

Tony Bishton

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A seasoned interim, consultant, mentor, programme manager and change agent with extensive retail multi-channel experience - managing complex and cross functional programmes. A history of successfully delivering results in challenging and sensitive situations. A rare individual who has both business acumen and a great understanding of IT and "how it works". Experienced in programme management in a number of sectors – retail, manufacturing and charity sectors including the following functions – distribution, merchandising; supply chain management; high street retailing; direct retailing; retail operations; change initiation; change management; transformation, surplus stock management. Highly numerate and rational with the ability to understand complexity and explain it simply to others. An innovator who provides simple and pragmatic but successful business solutions. A consistent history of creating and delivering a business vision through step change.

An accomplished strategist who, at the same time, is able to resolve detailed day-to-day issues affecting multiple internal and external stakeholders. An individual with a keen eye for improving the operation [including the internal and external customer experience] whilst maintaining a clear focus on efficiencies and profit. With skills across a broad range of disciplines including retail operations, print manufacturing, merchandising, WMS & ERP implementation, supply chain & stock control; business planning; business turnaround; B2B & B2C catalogue production and planning; surplus stock management; reverse logistics; returns management; product data management; change project management, print production management.

CAREER DETAIL

Interim Programme Head

Habitat [Sainsbury's Argos]

Feb 2017 – Current

HEADLINE – PROGRAMME HEAD, ERP & WMS IMPLEMENTATION RESCUE

Retained by the Argos board to 'rescue' the programme to implement a replacement ERP and WMS (Microsoft Dynamics AX) – a requirement of the separation from the Homebase business. The programme was planned to go live in Oct/Nov 2016 but was still not able to go live as at Feb 2017. First activities were to 're-centre' the programme; create new momentum and buy-in within the business teams and the programme team which included 3rd parties and IT service providers; lead the business team to create a new, achievable delivery plan and then communicate the new objectives and programme timelines to the business leadership team. Subsequently my involvement has been to drive the implementation of the WMS across the warehouse estate, including the recruitment of a test manager to implement a rigorous UAT test programme; to create and manage a plan to migrate the business stocks from 2 existing warehouses to a single warehouse location; to mentor the management team of the 3PL, to coach the Habitat programme team in project disciplines & communications and ensure the successful completion of the programme. I estimated the rescue programme to be of 6 months duration – completed on budget and 3 hours early!!.

Interim Programme Head

Argos [Sainsbury's Argos]

Aug 2014 – Feb 2017

HEADLINE – BUSINESS PROGRAMME HEAD - MIGRATE MULTIPLE ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS TO A SINGLE ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM & CREATE CUSTOMER SELF-SERVICE ORDER MANAGEMENT CAPABILITIES

When I was initially engaged, Argos were 2 years into a 5-year IT transformation programme. My engagement has been to be the Business Programme Head of a key component of the next phase of the programme - the delivery of a consolidated order management infrastructure across the business. The Argos business uses a number of legacy order management systems which, instead of being migrated into the newer platform, have been left in the estate handling a number of disparate order functions. My role included bringing together a strategic direction for the business to embrace and work with the disparate teams to create and implement a tactical roadmap to migrate to all functionality onto one single OM system.

During the investigation and planning phase, I identified that there was an opportunity to bring self-serve order management into the My Account area of the argos.co.uk site [Something that the company had attempted and failed several times during the last 10 years]

In order to do this, I worked with the 3rd party IT provider [Accenture] to create an Agile development team, which was broken away from the regular 'waterfall' delivery, 'factory' environment, in order to deliver a number of common order management services. [...again, Argos had been trying to do this for 10 years, without success] This method of development was highly successful and the ability to view historic order details, extend in store reservations and cancel in store reservations was delivered on time and with 100% error free code - the first time that this level of accuracy had been achieved in Argos. Subsequent to this, the whole IT development model migrated over to Agile methodologies

As part of this structural change, I worked with the Dev team to migrate the testing model away from the virtually 100% manual testing regime onto an automated test regime. This was successfully achieved and the processes is now being adopted across

the whole IT team and the next focus for change is to continue with the rollout of the test-driven development approach to software builds.

