result provided a welcome boost and, more interestingly, attracted massive enthusiasm from India, the Far East and Australasia who see it as a precursor to new trading relationships with the UK alongside Trump's promise of a UK / US trade deal. So although trade tensions are bound to linger until the US/China deal and Brexit are fully sorted, the vision must be of a more settled marketplace, returning growth and a positive business outlook. Evidence of this are our overseas acquisition enquiries that number over 150!

If you add this to the three undeniables of low interest rates, difficult organic growth and record amounts of cash in circulation, then 2020 should be a great year for transactions.

Those with cash or access to it will be looking to use it to buy and build or support others to do the same. Cash has continued to be available for strong proposals, and with a more settled economic outlook this will surely continue.

So, is it time to take more risk on board, either with hires, acquisition or investment? The starting point has to be a robust business plan, and if you have failed to deliver positive profit and turnover growth in the past, this will need some change!

If the future is to be more rosy, any ambitious business owner must look to exploit the opportunities which will involve change and risk – and now might be exactly the time to take them.

Alternatively, you may think it's time to cash in whilst the market is strong and tax rates are low. Either way, EMC is here to help!



EMC clients and Black Dog Vineyard investors at the vineyard celebrating another fabulous year of trading.

MEET THE TEAM



Nik Askaroff



John Blackburn



Ross Christie



Andrew Crumpton



Julie Foster



Michael Gibbs



Jon Green



Desmond High



Natasha Jones



Stephen Milton



Rod Muir



Michael Pay



Terry Rainback



Ryan Smith



Luke Soper



John Stevenson



Kevin Wheelhouse

WE'RE IN EXPERIAN'S TOP TEN AGAIN

EMC has been named among the South East's top ten most active corporate finance advisers for the second year running.

With 14 completed transactions across the South East in 2019, we were in joint seventh place in Experian's end-of-year league table, up one place from 2018 and just one completion shy of being in the top five!

Nik Askaroff commented: *"In what was a difficult year generally for dealmaking across the country, our team once again did a magnificent job on behalf of the small and medium sized business owners we represent."*

"We are the only firm in Experian's top ten list to be wholly based in the South East region and the leading independent."

"It's good to know that we are in the mix with the major international and London based firms and that our unique offering of support for business owners across all the main business disciplines – finance, sales, marketing, strategic IT management and production – alongside our award-winning corporate finance team, is one that provides businesses with the resources and advice they need at any point in their journey, from start-up to selling."

The EMC team celebrate (although not in style with those jumpers!) at their end of year Christmas Party



A RIGHT ROYAL DAY OUT AT ASCOT



EMC clients and guests enjoyed a magnificent day out at Royal Ascot, celebrating our successes over the previous 12 months which had seen the firm propelled into Experian's top 10 list of the region's most active M&A Financial Advisers.

Luckily the EMC team's business skills are a lot better than their betting skills!



The team were thrilled to see EMC director Michael Gibbs tie the knot this year. We are not sure if it is something in the water at the EMC Hove office as this was the fourth wedding in three years!

We all wish Michael and his wife Natalie a very long and happy marriage.

SUSSEX BUSINESSPERSON OF THE YEAR JOINS EMC



The 2018 Sussex Businessperson of the Year, Carl Fillery, has joined EMC to head our team in East Sussex.

Carl, who works out of our Eastbourne office, was previously Group CEO of Boundless, formerly CSMA, headquartered in Brighton. He led the transformation of the previously loss-making traditional mutual organisation into a fully commercialised and

diversified business, turning it into one of the leading membership associations in the UK.

In addition to being CEO of Boundless, Carl also held Executive and Non-Executive Chairmanships with two FCA regulated companies.

EMC CEO Nik Askaroff said: *"The work Carl did in turning around the fortunes of the 90-year-old CSMA was absolutely outstanding."*

"We are thrilled that he has now joined us, bringing years of experience and expertise in business development, acquisitions, project delivery, interim leadership and crisis turnaround to support business owners across the region."

Carl, who is a Chartered Director and a Fellow of the Institute of Directors, added: *"EMC had been on my radar for a little while. They enjoy an unrivalled reputation locally and I am excited to be working with their team of top business growth and corporate finance professionals to help business owners achieve their goals."*

IBM EXECUTIVE TO WORK WITH EMC



Tony Barsham, IBM Executive and formerly FMCG UK lead, has joined EMC to boost our business growth team.

