

Craig Huntingdon



Profile

A multi-disciplined commercial executive with extensive Board level experience in large multi-nationals and dynamic, start-up businesses.

A record of game-changing success achieved in highly competitive sectors against challenging conditions. Genuinely people-centric with a hands-on style and tenacious approach.

Experience & Achievements

2017 - Present

Vision Analytics – Founder & NED

Researched, financed and co-founded this business that uses image analysis and machine learning to provide the retail sector with actionable data to improve on-shelf availability, sales and wastage.

Notable Achievements;

- Built the start up team, conceptualized the product and launched the business
- Developed the initial customer base
- Created strategic alliances with key suppliers and partners
- Achieved profitability within 2 months

2011 - 2017

Dentist Direct / Love Dental - Founder & CEO

Researched, financed and co-founded this business with ambitions to roll out a national chain of dental practices which tackle fear of the dentist head-on with the help of cutting edge technology.

Notable Achievements;

- Launched the business after raising Private Equity, Debt and personal investment.
- Developed an award winning marketing strategy, recognised nationally in the 'Drum' awards
- Opened five practices which all became profitable much faster than the sector average
- Developed and launched a franchise and joint ownership model
- Launched the business into Dubai
- Awarded the opportunity to roll out the business nationally with sites in a major Supermarket
- Runner Up – Entrepreneur of the Year – Emerging Talent 2013

2011 – 2017

Open Collar/Smart Sourced – Principal Consultant

Founder of a successful Consultancy business focussed on providing a high quality service in the areas of retail, recruitment, business planning, commercial performance and marketing.

Notable Achievements;

- Quickly built a very profitable business generating revenues of £200k+ annually
- Generated very high levels of repeat business based on the tangible improvements delivered

2002 – 2011

Aldi Stores Ltd – Trading Director

Board responsibility for the commercial operations of this £multi-billion business unit with individual P&L responsibility for a £300m department therein. Responsibilities included developing and delivering the strategic and commercial objectives in areas such as brand development, customer proposition, marketing, regional buying, merchandising, operational processes and graduate recruitment.

Notable Achievements;

- Understanding the brand limitations and customer resistance to engage
- Repositioning of the business proposition to broaden it's appeal
- Drove new customers and visit frequency with a concise branding and marketing strategy
- Top-line sales growth from £265m to over £1 billion
- Improved EBITDA from -46% to +4%
- Development of a 'Fresh' buying strategy resulting in an improvement in fresh produce sales of 45% on a like for like basis and improved margin by over 25%
- Developed a successful fresh Bakery business by identifying key suppliers and implementing a direct delivery programme to over 60 stores generating revenues of over £6m
- Achieved 5th position in The Times Top 100 Graduate Employers list
- Motivated, developed and empowered a team of direct reports to optimize their potential

2000 – 2002

Aldi Stores Ltd – Area Manager

Joined the business via an accelerated scheme and took over the direct operational control of 6 stores having successfully completed the 12 month graduate training programme.

Responsible for all operational aspects of the stores including, sales, marketing, people, costs and inventory control.

Notable Achievements;

- Reduced inventory loss by 50% within 6 months by focusing the development of the store management team in this area.
- Negotiated a 20% reduction in waste management costs, which was adopted nationally.
- Developed and motivated a team of store managers who in turn achieved set goals in the areas of recruitment & retention, sales development, store standards, availability and wastage control.

1999 – 2000

Cleveland Papers Ltd – Managing Director

Upon successful completion of the MBO, was appointed as Managing Director to oversee the day to day running of the company in conjunction with the new management team. Full P&L responsibility was granted.

Notable Achievements;

- Completed a company-wide Strategic Review resulting in a re-organisation of the management structure; the introduction of departmental budgets/KPI's; structured performance reviews for all staff and a Company mission statement.
- Successfully negotiated a CVA with the Company's advisors in response to the Company's largest customer entering into administration.

1998 – 1999

Cleveland Papers Ltd – Commercial Manager

Transferred to the parent Company of Designers Selection on completion of the secondment. Full departmental P&L responsibility was granted.

Whilst in this employment, approached by a Director of the Company to develop a business plan in order to facilitate a Management Buy Out. Upon completion of the business plan, tasked to raise the necessary finance and structure a deal that would leave the Company in the strongest possible position.

Notable Achievements;

- Successfully developed and implemented an IT strategy within time and budgetary constraints.
- Appraised and appointed IT consultants to undertake the development of a MIS system using bespoke software written specifically for the Company. Implemented the system Company wide.
- Developed a business plan in conjunction with the Company's advisors that was successfully used to raise over £1m of finance to facilitate a MBO. Liaised with the Company's lawyers to structure a deal that was suitable to all parties including the new Management Team; the outgoing Directors and all other associated parties.

1997 – 1998

Designers Selection Ltd – Commercial Manager

Seconded to undertake a review of the Company's commercial position and to report on its overall potential and viability.

Notable Achievements;

- Successfully liaised with the Company's bankers in order to extend its facilities until a detailed review of its business activities could be undertaken.
- Produced a Business Plan that was used successfully to re-structure the financing of the business using more appropriate means and outlining the basis for a complete overhaul of the Company's activities.
- Implementation of the above plan resulting in a 35% increase in sales; 33% reduction in overheads; 15% reduction in stock holding and a 10% reduction in debtor collection days.
- Completely updated the Company's corporate identity to reinforce its position in the marketplace and to reflect its new trading style.

1993 – 1997

Euro Wallcoverings - Operations Manager

Main responsibilities included the supervision of the Company's sales force; product development; co-ordination of marketing activities; purchasing and logistics.

Notable Achievements;

- Reduced product development time from 6 to 1 month allowing the Company to react rapidly to changes in market demand.
- Introduced departmental budgets with delegated responsibility resulting in a 12% reduction of sales, marketing and distribution costs.
- Undertook a review of the Company's major suppliers resulting in the awarding of several sole supplier agreements improving supplier relations, terms of trade and reducing raw material costs.
- Increased export turnover from 8% to 51% in 3 consecutive years by targeting potential export markets, recruiting sales agents and participation at international trade fairs.
- Produced a Business Review on behalf of the Board of Directors, which resulted in an overhaul of the Company's sales and marketing activities within the UK.

1990 – 1993

Euro Wallcoverings - Management Trainee

Employed on a sponsored study basis. Worked closely with the Company's management team in order to experience a varied overview of the Company's diverse operations including; financial management and reporting; human resource management; quality management; personnel; health & safety; sales & marketing; design; product development; logistics; purchasing and production control.

Notable Achievements;

- Designed and implemented a sales analysis system that provided detailed understanding of each product, range, sales executive and agent.
- Undertook a review of the Company's purchasing function resulting in new purchase order processing procedures being implemented and reducing stock holding by 17%.

Education

HNC Business & Finance

Business Law
Personnel Management
Statistics for Business Apps
Marketing Communication
Marketing
Business Environment
Finance
Total Quality Management
Human Resource Management

Merit
Merit
Merit
Merit
Merit
Pass
Merit
Pass
Pass

GCSE

Mathematics
English
English Literature
Geography
Physics
Chemistry
Information Technology
Accounts

All grade A - C