



SHERRINGTON
associates

Issue no. 02

New Horizons

Your bulletin for news updates and business
insight from Sherrington Associates

Sherrington team expands with the appointment of Laura McKay
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Diversity in Executive Search – all things being equal

WELCOME FROM ROB MCKAY

There is, few will doubt, a distinct lack of clarity over the future landscape for business in the UK at present. Whilst ambiguity is generally perceived to be unhealthy for business planning, history has shown that during prolonged periods of economic uncertainty, there are always some who manage not only to survive, but to positively thrive. The executive search sector is one such profession that remains in high demand with clients, even when the wider outlook is unsure.

As risk adversity increases amongst top talent and high-performing executives become less 'active' in the job market, it becomes extremely difficult for employers to engage these candidates through traditional recruitment methods of advertising and/or using contingency recruiters. Coupled with record low-levels of unemployment, meaning increased competition for these candidates, the conditions make for good reasons to use an executive search partner.

The key is working with a partner who's as proactive as they are well-connected. Whilst the value of 'a network' can't be understated, outdated 'black book' headhunting techniques are limited at best and can only be capitalised upon when used in conjunction with genuine research-based headhunting methods to uncover latent 'passive' talent. We know our value as a search partner is about having good-quality senior networks and a relentless commitment to researching new candidate markets. But most importantly as a boutique provider it's about having a really clear and supportive purpose, which for Sherrington is 'optimising leadership teams by exceeding clients' expectations every time'.

This month I was asked to chair a panel debate at the University of Chester's '10th Annual Chester Forum', in which over 30 business leaders and esteemed academics from around the region were asked to discuss the notion of entrepreneurship in a 'post-Brexit world'. What struck me was that despite the general mood of uncertainty, the outlook for the SME's and entrepreneurs

who really understand their value in a changing market was distinctively rosy.

In my non-exec role as Chair of the Institute of Directors in Cheshire I meet senior leaders from around the region on a regular basis and the message is consistent – research your market, understand your intrinsic value to your customers, play with a straight die and you'll do all right in the long run.

So, I come back to my opening line. It's an extremely exciting time to be in business right now. Having a really clear picture of the value we provide to our clients' ever-changing needs and demands, I feel incredibly positive about the future, despite all the turmoil. As long as businesses need good leaders then we'll be here to help.

Rob McKay, Managing Director,
Sherrington Associates



TEAM TALKS... SHERRINGTON EXPANDS

Sherrington Associates was founded as a family business by husband and wife Rob and Joanne McKay in 2014. Now in our sixth year we are delighted to announce the appointment of another family member to the team. Laura McKay joins the business as Executive Search Consultant in September of this year, further adding to the team's delivery capability on retained executive search mandates.

Laura is a graduate in French from Leeds University and has an extensive background in the corporate travel arena, working closely with prestige corporate accounts and managing teams of business travel consultants. Laura's experience of client liaison and account development fits exactly with Sherrington's aspirations to grow the business over the coming years.

Commented Laura on her appointment: *"Executive search shares many parallels with my background in service-led industries, delivering tailored projects for clients across multiple sectors. I'm hugely excited to be joining the family business at such a pivotal time."*

THE 3RD SHERRINGTON AUTUMN RECEPTION

THURSDAY 10TH OCTOBER - ARE YOU BOOKED ON?

Following the success of last year's reception, we are pleased to announce that this year we will be returning to the Abode Hotel on Thursday 10 October. Last year over 100 senior executives listened to keynote speeches on 'The Executive Talent Landscape' by Ian O'Doherty, the CEO of Park Group and Chair of Chester racecourse (and a former CEO of MBNA), and Katrina Michel, who until recently was CEO of Marketing Cheshire.

This year's reception will take a slightly different tone. As Brexit D-Day draws ever nearer, we thought we'd give guests some hope and inspiration during these times of uncertainty.

Our speaker this year is former fireman and star of BBC Two's 'Saving Lives at Sea' Paul Rowland. In February 2018 he went kayaking off the coast of Anglesey with his son Joe. Disaster struck when the kayak capsized two miles offshore.

Paul will be telling the story (which you can watch on BBC iPlayer) of how his 13 year-old son saved his life that day and went on to be given the Queen's Gallantry Medal. It really is a truly inspiring story and we'll be drawing on some powerful leadership lessons on the night. We hope you can join us.

Please RSVP before the end of September to guarantee your place. Tickets and hospitality are free. However, guests are kindly asked to make a donation to the RNLI on the night. Confirm your place by emailing info@sherringtonassociates.co.uk

FIVE KEY QUALITIES THAT MAKE A GREAT LEADER:

- ✓ Good communicator with the ability to listen
- ✓ Determination
- ✓ Honesty
- ✓ Adaptability
- ✓ Innovative thinker.



