

Andrew Forster – Career History

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Personal Summary

I am a multi-skilled, highly motivated and creative individual that welcomes a challenge. I always deliver results and enjoy solving complex problems. My experience in media and working across many sectors with all types of businesses has provided me with sound business sense and the commercial aptitude to drive forward any project or business to achieve high levels of success. I believe that people are our most important resource and as a result have developed excellent man-management skills to motivate and inspire any team ensuring the business in which they work benefits from them exceeding their goals.

10 Career Highlights

1. Involved with the launch of over 30 mixed market magazines (from cross-stitch to guitars / mountain bikes to koi keeping!)
2. Started my first business with the first free distribution property led lifestyle magazine for a city outside of London (Bath Life)
3. Designed the concept for, and delivered Bath's largest mass participation sporting event in the history of the city (Queen Square Skating – an ice-rink in a Georgian square in the centre of the City of Bath)
4. Sold my first business to my old employer – enabling me to have 8 months with my 4 children before they started school
5. Helped to develop the sales processes around the 12 box framework at the FD Centre successfully bringing on 7 clients a month consistently over a period of 18 months
6. Started a media businesses in Cornwall; with no contacts, minimal funding and a team of people I didn't know before
7. Member of Vistage (www.vistage.co.uk) for 2 years – seeing key note speakers like Prof Steve Peters + Philip Hesketh
8. Getting my business self running through implementation of the key-learning at Vistage
9. Achieved Dive-Master qualification and worked as a volunteer at my local dive centre
10. Raising the sponsorship to fund a dive-project to bring 400 inner city children down to Cornwall to learn to dive

15 Core Skills

- Consultative sales ability – over 25 years
- Creative sales and marketing professional
- Able to quickly excite, engage and inspire clients
- Clear communicator and key influencer
- Professional and articulate
- Excellent written communication
- Highly numerate with good financial understanding and control
- Strategic planner and thinker
- Wide ranging commercial prowess across many disciplines
- Creative problem solver that looks outside the box
- Team player who thrives on others success
- Motivating and inspiration leader and manager
- Good eye for design and detail
- Innovator of ideas and new solutions
- Fun, energetic, flexible and motivated self-starter

References - available on request

Employment History

December 2011 to Present Date Founder & CEO – Leven Media Group (www.levenmediagroup.co.uk)

The launch of Cornwall Living (www.cornwall-living.co.uk) in-print, online, digitally and across social media presented some very real challenges that played to my strengths and put to test all of my experience gained over my 25 year career in media. From a new location where I had no contacts or real understanding of the business landscape to a brand new team of people I had never met or worked with before, oh and an office based in the UK's most southerly port. Despite these issues the business has experienced good growth since conception now employing up to 25 people with a turnover of £1.7million. The growth coming through the launch of Drift (www.drift-cornwall.co.uk) and the creation of additional projects associated to Cornwall Living such as Dogs Love Cornwall and Kids Love Cornwall. We have taken Cornwall living to Bath & Bristol, the Cotswolds, London and Germany and now reach an audience of 4million people per year. Through the business success I have made many commercial-friends and through our unique methodology of read-watch-experience we have enjoyed winning various contracts, web-builds and other media work resulting in the creation of Leven Media Group, a media services business (www.levenmediagrouop.co.uk). Firmly at the helm since the start and for the first 5-6 years I have now handed over to my partner, co founder and managing director who runs the business with a Commercial Director and a heads of department team. My role is more exploratory in new areas, plus enjoying a part-time existence to explore some personal passions – diving and time with the family.

I am ready for a new challenge where I can apply my skills and share my experience!

August 2007 to December 2011 Sales and Marketing Director – The FD Centre

Reason for leaving: relocation to Cornwall

After having enjoyed a short break through the summer with my family, following the successful sale of Surf Media, I set up a new commercial consultancy service business; **Red Flag Media** this provided me with various projects for the first year, resulting in meeting the CEO of The FD Centre and working for them permanently for approximately 3 years...

