

Group Chief Technical Officer

Candidate Pack

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1. Summary

MM Flowers is a dynamic, fast growing business supplying fresh cut-flowers and bouquets to consumers through the retail and digital channels. MM Flowers has grown rapidly since its inception in 2007 to become a dominant player in its field. The business has doubled in size in the past three years and anticipates further significant growth in the coming years.

Our people are fundamental to our success as we continue to build the culture of a Great Place to Work. We are seeking a Group Chief Technical Officer to join a driven leadership team, reporting to the MD.

Corporate Structure and History

MM Flowers is a privately owned cut-flower business with three shareholders – AM Fresh, Vegpro (based in Kenya) and Elite (based in Columbia)

MM Flowers was founded in 2007 by current Managing Director, Phil Whelan with a £50,000 investment of seed capital. The company was developed initially as a strategic partner for M&S and the business has been trading successfully with the retailer for 15 years.

With the two major shareholders, Vegpro (based in Kenya) and Elite (Columbia), representing two of the largest global players in the flower sector, MM Flowers is supported with a true end-to-end supply chain and is therefore in a unique position compared to its competitive set. This ownership enables control of the supply chain which is especially useful when considering the seasonal nature of the industry, as the majority of the business falls across December to March including Christmas, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day.

Today, the organisation trades with domestic and international retailers including Tesco, M&S, Co-Op, Waitrose, Jumbo, Migros and Costco. MM Flowers operation in Europe is run through its own 50,000 sq ft production facility in Aalsmeer, Holland.

In August 2021, MM Flowers Group recorded revenues of £204m with an EBITDA of £3m.



Apex is a subsidiary company of MM Flowers and is an industry leader in rose research and development. It operates from an industry unique research facility within the Alconbury site.

Investment

Over £35m was invested to create a state-of-the-art production facility in Alconbury. A further £11m is being invested to extend the Alconbury site, due for completion August 2022. The extension will include a new Digital Centre which will result in a step-change in online processing and production capabilities while providing the capacity to deliver the strong growth plans in online sales.

MM Flowers has also recently acquired an additional production facility at Chatteris to support business growth and enable delivery of Peaks from Christmas 2021.

2. Core Activities & Strategic Objectives

Core Activities

Operating out of 200,000 sq ft of facility on the Alconbury Weald Industrial Estate, MM Flowers processes 11 million stems on average each week in the production of straight-line flowers and bouquets across both its store and digital customers. Currently MM Flowers has 28% of the UK cut-flower market and there is opportunity to increase this further.

The business has an international supply chain and processes product daily from Europe, Africa and South America.

There are 550 MM Flowers employees based at Alconbury. This team is supported by approximately 300 agency workers from our strategic labour provider, Staffline.

Strategic Objectives

The philosophy of MM Flowers is to be driven by our values and high standards, with a committed focus on developing and leveraging outstanding People & Products. We aim to achieve 'best in class' flower production capabilities through optimal mix of people & automation and to implement a leading-edge digital flowers & gifting solution for our customers. Our belief in the need to protect the environment, ethical working and a having a positive impact on the communities where we operate guides our approach to developing long term sustainable supply chains. We intend to deliver the highest quality flowers to all customers, versus our competitive set, from our shareholders' farms.

3 Year Plan

Over the next 3 years we expect to grow the business to an annual turnover of £325m and double the size of the digital business. This will be enabled through a re-design of our main production facility, streamlining the layout, automating key processes, and creating remarkable welfare facility. Local UK production will also feature in our strategic aims.

3. Structure

Currently operating with a flat management structure with key functions reporting into the Managing Director.

There is a Group Board of 7 consisting of the MD, Finance Director, Operations Director, Trading Director, Technical Director and 2 Non-Executive Directors.

There is wider Senior Leader Team which consists of the Group Board plus the HR, Supply Chain and Operations Directors.

4. The Role

MM Flowers is now embarking on an exciting next stage in its development, targeting further growth and expansion. The MD has identified the need to develop the company's IT and Data capabilities, to help facilitate the growth strategy.

The budget is in place to implement a new ERP system by June 2023 and develop MMF's data capabilities in parallel.

Purpose of the Role

Overall responsibility for developing the group IT, data & cyber security strategies in the UK and Europe, ensuring that all systems are in place to support MMF's strategic objectives and operations.