Alongside the delivery of common services, I have been continuing to plan and drive activities to consolidate business functions onto the target OMS to operationally de-commission the legacy OM systems – this process is still ongoing.

In summary, the engagement was one of investigation of the current state, creating recommendations for a future state, working with the business to plan the transition/migration and then working with the business teams and development teams to carry out the migration to the agreed future state. The plan has already removed 1 of 3 legacy systems and the programme is being continued by an internal Argos team.

"Tony is a great partner to have on any major change project. He has a deep understanding of business and technology, brings a level of passion and commitment that motivates teams to do their best work, and can cut through to what's important in order to deliver with pace."

Interim Programme Head

JD Williams

Oct 2012 – Oct 2013

HEADLINE – CREATED AND IMPLEMENTED NEW CONSUMER-LED PROCESSES AND TEAM STRUCTURES [at Group Level] TO REPLACE PRODUCT-LED STRUCTURE & PROCESSES

JD Williams is a leading internet and catalogue home shopping business, with over 140 years of experience in the distance shopping market. They have extensive ranges of value products, principally clothing, footwear, household and electrical goods, which are provided through an omni-channel offering.

The preliminary part of the engagement involved carrying out extended and detailed investigations into the 'as-is' working processes, culture and organisation of the Merchandising, Buying and Marketing teams. The analysis showed that the 'as-is' processes were primarily product-led and heavily catalogue biased. Detailed analysis and subsequent discussions with the Board, resulted in my designing, and recommending the implementation of, a consumer-led operating model, along with associated new processes, for these 3 teams. The initial part of the implementation involved working with the Board and key Senior managers refining the model and developing buy-in for the new business model prior to implementation. The implementation phase involved working with the core business teams to implement that new operating model across the business – complete with new strategies, new operating processes and new day-to-day working practices across all of the Merchandising, Buying and Marketing teams. There were, inevitably, a number of contentious issues and potential "turf wars" as a consequence. My pragmatic approach, using collaborative intervention ensured that the teams achieved the required result.

The new operating model now gives a greater and more informed focus on consumers; simplified and focussed business planning and management activity and has set the scene for a major ERP implementation.

The implementation phase was completed successfully and formed the foundations for a subsequent project, now being completed by the in-house team, tying the new structures and processes into a major ERP implementation project led by one of the 'Big 4' consultancies.

"I have worked with Tony on a number of key projects in a number of companies. Each time he has delivered more than was asked of him. He adds real value to the discussions and strategic development and helps us cut through to reach a viable solution in whatever project he has worked on. From Operational changes to processes, strategy to delivery he has always exceeded expectations"

Interim Operations Director

Bezier Ltd

Oct 2011 – Apr 2012

HEADLINE – IMPROVED OPERATIONAL PROCESS, TEAM STRUCTURES & INTEGRATED NEW WMS AND ERP IN A RETAIL POS SUPPLIER. IMPROVED PROFITABILITY BY £1M PER ANNUM - £500k FROM ONE CUSTOMER STREAM ACCOUNT ALONE

During the time that I was involved with the WMS and ERP implementations [see section below], Bezier was bought by HIG. I was approached by HIG to extend my engagement to become the Interim Operations Director and to work closely with HIG and the turnaround team from Alvarez & Marsal. The whole of the existing Bezier Board left the business and I became the key member of the new interim management Board, which had a remit to return the business to profitability. My responsibilities included the management of all business Operations teams – print production, warehousing, pack & despatch, engineering, HASAW; identification of cost-savings and implementing associated actions; team building and re-structuring; process improvement & implementation; KPI identification and reporting; providing business leadership; coaching and mentoring of the middle management team; extensive problem analysis and solution providing; providing drive, determination and motivation to the Wakefield management team and other teams across the wider Bezier group.

