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PARTNERS

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SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

IN THE TIC INDUSTRY

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CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND AND HOW YOU GOT STARTED IN THE TIC SECTOR?

My journey into the TIC sector began in the most ironic way possible. Picture this: I'm in university, stuck in a lecture about ISO 9001 and the certification process, and the lecturer, an aircraft engineer, was doing his best to make it sound interesting. Meanwhile, the other 129 students in the room were perfecting the art of napping. I remember thinking, "This has to be the most boring job ever—who would want to do this?" Fast forward a few years, and, surprise! I was doing that exact job and loving it.

I started out in Aerospace Engineering, which I still use today when auditing in the aerospace sector. My TIC adventure really kicked off at IMS International. I walked in one day as a temp to answer phones—just for a day. It was a tiny Certification Body with about 30 clients and two employees, both conveniently out of the office. To keep me from dying of boredom, they asked me to compile some contact info for a mail merge. Being pretty handy with a computer, I knocked it out quickly. The owner was impressed, and what was supposed to be a one-day gig turned into years—and eventually, I became part-owner of the company.

From there, I dove headfirst into ISO 9001, starting with scheduling, then certificate generation, and basically anything that needed doing. It was the classic small-business story—everyone pitches in, you learn on the job, and somehow, you come out on top. Graham O'Geran, who later generously gave me shares in the company, played a huge part in my development, for which I'm forever grateful.



OUR MOTTO, "GOING FURTHER," IS A CONSTANT REMINDER TO PUSH OURSELVES, WHETHER THAT'S INTERNALLY OR IN HOW WE SERVE OUR CLIENTS.

In 2014, we sold the business, and I stayed on as CEO. We took the company global, opening offices in China, Italy, Germany, the USA, and South Africa. The business was sold again in 2018, and in late 2021, I joined Auva Certification. Once again, I teamed up with Graham O'Geran, and many of our old IMS colleagues have joined us. We've even dabbled in operating an Inspection Body for toys which was also a notified body.

CAN YOU SHARE WITH US A SPECIFIC PROJECT OR ACCOMPLISHMENT THAT YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF AND WHY?

One of the feathers in Auva's cap is obtaining our UKAS Accreditation in August 2019, and most recently, achieving accreditation to AS9104, allowing us to offer certification to AS9100 and AS9120. And here's the kicker—we did it all in just six months. We might be a small certification body, but we're definitely punching above our weight. I'm particularly proud because not only have we achieved so much more than many of our competitors, but we've also built a strong brand reputation. We're like the little engine that could—but with a lot more paperwork.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST FACTOR AFFECTING THE TIC INDUSTRY AT THE MOMENT?

The biggest factor impacting the TIC industry right now is the digital revolution—specifically, the rise of Artificial Intelligence and information security. AI is changing the game for our clients, which means our auditors need to be as savvy with tech as they are with traditional auditing. Gone are the days when knowing your way around a machine shop was enough to conduct an audit. Now, you need a working knowledge of IT, security, and AI tools.

We also have to be careful with our own use of these technologies. Every certification and inspection body is diving into AI, but if we're not careful, we'll end up with the old "garbage in, garbage out" scenario. The AI models we use must be built on clean, robust data to ensure valid results. Otherwise, we're just spinning our wheels—albeit very high-tech wheels.



IT'S NOT ALWAYS EASY TO FIND PEOPLE WHO FIT WELL WITH THE COMPANY CULTURE, BUT WHEN YOU DO, IT'S LIKE FINDING THAT ELUSIVE PERFECT CUP OF COFFEE.

LOOK AFTER YOUR TEAM, AND YOUR TEAM WILL LOOK AFTER YOUR CLIENTS.

CAN YOU SPEAK OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES YOU HAVE FACED IN YOUR CAREER AND HOW YOU OVERCAME THEM?

The biggest challenges I've faced usually come down to one thing: resources—or, more accurately, the lack of them. Running a small business means you're always battling larger competitors with deeper pockets and more employees. It's like David vs. Goliath, but with spreadsheets. This forces you to get creative, streamline processes, and cut costs wherever possible.

A prime example is the recent launch of our own bespoke ERP system. Back in the IMS days, we needed four admin staff to handle our client volume; now, with our new system, we manage the same volume with just one person. The lesson here? Don't just throw more people at a problem—that's a one-way ticket to increased costs and complexity. Instead, focus on efficiency. Our motto, "Going Further," is a constant reminder to push ourselves, whether that's internally or in how we serve our clients.

One of the more complex challenges we tackled was opening an office in China and making it a critical location—where they handle their own certifications and decisions. It's a tricky process in any country, but China presented a whole new level of complexity due to cultural differences. Employee turnover was high, making it difficult to maintain consistency and quality. The key takeaway? Meticulous planning and constant monitoring. And, of course, being very careful with translations—because you don't want to accidentally approve a "frying pan" instead of a "flying plan."

WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AND TEAM MANAGEMENT?

This is a tricky one, mostly because my leadership style is pretty instinctual—sort of like my knack for picking the fastest-moving queue at the supermarket. I believe in finding and investing in the right people. If you've got the right vision and a team that shares it, you're halfway to success. I'm incredibly fortunate to have a passionate team around me. We get excited about every win, no matter how big or small.

I don't believe in micromanaging. Need time off for something personal? Go for it. Need to come in late or leave early? No problem. We trust our team to get the job done, and they do. Regular catch-ups aren't just about business; they're about checking in on each other personally too. It's not always easy to find people who fit well with the company culture, but when you do, it's like finding that elusive perfect cup of coffee—it just makes everything better.

Look after your team, and your team will look after your clients.



HOW DO YOU SPEND TIME OUTSIDE OF WORK?

I'm a keen runner, logging miles six days a week, always with a race on the horizon. Running is my therapy; it clears my mind and sets me up for the day. Everyone needs a way to blow off steam, and for me, it's pounding the pavement. It helps me stay focused, and let's be honest, it's better than taking out work stress on colleagues or family!

Running also feeds my perfectionist side. There's always something I could have done better in a race—better pacing, better nutrition, stronger legs, better weather (okay, maybe not that last one). It's a constant learning process, which I love.

IN 3 WORDS ONLY - WHAT IS THE SECRET TO YOUR SUCCESS?

RELATIONSHIPS
CARING
HELPFUL

HOW DO YOU PRIORITIZE AND MANAGE YOUR WORKLOAD TO ENSURE SUCCESS?

I'll admit, managing my workload is something I've struggled with, and it's taken years of practice to get where I am—and I'm still not 100% there. My main issue is that I like to know everything, not in detail, but enough to assess and support the process. So, when a new project comes along, I dive in, but once it's rolling, I pass the baton to someone else to take it to the next level.

Delegation is something I've become quite good at—mainly because I've had to be. If you want to grow a business, you can't do everything yourself. I focus on what only I can do and delegate the rest. It's a constant balancing act, but it's the only way to keep the wheels turning.