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John is Managing Partner of Playfair Partnerships, a firm that he founded in 1992. He has extensive experience in improving the performance and strategic development of owner-managed businesses, as well as monitoring and advising on the financial position of a number of organisations. He also has a long track record in turning around businesses in financial difficulty. John's background is in financial and general management and he has wide ranging industry experience including the legal, construction, manufacturing, engineering and service sectors. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, a Member of the Institute for Turnaround and a board member of the Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce, as well as a non-executive director for a number of SME companies.

Prior to forming Playfair Partnerships, John worked predominantly for quoted companies, mainly in finance roles in both the UK and overseas and his former companies include ICI, Tarmac, Wilkinson Sword, Rockwell Automation and Davis Service Group (now Berendsen) – where he was finance director of the main operating company and oversaw the modernisation of that business as well as significant growth in both turnover and profit.

Summary of Positions

Playfair Partnerships

Managing Partner – 1992 – to date

Formed the firm to provide financial and general management expertise to shareholders of private companies, in both turnaround and non-turnaround situations. With experience across a broad range of industry sectors, Playfair Partnerships has worked with over 50 businesses providing one or more of the services below, with a strong track record of success.

Business turnaround: taking successful action to correct a period of deteriorating financial performance that may often threaten the solvency of the business.

FD services: providing board-level input, strategies and controls to ensure the long-term financial health of the business either as an interim or permanent solution.

Financial control: providing accurate and timely financial information and effective financial systems and reports to monitor the current and projected financial performance of the business.

Investigations & projects: providing a range of financial and business services, including funding reviews, profitability investigations, systems and staff reviews, business plans and business development recommendations and start-ups.

EF Meering Ltd

Chief Executive – 1991 – 2000

- Rescued a family-owned group of companies from financial difficulty.
- Implemented a survival plan for the group, involving business disposals and asset sales, and restored profitability and cashflow.
- Halved the group's debt and achieved long-term refinancing, enabling the group to repay the debt and become cash rich.
- Reorganised a complex shareholding structure to accommodate family and business requirements.

Consolidated Microvision Holdings Plc

Managing/Financial Director – 1990 – 1991

- Delivered a rescue package involving complex operational, financial and shareholding issues, dealing with multi-bank and large value debts.
- Formulated financial workout plan to recover stakeholders' investments and assumed management control of the business.
- Formed a new portfolio management business, after negotiating a merger and overseeing integration of activities and staff.

Sunlight Textile Services Ltd (now Berendsen)

Financial Director – 1985 – 1990

- Established a strategy for growth, and reorganised and modernised the accounting function of a group of 30 companies with 40 sites and 2,500 personnel.
- Increased turnover from £15m to £45m and profits from £1m to £6m, by developing a growth strategy.
- Introduced tight financial control by adopting effective budgetary and reporting systems.
- Created a responsive Finance Department (to handle rapidly increasing turnover) by progressively introducing more professional and motivated staff, in line with corporate growth.

Tarmac Building Products Ltd

Financial Controller – 1981 – 1984

- Resolved problems in the South African subsidiary company, reorganised the finance function, and recruited a replacement Finance Director.
- Strengthened the quality and presentation of financial advice and reporting, covering five operating companies.
- Restored financial management credibility to the group, helped appraise and formulate strategy, including acquisitions and disposals.

1971 – 1981

- Commenced accountancy training (qualifying in 1976) and was appointed to progressively more senior positions within ICI, Rockwell Automation, British Engines, Wilkinson Sword and Turner & Newall.