**Damien Ghee (BSc Hons)**

**Warrington, Cheshire**

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**PROFILE**

A proven Non-Executive Director with over 25 years in senior board level positions across a range of industries. Damien brings a wealth of experience, strategic insight and board level mastery; having worked amongst some of the UK's largest family SME businesses and leading blue-chip global corporations in both industry and management consulting.

Experience in creating strategic vision for both large, global, complex businesses & organisations, and UK SMEs, driving results through operational delivery and cultural sensitivity. Skilful with people, developing trust and credibility across all stakeholders. A naturally empathetic and decidedly visible leader who can translate strategic vision into operational delivery, taking responsibility for the broadest of perspectives in order to identify potential blind spots. Adaptable and flexible style, able to adjust to different group dynamics to deliver a favourable bottom line.

Damien is developing a portfolio of Non-Executive and advisory positions, using his extensive business knowledge and transferrable skill set. With his proven ability to see the ‘bigger picture’ and take a pragmatic approach to issues and challenges, Damien would be a truly valuable member to Non-Executive boards.

* Brings knowledge and transferrable skills to multiple industries and sectors (including consumer goods, manufacturing, hospitality, logistics and IT), enabling him to understand, advise, support and challenge the board on a range of issues:
* Development and delivery of business strategy, including risk management
* Programme, portfolio, project and organisational change management of both business growth & innovation (including new service and product development, new sales channels such as Export, through business start-up, partnerships and M&A) and organisational transformation projects
* Efficiency and effectiveness improvement across business operations at all levels of a company
* Use of technology such as ERP, CRM and e-commerce to transform business and operations
* Building of high performing teams, coaching and mentoring of both individuals and businesses
* Builds engaging and effective relationships, recognising the need for, and facilitating, collaboration between board and business

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**KEY SOFT SKILLS**

* Leads big picture, longer term thinking in the organisation with strong facilitation and collaboration skills, acting as a catalyst to the executive team
* With self-awareness and self-belief, a confident leader who is quick to build trust when working with teams and business leaders from different functional disciplines and backgrounds
* A conscientious, self-starter who relishes taking on and successfully developing new roles and building high performing teams
* Well-developed influencing skills to achieve business objectives through shareholders, board members, executive management and teams
* Whilst delivering process and detail using data and information as a preferred communication style also uses humour and warmth to help build strong relationships and keep the audience engaged
* Challenges and holds people to account for successful delivery
* Strong analytical skills and creative problem-solver
* Clearly structures complex, ambiguous and potentially ‘charged’ business issues for the executive team
* Inquisitive, identifying and developing new business opportunities, embracing change and innovation, whilst leveraging strong networking and relationship building
* High degrees of personal integrity and personal resilience
* Strong sense of cultural awareness developed during significant time working outside of the UK
* Hunger to gain new knowledge and skills to develop own competence further

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**BOARD-LEVEL EXPERIENCE**

* Non-Executive Director and statutory director of Bako North Western Group Ltd
* Board member and statutory director of The Campden BRI Group
* As Director of New Enterprise Innovation worked with both the CEO, Group Board and Shareholders of Bettys & Taylors Group to develop a Group growth strategy including agreement of investment parameters and a governance model for new business development activity. Had P&L responsibility for new business developments
* Board of Trustees member and statutory director of Age UK Blackpool & District
* As New Business Development and Strategy Director worked with the Business Management Board, Main Board and Shareholders of Warburtons Ltd to develop and monitor business strategy including management of strategic risks. Had P&L responsibility for new business developments. Also worked with Board-level stakeholders to define and implement a business-driven IT strategy
* As a member of Unilever Global Infrastructure Organisation Europe’s management board responsible for technical resourcing of the transition programmes to insource IT services and for the deployment of new technology in over 80 Unilever H&PC and Foods division subsidiaries

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**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**BAKO North Western (Group) Ltd 2019 - Present**

BAKO North Western was launched over 50 years ago as a regional buying co-operative for craft bakers to secure bakery ingredients. Headquartered in Preston, with depots also in Durham and London, its combined purchasing power, logistics and resources make it one of the largest nationwide delivered wholesale distributors to the food industry, offering a range of ambient, chilled and frozen products from the same delivery vehicle.

**NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Appointed as an independent director with sector experience, to complement the Board made up of shareholder directors and independent directors with finance and HR experience.

