



John Playfair

Senior Partner

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 [John Playfair](#)

Introduction

Following a career in financial and general management within large corporates, John founded Playfair Partnerships in 1992 to provide cost-effective business turnaround and strategic financial management services to the SME sector, giving owner-managers access to a range of skills, previously unavailable to them.

John has a strong track record in turning around businesses in financial difficulty, and his first assignment was helping a family-owned broad-ranging business by leading the discussions with their bank to agree a strategy of debt management and then work with the management team to reorganise, rehabilitate and refinance the business to give it a healthy future. Since then John has completed over 50 successful assignments and is a firm believer in working in partnership - both within the team at Playfair and with the clients, to achieve the best result. This is why Playfair Partnerships have developed a proactive and integrated outsourced approach, which allows clients affordable access to both the level and volume of resources they need at the right time.

John has wide-ranging industry experience including the legal, construction, property rental, manufacturing and engineering sectors, professional services, as well as retail, warehousing and distribution. He also has significant experience in working with family businesses and has lectured on the subject. He is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and a Member of the Institute for Turnaround.

Playfair Partnerships' broad integrated services incorporate full business turnaround together with strategic and financial management on behalf of their clients. Playfair also work with Banks and other funding institutions to review business performance and undertake profit and cash forecasts jointly for clients and funders.

John is now senior partner of the firm, overseeing the strategy and leading the major assignments. As part of this role, he also acts in both executive and non-executive director roles for owner-managed businesses.

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 turnover and a six-fold increase in profit.

Client Quote

John walked into a hornet's nest of business problems that had hitherto seemed insoluble. He took decisive action to unravel a complex family shareholding structure, had the courage to implement difficult and unpopular strategic decisions, and the energy and dedication to find workable solutions. Thanks to John's business experience, financial acumen and long-term vision, the business is now streamlined, debt-free and profitable.

Director & Shareholder
Family Business

Business Summary

- 1971-1992** Commenced accountancy career and was appointed to progressively more senior roles, culminating in Finance Director role in Davis Service Group.
- 1981** Seconded to South African business to resolve trading, financial and exchange control issues.
- 1991** Recruited to undertake float of independent photocopier/leasing operation.
- 1992** Formed Playfair Partnerships.

Playfair Partnerships - Recent Assignments

- 2021** Awarded SME Turnaround of the year for our successful turnaround of a family-owned lingerie, leisure & swimwear brand management business.
- 2021** Commended by judges for our work in the turnaround of a family-owned manufacturing/wholesaler/retailer with significant financial and operational problems.
- 2021** Returned to profitability and exited from Bank support of an independent up-market shooting school.
- 2021** Continued to expand our financial management services client base, providing financial management & control and strategic advice across a range of business sectors.
- 2020** Completed 10 Covid-19 refinancing projects.
- 2019** Undertook numerous financial management projects including untangling poor financial management and assessing business prospects on behalf of major bank of a highly geared independent healthcare provider.
- 2019** Undertook financial review of clinical negligence law firm, summarising and explaining financial performance; create a new financial strategy and gain significant new funds to aid growth.
- 2018** Completed turnaround of manufacturer/installer of window products in the construction industry and effected share buy-backs for multiple £m's.
- 2017** Completed turnaround of specialist services building contractor, by restructure of business, elimination of significant debt and subsequent reorganisation of shareholding, culminating in profitable ongoing business.
- 2017** Commenced turnaround assignment in construction supply business with significant financial and operational problem.