



THE FURNISHING SERVICE LIMITED

BUSINESS PLAN 2005-2006

"Working in partnership with you"

Founded: 1995

Legal status: Private Limited Company (Registration No. 157534)

Office Address:

East Kilbride & Head Office

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Kelvin Industrial Estate
East Kilbride
G75 0RA**

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Contact: Randle Wilson (Managing Director)

Mobile: 07801 192926

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Manchester Office

**Leslie Powell Building
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Manchester
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Contact: Jan Hilton (Sales and Marketing Manager)

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Executive Summary

The company was formed in 1995 with a view to providing a 'one stop' service to customers specifically in the social housing sector. Throughout the UK the company provides a service to over 145 local authorities and housing associations.

The company was initially established in Scotland and moved to its current head office in East Kilbride in 1998. Our premises in East Kilbride include 17,000 sq ft of warehousing and a showroom. As we developed, we picked up significant business in the North West of England, which culminated in winning the Manchester City Council contract in 2002. This in turn helped us to open an office and warehouse in Manchester, which we duly did in February 2003. We currently employ 34 members of staff across both divisions.

Our service has enabled customers to develop high quality furnished accommodation which has reduced void levels, increased customer satisfaction, created sustainable communities and provided a valuable marketing tool in an increased climate of competition.

Our service ensures that vulnerable groups such as the elderly, asylum seekers, women's aid, single parents, BME groups etc. are specifically catered for. Our staff are trained to take into account the needs of these groups. For example, we can source specialist products, deliver at specific times; take extra care with deliveries so the tenant is 100% happy.

Our key objectives are-

- To provide a high quality and affordable 'one stop' furniture service to Local Authorities and Housing Associations which will enable their tenants to access furnished accommodation
- To deliver exactly what has been ordered on the day requested. Target 100% of the time, current performance 98%
- To create permanent employment, we now employ 34 people, 65% of whom were previously unemployed
- To establish and maintain a working environment where each member of staff is treated fairly in relation to
 - Pay and conditions
 - Training and development
 - Equal opportunities
 - Health and safety

- To build and maintain an excellent working relationship with customers and suppliers by
 - Agreeing mutual objectives
 - Responding to feedback
 - Communicating effectively
- To implement and maintain good environmental practices by
 - Complying with relevant legislation
 - Minimising waste by reusing and recycling as much as is economically viable
 - To dispose of any necessary waste responsibly

Staff - Experience & Skills

The team has experience of delivering a quality furnishing service based on extensive knowledge from a supplier and a customer perspective.

The Managing Director (Randle Wilson) was manager of the furnished accommodation team for Glasgow City Council (the largest in Europe with over 6000 furnished tenancies).

The Sales and Marketing Manager (Jan Hilton) made a conscious decision to move from a major competitor (Furniture Resource Centre). Her considerable experience and professional approach has enabled the company to provide an even better service to customers and has resulted in significant and sustained growth.

You can establish a furnished tenancy scheme or develop a pilot scheme by using our expertise.

Our free consultancy, advice and networking capabilities mean you can be confident we are the right choice to assist you in developing a service. You do not have to worry about starting from scratch as procedures and policies can be provided. We will even assist with presentations and help you to obtain political approval.

You can be confident in our positive 'can do' approach as our experienced staff will remove the 'hassle' of chasing contractors and enable you to save money and concentrate on satisfying your customers by providing an efficient service.

You can be safe in the knowledge that The Furnishing Service has the experience and business acumen required. The directors have a wealth of experience.

- Brian Forrester (also company secretary) is a senior partner with Thomson Cooper & Co., which specialises in commercial accountancy
- Ian Swanson is a retired accountant with business experience

- Sandy Morris is the retired chairman of a large furnishing and flooring group.

Human Resources & Staff Development

The Furnishing Service aims to be a model employer in how it recruits, retains and develops staff. This will be achieved via the development of the following measures:

- A management culture which praises and rewards achievement
- A climate of trust and co-operation
- Look to find solutions rather than apportion blame
- Openly and constructively consult with staff
- Monitor and implement training requirements
- Empower staff to deliver services
- Recruit in a rigorous and robust manner
- Provide the right tools and equipment

The most important asset of the company is the staff. The commitment to the staff and the drive for 'togetherness' is demonstrated by the company profit share scheme. At the end of each year, each member of staff will receive a share of the profits, which bolsters the 'can do', approach and provides a share in the success of the company.

In addition there is a company pension scheme, uniforms and tools are provided and staff will be able to purchase products at discounted prices.

Staff Training

All employees will be interviewed on an annual basis to formally assess their development and training needs. In addition, regular meetings and 1:1's will be held to discuss operational issues and develop the service.