ABOUT THE RNLI

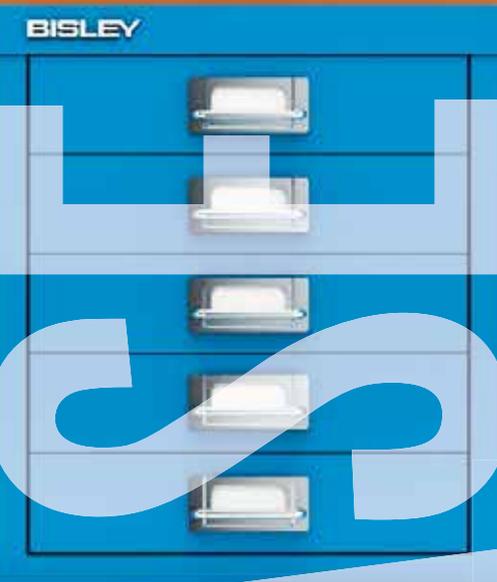
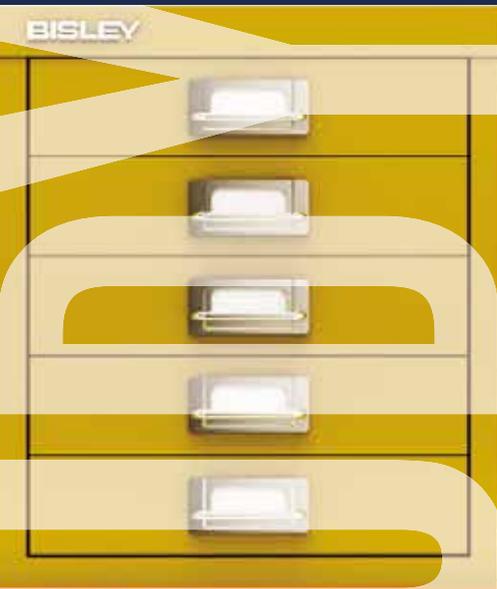
Having previously recruited for the RNLI executive board, the team at Sherrington are all too familiar with the incredible work they do. RNLI volunteer lifeboat crews provide a 24-hour rescue service in the UK and Ireland, and its seasonal lifeguards look after people on busy beaches. Its Flood Rescue team helps those affected by flooding. RNLI crews and lifeguards have saved over 142,200 lives since 1824 but its more than a rescue service. It aims to influence, supervise and educate people too.

Its Community Safety teams explain the risks and share safety knowledge with anyone going out to sea or to the coast, and its international teams work with like-minded organisations to help tackle drowning in communities at risk all around the world.

Donations raised on the night will go to the Moelfre Lifeboat Station in Anglesey.



Lifeboats



BISLEY

Retained Search - Director of International Sales

It's no coincidence that much of our work today is delivering search assignments for clients we've worked with for many years. Testament to the value we provide for clients, some of them have been with us since we set up the business and long before.

BISLEY is one such client. Founded in the 1930s and with annualised revenues of circa £70m, BISLEY remains family-owned and is a leading British manufacturer of innovative office furniture with a strong international presence via seven overseas subsidiaries.

Having assembled technical and business development teams for BISLEY over the last decade, Sherrington is delighted to have completed a new search for a Director of International Sales this summer.

To lead the growth of its established reseller network predominantly in Western Europe, the business retained Sherrington to appoint a new Director of International Sales.

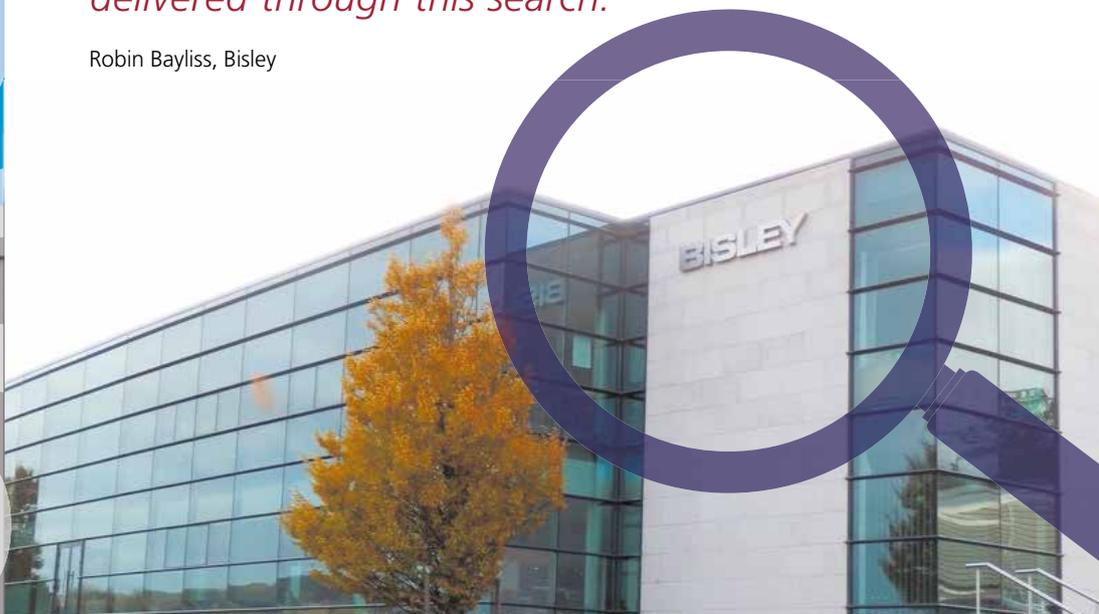
The candidate needed to be an exceptionally strong sales leader with an international pedigree in the commercial furniture industry.