Tony, who has spent 18 years with IBM in senior management roles, is a technology specialist with a proven record of developing and growing businesses. He has been responsible

directly for managing a number of major FMCG clients, and he continues to work with IBM in this area. Prior to this, Tony was the European Lead for the Travel & Transportation business.

EMC CEO Nik Askaroff said: *"Tony has a deep understanding of how technology can be used to change business processes and create new business models."*

"It is a tremendous feather in our cap that someone with his vast experience has joined us to work with our SME clients to help them harness the power of digital transformation."

Tony added: *"This is an exciting opportunity for me. I am really looking forward to being able to use the experience and knowledge acquired at IBM to help the owners of smaller businesses to reap the benefits that cloud-based solutions can bring to their business processes, the management of their inventories and improved customer services."*



Terry Rainback (second right) congratulates Peter Brooks flanked by Kate Norgett and Joshua Cronin of DMH Stallard

WATER WAY TO END THE YEAR!

EMC completed its second deal of the year in the UK water cooler sector by assisting in the sale of its client, Office Beverages.

“The process from start to finish was an enormous undertaking and the help, guidance and support provided by EMC was invaluable.”

it is a massive step to allow the business you have created to be taken forward under new ownership, and something that needs to be done well and expertly.

“The process from start to finish was an enormous undertaking and the help, guidance and support provided by EMC was invaluable. Terry Rainback, Nik Askaroff and the EMC team managed the complexities of the deal and provided the guidance and support I needed, never losing sight of my own goals and objectives from start to finish.”

EMC’s Terry Rainback said: *“No two deals are ever the same and we are delighted to have been able to help Peter to achieve a successful outcome.”*

The EMC team of Terry Rainback, Nik Askaroff, Michael Gibbs and Luke Soper was supported by DMH Stallard who provided legal advice.

RYAN JOINS THE EMC BOARD



Ryan Smith, who joined EMC in 2009 from one of Australia’s leading investment groups, has joined the firm’s Board.

Initially focused on establishing EMC’s research function, Ryan is now a Lead Advisor in our London and Hove corporate finance team, supporting SMEs with company acquisitions and sales, management buy outs, debt and equity financing and transactional support.

A graduate of Brunel University, Ryan has also gained post graduate qualifications in Applied Finance and Investment.

Over the last 10 years he has developed his financial and commercial skills, working with businesses and management teams on local, national and international projects, specialising in business development and transaction advisory.



TOP BANKER’S BRIEFING FOR BUSINESS LEADERS

EMC CEO Nik Askaroff is pictured with Elisabeth Steeman, an external member of the Bank of England’s Financial Policy Committee, who addressed more than 70 local business leaders at EMC’s annual

BoE briefing lunch held at the Sussex County Cricket Ground, Hove.

Nik said: *“With the challenges, both political and financial, facing the UK, it was good to hear directly from a real expert that we are well placed to stand up to the worst scenarios envisaged. We are in a much better place than we were pre-2008.”*



EMC BUILDS ON ITS SUCCESS IN MERCHANTING

EMC Corporate Finance completed its second major builders' merchant deal in 18 months with the sale of Fairalls (Builders' Merchants) Ltd to specialist private investment firm Cairngorm Capital Partners.

“EMC’s experience in M&A shone through throughout the process.”

The deal came a little over a year after EMC also advised on the sale of Parker

Building Supplies, the South East’s leading independent builders’ merchant with 15 branches across Sussex and Kent.

Fairalls, a family-run business dating back to 1900, offers a mix of heavy and lightside building materials, from its four locations in Gatwick, Sevenoaks and two in Godstone.

Michael Pay, who led EMC’s team advising Fairalls, said: *“We were delighted to get this deal across the line after a nine-month process that had numerous twists and turns. It was an excellent result for all concerned and came at just the right time for MD Bob Fairall who can look forward to retirement knowing that Cairngorm Capital’s unique mix of sectorial expertise and investment skill will enable them to take the business to the next level.”*

Bob Fairall commented: *“Michael Pay led the deal the whole way through and I am delighted with the outcome. EMC’s experience in M&A shone through throughout the process.”*

EMC acted as lead advisors to Fairalls with support from Rix & Kay (legal) and Plummer Parsons (financial and tax). Cairngorm Capital were advised by PwC (financial and tax), Gowling WLG (legal), CIL (commercial), JLT (insurance) and Vail Williams (property). MDW Capital provided financing advice.