From January 2012, I worked with HIG to recruit and embed a new permanent Board. This was completed at the end of March 2012 and my engagement was completed.

"Tony led a major operational improvement exercise as interim Ops Director at one of H.I.G.'s portfolio companies. His energy, commitment and effectiveness were outstanding. He delivered substantial operational benefits that enhanced customer service levels, boosted morale of employees and improved earnings. I look forward to the opportunity to work with Tony again on similar high-impact projects and will be happy to provide a reference."

"I worked alongside Tony on the turnaround of Bezier. Tony is a smart, hard-working, action-orientated individual. He brings a real sense of energy and spirit to the teams he works with. I would welcome the opportunity to work with him again."

"Tony is a practical, detail-oriented professional who delivers results. His 'can do' attitude, team player and strong work ethic made him a great asset to the Business"

Programme Manager – WMS & ERP implementation Bezier Ltd Dec 2010 – Sept 2011

HEADLINE – SUCCESSFULLY *RESCUED* THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A REPLACEMENT ERP & WMS FOR A RETAIL PRINT MANUFACTURER, IN 6 SITES AND 2 COUNTRIES, SUPPORTED BY NEW PROCESSES AND TEAM STRUCTURES

Initially, I was engaged to work with the team at Bezier and a WMS supplier [Delta] to programme manage the implementation of a new WMS solution across the business - in 2 countries and 6 sites. Despite constant challenges and changed priorities thrown up by the business management team, the WMS was implemented on time and to budget. The implementation programme involved several teams, working up from the basics – mapping current processes and recommending changes and improvements; reviewing and improving data structures and nomenclatures; liaising with the internal IT team and technical contractors to install cabling & Wi-Fi infrastructure; training and coaching; project and programme management; go-live planning and post-live support.

"I worked with Tony in a project team implementing a new group wide management system. Tony's role was as a consultant programme manager working with each group site to ensure that the needs of all were met. Although a consultant, Tony blended in as though he were an employee and led the project very capably, paying attention to risks, using the skill base of the team effectively and keeping the project on track. Despite leading the team, Tony was also prepared to go into great detail in order to understand the challenge, something that is often missing in big picture projects!"

Whilst implementing the WMS, the scope of my programme management remit was extended to cover the management of the final stages of a troublesome ERP implementation. This late intervention involved taking the team back to basic project methodologies – analysis, planning, data analysis; data cutover planning; risk management; contingency planning; pre-release test planning [inc parallel testing with the incumbent ERP]; team coaching; go-live planning and support;

Subsequent to go-live, my engagement was extended again, to offer post-implementation support to the business to further develop the ERP and to manage a number of critical business improvement projects

"I cannot speak highly enough of the motivational effect he had on the team that was not used to change of this magnitude and the responsibilities only they could deliver on top of their day jobs."

"He has driven through two demanding projects on time, budget and to scope. This would not have happened without his drive and determination. He is a leader, team player and team-maker who has left a positive legacy in the business. He is not afraid to confront difficult issues at all levels."

Consultant / Adviser Winning Pitch May 2009 – Dec 2010

HEADLINE – PROVIDED STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL BUSINESS INPUT TO A NUMBER OF SMES

Working with Winning Pitch and a number of high growth owner-managed SME companies in the North West to achieve profitable breakthroughs in revenue performance. The companies I worked with were as diverse as a lighting manufacturer, an online bed retailer, an online property auction business and a legal practice.

Primarily delivering business advice and mentoring, business consultancy, personal coaching, strategy and planning insight, innovation, support, entrepreneurial development, marketing insight and personal development to SMEs.

"Tony's ability to provide a strategic input to clients along with excellent operational skills makes him an extremely valuable member of our associate team"

Programme Head / Retail Consultant Ironmongery Direct Feb 2009 – Dec 2010

HEADLINE – PROVIDED STRATEGIC & PROCESS LED INPUT RESULTING IN INCREASED SALES OF >15% IN AREAS ADDRESSED

I worked with this rapidly growing owner-managed eCommerce B2B business to develop strategies and improve internal business processes. This involved working with the team to improve many business areas including product selection and range building processes, reviewing and improving customer segmentation, reviewing and improving product hierarchies and classifications, improving catalogue creation processes, improving catalogue look & feel, selecting and assisting in the engagement of a design supplier.

