



Jerry Williams
Interim COO

Overview of Corporate Career

12 years in the military - made the transition into the commercial world by working for a leading management consultancy. A short foray in the defence sector was then followed by over 15 years in SME leadership roles (including private equity owned) in multiple sectors ranging from motorsport, to insurance and maritime security - and in roles ranging from Managing Director, to Commercial Director and COO.

Interim Assignments Completed

One so far, Insurance company marketing strategy development - but also led a number of initiatives (including business turnarounds) that had many of the features of interim positions.

Core Specialisms and USPs

My bias is for working in dynamic and complex environments, bringing structure and clarity. I have led Change initiatives including performance improvement, entry into new markets, business turnarounds and transformation.

The Interim Statement

February 2019

1. Why did you become an IM?

Having left my last permanent role, I took some time to reflect on my career to date, my achievements and what I most enjoyed doing. I realised that my preference is for leading change initiatives – especially working in SME environments where the impact and value of those initiatives is very quickly visible. Having had that “light bulb moment”, it seemed to me that I could add real value in the interim environment.

2. How did you secure your first assignment?

I had been in contact with a specialist interim provider for some time. They introduced me to a Lloyd’s underwriter that wanted to develop a marketing strategy for the business. In conversation with the leadership we decided that this should be approached, certainly initially, as a short term 3-4 month interim engagement. I worked with the management team for 3 months, helping them better understand their key customer segments, develop a clear strategy and associated 12 month marketing action plan.

3. How do you go about getting assignments?

As well as keeping in touch with my network within the SME and corporate community, I also maintain a network of specialist interim headhunters.

4. What attracts you to a particular assignment?

As I suspect is the case with most Interim Managers, it’s the business challenge. Given my background, I am particularly passionate about innovation – working with key stakeholders to identify and implement better ways of doing business.

5. Which assignment are you most proud of?

Whilst not a traditional interim assignment, the timescales and challenge were similar – as MD, turning around a maritime security company. This required a rapid business restructuring, leading the sales team to build a pipeline of new business, and developing a clear strategy for future growth. The result was a significant reduction in costs, and a fourfold increase in revenues.

6. Has an assignment ever ‘gone wrong’? Why?

So far, so good...

A collaborative approach to team leadership has been vital in generating alignment.

Education & Qualifications

MSc and BEng

7. What advice would you give to a first time IM?

Finding the first assignment is hard and will take time - stick with it and keep your personal "sales funnel" ticking over. When it does come, take time to carefully scope the engagement – ensure that you and the management team are completely aligned on expectations and timing.

8. Do you ever feel you should go back to a permanent/corporate job?

"Never say never" – but I enjoy the variety of challenges and the change imperative offered by interim assignments.

9. What is the best thing about being an IM?

Being given the mandate to make change happen. Having immediate impact – and then moving onto the next challenge once the task is complete.

10. What would you say to a client thinking about hiring their first IM?

When you need to make change happen, there is real value in using an experienced IM from outside your sector. That new perspective, combined with the experience of leading change, can open the door to more creative problem solving.

11. Does having an engineering background help in being an Interim Manager?

Interesting question! In that both require a logical and fact-based approach to problem solving – yes, having an engineering background does help. However Interim roles also require emotional intelligence to approach the key people aspects of making change happen.

12. How does an Interim career compare to serving in the Army?

There are some similarities - particularly the way in which your role changes on a regular basis – in the military every 2 years or so you will move into an entirely new role and have to be prepared to "hit the ground running". Leadership skills are also key in both environments. Perhaps more of a general management point, but the Army also embeds great innate project management skills – effective and efficient use of limited resources to hit a deadline that is immovable.

To understand more about the benefits hiring an Interim Manager can bring to your organisation, please contact Steve Rutherford on +44(0) 20 7569 9540 or steve.rutherford@miles-partnership.com