After an extensive search of the competitor landscape and a rigorous selection process, Greg Aspinall was appointed to the role in August.

Greg brings with him over 20 years' experience in the furniture sector most latterly as Key Account Director at KI Europe, where he managed the largest international accounts in the company's portfolio.

"I was very pleased with the calibre of candidates that Sherrington provided and the work they delivered through this search."

Robin Bayliss, Bisley



CALLING ALL RUNNERS!

'RACE FOR THE RAINFOREST' LAUNCH EVENT – SEPTEMBER 25TH

Ever thought about competing in an ultra-marathon through the jungles of Borneo? No? Well neither will most of the senior leaders who have committed to taking part in the Borneo Ultra Trails Marathon to raise money for Chester Zoo's reforestation and conservation work in March 2021! As a longstanding client of Sherrington Associates, Rob began exploring fundraising opportunities with the zoo last year, inspired by a talk from the zoo's CEO and leading conservationist Dr Mark Pilgrim, where he spelled out the devastating effects of deforestation caused by the palm oil industry over the last two decades.

The Borneo forests are the most ancient rainforests on the planet, home to the richest biodiversity and some of the most unique species on Earth. However Indonesia and Malaysia produce over 85% of the world's palm oil. Deforestation in Borneo has happened on an industrial scale since the 1960's, accelerating dramatically in the last decade. Only half of Borneo's rainforest remains today and with a deforestation rate of 1.3million hectares per annum, only peat and montane forests are expected to survive in the coming years unless we do something to change the current trajectory. Populations of Sumatran Rhinos, Sumatran Tigers, Orangutans, Pygmy Elephants and many more rare and unique species have been devastated and remain critically endangered if not 'functionally' extinct (ie: not enough of the species left in the wild to function as a healthy population without the help of zoos and support from conservation experts).

Working with the zoo's fundraising

experts, Rob and the Sherrington team researched a number of potential race options, finally settling on probably the most ambitious of them all. Each year, around March time, over 1,500 athletes compete in the Borneo Ultra Trail Marathon, a merciless footrace through the Sabah jungle in Borneo, with 30k, 50k, 100k and 100 mile race options. It's not for the faint-hearted, but given the variety of race distances making it more inclusive for competitors of varying abilities we felt it was ideal. Running an ultra-marathon (defined as a foot race above the distance of a usual 26.2 mile marathon) for most people isn't about competing or beating a time, instead it's more about just finishing. In 2021 we're taking a group of influential business leaders to Borneo to race in the BUTM to raise much-needed funds for the zoo's reforestation work and probably even more importantly, to witness the biodiversity crisis first hand – the idea being they'll return to the UK with a burning passion to influence change in supply chains through their roles in business.

We're actively looking for sponsors and competitors right now. If you're interested in lacing up your trainers or becoming a corporate sponsor and making a real difference, you can join us for the official launch event at 8:30am on September 25th at Chester Zoo, where you'll hear from Rob, Mark and the winner of this year's 100k distance race, Major Lucy Scott, describing the what, the why and the how behind this incredible adventure. Email the zoo to confirm your place... vip@chesterzoo.org or for more information contact Rob on rob.mckay@sherringtonassociates.co.uk



In order to achieve meaningful and lasting change, to prevent the further growth of the 'unsustainable' palm oil industry, consumer countries like the UK will need to take a completely different approach to the way their supply chains operate.