CHAIRMAN ROLE FOR DESMOND

EMC Kent director Desmond High has taken over as Chairman of the ICAEW (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales) Kent Business Members’ Breakfast Forum which meets four times a year to discuss issues affecting business and how businesses are reacting in the current climate.

DIVIDENDS OR SALARIES? IT’S NOT A STRAIGHTFORWARD CHOICE

By Desmond High

It has become commonplace for tax advisers to suggest that directors of privately owned businesses should pay themselves in dividends rather than salary for tax efficient reasons.

To do that they have to be shareholders. And often spouses are allocated a small number of shares (of a different class) to allow income to be shared and personal allowances fully used.

So far so good, but I have seen several instances where this has created undue complications, especially where there are two or more shareholders with different shareholdings trying to equalise their take from the business.

Here are 10 other reasons why this might not be as smart a wheeze as it looks.

1. You can only take dividends if distributable reserves exist. If they don't, the dividends are illegal. Often the cash is drawn without regard to this and will have to be treated as a loan. But salaries can still be paid even if the company has trading losses.
2. If the business fails, a liquidator will come after you to recover any balance on an overdrawn directors’ loan account.
3. It overstates profits because the P&L account doesn't carry the real cost of running the business. All well and good until you try to sell out and have to explain that real profits, after allowing for open market salaries, are really much lower (as will be the capital value).
4. If there are differential shareholdings, trying to equalise a mix of dividends and salaries to give the same net return to two different shareholders is desperately difficult. Dividend waivers can attract the attention of HMRC.
5. All shareholders have to be treated equally and are entitled to a dividend if one is declared. This includes shareholders who might no longer be employed.
6. Trying to find ways around it, e.g. using alphabet shares (where different classes of shares can have different dividend rights), are increasingly under scrutiny by HMRC.
7. Many mortgage lenders ignore dividends in assessing income so getting a mortgage can be difficult.
8. Tax relief on pension contributions can be restricted. The relief is capped by reference to earned income. Dividends are deemed to be unearned income.
9. Claims under income protection policies, where someone is unable to work because of ill health, are generally based around PAYE income.
10. If the business wanted to claim R&D tax credits on a project, the value of any director time will be limited to the actual PAYE-related cost.

These may not all be relevant to a particular entity but the message to shareholder/directors is not to blindly accept the dividend route without giving proper thought to the wider consequences.

MORE SUCCESS FOR EMC AT THE DEALMAKER ‘OSCARS’

EMC was once again one of the big winners at the 2020 Insider South East Dealmaker of the Year Awards – the ‘Oscars’ of the dealmaking industry in the region.

Michael Gibbs was named Emerging Dealmaker of the Year after completing seven transactions during the qualifying period including the acquisition of Regent Document Solutions by Corona Corporate, the sale of Carville Switchgear to Otter Controls and the refinancing of DK Music Management.

It capped a memorable year for Michael who also got married and joined our Board of Directors.

A delayed honeymoon meant that he was unable to be present at the Copthorne Hotel awards dinner to receive his trophy in person which was collected on his behalf by Carl Fillery.

Michael said: *“The EMC team that was present at the awards ceremony kept me in touch with what was happening, and I was chuffed to bits when they texted me to say that I had won the Emerging Dealmaker award.*

“I knew we had had a terrific year as a corporate finance team with 14 completed transactions in the region and 19 in all across the country, placing us once again in the top ten of Experian’s most active advisers for the year. But even so, it was extra special to receive this personal accolade. It has certainly been a year to remember!”



EMC has been a regular winner at the Insider awards having twice won the Deal of the Year title and three times seen our CEO, Nik Askaroff, lift the Dealmaker of the Year Award.