"Tony has a great way of breaking down large projects and setting out a clear road map to ensure things get done; all with great enthusiasm, fun and energy"

Programme Manager Mothercare Sept 2008 - Jan 2009

HEADLINE – CREATED UNIFORM, JOINED UP PROCESSES ACROSS MULTIPLE TEAMS RESULTING IN IMPROVED PRODUCT OFFER AND SIGNIFICANT SALES GROWTH

Engaged by the Group Direct Channels Director to (1) work with the Direct Channels team to improve internal processes and (2) review the current catalogue design and construct and make recommendations for improvement. The scope of the process improvement assignment covered from product selection through to data feeds into the catalogue and web processes. Building, and improving internal and 3rd party relationships within the teams was also a key requirement of the engagement. Many of the process improvements had been attempted on several previous occasions but on this occasion the changes have 'stuck' [the tactical process improvements have now been allied to a strategic planning framework which was identified as being a key enabling step missing from the process]. As a consequence of the project, the Mothercare Direct offer has shown major improvement, which has been reflected in very significant sales improvements.

"The true test of how successful this new process has been is that, if I was to say we were going to go back to the old way of working, I'd have a riot on my hands"

Interim Programme Head

ScrewFix Direct

Jun 2007 to Jul 2008

HEADLINE – RESTRUCTURED CROSS-TEAM/ CROSS-BUSINESS PROCESS AND IMPROVED WAYS OF WORKING TO SAVE £2M PER ANNUM

The Initial brief was to examine the end-to-end catalogue production processes and report on potential process improvement and cost efficiencies. After the initial report was delivered the engagement was extended with appointment as Interim to deliver the recommended process and team structure improvements. The team size was 40+ with a non headcount budgetary spend of £20m+ pa. There were complex relationships between the Catalogue Production team and the Merchandising, Buying & Marketing teams. Day-to-day control of non-headcount expenditure was poor. Processes were improved and, where appropriate, new processes developed. By the conclusion of the assignment in excess of £2m annual savings had been delivered in production costs and print & distribution costs; the team was restructured to deliver a multi-publication, multi-propositional catalogue and web offer; process changes were implemented that allowed page production to be more than doubled with only a very minor increase in headcount; new cost monitoring processes were implemented to manage and control the non-headcount spend and key relationships were developed between the team and the Buying, Range Development and Marketing functions. I was a fundamental driver in re-engineering the product selection processes and their interface into Catalogue & Web production.

In addition, I was embedded as a key member of the 'Heads of Department' population to challenge thinking and enable the driving and steering of key changes across the whole the business.

"I worked alongside Tony throughout his time at Screwfix Direct. A strategic business leader who was incredibly driven towards achieving the results of our organisation (As an Interim this is a very rare commodity). He contributes to the organisation from much more than just the perspective of his role, a real player who has been there and done it and is happy share his experience for the benefit and growth of others. From a personal perspective this is a man you would definitely want on your team going into battle."

Interim Programme Head – New Retail Channel

PC World

Jun 2006 to Feb 2007

HEADLINE – CREATED NEW SALES CHANNEL AND IMPLEMENTED FIRST EVER RETAIL 'TEXT AND COLLECT' SERVICE IN THE UK

Initiated, created from new and managed the internal and external processes to create and distribute the 1st ever PC World Customer Catalogue. This involved detailed preliminary investigation work, developing buy-in across the wider business hierarchy, process design and implementation, creation and execution of catalogue plans and schedules, development of relationships and contracts with 3rd parties for production and print, training and coaching and production management. Catalogue delivered early February 2006 – on time, under budget.

