

## **To Whom It May Concern**

### **Jane Goodbody of Search4 Office Solutions**

This reference is provided to recommend Jane Goodbody's services as an Office Move Co-ordinator to third parties - which I am extremely pleased to do wholeheartedly and without reservation. In the event that I can be of assistance in further elaborating on any aspect of the work she has done for SEB, please feel free to ask, using the contact details given below.

#### **Background:**

Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken AB ("SEB", or "the Bank") is a Swedish-based international bank operating in the wholesale financial markets, with a London branch which employs some 160 people. It had occupied premises in Cannon Street, London EC4 for some 25 years, prior to the lease expiring in 2015 – and since the owners wished to redevelop the site, the Bank was forced to relocate.

The premises selected for this purpose were in One Carter Lane, London EC4 – a building which was in the process of being fitted out to Cat A specification by its then owners. SEB committed in June 2013 to take 36,000 sq. ft. located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors of this building and a timeline was established that committed to a fit-out commencing in July 2014, with physical relocation of all staff occurring over two weekends in early January, 2015.

#### **Project details:**

The project was necessarily complex, for the following reasons:

- The SEB fit-out had to dovetail with the base-build fit-out being undertaken by the landlord, particularly since the latter over-ran its timeline and overlapped.
- SEB took the opportunity to re-appraise its working practices generally, and take a fresh look at the facilities which it wished to offer its staff. Although a third party firm was involved in the initial high-level stages of this work, much of the practical finalisation and execution of this part of the planning was left to the project proper.
- The Bank required a combination of high specification front-of-house visitor facilities (including a full catering capability, flexible meeting rooms and video-conferencing facilities), and more functional trading rooms, back-office space, incorporating the latest IT functionality.

- Given the physical layout of the building, accommodating all of the relevant services in the core risers alongside those of other tenants was a challenge – and the plans evolved in this respect even as the fit-out work was proceeding.
- The project employed a variety of different specialist contractors, ranging from architects and interior designers, M&E consultants, catering consultants, IT consultants, furniture providers, manufacturers of gymnasium equipment and art-work advisers etc. Selection of, and co-ordination between, these contractors was a critical element of the project.
- All aspects of the fit-out had to be co-ordinated with the SEB Group Real Estate department in Stockholm, and also with the Bank's Brand experts. A particular challenge was thrown up by the fact that the SEB Brand Manual contained specifications for office layouts, furniture and decoration which were based on a one-size-fits-all approach, with the result that many aspects which might have been appropriate for a retail branch office in a small Swedish town were not appropriate for a wholesale flagship office in the City. This occasioned frequent meetings in which a suitable compromise could be negotiated.

As such, the project required an experienced and highly capable Project Manager - not least because the close and highly demanding attention of the SEB CEO was focussed on it, given that the initially assessed cost was some £11 million.

### **Choice of Jane Goodbody**

I had known Jane Goodbody for many years, since she had worked for SEB as an Office Manager, and had been a project manager when part of the bank for which I was responsible had relocated in 2001 to another building – a move which also required a fit-out from scratch. Although she had subsequently left our employment and set up her own business, we had kept in touch.

I therefore proposed Jane as the Project Manager, and she was selected after being interviewed together with two other candidates by my colleagues in London, and by the SEB Real Estate and Brand experts in Stockholm.

### **Jane's performance**

The fact that the project was completed seamlessly, on time and within budget, was largely down to Jane's performance, without which a project of this scale and complexity could have foundered.

Specifically, she:

- Advised and assisted in the appointment of many of the contractors employed in the project, frequently providing both technical and practical experience which nobody within SEB possessed;
- Was highly structured and organised throughout, effectively marshalling the various parties, both within SEB and outside, taking minutes of all meetings, handing communications with all parties efficiently, and making concise yet comprehensive reports of progress and issues internally;
- Was meticulous in ensuring that our Finance team kept the expenditure fully under control throughout the Project, both as it was incurred and in the context of the overall projected budget;
- Demonstrated exceptional initiative and sensitivity over when to consult with me and the other senior managers within SEB where necessary - this in itself took a great deal of the burden from our shoulders;
- Was diplomatically robust in dealing with the landlord's agents, particularly when their fit-out process overlapped and caused complications with ours, and was equally adept at defusing and solving situations which arose (as they inevitably do) between the various contractors working directly for us;
- Handled communications with our staff sensitively, persuading them where necessary to drop their over-enthusiastic or unrealistic expectations as to what could be delivered under the project, and yet bringing to our attention matters in respect of which the project plans needed to be adjusted, together with practical suggestions as to how this could best be achieved with minimum knock-on effects;
- Was equally adept at handling the occasionally tense discussions with the SEB Branding experts in Head Office, winning in their respect and playing a major role in the compromises reached between their and our objectives; and
- Did all of the above with consistent good humour, practical common sense and lack of drama – ensuring that minor incidents did not get out of control, and that major ones were handled effectively without undue fuss.

The result of the project is an office of which we are really proud - and we are indebted to Jane for the fact that the project was accomplished so satisfactorily. I strongly recommend her services !

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