From left to right: Daniel Coene (Julius Baer), Rod Flavell (FDM Group), Michael Pay (EMC), Nik Askaroff (EMC), Mathew Garnham (Julius Baer)

ENTREPRENEURS’ QUESTION TIME

More than 60 local businesses attended EMC’s annual Entrepreneurs’ Question Time evening to hear Rod Flavell talk about the growth and success of the FDM Group which he founded and has built to a £1bn-plus group listed on the FTSE.

Michael Pay, who acted as question master, said: *“Rod was a brilliant speaker. The story of how he has built the FDM Group from its small beginnings in Brighton to become an enormously successful international professional services business with offices around the globe was truly inspirational.*

EMC and Julius Baer, the private bank, co-hosted the evening which was open to business owners of growth-focused companies in the South East.

“I’m sure our guests will have benefited greatly from hearing his views on corporate culture and leadership.”

EMC STEERS MBO OF FIT-OUT AND REFURBISHMENT SPECIALIST

Award-winning commercial interior fit-out and refurbishment specialist Warnes Projects Ltd, based in Arundel, has been sold in a management buy-out advised on by EMC Corporate Finance.

The deal sees director Stephen Hobbs take control of the business with former director Ed Davies moving out to pursue other interests.

The company, formed in 2005, has

successfully combined financial growth with reinvestment in the business, enabling it to become a leading player in the field of commercial space planning, design and build in West Sussex and beyond.

Michael Gibbs, who led the EMC team advising the Warnes Projects management, said: *“The business has come a long way in a relatively short time and, under Stephen Hobbs’s guidance, we expect it to go a lot further yet.*

“It is blessed with a first-class in-house workforce, supported by a trusted collaborative team of complementary professional services, who are totally committed to ensuring all its projects are completed on time and to budget – key factors which have enabled Warnes’s

reputation to spread beyond West Sussex and into major projects in London.”

Stephen Hobbs commented: *“I would like to thank Michael Gibbs and his team at EMC for guiding us through the process.*

“I now look forward to continuing to innovate and drive the business forward, ensuring first class service standards, impeccable relationships, exemplary processes and laser-focused vision, to ensure Warnes is a trusted partner and safe pair of hands for all sizes and scopes of projects now and in the future.”

Warnes Projects were supported by Bright Law (legal) and accountants MHA Carpenter Box.

EASTBOURNE FOUNDRY RESHAPES FOR FUTURE GROWTH

Collier Webb (part of the Edward Alexander Group), an Eastbourne-based foundry that makes beautiful hand-crafted lighting, furniture and hardware, has appointed EMC to assist with its next stage of growth.

It recognised that this growth would bring operational challenges and the need for more developed planning and scheduling systems. So our consultant, John Stevenson, was called in to help.

He said: *"The Collier Webb reputation for excellence with many of the world's most highly regarded interior designers and architects was putting additional strain on the creative and experienced design team.*

"A management restructure has led to additional expertise in the operational area which will allow more focus on efficient planning and output. At the same time, it frees up the highly skilled engineering resources to work on bespoke projects and process development.



"Improved procurement, outsourcing and organisational design will provide some headroom for the design team to focus on the creation of bespoke products and management of projects with the company's blue-chip clients."

He added: *"The current project to address this capacity challenge will give increased design, operational and engineering capacity to allow the company to move to the next level."*

EMC GUIDES TRAVEL BUSINESS TO SUCCESSFUL SALE



EMC Corporate Finance acted as Lead Adviser to Ickenham Travel Group plc on the sale of Business Travel Direct to global travel management company, Reed & Mackay.

Peter Reglar, CEO of the Ickenham Travel Group, said: *"After 49 years with this amazing business and team, this is now a fantastic opportunity for our clients, colleagues and partners, and brings with it a range of additional benefits. ITG will continue to invest in our award-winning retail travel brand, LetsGo2, and Julie Oliver and the team at Business Travel Direct can enjoy the backing of a truly global travel management company."*

He added: *"Michael Pay of EMC led the transaction from start to finish,*

overseeing the complex negotiations that resulted in a great outcome for both parties.

"Having had Michael act on the other side when we acquired Timely Management Ltd last year, we experienced the skill, dedication and knowledge that he brings to a transaction, without which the delicate steps in closing a deal would be far tougher!"

