



Case Study – Tetley GB Ltd.

Hutchinson Interim Manager – Mark Cooper

Assignment – Director of UK Operations



Tetley is owned by Tata Tea, a subsidiary of TATA, the Indian conglomerate that has recently taken over Corus, the British Steel Manufacturer. With Tata Tea, Tetley is the second biggest tea company in the world. Tetley, as well as being the leading tea brand in the UK, has what is believed to be the largest tea manufacturing facility in the world, at Eaglescliffe, near Stockton, on Teesside. Here, hundreds of millions of teabags are produced every week!!

Mark Cooper has been working in Interim Management for over seven years. Starting his career in Engineering Management in Kimberley-Clark and RHM, he moved into Manufacturing Management, then General Management working at Mr. Kipling. After a brief spell in the airline industry at Alpha, based at Heathrow, he moved into Interim Management. In between assignments (!) he also became CIMA Accountancy qualified.

“Personally, I would never have started Interim Management by quitting from a blue-chip career. I was made redundant in a management re-organisation just before all the celebrations around the Year 2000; not a great time to be job hunting! I have no regrets now, Interim is fast-paced and challenging; you are never bored!”

Assignments in the food industry have included sandwiches, pizza, bread, biscuits, meat, seafood, and now beverages!

Interim Managers are accustomed to being thrown in at the deep-end, and this assignment was no exception. The previous incumbent had left 9 months previously, and although the senior team were addressing the key issues, strong leadership and support were needed. Sandra Brown, The Tetley Group Operations Director, had been managing the site from her Head Office base in Greenford, NW London (250 miles away!), but with a significant change programme planned it was important that the team was now led locally.

The assignment started in September '06, initially for 6 months. UK Operations in Tetley terms means the factory at Eaglescliffe (700 people) and a Distribution Centre at nearby Newton Aycliffe. The initial brief was two-fold; ensure the operation met or exceeded the financial budget; and completely re-organise the manufacturing management of the site. The latter was a large investment for the company, with some long serving employees leaving Tetley, and a lot of differently skilled managers joining a rapidly changing business. After months of planning, the changes were announced in January '07, with the different structure effective from April '07. Manufacturing teams now have full accountability for output and their KPIs; Engineers now report into an Area Management structure and these multi-functional teams are motivated more than ever to improve plant performance. Greater site autonomy will also be achieved when the Planning and Customer Fulfilment functions are relocated to Teesside from London by September '07.

The assignment was extended for a further 5 months. During this time, as well as a continuation of the project transition, negotiations regarding wages and certain working practices were successfully led with the Amicus and GMB Unions.

The recruitment of a permanent replacement is underway, with a hand-over hopefully planned mid / late summer '07.

