

**Alan Carter,**  
Founder of QA International  
Certification Limited (QAICL)  
United Kingdom

# SUCCESSFUL LEADERS

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IN THE TIC INDUSTRY

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FOUNDER OF QA INTERNATIONAL  
CERTIFICATION LIMITED (QAICL)

“**K**now your subject,” says Alan Carter, founder of QA International Certification Limited (QAICL) and a successful leader in the TIC industry. In this interview with Red Swan, he shares insights into his career and the challenges facing the industry sector.

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

I began my career in the early 80's as an Electrical Inspector, and later moved into Commissioning of offshore production facilities in Gas and petrochemicals. As I gained professional qualifications and registrations with various Professional Institutions, I progressed from Inspection through Quality Control in the Construction and Manufacturing sectors. By the late 80's, I had roles and responsibilities as a special projects manager for FMEA, FMCG product development, and waste reduction with a Laboratory for testing under BEAB conditions. After spending several years in Quality Assurance in the Nuclear and Defence Industries, I set up QA International Certification Limited (QAICL) in 1992 with a financial partner.



ALAN CARTER POLICE SERGEANT @BBC'S WATERLOO ROAD AND SHED PRODUCTIONS

**“ I HAVE FACED MANY CHALLENGES IN MY CAREER, FOR EXAMPLE I WAS A TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVE IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES AND SAT AROUND THE TABLE WITH CONTROVERSIAL IAN MACGREGOR AS HE DISMANTLED THE BRITISH STEEL CORPORATION. ”**

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

I have faced numerous challenges throughout my life, including being paralyzed from the neck downwards when I was in my early teens. However, I soldiered on with schooling, with the help of my parents and brother, and recovered after 12 months. In my career, I was a Trade Union Representative in the early eighties and sat around the table with controversial Ian MacGregor as he dismantled the British Steel Corporation. It was a tough time fighting to retain jobs and workers' rights. Whilst setting up QAICL, I also had to find time to restructure SARTOR with the Engineering Council, nominated by the Institution of Plant Engineers. This was delicate work and involved several debates and diplomatic discussions. Apart from setting up a global business from scratch with no capital, my biggest challenge was getting out of Turkey in one piece, after being shot at during the coup of 2016. We managed to escape the country on the last two airplane tickets left, and I was grateful to my co-director Ann for her support.

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

As the Branch Chairman and Director on Council of the Institution of Plant Engineers, I was proud to work alongside other organisations and Marjorie (Mo) Mowlem MP for the Women into Science and Engineering (WISE) campaign. We developed initiatives such as providing funding for school buses for girls, so they could explore computing, engineering, and other science-based areas. I have seen the progress of the campaign in producing our modern engineers and surveyors, and of course registered technicians. Mo Mowlem was a fantastic lady and such an inspiration to us all.

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

I think the biggest factor facing the TIC industry is the same as any other industry under current trading conditions. We have political unrest on the global stage, rising costs domestically and internationally, and a planet that needs targeted interventions by everyone to ensure the survival of ourselves and future generations. As a crucial part of the regulatory and compliance framework, the TIC sector needs to adapt as industries adapt. The TIC sector needs to be aware that digitalisation presents both opportunities and threats, CABs need to prepare for rapid shifts in the market from emergent technologies presented by Industry 4.0 and 5.0 through to sustainability governance.

## HOW DO YOU SPEND TIME OUTSIDE OF WORK?

I am a keen photographer and also a professionally registered actor, so I get involved in stock photography, acting in TV and films and some presenting, and I have appeared as a guest speaker from time to time.

## IN THREE WORDS ONLY, WHAT IS THE SECRET TO YOUR SUCCESS?

**KNOW YOUR SUBJECT.**



ALAN CARTER TALENT JUDGE WITH KELSEY GILL ©DJW TALENT



***I TRY TO FOSTER AN INTRAPRENEURIAL SPIRIT WITHIN MY TEAM. I WANT EVERYONE TO FEEL LIKE THEY ARE A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER.***

## WHAT IS YOUR APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP AND TEAM MANAGEMENT?

When it comes to leadership and team management, I believe that it's important to be aware of your own strengths and weaknesses. For me, I'm primarily a 'Plant' on the Belbin scale, which means I have a lot of ideas and tend to see the bigger picture. However, I also know that I'm not particularly good at concentrating on minute details. That's why I look for complete finishers in my management team - people who are good at details and can take my outline forward," explains Alan. "I try to foster an intrapreneurial spirit within my team. I want everyone to feel like they are a part of something bigger and that we're all working together towards the same goals. I think it's important to capture emergent skills and strategies, so that we're always adapting to changes in the industry and staying ahead of the curve," he continues.

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

I believe in time management and the importance of planning to ensure success. A good friend of mine once told me in my younger years, that if you fail to plan then plan to fail. This has been an underlying and recurring theme and a lesson well practiced.