Michael Pay commented: *"Peter is a spirited entrepreneur who built the original retail business on the back of an estate agency, before turning to the corporate sector and then back to capitalising on the growth in online leisure with LetsGo2. Business Travel Direct had a lot of interest but the team at Reed & Mackay delivered all the way through and were great to work opposite."*

Lead adviser Michael Pay was supported by Stojan Essex and Martin Kay of Blake Morgan (legal) and Chris Photti of Whitehart Associates (accounting, tax and regulatory). Reed & Mackay were represented by Matthew Stoate and Dominic Crosswell of Foot Anstey (legal) and Jo Davenport and Richard Crisp of BDO (financial due diligence).



Pictured are our speakers at the Grand Hotel, Eastbourne: (left to right) John Blackburn (EMC), Stuart Noakes (MHA Carpenter Box), Chris White (EMC), Michael Gibbs (EMC) and Mathew Glentworth (NatWest).

SEMINARS ARE A HUGE SUCCESS

Our series of seminars on the challenges of growing and selling businesses proved hugely popular in 2019 when dozens of companies attended the free events in Hove, Crawley and Eastbourne.

More seminars are planned for this year in Fontwell, Guildford, Tunbridge Wells and Haywards Heath. Watch out for your e-mailed invitation or call us on 01273 945984 for more details.

EMC HELPS WATER FIRM TO COMPLETE DOUBLE DEAL

EMC Corporate Finance is delighted to have assisted Water Wellbeing Ltd (WWL) with the sale of its hydration business to Zip UK, part of the global Culligan Group, for an undisclosed sum.

“Nobody should underestimate what might be involved when deciding to sell their business and having the right experts around you is essential.”

Known to most of its customers as Edgar's Water, the Marden, Kent-headquartered company is perfectly positioned to build on its position in the UK bottled and Point of Use (POU) water sector.

WWL's Simon Edgar is staying with the company to oversee its ongoing development. He said: *“Edgar's Water enjoys an enviable position in London and*

the South and the whole team is looking forward to building upon that as we move forward with Zip UK and as a part of the Culligan Group.”

Part of the transaction included the demerger of the company's Wellbeing People operations with its sale to the newly formed Wellbeing People Ltd under the direction of its founder and MD Ben McGannan.

Ben commented: *“The whole process was an enormous undertaking and we could not have done it without the help of EMC. Nobody should underestimate what might be involved when deciding to sell their business and having the right experts around you is essential.*

“The EMC team were there for us from the start to drive, guide and support through all of the twists and turns along the way.”

The EMC Corporate Finance team comprised Terry Rainback, Nik Askaroff, Michael Gibbs and Luke Soper.



‘BORN IN THE CLOUD’ SOLUTIONS LEVEL THE FIELD FOR SMEs

By Tony Barsham

For more than 20 years large corporates have been investing in ‘end-to-end’ solutions that enable them to optimise their business processes, better manage their inventories and improve customer services.

These solutions – more commonly known as ERPs (Enterprise Resource Planning) – were once highly complex which made them the almost exclusive domain of major corporates and large integration businesses that had the skills to implement them.

But that has changed over the last few years. The advent of cloud computing allowed solution providers to create highly configurable ‘born in the cloud’ solutions. These can be easily adapted to a business process, and providers charge for them using a ‘subscription’ model (i.e. a monthly charge).

Salesforce.com was one of the early starters in this space, and its solution for CRM (sales and pipeline management) is now used by organisations both large and small.

Traditional ERP providers, like SAP and Oracle, also recognised this opportunity and have created cloud-based configurable solutions for SMEs. There are also some exciting new entrants such as Priority Solutions which has an excellent track record in the SME space. I have seen these solutions implemented in less than three months.

With any enterprise – large or small – there are three key requirements for a successful solution.

Firstly, a strong level of commitment from the leadership of the business (they often require changes to some working practices which require support and sponsorship to execute).

Secondly, a strong and clear business case which is then ‘tracked’ through to benefits realisation.

And thirdly, the right skills from within the organisation, the solution provider and/or a third party implementor to help adapt the solution to meet the needs of the business.

As SMEs grow, it is imperative that they focus on efficiency and ‘scalability’. ERPs will continue to be one of the key elements of process ‘fabric’ that will be the foundation for this.

