**Thomas Bridge LLB ( BA (HONS ) LAW )**

**PERSONAL STATEMENT**

I am a senior and experienced qualified lawyer who has for many years been responsible for the operational and strategic management of a large property and private client section of a top 200 law firm .

An ability to develop strategies for business development , implementation of new sources of work and improvement to existing service level delivery are amongst my key skills.

I have been responsible for the development of business plans and budgets and the subsequent delivery against those for many years in my role as a Managing Partner .

I have been a member of the management committee of the Conveyancing Association which is an organization representing 50+ of the top Conveyancing firms in the country .

**EXPERIENCE**

**June 2018 to Present – Sort Legal Limited**

I was recruited to replace the previous Head of Legal Practice who had been dismissed following a referral to the Council of Licensed Conveyancers who had suspended the firm from taking in any further new work.

I have completely reorganised the law firm including the following :

Implementation of technical testing for all staff members .

Amendment of job descriptions for all staff.

Introduction of core competencies for all staff roles

Implementation of a new team structure and line management structure.

Implementation of technical testing and revised recruitment process for all new recruitment

In addition, the following work was undertaken :

A full file review audit of previous completed files was conducted which resulted in several potential claims being reported to PII insurers.

Introduction of a new case management system including integrated accounts software in place of the existing systems

Revised processes for both transactional sale and purchase work and high-volume remortgage work

Obtained membership of LMS / Lender Exchange and a number of lender panels not previously obtained

By October 2018 the firm passed a follow up CLC audit with a clean bill of health .

In November 2018 we set up and ran an academy style training scheme for remortgage work which takes graduates through a two-week intensive class room based course teaching them the basics of how to run a remortgage file . 7 academy graduates are now running remortgage caseloads and we are due to run another round of academy training in March 2019 .

As of March 2019 , Sort Legal Limited has been accepted as a member of the Conveyancing Association and currently opens approximately 175 new files per week from a standing start of zero in June 2018. The transactional team works to an average pipeline conversion of 3 – 4 months and remortgage team to a pipeline conversion of two months maximum.

**June 2016 – May 2018– Keoghs LLP**

I joined Keoghs in June 2016 as Director of Conveyancing and was recruited to establish a new conveyancing department for the firm which had not undertaken this work for some years .

I was responsible for setting up the new conveyancing department including :

Setting up department / team structures

Drafting job descriptions / specification / competencies

Drafting department policies and processes

Recruitment and training of staff into teams – approximately 25 staff members

Establishing a working fully functioning case management system including an integrated accounts package and client portal by busing Redbrick Solutions system

Establishing a fully functioning quote calculator/ conversion tool to provide private clients with fully inclusive quotes

Gaining membership of all major lending panels

Gaining acceptance by Lender Exchange for which I am the administrator

Gaining accreditation by the Law Society under the CQS scheme for which I am currently Senior Responsible Officer

Secured contracts with several large panel management companies including LSL , MoveWithUs and MyHomeMove .

Managed and supervised compliance with service level agreements for all introducers of work

Department had grown to circa £1M plus pa turnover within 18 months of trading

Received an award at the 2017 Law Firm Services Conveyancing Conference as highly commended in the North West Conveyancing firm of the year category. This award includes mystery shopping exercises and client feedback on service delivered.

**1993 to 2016 - Stephensons Solicitors LLP.**

2013 -2016 - Managing Partner of Conveyancing & Probate Department nationally .

I was responsible for the management of a large department over a number of sites with responsibility for a total of approximately 70 staff including direct and indirect supervision of 10 managers.

I was the Senior Responsible Office for the Firm’s Conveyancing Quality Scheme (CQS) since 2011 and have overseen several re-accreditations by the Law Society.

During this period, I established a new office in London which grew from myself and an assistant to over 25 staff with a turnover in excess of **£1.2M**.

The department I managed had an overall current annual budget of £**3.9M** ( **£3.1M** Conveyancing / **£800k** Probate ) which amounted to approximately **20%** of the Firm’s annual turnover .

Key Achievements:

* Development of property and probate departments across multiple sites nationally
* Delivery of business plans and budgets showing year on year growth
* Development of additional sources of work in additional to traditional law firm routes to market
* Development of case management systems to enable processing of sources of work

Key Skills Gained:

**.**  Understanding of the key aspects of the probate and property markets nationally

* Ability to deliver business plans and budgets
* Ability to bring together teams of individuals to deliver results identified within business plans

2006 – 2013 – Managing Partner of Conveyancing & Probate Department in North West

I took over the responsibility for the entire department from the founding Partner of the Firm .

During this period the Conveyancing teams experienced growth across the board and also retraction due to the global financial crisis which required a scaling back of that part of the department . Latterly in this period the Conveyancing teams again grew across the region to produce over **£1.5 M** pa in income .

The Probate team grew from a very small team in one location to a much larger centralized team servicing several office across the region. The income of the team grew to **£400k pa.**

2003 – 2006 – Partner in Conveyancing Department in North West

I moved departments within the Firm in order to facilitate succession planning and assist in the growth of a department that was identified as having growth potential.

I completely retrained myself within 6 months and thereafter was responsible for management of my own case load of Conveyancing files and the transactional section of the department .

During this time, I grew the size of the section by not only establishing new local contacts but also introducing new sources of referred transactional work into the Firm .

I was responsible for the section growing from two small transactional teams to a much larger section of up to six teams dealing with different sources of work .

New case management processes were introduced into the section to improve efficiencies and mover the section away from more traditional methods of working .

1999 - 2003 – Managing Partner Crime Department

During this time, I was responsible for the management and supervision of the entire department across the north west region.

I implemented new systems and processes for the criminal legal aid franchises implemented by the Legal Services Commission.

I was responsible for the opening of new offices in both Salford and Bolton . The Salford office has since been moved into Manchester and currently has approximately 30 staff . The Bolton office has moved to other premises and now has approximately 15 staff .

1993- 1999 – Partner Crime Department

When I joined Stephensons I specialist as a criminal solicitor working out of the Wigan office .

Together with two other Partners I assisted in the growth of the department to be the biggest criminal firm in the town and one of the largest in the North West region . We acted for clients locally , regionally and nationally .

**1983 to 1992 - Rhodes & Swalwell Solicitors**

1988 – 1992 - Partner

During this time, I assisted in the opening and management of a small branch office as well as acting for clients in a full range of general practice matters.

1986- 1988- Solicitor

After qualification I undertook a wide range of work across general practice acting for a variety of clients.

1983-1986- Trainee Solicitor

During this period, I undertook training in a wide variety of general practice areas under the supervision of the two senior partners of the Firm.

Key Achievements :

* Joined firm after solicitors final exams , trained with Principals and remained with the firm reaching Partner level
* Gained a good grounding in general practice including private client and probate

Key Skills Gained :

Ability to deal with a full cross section of society across a variety of practice areas

Development of skills required to assist in the running of a small local law firm

**EDUCATION**

* Law Society Solicitors Final Exams - 1982-1983
* Leicester University - BA ( Hons ) Law Degree -1979 - 1982
* Mesnes High School Wigan - 1975-1979 - 9 O levels and 3 A Levels

**PERSONAL INTERESTS**

Married with three adult sons. My interests outside of work include playing golf, going to the gym as often as reasonably possible and watching sport particularly football and rugby.

I enjoy travelling abroad and have a property in Spain which is used regularly by all of my family including golf breaks when possible.

**CONTACT DETAILS**

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**REFERENCES**

References are available on request