

ESTABLISHING A PORTFOLIO CAREER

PLATINUM CAREER COACH: MICHAEL MORAN

INTRODUCTION

Steve Secker left McCarthy & Stone after almost 25 years' service; during those years he filled various roles in finance, business development and regional management, including 13 years as Managing Director.

A graduate of Southampton University, he is an MBA qualified Chartered Accountant. Steve was introduced to 10Eighty for a career coaching programme and has shared his journey and learnings with us.

ABOUT STEVE

Steve was a senior executive, his final role was that of Regional Director for McCarthy & Stone properties in the north of England. The company is the UK's leading developer and manager of retirement communities, with a c.70% share of the owner-occupied market. Steve, like most people, devoted most of his energy inside the business, and was not market ready when he found himself displaced as a result of a restructure.

He knew he wanted a lifestyle change, wanted to spend more time at home with his family. Steve also wanted control of where and when he worked so he decided to embark on a portfolio career, using his extensive experience in the housing market.

OUR APPROACH

Working with Michael Moran, CEO of 10Eighty, Steve set about defining his proposition, understanding his values and priorities along with those things which energise him, his talents and where he can add value to an organisation.

Taking this information, Steve put together an elevator pitch which he could take to the marketplace via his network. Steve received support from specialist consultants, Peter Collinson helping him draft a functional CV, and Sarah Burgess 10Eighty's expert in LinkedIn who ensured his web presence was fit for purpose.

Over the following six months Steve spent time investing in his network and getting his message out to the marketplace.

OUTCOMES

Steve began his networking in April 2018 and obtained his first non-executive director role at Ashfield Housing Group in March 2019. Ashfield are a fast-growing quality building contracting serving clients in Yorkshire. Subsequently he became Chairman of Ashfield Homes in January this year. He also became Chair of the York Property Forum, Chamber of Commerce in January 2019.

His second non-executive director role is with the Rail Diary, a role he obtained in April 2019, the same month he became Chair of the York Housing Association. Rail Diary is working to improve the railway construction industry by collecting data to reduce inefficiencies and overspending.



He has also filled NED roles at Johnnie Johnson Housing and Tang Hall Smart CIC, a not-for-profit social enterprise that delivers music/arts clubs and classes to the community, as well as running an electronics workshop and record label.

Having established Secker Taylor Associates Ltd it had always been Steve's intention, alongside his consultancy work, to make mentoring part of his portfolio. He has achieved some limited success in this objective, perhaps due to the function of his success in getting securing non-executive directorships in the housing sector.

MICHAEL MORAN'S COMMENTS

It was a pleasure to work with Steve, he is someone who embraced the coaching aspect of our programme and whilst he is naturally a reluctant networker that didn't stop him reaching out to people.

I think the time spent on his programme reflected his lack of readiness for the marketplace when I first began working with him. Our coaching sessions were conducted over a 14 month period and myself and colleagues spent 14 hours of one-to-one time with him.

I believe Steve is more than capable of establishing himself as a mentor, and not just to the housing sector.

STEVE'S COMMENTS

"I expected one of the biggest challenges was to be getting out and networking, as this wasn't something that came naturally to me.

In practice I found it easier than expected and people have been genuinely welcoming and helpful towards getting me started.

Interestingly some of the key contacts that I was hopeful of gaining work through have not necessarily been my best prospects in reality.

Conversely some of the most chance meetings have led to significant opportunities, so one always needs to approach things with an open mind.

Compared to my initial expectations, consultancy work has actually been less forthcoming. To some extent this reflects that most of the opportunities seem to be London focused. After not too many months out in the big world I reflected that actually part of my reason for leaving full-time permanent employment was to establish a better work-life balance; since living out of a suitcase in London didn't really deliver this I have focused efforts on seeking opportunities in the north, particularly the Yorkshire area. I have also secured more non-executive appointments, although these took time to materialise they provide a more long-term sustainable income.

On the mentoring side I now have four clients although one has unfortunately been made redundant. I find the work is mentally challenging but it is very rewarding to help individuals on their journey.

LinkedIn and following my own contact network including attending networking lunches (I joined the Chamber of Commerce locally and have taken up the chair of the property forum), trade conferences and things like Angel pitching sessions have been the most fruitful ways of generating new opportunities."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Steve achieved his objective of establishing a successful portfolio career; he is now running his own specialist retirement housing and development consultancy and is in charge of his career, working where and when he wants on projects that are challenging and fulfilling.