EMC COMPLETES SALE OF SUSSEX RECRUITMENT BUSINESS

An Eastbourne-based recruitment business, formed in 2007, was snapped up by Ashford-headquartered Plc HR GO in a deal advised on by EMC Corporate Finance.

Financial details of the transaction, which saw both Sussex Recruitment Ltd and its specialist division, Gel Resourcing Ltd, join HR GO, were not disclosed.

Stephen and Margaret Hopkinson, founders of Sussex Recruitment, have retained a substantial minority stake in the new business which Stephen is continuing to manage under its new name, HR GO Recruitment (Sussex) Limited.

Nik Askaroff, who with Ryan Smith led the EMC team advising Sussex Recruitment, said: "We are pleased to have helped Steve and Margaret achieve their succession ambitions. They were an independent consultancy operating successfully in a very competitive area and the buyer's culture was key to them. With HR GO we think we found an excellent fit which will benefit all parties."

Stephen Hopkinson added: "We have achieved much to be proud of over the past 12 years and Gel Resourcing MD Chris Rose and I look forward to driving our Sussex businesses into an exciting future with the HR GO group."

EMC were lead advisers to the directors of Sussex Recruitment with legal support provided by James Chadburn of Dean Wilson. Dan Tozer of ASB Law acted for HR GO.



HR Go and Sussex Recruitment celebrating the deal

AWARD SPONSORSHIP ADDS TO OUR MANUFACTURING SUPPORT



EMC's Ross Christie and John Stevenson with Sussex manufacturers at one of the two Round Table discussions on manufacturing in the South East

EMC's continuing and growing support for manufacturing businesses across the region last year included sponsorship of the prestigious Made in the South East Awards organised by Insider Media.

Events throughout the year brought together many of the leading manufacturing companies to share best practices, celebrate

their achievements and look towards the opportunities and challenges of a post-Brexit Britain.

Several companies were invited to take part in a survey on how they saw the future. Encouragingly, the results were overwhelmingly optimistic, with over 80% of respondents forecasting growth for the region.

The survey was followed a few weeks later by a roundtable discussion at the Amex Stadium with representatives from a diverse range of industries.

EMC's John Stevenson said: "The high calibre of attendees provoked an excellent debate on the main issues that manufacturing businesses face as they strive to continue to drive growth in the region.

"We were delighted to be involved. The awards helped continue the excellent interaction with, and support from, companies in the region that our manufacturing team enjoys.

"Last year saw us work with a record number of businesses to help them grow, reinforcing our reputation as the region's leading partner for manufacturing support."

The year concluded with an award ceremony at the Sofitel Hotel, Gatwick, where MR Solutions, the world leader in MRI technology, walked away with the EMC-sponsored Digital Engineering / Technology Award.

SILK WEAVING IMPROVEMENTS IN SUFFOLK MILL

A Suffolk-based silk mill that has been producing some of the world's finest interior furnishing fabrics since 1903 has turned to EMC to help it improve its weaving operations.

Gainsborough weaves mainly classic

damask designs and, with an archive of over 7,000 designs, is the go-to name in historic restorations whilst also producing bespoke fabrics for many contemporary names in fashion and interiors.

EMC's John Stevenson has been working with the company on an operational project aimed at maintaining the unique heritage, archive and design skills of Gainsborough whilst incorporating more modern supply chain and operational tools.

The first stage identified and worked with some complementary weavers, allowing

longer run orders to be outsourced and freeing up capacity and design resource.

The second stage of the project is looking to improve processes within the mill, focusing on capacity improvements, efficiencies and investment to increase the range and volume of designs that could be woven on each loom.

Recruitment is ongoing for a new mill manager and EMC will work with this individual and the management team to continue the progress over the last year when the business has also enjoyed significant sales growth.

GRP HUB SNAPS UP EAST SUSSEX INSURANCE BROKER



An Eastbourne-based independent insurance brokers with over 50 years of experience has been acquired by one of the UK's top independent insurance intermediaries in a deal advised on by EMC Corporate Finance.

Reid Briggs Insurance Brokers was snapped up by Global Risk Partners (GRP) through its South East hub, Green Insurance Group. At the same time, it also bought Clifton Morley Associates based in Welling, Kent.

