



## Case Study



### OB10

OB10 is the leading global B2B e-Invoicing network. OB10's software and e-Invoicing technology enables businesses to invoice their customers without reliance on paper based systems. Founded in 2000, OB10 has regional centres in London, Atlanta and Kuala Lumpur and supporting offices in Germany, Sofia and Bangalore. OB10 is ranked number 30, as a fastest growing technology company, on the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 EMEA 2008.

#### **The issue – organizational growth**

OB10 had grown steadily since its' inception, finally reaching a point in late 2007 which required the introduction of new business processes and services. A tight financial environment, strong historical departmental boundaries and a geographically dispersed population made the problem that much more complex. The CEO, Jamie Gunn, identified the need to establish a program office to facilitate change and deliver projects concurrently. As this skill set did not exist within the business, Jamie decided to bring in an interim executive. Jamie had previously undertaken a couple of interim assignments himself and was aware of the value an interim can bring.

Jamie consulted Sue Smith from BIE. He had met Sue when prospecting the interim market and was impressed with her professionalism and the care she took to understand an individual's skill set. Following a competitive selection process, Steve Davies joined OB10 as Interim Vice President of Service Delivery.

#### **The assignment**

Steve's initial 4 month assignment was to manage OB10's programme of project deployment. Projects ranged from the implementation of OB10's first US data centre to 'territory' product launches, such as those in the US Federal Market. Over a four month period, Steve was also tasked with designing and implementing a project deployment methodology to sustain the improvements in project delivery over the coming months and years.

A necessary component of the project methodology implementation was training of all managers and senior managers without compromising to the day-to-day business. In particular, Steve worked closely with the Systems Department to convince them that the process changes he was introducing would be beneficial to them, not something to fear.

## The Benefits

By the end of his initial 4 month assignment, OB10 had not only regained control of product and project delivery but it now boasted a deployment methodology, a very rigorous business operating plan, associated performance management process and he had trained 50 Project Managers, without disruption to day to day work.

Beyond the initial brief, Steve's contract was extended to undertake coaching and mentoring of the many managers whose roles had changed as a result of the introduction of the program office. Used as an instrument of change, Steve was able to be candid and challenging often saying to his peers "You know if I was you I couldn't say that but [as an interim] I can. I'm not after your job. I'm here to make things better." This objectivity and ability to challenge made him the perfect coach.

Jamie Gunn says: "Steve Davies is an exceptional interim executive. He is an expert Programme Director and a competent operational leader who is clearly used to a place around a Board table. Not afraid to launch himself into the most challenging situations but always careful, considered and professional in his approach, Steve has an ability to get 'under the skin' of an organisation – both in terms of its business and culture. He is far from 'work-shy' and when needed, became personally involved in the recovery of individual projects – both in the UK and the US.

"Assertive and direct when required, Steve is also sensitive to the subtleties of growing businesses – in our case, our start-up history tested and proved Steve's handling of organisational politics too.

"Steve is intelligent and commercially astute. He used his experiences here to great effect at no point did I feel he was adopting a 'one size fits all' approach to deploying his solutions. I always felt Steve listened to our business, carefully considered and constructed solutions and delivered what we really needed.

"Steve has left a legacy that will be a foundation for the next stage in the development of OB10's global business, indeed we have already adapted and expanded his methodology to better manage our campaigns to enrol suppliers on the OB10 network. Perhaps most important of all, we now have a well equipped second tier management cadre who run projects with their peers and need little more than sponsorship from the executive management team."

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