The company aims to obtain continuous improvement via training and development by adopting the following principles:-

- Promote the development of staff
- Ensure training needs are assessed
- Allocate reasonable resources for training
- Develop team building
- Increase experience and skills through voluntary job swaps

Customer Care

Your needs will be met as we will constantly listen and communicate. Regular contract meetings will provide a forum in which to comment on issues over the previous month. Feedback from the most recent customer survey will give you the confidence to choose our company in the knowledge a quality service will be given.

You will be confident in our logistic teams as they will wear name/id badges and will be specifically instructed to immediately communicate any problems for example, if the tenant is not at home or if an item of furniture is declined for any reason. This will enable you to be proactive and contact your customer with an agreed solution.

E-Business

The Furnishing Service is committed to realising the benefits of effective, accountable and sustainable electronic commerce as defined in the various government e-procurement/business strategies. We can confirm the following:

- We can enable transactions via BACS
- We can enable transactions via Visa/Mastercard Purchasing cards
- We can receive orders via e-mail

In partnership with Manchester City Council we are part of their intranet e-catalogue system. Our new online catalogue has been implemented. This will streamline your ability to purchase goods as each customer has unique access to their products/prices and can order them online.

This initiative was designed with the aforementioned Government strategies in mind. Our online processes and web development will be subject to an ongoing review to ensure that we adhere to best practice and realise the benefits of efficient e-commerce for our clients and ourselves.

Turnover

The company now has annual turnover exceeding £3 000 000 and it is envisaged that this will continue to increase over the next 3-5 years.

Stockholding

At any moment in time each warehouse has a minimum of £100 000 worth of stock in place. This means that we will respond to our customers needs if there is a sudden rise in demand.

Suppliers

The company has spent a considerable amount of time sourcing reputable suppliers. However, an equally important criterion is that of reliability. We have a range of suppliers that will meet any specific customer requirements (e.g. the need for a different type of hinge) and will adopt the same ethic as the company i.e. they will do 'whatever it takes' to get the job done.

Pricing

To ensure the company is ahead of its competitors a great deal of time will be spent choosing suppliers who provide high quality products at competitive prices.

If we source a supplier who is cheaper than the previous one but of the same quality we will seek to pass this benefit on to our customers.

Organisation, Logistics & Quality Control

Our dedicated team will provide a comprehensive service to our many customers.

We will operate in teams; staff will be trained to be polite, efficient and sensitive to the needs of our customers. There will be a 4-stage check on all products to prevent damaged/wrong goods being sent. Goods will be checked upon entering the warehouse, when they are 'picked' for delivery, when they are loaded onto the delivery vehicle and when they are unpacked and installed.

Virtually none of the work we carry out will be sub-contracted which will enable us to maintain full control over work co-ordination and ensure maximum flexibility and efficiency.

We will meet the most rigorous of timescales. Moreover, we consider ourselves to be a 'can do' organisation. This means in the event of an emergency we will supply and fit furniture within one full working day. We are proud of the service provided and we will do 'whatever it takes' to get the job done.

We have a trained team of customer service coordinators who will deal quickly and effectively with orders and queries. We have a fully computerised system, which will enable the efficient monitoring, and ordering of stock, customer accounts and invoicing within 24 hours.

Strategic and review meetings will be held with all our partners on a regular basis and will be attended by the Managing Director, Randle Wilson and Jan Hilton, Sales and Marketing Manager, if the customer is supported by our Manchester office or Kaye McKenna, Contracts Manager, if the customer is supported by our East Kilbride office.

We will use leased vehicles from a reputable National company to deliver the furniture. This will ensure all our commitments are met on the delivery day as a replacement vehicle is provided in the event of a breakdown.

Bank

Bank of Scotland
1 Bothwell Street
Dunfermline
KY11 3AG
Tel: 01383 812100

Accountants

Thomson Cooper & Co.
Castle Court
Carnegie Campus
Dunfermline
KY11 8PD
Tel: 01383 628800

VAT Reg No: 659 022043

Solicitor (England)

Robin Burman & Co.
446 Barlow Moor Road
Chorlton
Manchester
M21 0BQ

Insurance Brokers

Wylie & Hoblin
74 Victoria Road
Glasgow
G42 7AA

Type of Insurance: Employers Liability £10 000 000
Public Liability £5 000 000
Comprehensive Motor Insurance (including goods in transit)
Premises Insurance
Key person insurance

Health & Safety

The Furnishing Service is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and all persons likely to be affected by the service delivered. The company accepts the aims and provisions of all current Health and Safety legislation and will comply with all relevant statutory obligations. The successful management of health and safety will be an integral part of how the company performs.

The company is committed to implementing and maintaining high health and safety standards by:

- Developing a health and safety conscious culture throughout the organisation
- Assessing the risks to the health and safety of its employees and all persons likely to be affected by the service delivered
- Ensuring effective planning, organisation and control of health and safety within the workplace and of the service delivered
- Taking a pro-active approach to health and safety by conducting regular risk assessments to identify any measures required to safeguard the health and safety of its employees and all persons likely to be affected by the service delivered
- Consulting on a regular basis with employees on health and safety issues and providing any relevant training and supervision as a result of this consultation

The company will adopt a pro-active approach to health and safety. Each employee, regardless of status, will be responsible for ensuring strict adherence to all policies and procedures, including health and safety.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and amended when required.