They're the latest in a series of acquisitions made by GRP since it took a majority stake in Bexhill-headquartered Greens in June 2017.

Duncan Coleman, chief executive officer of Greens, said: *"When Greens was acquired by GRP, we said we would double the size of the business."*

"Since then we have acquired Collidge and Partners, Insurance Services (West End), Eclipse Insurance Services, and now Reid Briggs and Clifton Morley. We will continue to acquire businesses that help us deliver our ambitious growth plans."

Reid Briggs offers both personal and commercial insurance, primarily in the East Sussex area. The broker will remain in its Eastbourne office, with the whole team, led by Andrew Briggs and Kevin Barnard, moving across to Greens.

Nik Askaroff, who led the EMC team advising the Reid Briggs owners, added: *"Reid Briggs has been providing a high quality specialist insurance service in East Sussex since 1964. The deal with GRP, through its regional hub, offers the ideal environment for the business to continue to thrive and grow long into the future."*



EMC HELPS POSTURITE TO DEVELOP A NEW ROUTE TO MARKET

Posturite, the UK's market leader in the manufacture and supply of ergonomic office furniture and equipment, has been carrying out a major project to improve its route to market with the help of EMC's John Stevenson.

The project sought a delivery solution that would align with the values of the Posturite brand, provide a market leading customer experience and be easily scalable to match the company's growth plans.

Starting in late 2018, a detailed review was carried out comparing couriers, in-house logistics and various other outsourcing options which eventually led to a leading white glove supply company being chosen to manage future delivery and assembly of Posturite's products.

The new service provides an improved customer experience, reduced time from order to product usage, and has been welcomed by Posturite's blue-chip clients who wish to improve their employees' working environments but also want a one-step delivery and professional set-up experience with the smallest environmental footprint.

The process is scalable and will meet the needs of Posturite as it continues its successful growth at a significantly reduced cost.

John said: *"With the ever-improving logistics performance of UK operators and the continuing demands for less waste and reduced carbon footprint, every company needs to review its delivery performance and warehousing operations which must include third party logistics options."*



EMC were proud to support the Sussex Cricket at their Kevin Keegan lunch.

Stephen Rimmer (above left) who met his long term hero and compared memories.

Stephen played semi-professional football in his youth before deciding that the law was a more exciting and rewarding profession!

Where did it all go wrong?

HOW TO PREPARE AND DELIVER A ROBUST BUSINESS PLAN

By Carl Fillery

We regularly see the negative impact a lack of planning can have on businesses. Owners are usually clear about what they are trying to achieve, but are far less certain about what they need to do and how to do it in order to get there!

We have been working recently with an owner who has a fantastic business, has been successful in the past and has recently had the confidence to make considerable investment to increase sales and efficiency.

Whilst the ambition and motive were sound, the company's performance declined rapidly, placing a heavy burden on capability, working capital (cash flow) and profitability. They just couldn't understand why the investment wasn't returning value.

Since reviewing the business, prioritising and setting clear, manageable objectives/measures and assisting with delivery, working capital has been returned to where it should be, sales are growing and profitability has tripled in very little time!

Adopting the following approach and principles will put you on the right track to producing great plans. Start by analysing and challenging your business. Having an external perspective is essential to that. Obtain input and buy-in from key stakeholders and then hold responsible parties to account.

Here are some additional basic principles to help and guide:

- **KEEP IT SIMPLE** – The shorter and simpler the better. You want your teams to understand and know what is expected of them.
- **ACCEPT THE RISK** – There is inherent risk in any plan – it's a requirement for growth. But a well thought through plan will minimise the chance of failure.
- **ARE YOU CLEAR WHAT'S NEEDED?** – Do you have the resources and funding, and the people who are capable of carrying out the plan?
- **COST IT AND ANALYSE THE NUMBERS** - If you do not have the money to get there in one go, think about how it will be funded.
- **KEEP IT FLEXIBLE** – Things rarely go completely to plan, so factor in alternatives so that you can be ready to respond if necessary.
- **SHARE IT** - Get your people involved. It helps the journey, creates ownership and makes it more fun!