Worked with a 3rd party provider to create the UKs first 'text & collect' service for the PC World retail chain. NB - This was in the days before smart phones!!and was based around simple SMS interactions with the customer.

"You have, despite the challenging environment and circumstances, managed to deliver everything I could have expected to a far higher standard than I would have believed possible. You have also helped to create the most enjoyable and productive team atmosphere I've experienced in many years, and you will be sadly missed."

Interim Warehouse / Operations Director

eBuyerUK

Oct to Dec 2005

HEADLINE – IMPROVED PROCESSES, RETURNED £1M CASH TO THE BUSINESS AND REDUCED WIP TIMES BY 80%

Engaged to resolve internal process and cash flow issues in the Returns warehouse operation and to get the operation prepared for relocation to the new automated warehouse in Hull. Implemented new end-to-end processes, created improved internal workflows, enhanced staff recruitment procedures and implemented team induction processes. Reduced on-site stock holding by £1m within 12 weeks. Improved processing time taken from 2 weeks to 3 days. Established 3rd party relationships and implemented new stock recovery & refurbishment routines.

Programme Head – Warehouse Relocation

ScrewFix Direct

Oct to Dec 2004

HEADLINE – RELOCATED 2 CUSTOMER RETURNS WAREHOUSES INTO A MERGED 3RD PARTY FACILITY - ON TIME, UNDER BUDGET, NO IMPACT ON OPERATION

Managed the outsourcing of the whole returns operation to a 3rd party provider including the relocation of the customer returns operation and the closure of the 2 existing warehouses. The client requirements were to complete the project in only 8 weeks with no effect on 'business as usual' activities. Involved ensuring that 3rd party contractors and a 'demotivated' internal workforce achieved a successful conclusion. The objective was achieved on time and within budget with no impact on customer cash-flows.

"Tony takes full ownership of projects he manages and turns them into success."

Programme Head - Warehouse Relocation Derby House June to Sept 2003
HEADLINE – RELOCATED WHOLE BUSINESS FROM SEVERAL BUILDINGS INTO A DEDICATED SITE – AHEAD OF PLAN, ON BUDGET, NO IMPACT ON OPERATION

Derby House was a family owned / run business. In 2003 an investor bought into the business. The business was run out of a series of barns and outbuildings around a farm-yard in a village in Lancashire. In order to significantly grow the business, the new owner identified that the business needed to be moved to more 'business-like' premises. I was engaged to plan and programme manage the business move. The programme covered relocation of the warehousing and retail operations. The move was completed in 12 weeks – ahead of plan, on budget and with no measurable impact on trading, sales or cash flows.

"His organisational skills and on-going mentoring were invaluable in achieving our aims. I could not recommend his work highly enough. Simply put, we would not have achieved the successful completion of these two major projects without him"

Interim Head of Supply Chain/Stock Management Express Gifts Ltd 2002 /2004
HEADLINE – REBRANDED THE STOCK DISPOSAL ARM OF THE BUSINESS, IMPROVED INTERNAL PROCESSES, INCREASED SALES BY 40%

Implemented improved returns warehouse procedures including refurbishment, return to line and disposal. Radically transformed stock disposal retail operation. Developed a new brand strategy, retail footprint and business operating model improving sales by 40%.

"I have worked closely with Tony for nearly 2 years and found the process very rewarding. His interest in the business is always first class and his understanding of what is required astute. During this time we have all learned much and the business has benefited greatly. It will be a shame to see him go."