* Appointed to the Risk Committee
* Established and appointed to the ERP Steering Group

**Grant Thornton UK LLP 2018 - Present**

Grant Thornton’s Growth 365 is a tailored service for ambitious CEOs and leaders of mid-sized businesses. It focuses on key business activities agreed with the client and aligned to the needs of their business – all provided by an experienced team of growth advisers, technical specialists and analysts

**GROWTH ADVISER**

As an associate Growth Adviser, I currently support a diverse portfolio of businesses with turnovers between £10m and £230m. I provide help ranging from executive coaching; helping owners, boards and leadership teams to define ambition, vision, purpose, growth priorities, value propositions, market entry, marketing & sales strategies; funding and acquisition; improving management effectiveness; supporting internal innovation, to improving employee engagement and organisation design for business scale-up.

**Strategy Return Ltd 2017- Present**

I created Strategy Return Ltd to help businesses achieve their visions and ambitions through the development and execution of successful growth strategies.

**MANAGING DIRECTOR**

* Supported the MD and management team of a Liverpool-based logistics business (which is part of a family-owned, £1b+ diverse global business) with the development of a business turnaround strategy and subsequent delivery of a transformation programme, including interim IT management support to the Exec Board
* Supported a Cheshire-based bakery business to develop and execute an export strategy for their sweet biscuit range (which included ROI and Mainland Europe); designed & delivered product innovation workshops; supported the Board with the development of a new business strategy, including identification of M&A targets
* Supported the management team of a Greater Manchester-based bakery development and import business in the creation and monitoring of a 3-year plan to deliver shareholder ambition
* Currently working as a pro-bono business mentor to the founders of a UK-based, branded children’s hydration start-up business; Lancashire-based branded, plant-based protein, prepared food business; London-based Greek olive oil import business and a Leeds-based CIC whose purpose is to deliver mental health first aid training to coffee shop employees

**The Campden-BRI Group 2015 - 2017**

Industry owned provider to food and drink industry of scientific, technical and advisory services, generating over £24m income.

**BOARD MEMBER**

Appointed to represent the views of the fee-paying members of Campden BRI during a period of financial challenge to the organisation from cuts to UK and EU research funding and pension deficits.

Responsibilities:

* Worked with the Chief Executive and Operational Management to set the business strategy including input to decisions on acquisition and approval of business plans and budgets
* Reviewed business and financial performance of the Group and approval of major capital investments including equipment and property
* Reviewed operational performance of the Group including health & safety and efficacy of member funded research programmes

Achievements:

* Facilitated review and development of new 3-year strategic plan with the Chief Executive and Operational Management team to grow revenues by 10%. Plan identified 5 areas of strategic skills development to invest in, to drive future growth outside of the existing core skills

**Bettys & Taylors Group Ltd 2015 - 2017**

*Yorkshire-based family business founded in 1919. Generating over £175m in revenue, it consists of Bettys Café Tea Rooms and Taylors which blends Yorkshire Tea the second best-selling tea in the UK, as well as Taylors of Harrogate market leading roast and ground coffees and a range of speciality teas.*

**DIRECTOR OF NEW ENTERPRISE INNOVATION**

Recruited to transform Bettys & Taylors approach to new business innovation through the creation and leadership of a team of ‘intrapreneurs’ tasked with delivering new and prosperous business streams for the Group.

Responsibilities:

* Recruitment, development and leadership of a six-strong, cross-functional, business innovation team and the design and implementation of new processes and tools (including business model canvas, lean start-up, visible project management) to support the delivery of the team’s objectives
* Ensuring the short- and long-term strategic thinking, practice and governance of the team’s work from horizon scanning, feasibility, design, pilot build through to scale-up
* Leading the development and project management of new opportunities in food and drink products and services, licensing, joint ventures and strategic investment and acquisition

Achievements:

* Created and presented a values-aligned Group growth strategy including agreement of investment parameters to define whether an opportunity was appropriate tor for the business to progress with the Group Board and Shareholders
* Creation and of a detailed design (including governance and operating model) for a branded, quick service restaurant (QSR) business capable of generating £10m+ revenue/£1m+ operating profit. Successfully progressed ready for pilot launch at a total of six, high-footfall sites across the UK using an outsource-based operating model. Partnered with a property start-up
* Creation of a concept design for a branded, super premium, direct to consumer business, including the development of a new cloud-based e-commerce platform capable of generating £5m+ revenue/£1m operating profit

**Age UK Blackpool & District 2014 - 2015**

*Age UK is the country's largest charity dedicated to helping everyone make the most of later life. Blackpool & District generated over £0.5m income.*

**TRUSTEE**

Brought in to provide Trustees, CEO and management team with strategic and commercial thinking during a period of extreme financial pressure from a rise in demand for charitable services, whilst the charity’s income source changed from financial legacies to retail, financial services, short-term funded and fee-based personal care services.