RECENT APPOINTMENTS:

BILFINGER UK 2 X REGIONAL OPERATIONS DIRECTORS



Bilfinger is one of the world's largest and most innovative engineering support services businesses, operating predominantly in the global energy sector and process industries. Following the merger of three existing Bilfinger UK entities to create the new business Bilfinger UK, the business sought to appoint two new Regional Operations Directors. These positions were required to manage the high-value portfolios of work in the north and south of England. Leading teams across multiple onsite contracts for the provision of a range of services including capital projects, plant maintenance, overhauls and asset support, the business required candidates with an excellent track record of senior operational leadership within site services, shutdowns, maintenance and contract engineering. Sherrington is pleased to have successfully completed two targeted headhunting projects to acquire two new Regional Operations Directors for the business covering different regions of the UK.

BIKMO DIRECTOR OF FINANCE



Bikmo is an emerging player in the bicycle insurance market. Founded in July 2014 by cycling enthusiast David George, the business has rapidly created a name for itself as a leading provider of cycling insurance products that enable its customers to simply 'ride more'. In 2016 the business won the coveted 'Best Cycling Insurer' award at the Insurance Choice Awards and recently moved to new premises in Abbey Square in the heart of Chester City Centre. Looking to recruit a new Finance Director, Sherrington helped the business to select a candidate with a background of working with tech start-ups and an impressive pedigree of building financial structures and controls to help entrepreneurial SMEs scale. Louise Towers, also a Non-Executive Director at Storyhouse, joined the business in July of this year.

TEXTLOCAL HEAD OF SALES OPERATIONS



Textlocal is a mobile communications business, based in Chester and founded in 2005 to provide bulk SMS messaging services on behalf of its customers. Part of the AIM-listed £142m turnover IMI Group, the business has grown both organically and through acquisition over the last five years. It has significantly broadened its services, incorporating omnichannel messaging via a new and enhanced platform capable of delivering content via a whole range of end-user touch points. To spearhead the growth of its commercial sales, the business sought to appoint a highly-accomplished sales and operational leader with experience from within the same sector. Given its 'nicheness' the company appointed Sherrington to conduct a targeted headhunting campaign that would identify, engage and attract senior industry talent from across the UK. Following an extensive search of the omnichannel messaging industry and associated SaaS sectors, a candidate from one of Textlocal's direct competitors was appointed and joined the business in August.

THE ROLE OF EXECUTIVE SEARCH IN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Discussing how executive search firms can help organisations take a fair, balanced and inclusive approach to their senior leadership hiring strategy.



The subject of diversity and inclusion (D&I) has become an increasingly prominent feature underpinning employers' executive talent strategies over the last decade. For some, it is perceived simply as an issue of social responsibility and compliance, but for more and more, it is now recognised as a fundamental pillar of their growth strategy and a surefire way to gain a competitive advantage. Research shows that a diverse and inclusive workforce outperforms competitors, thanks to a wider skillset.

The role of the executive search partner in helping employers to develop a diverse and inclusive organisation can't be understated. Studies show that more companies are specifically requesting diverse longlists for roles, and many are insisting on 50:50 gender split longlists. There is however, an important balance that needs to be achieved between delivering diversity in longlists and 'ticking a box' simply to create a board or workforce with an equal gender or BAME representation.

In many organisations, there still exists an observable lack of diversity at board level, with many still holding the belief that it is more difficult for women to reach senior board positions.

Although these attitudes are slowly changing, the question remains,

"What can executive search partners do to help their clients overcome an often unconscious bias, that limits the true achievement of objective hiring?"

It's important to note that diversity comes in many forms and when we talk about diversity in the context of hiring senior directors, we must also refer to sector experience, personality profiles and socioeconomic background, as well as the more widely assumed forms of gender, race, age and sexual orientation. The simple fact is that a broader, richer collection of skills, backgrounds and experiences provides far greater innovation and creativity within boards.

Methods to enable the provision of greater diversity in longlists include placing more emphasis on the relevant skillset and the actual 'capabilities' of a candidate, as opposed to being overly-focused on documented experience and hiring candidates from the same industry sector. Some organisations are also reporting benefits from using gender-neutral language in job descriptions, as well as specifically requesting 'blind' CVs during the shortlisting procedure. This removes any clues as to gender or ethnicity, and reduces the propensity for unconscious bias.

Sometimes hiring businesses can struggle to find diversity through their own hiring

practices. This is why it's important to choose a search partner whose approach is innovative and actively seeks to present new ideas, rather than simply executing a CV-search based on a two-page job description.

The role of the executive search partner should be to empower their client to recruit the best possible team of senior executives to support the aspirations of the business. This means delivering longlists that are both accurate to the brief and diverse of talent, as well as supporting the client to remove bias where appropriate. Achieving a diverse, inclusive workforce is not something that happens by accident. It requires time and focus, but by working with an executive search partner who is in tune with the issue, organisations can embed good practice right throughout their talent strategy and, most importantly, give themselves the best chance of assembling winning senior teams.



Joanne McKay
Director of Research



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