Core Business Responsibilities

IT Infrastructure

- Ensure the IT infrastructure, systems and processes support the goals and requirements of the business
- The infrastructure must at all times be:
 - Robust, with an availability of not less than 99.95%.
 - Recoverable, with all corporate data and systems fully replicated to cloud and capable of being recovered within acceptable time limits.
 - Secure, with appropriate protection mechanisms in place that prevent unauthorised access to personal or corporate data.
 - Comply with the licencing and other data related regulation.
- Continue to modernise and rationalise the UK IT infrastructure reducing reliance on on-premise infrastructure and improving resilience.

Performance Management

- Establish, agree and publish IT service agreements with key users and departments and to monitor performance against those agreements in order that business units understand what service is being provided and the costs associated with that service.
- Conduct regular reviews with key users/departments to establish "value" from the service provision.
- Ensure supplier performance to agreed levels, ensuring value for money.

Systems Strategy

- Analyse the costs and relative merits of new systems or upgrades to existing systems
- Identify areas where technology could improve efficiency and profitability
- Develop technology long-term capital plans and annual budgets
- Ensure that MMF systems development enables execution of the business strategy

Project Delivery

- Design and implement fit-for-purpose project delivery function.
- Contribute to the evaluation of potential and current information system projects in terms of their business benefit, in order to recommend value-added change to the business or business process. Plan and monitor benefit delivery as appropriate, to ensure that the delivery achieves expectation.
- Evaluate new & emerging technology and where adopted provide guidelines for the Group.

Business Planning

- Participate in business planning and development activities when required, playing a leading role in change management as part of major IT development projects.

Security & Risk

- Deliver against the UK Cyber Security Strategy.
- Continue to develop the UK systems, policies and processes to protect the Group and users from encroachment of systems, loss of data and malware/virus.
- Attain & maintain Cyber Essentials Plus status, along with supporting industry compliance or certifications.
- Contribute to the development of the cyber recovery / cyber major incident plan.
- Consultative and influencer in the Group GDPR & Risk governance.

Business Information and Application Development

- Working in collaboration with all functions support the development of BI data repositories and structures to ensure the business to gain better insight into business performance and maintains a 'one-version of truth' approach.
- Roll-out of the Business Intelligence (BI) Strategy.
- Review current business applications and ensure they are supported and meet the business needs. Collaborate with MMF BV to remove duplication of application development and agree common standards.

Policies and Processes

- Responsible for the development of UK IT policies and provide information on business compliance.
- Implement best practice user monitoring.
- Ensure all IT processes are documented, clearly understood and followed by the team and audited.
- Ensure rigour and discipline across technical governance e.g. Technical Design Authority & Change Advisory Board.

People

- Evolve the existing Target Operating Model to align supply with demand.
- Maintain Employee Engagement activities and action planning.
- Procure cost effective sourcing solutions for scale up or specialist situations.
- Work in collaboration with MMF BV to ensure that specialist skills are employed most efficiently for the Group.
- Create data organizational structure to optimize data exploitation

Skills & Experience

- Outstanding knowledge of FMCG related IT systems
- Minimum 5 years' experience in IT management
- Minimum 2 years' experience in developing IT systems
- Experience of leading major IT system implementations and related change management
- Experience of developing and implementing data strategies
- Good understanding of data analysis, budgeting and business operations
- Excellent leadership skills
- Ability to develop and implement strategies and plans to help a business reach its goals
- Good all-round business understanding
- Strong organisational and time management skills
- Good communication and people skills to enable effective working across business functions
- Good analytical and problem-solving skills
- Hold excellent knowledge of the upcoming and ongoing trends in the IT sector
- Education – degree in computer programming, software engineering, or information systems

Stakeholders and Customers

- Stakeholder management across the multiple devolved business entities within the UK operating model.
- Engagement and alignment of information systems strategies and roadmaps to individual business unit needs.
- Deliver a BRM framework that provides demonstrable value proposition for Business systems to key stakeholders and IT Steering Group.
- Seek out collaboration opportunities and matrix project delivery with MMF BV team.

Recruitment Process

- First interviews – BJD and SR
- Psychometric profiling - BJD
- Second interview – PW and BJD
- Site visit – PW and
- Appointment