[The FD Centre on-line: click here](#)

The FD Centre is the market-leading provider of part-time finance directors. Here I brought structure to the marketing department and it's numerous core activities, worked on both referral and marketing agreements with numerous national partners from Vistage, Smith & Williamson and many others to build regional partnerships spanning accountants, lawyers and all the main banks. On the sales side I trained, coached and mentored the Finance Director team, devised and created the sales strategies across the UK and supported 12 regional directors in all of their interactions with potential clients. In addition, I oversaw the design and implementation of a new customer relationship management system (CRM), built a telesales team from scratch and overall added over £1.5million turnover. Finally, I must note what a pleasure it was to work with some of the country's most impressive financial minds, finance directors with experience drawn from the likes of Mars, Tesco, Dell, Laura Ashley, Mothercare and numerous other large successful blue-chip businesses; it really was a fascinating and interesting mix of people that I feel very lucky to of met, learned a lot from and to still be in touch with.

Other contracts and work during my time working at Red Flag Media

- Launching a TV Channel for Caravan Sites in Devon and Cornwall
- Launching a tourism TV channel for Hotels in Bath
- Commercial Consultancy on a market leading Wedding title and website
- Publishing a magazine for Mogers, a local solicitor
- Commercial Sponsorship on events for Robert Craven, Key Note Speaker and FT's entrepreneurship Guru.

May 2002 to April 2007

Managing Director – Surf Media, Bath

Reason for leaving: sale of company

During my time running Surf Media I successfully launched Bath Life; a property led lifestyle magazine, which grew in popularity and whose replicable business model spread across 6 territories. I am proud to say it is still going and is still considered fabric of society. Bath Life was the first free distribution magazine for a city outside of London.

Starting with a team of 2, some hard work and determination to succeed coupled with a good idea and clear vision; Surf Media took on some pace very quickly. Whilst supplementing revenues with various contract work and consultancy jobs in the early days, I was able to establish Bath Life in a very short space of time. Now Bath's most respected magazine, Bath Life is considered part of the "fabric of the city".

The idea of Bath Life owes its success to my expertise in all aspects of media. The ability to present words and pictures, on paper to a specific audience in their language enabled Bath Life to capture the instant imagination of its readers – the true secret to its success. The unique niche-targeting and dedicated distribution of 10,000 copies to properties over £500K in value created a real affinity with the target audience.

Through this magazine/reader relationship Bath Life generated huge responses for its advertisers. By adding stand-alone wedding guides, shopping guides, restaurant guides and business news pages – all related to the Bath Life brand, the revenues grew over the five years from zero to £400K turnover on Bath Life alone.

By rolling out the idea into other towns/cities (Salisbury Life, Clifton Life in Bristol, Wykeham Life in Winchester, Exeter Living and Bournemouth & Poole Living) I fought off many competitors to create a business with a total turnover of £1.7million.

Seeing the potential of the idea, Jane & Greg Ingham (part of the senior management team that took Future Publishing's turnover from £2million to £225million) purchased the company – testament itself to my success in building a solid business consisting of strong magazines. Add to this the various contract publishing work (such as At Home, Jane Austen's Regency World and numerous other mini-magazine ideas produced on contract for various clients) and Surf Media's story proves my ability to perform in many roles across the media spectrum.

May 1997 to May 2002

Advertising Manager rising to Group Manager – Origin Publishing, Bristol

Reason for leaving: to start my own business

Here I worked on a wide range of existing and launch specialist consumer magazines; The World of Cross Stitching to 220 Triathlon and contract magazines for HMV, Waterstones and DHL to name a few. The company was started by Kevin Cox, an ex MD at Future Publishing - he head-hunted 10 media professionals from Future Publishing – I was one of those lucky 10. It grew massively during my five years there. Starting as the only sales person; Advertising Manager of The World of Cross Stitching; I took on more and more responsibility and helped drive the growth of the business. I led the sales and production team across all 15 titles – at the end managing a department of 40 strong. Being involved with such dramatic growth and working alongside two of the most respected media people in the UK I received a wealth of experience in all aspects of media – ultimately giving me the knowledge and confidence to start my own business; Surf Media.

May 1995 to May 1997

Sales Executive rising to Advertising Manager – Future Publishing, Bath

Reason for leaving: head hunted to join Origin Publishing