HOLDSWAY INTERIM LEADERSHIP

HOLDSWAY | INTERIM CASE STUDY | INTERIM TRANSFORMATION DIRECTOR

Transforming a Chief Executive's Growth Strategy into Implementation

CLIENT AT A GLANCE

Sector: Logistics & supply chain (UK) | **Ownership:** Listed plc | **Revenue:** £2bn+ | **Workforce:** 15,000+ | **Operations:** National fleet & warehouse network

The Situation

The client is one of the UK's leading supply chain and businesses — a £2bn+ revenue plc employing more than 15,000 people, storing, picking and moving everything from groceries and white goods to building materials and furniture through a national fleet and warehouse network.

The Chief Executive had completed a full business review that produced an ambitious growth strategy. The business now needed someone to lead the next critical steps: planning and execution. This was a business-critical role requiring a seasoned executive with a record of leading complex transformation in comparable organisations — someone with the commercial acumen, character and tenacity to turn strategy into an effective action plan.

> *"Nick has an amazing talent for understanding a client's needs and turning them into a focused list of ideal interim executive candidates."* **Chief Executive Officer**

The Challenge

The CEO had already begun searching for an interim executive when a routine catch-up call from Holdsway's Nick Diprose came at the perfect time. The brief was demanding:

- Translate a strategy that existed largely on paper into a funded, sequenced programme across every business function.
- Win genuine ownership from a senior team that had to deliver the change while running a large, complex operation day to day.
- Maintain pace, direction and clarity over an 18-month horizon — the point at which most transformation programmes lose momentum.
- Overcome a degree of scepticism and concerns about 'micro-management ' among some workstream sponsors.

Holdsway introduced an executive it had known and represented for over a decade: a former Director of Global Business Transformation at a FTSE 100 consumer goods group, who had since delivered successful interim transformation assignments across energy, utilities, rail, higher education and construction.

The Intervention

Phase one: mobilise and secure ownership. The interim executive scoped and budgeted an eighteen-month programme, defined workstreams across all business functions—sales, finance, marketing, HR, operations, procurement and property—and agreed objectives and individual ownership for each sub-project, with an executive sponsor for every workstream.

Securing authentic buy-in from senior leaders came first, because it is the most often neglected step.

Phase two: align, visualise and track. The plan was aligned to growth KPIs, and milestones were agreed with workstream heads. A 'brown paper' visualisation session harmonised workloads, exposed interdependencies and gaps, and showed how the component parts worked as a whole. From this, a bespoke planning tool was built with a dashboard for each of 30 sub-projects — activities, risks, targets and deadlines, with traffic-light status and supporting narrative.

Phase three: drive the rhythm. Sponsors chose fortnightly rather than monthly reporting, creating a steady drumbeat that kept the programme focused, in control and on track. During the rollout, the interim executive worked alongside the CEO to address early resistance through regular communication and visible leadership; once most people had embraced the programme, resistance dissipated.

> *"You can't impose programmes like this; they must be willingly owned. Winning the senior people over and getting them to accept and take ownership was a crucial first step. It demands sensitivity, and you need authentic buy-in."*
>
> **Interim Transformation Director**

Key Outcomes

Results Panel	
Financial	Highest revenue in six years; earnings per share up year on year.
Operational	30 sub-projects across 7 business functions planned, sponsored and tracked through live dashboards on a fortnightly cycle.
Strategic	Growth strategy converted from a paper plan into a deliverable, owned roadmap — handed over two months ahead of schedule.
People & stakeholders	Improved employee engagement; senior team left self-sufficient and accountable for ongoing delivery.

Legacy

The interim executive left behind more than a completed programme. The business gained a disciplined governance rhythm, a planning and reporting capability its own leaders now run, and a senior team that owns its strategy rather than having it imposed. Confident the organisation was self-sufficient, the interim executive handed over two months earlier than planned — leaving a business with renewed vitality and poised to keep delivering year-on-year performance improvement.

> *"The work delivered a straightforward, no-nonsense roadmap that was all about moving strategy into a deliverable action plan and getting results. The interim transformation director introduced by Holdsway brought natural enthusiasm to any change initiative — and at the same time 'held feet to the fire' to keep things on track when required."* **Chief Executive Officer**