Responsibilities:

* Worked with the Chief Executive and Management team to set the business strategy, business plan and budgets
* Reviewed management accounts, revenue forecasts, cash-flows, restructuring and cost reduction initiatives with Chief Executive and Finance Director
* Reviewed operational performance including health & safety, HR, policies & procedures and Age UK Brand Partner quality standards

Achievements:

* Reviewed retail operations, leading to a decision to close one outlet
* Facilitated review and development of a new 3-year strategic plan with the Chief Executive. Identified necessity for the organisation to merge with other Age UK districts to secure a long-term future through lowering back-office overheads

**Warburtons Ltd 2005 - 2015**

*UK’s largest family-owned bakery business, producing over 2 million branded bread and bakery products daily. With annual sales revenues of over £660m, Warburtons is the second most valuable brand within the UK grocery sector and has a 26% share of the UK wrapped bakery market.*

**NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & STRATEGY DIRECTOR 2010 - 2015**

Selected to take on newly created role to develop Warburtons long term strategy and deliver growth strategies outside of its core UK bakery market though the leadership and development of a small, influential strategy and growth team.

Responsibilities:

* Between 2008 and 2015 owned and managed the strategic planning that took Warburtons to the position of the UK’s favourite grocery brand
* Recruitment, development and leadership of a Programme Management Office to support business delivery of strategy, including portfolio management; definition, target setting and measurement of leading and lagging strategic KPIs and post-implementation benefits and investment analysis
* Identified, analysed, prioritised and developed options to deliver potential market opportunities and acquisition targets
* Conducted detailed business planning and managed the start-up of new growth opportunities, through internal start-up of new product ranges; third party manufacturing; licensee and licensor agreements; joint ventures; acquisitions; the development of new sales channels and management of site divestments
* Established a process to manage strategic risk and monitor and create insight into competitor activity

Achievements:

* Managed the creation and delivery of the 5- and 10-year strategic plans which identified how Warburtons would both differentiate itself within UK bakery and how it would diversify outside of bakery to meet executive management and shareholder objectives
* Created Warburtons international strategy including the start-up of an export function with export trials to international retailers in Central Europe and France, and with distributors in Spain. Full P&L responsibility for International business. Winner of the Insider North West magazine “Export team of the year” for 2012. Also represented Food Manufacturers on the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce International Committee and Pro-Manchester Food & Drink Group
* Identified and managed the acquisition of Giles Foods – the first acquisition by Warburtons in over 25 years. Responsible for the business integration planning and monitoring post-acquisition

**IT & PROGRAMME DIRECTOR 2005 - 2010**

Brought in to re-energise Warburtons IT department. An in-house team of 31, complemented by services from partners, providing 24x7 support for the business. It had an operating budget of £6.5m and a capital investment budget of £3.5m, whilst directly supporting 2,400 users across 30+ sites

**SAP (UK) Ltd GLOBAL CONSULTING MANAGER CONSUMER PRODUCTS 2004 - 2005**

**Unilever GIO IT DIRECTOR GTS EUROPE 2001 - 2003**

**Deloitte Consulting SENIOR MANAGER TECHNOLOGY/CONSUMER BUSINESS 1996 - 2001**

**ICI Systems Ltd SENIOR BUSINESS ANALYST 1989 - 1995**

**Aston University STUDENT 1986 - 1989**

**Plymouth Poly STUDENT 1985 - 1986**

 **MERCHANT NAVY OFFICER 1981 - 1985**

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**EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

* The Coaching Academy Level 1 Certified DISC Personality Profiling Workshop (2019)
* Association of Business Mentors Level 1 Fundamentals of Business Mentoring (2019)
* Affiliate Member of the Association of Business Mentors (2018)
* Oasis School of Human Relations Enabling Leader (2017)
* Jon Hammond Presentation Master Class (2016)
* NCVO – Charity Trustee Induction (2014)
* London School of Business – Finance for Senior Managers (2014)
* Ashridge Business School Making Successful Acquisitions course (2010) and Strategic Decisions course (2009)
* Awarded Chartered IT Professional status with the British Computer Society (2008)
* Diploma from Oxford Said Business School/Gartner Global CIO Academy (2008)
* Warburtons Coaching for Performance course (2008) and Warburtons Mentoring course (2007)
* B.Sc. (First Class Hons.), Transport and Logistics Management, Aston University (1989)