Having built a great plan, delivery can often be the main failure point. Time and money can easily be wasted on advisers that just don't have the experience to deliver. This leads to owners being confused and frustrated!

At EMC we have the quality, skill and experience in our team to help ensure successful delivery with real, sustained growth.



ONLINE HOMEWARE STORE SCOOPS OUR SUSSEX BUSINESS AWARD

An online homeware store launched in 2007 by friends Jane Rockett and Lucy St George was named E-Commerce Business of the Year in the 2019 Sussex Business Awards, sponsored for the first time by EMC.

Rockett St George, headquartered in Hassocks, sells what it describes as “expressive homeware with an exceptionally quirky style that inspires and delights.”

Its founders were joined by several company colleagues at the Grand Hotel, Brighton, in December to collect the coveted trophy from EMC director Michael Pay.

He said: “We were delighted to support these prestigious awards and the E-Commerce category in particular.

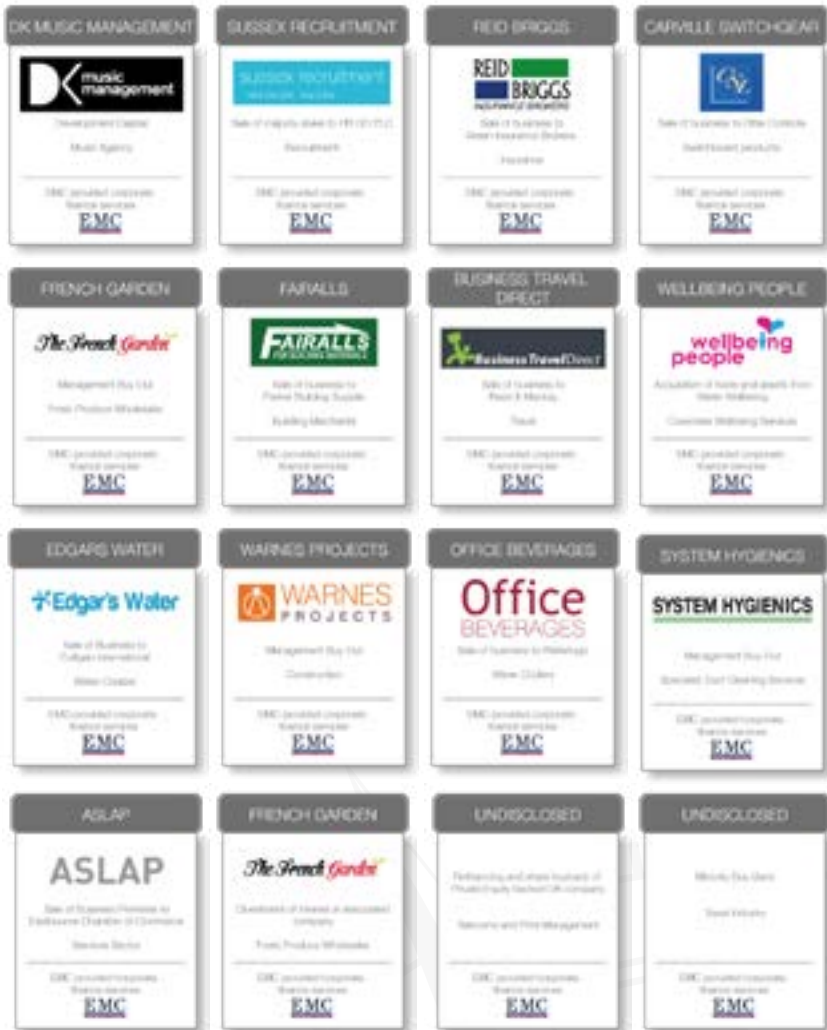
“We all recognise the massive role that e-commerce plays in business today, so it was very satisfying to see the extremely high calibre of most of the entries. But our winners, Rockett St George, stood out for having taken user experience, design, digital marketing and exceptional end-to-end purchasing experience to a top level.”

Park Cameras of Burgess Hill, The Tiny Box Company from North Chailey and World of Book from Goring by Sea were all highly commended.



EMC and clients competed in the Hannes Bachmann golf day in Salzburg. The Posturite team ended up winners by a single point. The trophy was presented by Hannes (above left).

2019 DEAL TOMBSTONES



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