

company profile

Source One cruises to another landmark success



Just when you thought it could not get any better... it has.

The business world has to celebrate every good news story and ensure it is printed. Let us put the feelgood factor back on the streets, and watch the wheels of commerce gather momentum.

Source One, the office furniture and interiors company, is proof that great products, real people, face-to-face CRM (customer relationship management) and providing service above and beyond your customers' expectations get results that matter.

When Peter Beadles, MD of Colchester-based Reader Offers (www.rolholidays.co.uk) was looking to fit out his circa £1 million, three-storey, newly-refurbished offices at Lexden House, Source One was the company of choice for him.

The 16,100 sq ft of office space is a big investment and must be right first time.

Pat Lewis, founder and managing director of Source One, said: "We were aware of Reader Offers' move from the outset of their decision to relocate.

"We have worked closely with Peter and his team over the past few years during their expansion and have got to know in great detail, how their staff like to work and what's expected of us as a partner.

"However, on a project of this size, it is understandable that we would still be expected to prove that we were both capable and competitive to be considered.

"Of course, we were confident that our past record would be taken into account in the final decision against our competitors. Of course, we were delighted when we were appointed.

"This was one of our larger project wins and I think it proves that if you care for your clients in the early days of your relationship, when perhaps they are expanding, when the time comes, that support is usually repaid.

"It's how we have always worked, it's the only way to work isn't it?"

Reader Offers Ltd (ROL) is one of the largest and fastest-growing independent retailers of cruises in the UK, so moving more than 100 staff from two separate offices in East Hill, Colchester, to their new home in Lexden House needed to be in very competent hands.

It seems the secret to Source One's unique offering is its innate ability to understand from the outset exactly what is required. Big picture planning, coupled with unreserved attention to detail are the foundation. It works with you as part of your team to pull it all together.

Pauline Dempster, ROL facilities manager, said: "It was wonderful to work with Pat. He's such a professional and a real people person.

"He can almost make furniture flexible and fit an office where you'd never think it was possible. He thinks of what you don't think for yourself and works with you until you're absolutely clear.

"Coming back for a re-brief from time to time throughout the life of the project was no problem. We needed a lot of input from Pat to nail what we wanted.

"Reader Offers has grown from 16 staff in 2004 to just over 100 in 2009. The value-for-money aspect of Source One's services means that Pat has sourced the best-fit office furniture, partitioning and storage space to meet our specific needs, and it all looks great.

"He has good contacts and is well-respected among his suppliers. In a word 'professional'."

The planning and design service Source One provides also meant that any CAD changes which Pauline requested were turned around with efficiency and good grace.

What you might expect in a 24-hour turnaround often happened in just 12 hours.

Pauline explained: "I'd come into work, turn on my computer and the changes would be there."

But what about any constructive criticism?

It is all very well extolling the virtues of a supplier, but doesn't everyone benefit from a little 'Kaizen', the Japanese philosophy for continuous improvement?

Did Pauline have anything she wanted to share with Pat for the ongoing development and success of Source One?

Changing expression and rolling her eyes towards her memory bank, Pauline gave this question serious consideration.

"I honestly can't think of anything that needs to be improved (but don't tell Pat!)"

"I outlined the different priorities, stages and timelines of the project; for example finance needed to be moved first, then client services, marketing and specialist sales and finally reservations.

"It's been hard work and together we've put in long days to make it all happen, and we have achieved it.

What's that expression? 'Back of the net'?"

So how does Source One manage the tender process for a job when it knows it is competing with cheaper suppliers?

Pat explained: "Our reputation is very important to us, borne of hard work and a genuine interest in meeting our clients' objectives. I won't compete on price at the expense of quality, and there is always a way to get this message gently across to the client. You just tell the truth."

Oscar Wilde said: "The only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about."

Source One is worth talking about.

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