Other Assignments Various 2002/2012

During the last 10 years, I have also completed other, minor consultancy assignments:

B&Q	Reviewed the B2C Home Delivery supply chain and made recommendations for service improvements and cost control.
Charities Trust	Facilitated a Strategy Planning workshop with the Charities Trust management team and the Board of Trustees. Helped the team to plan and deliver significant internal structure changes, which lead to increased revenues. The workshop also catalysed a step change in the product offer which also resulted in significant efficiency improvements across the business.
Index	Consultation and advice on supply chain 'run-down and stock disposal. Detailed database analysis and stock disposal at the closure of the business
Otto (UK)	Ran a project, with the Marketing team, to deliver a plan to implement a step change in customer recruitment processes
PC World	Developed and implemented innovative 'Text & Collect' processes, enabling customers to select products from catalogues, leaflets and press ads and reserve for collection at their nearest store.
Surrey County Council	Led a technical team to deliver a new IT strategy for the Local Authority <i>"We invited Tony to manage this Management Consultancy assignment because we were confident that he would use his skills and experience to manage the assignment to the highest possible standards. We were confident that our Client would be very impressed by his commitment and professionalism - we weren't disappointed."</i>
Wolseley UK	Reviewed pricing strategy, pricing processes and mechanisms and made recommendations for improvement

Director Littlewoods 1995 – 2002

Responsible for many functional areas across the business. Key characteristic of each role was the implementation of significant change and driving improved business performance.

Led the largest change programme ever undertaken by the Buying & Merchandising teams, delivering channel integration across the 3 retail business channels. The integration delivered common supply chain principles across the 3 trading channels. Catalysed and developed the framework in which the new integrated businesses would operate. Played a key role in developing and implementing the migration.

Led major change programme delivering a new operating infrastructure across a 140 strong team responsible for process improvement, cross business scheduling & capacity planning and production of over 15,000 catalogue pages per annum.

Successfully created new working practices, radically improved the working relationship with other key functional areas, reduced headcount cost by 25% and increased throughput by 40%.

Headed up the team responsible for all non – main catalogue sales. This team comprised Marketing, Business Planning, Buying & Merchandising and was operated as a separate end-to-end business activity within the organisation, generating over £200m sales p.a.

Delivered improved support and infrastructure services to the Group Trading Dept. A wide-ranging role, covering such diverse areas as offer planning, financial management and margin management. Initiated the sourcing and implementation of a scheduling and capacity planning system that delivered improved control of planning timelines to the business.

Responsible for Agency catalogue business planning. Delivered a structured planning procedure that was adopted across all Business Channels. Covered product/ range space allocation (10,000 pages per year), financial performance planning (£1 billion sales per year), product marketing and research.

"Tony's a very experienced practitioner in retail markets, especially catalogue businesses. Very capable of identifying changes necessary to improve business performance & recommending appropriate action plans."

Retail Channel CEO

Littlewoods

1995 – 1997

CEO of LCDS stock disposal retail operation [discreet operating business within the Littlewoods Group]. Transformed the business operating model and trading footprint. Implemented EPOS and Business Intelligence systems across the business. Transformed the trading profit performance from zero at take over to a level of 13% of turnover.

Responsible for returns and surplus stock disposal operation. Initiated, developed and implemented ground breaking automated brochure / leaflet creation systems and markdown pricing model. Improved profitability of operation by £3m p.a. within 2 years

Responsible for the management of the damaged / returned product disposal operation. Improved profitability of operation by £1m p.a.

Merchandising & Stock Disposals Manager

Index

1988 – 1995

Visioned, designed, coded and implemented all systems to support the stock management and surplus stock disposal operation. Designed, developed and implemented an automated leaflet production system which increased profitability by £2m.

Developed innovative and effective methods of disposing of end of line stocks profitably holding the mark-down and stock depreciation costs at constant value levels over a 6 year period during which time the business grew 4-fold and generated significant improvements in the cash flow associated with stock management.

Store Manager

Littlewoods

1974 – 1988

Entered via a Line-Management Training Scheme eventually managing stores in various locations. Delivered significant profit improvement in each store and was selected to manage many stores on the 'difficult to manage' list. Key achievements were: Development & roll out of a software package, which allowed managers to accurately plan staff requirements using EPOS trading data: Sales Manager in largest store [Argyle St, Glasgow] with additional responsibility of overseeing £10m building refurbishment programme: Instrumental in bringing retailers and Local Government together to resolve vandalism and shoplifting issues in South London. Key player in bringing about the development of a local drop-in centre.