Staff should report to the following persons:

East Kilbride: Randle Wilson – Managing Director

Manchester: Jan Hilton – Sales and Marketing Manager

The company is committed to a programme of action to make this policy fully effective.

Environmental Issues

The majority of the waste produced by the company will be packaging from the products supplied. We will continue working with Groundwork Environmental Business Services and will continue our membership of their highly successful Business Environment Association.

As a consequence we will receive advice on the most environmentally friendly method of disposing of waste. This will include networking with other employers to try and recycle material wherever possible e.g. supplying cardboard boxes for re-use.

We will hold regular meetings with suppliers to ensure they are utilising the most environmentally friendly methods in their production process.

The use of environmentally friendly suppliers and re-cycled material is something the company wishes to progress during the next financial year.

Partnering with local furniture and recycling initiatives

The company is fully committed to establishing partnerships with local furniture and recycling initiatives. This will allow the company to fulfill its environmental commitments in ensuring that as much of our product as possible is recycled. This principle will also allow us to support these local initiatives helping them to recycle and create employment and training.

We currently work with 3 local furniture and recycling projects and hope to expand this to 6 through 2006.

Equal Opportunities

This policy will be communicated to staff at interview and via regular team meetings.

Recruitment/Selection/Training/Promotion/Discipline/Dismissal

The Furnishing Service is an Equal Opportunities Employer. The Furnishing Service will ensure that no job applicant or employee is victimised, discriminated against or harassed in respect of any of the above issues on the grounds of gender, race, disability, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status, sexuality, responsibility for dependents, religion, trade union activity, and age (up to 65). This behaviour will be deemed to be a disciplinary offence and should it occur the person(s) responsible will be subject to formal disciplinary action.

Selection criteria will be kept under review to ensure that individuals are selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relative merits and abilities. All employees will be given equality of opportunity and will be encouraged to progress within the organisation.

In order to ensure either direct or indirect discrimination is not occurring, recruitment and other employment decisions will be regularly monitored in conjunction with ethnic records of job applicants and existing employees.

Service Delivery

The Furnishing Service will ensure that all customers (internally and externally) are treated equally irrespective of gender, race, disability, colour, creed, nationality, ethnic or national origin, marital status, sexuality, responsibility for dependents, religion, trades union activity, and age (up to 65).

Should any allegations prove to be founded the employee concerned will be subject to formal disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal.

The provision of a service to specific individuals and communities will be carried out in a manner that is sensitive to their needs and will respect any cultural difference e.g. language difficulties.

Randle Wilson (Managing Director) will be responsible for this policy and its effective communication.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and changed as required.

The company is committed to a programme of action to make this policy fully effective.

Complaints Procedure

If a complaint is about service delivery and/or a member of staff we will:

- 1) Formally log the complaint and provide written/electronic confirmation we are dealing with the matter within one working day
- 2) Investigate the matter thoroughly within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint (except in extenuating circumstances)
- 3) Log all the details of the investigation
- 4) Provide a written and verbal response of the action taken within 10 working days of the complaint
- 5) Request verbal and written confirmation that you are satisfied with the outcome of the complaint. This will be formally logged on file.

Short-term initiatives to enhance service delivery

The recent customer survey and customer seminar will become a permanent bi-annual feature to enable the service to be developed further. The new services requested by customers in the survey such as valeting, storage etc. are now available.

In order to improve the efficiency of our customers a new bespoke website has been developed that will enable personalized catalogues, up to date information and the ability to order on line.

We will be seeking full Investors in People accreditation in November 2005.

Medium term initiatives to enhance service delivery

The attainment of a quality mark (ISO 9000) will improve the service given to customers by making the company more efficient and effective. This quality mark demonstrates a commitment to continuous development as the needs of each customer are taken into account. We will be seeking accreditation in 2006.

We currently provide a Stock Management service for some of our customers. We intend to expand this service to ultimately offer a Stock Management service to all our customers. The expansion of this service is planned for 2006. The development of this service will allow our customers to meet recycling and re-use targets

Long-term initiatives to enhance service delivery

Our commitment to social responsibilities will provide you with the confidence to believe in our service. We will aim to create employment and support the environments we operate in for example; we are the main sponsors of the Pride of Manchester Awards.

In association with Groundwork Business Environment Association we will aim to recycle furniture collected and all product packaging.

The company will develop and expand by listening to what our customers want and adapting to the changing requirements of the market. The aim is to establish a nationwide network of operations, which will provide an integrated service to the whole of the U.K.

“The Furnishing Service working in Partnership with you”