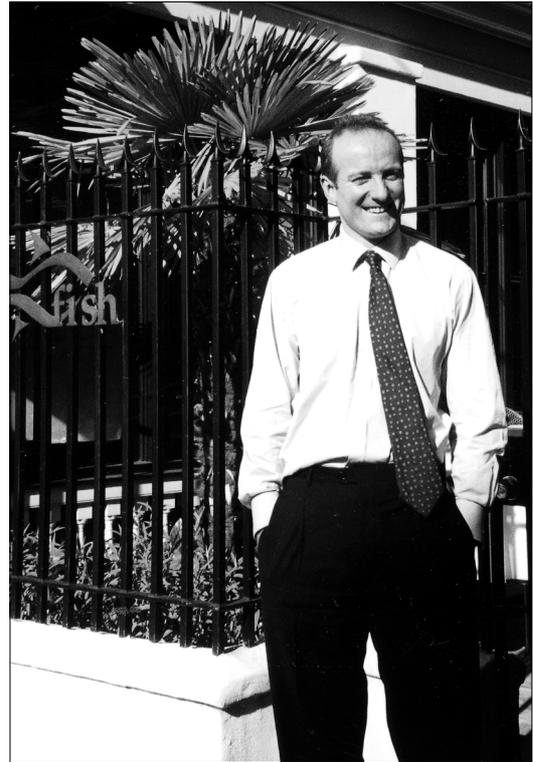


Profile: Bill Russell



Bill Russell – currently Sales and Marketing Director for Emerald – was born in Moreton-in-Marsh and grew up in Oxford. He studied History at Nottingham University, where he has fond memories of record shops, and seeing music giants REM with only 20 other people. Although his information industry credentials are impeccable (his father was a Production and Sales Director at Oxford University Press for well over 20 years) he says that, at the time, all he wanted to do was to go into commercial life and travel internationally. He certainly fulfilled his ambitions. He joined Castrol as a graduate trainee and spent 13 years in the motor industry selling and marketing motor oil. His international travel aspirations were realized when he joined the Castrol International Motorsports Programme, travelling to races and making lots of interesting contacts within the motor industry. However, he does blush to remember how he tried to persuade the Head of Mercedes not to bring Michael Schumacher into the team, but to retain a friend of his instead!

He became involved in the world of Toyota rallying and experienced some interesting culture shocks as he travelled around the globe with various motorbike, sportscar and rally teams. Interestingly he claims that his 'brand hero'

continues to be Toyota cars ... "because they are reliable, rock-solid, unpretentious and usable".

In 1993 he went 'up north' to Skipton, North Yorkshire, where he headed a sales team responsible for Scotland and Northern England, as well as dealing with the complexities of business in Northern Ireland.

However, Bill's travelling days were not over just yet. The fun continued as Bill rose through the ranks at Castrol to become a Sales and Marketing Director in Spain. He says that he approached this new job from a problem-solving perspective – the same approach he now uses at Emerald.

In 1997 he moved to Spain, where over a two-year period he led a team of 55 staff and learned to speak fluent Spanish. His time in Spain also taught him lessons about the importance of branding and simplification of choice. After his Spanish experience Bill's time with Castrol drew to a close and he moved to Hallmark cards in Yorkshire – but only for one year as he quickly became uncomfortable with a role which was very factory-based and not at all customer driven.

His three children (seven-year-old twins Poppy and Joe, and Tommy who is four) were born in Yorkshire. His wife Cilla – who is a journalist – is extremely fond of the Yorkshire Dales where they

now live, and Bill affectionately describes himself as 'a born-again Yorkshireman'. He even plays cricket for the local village team!

And so, in searching for a place to move on to, Bill spotted an advert for a role at the (then) MCB University Press. The post had the advantage of being a sales and marketing position and geographically it suited him and his family down to the ground. However, he says the only reason that he applied for it (having no previous experience in the information industry) was firstly the fact that his father had worked at OUP and he thought he understood some of the background to the industry and secondly, he felt convinced that many of the skills and much of the experience he had acquired in his previous jobs could be transferred to another sector. He was offered the post and began in May 2000. By June 2001 Bill had launched the Emerald company brand and in September 2003 the company name changed from MCB University Press to Emerald. When pressed for why the name Emerald was chosen Bill revealed that on a Far East trip, about three months into the Emerald job, he visited a temple in Bangkok, and in the temple was an emerald green buddah which 'seemed to be telling me something'. His report back to the company was entitled 'Quest for the Emerald Green Buddah'. He also loves the colour – green means 'go' and (for him) it exudes positive vibes being similar to the Castrol corporate green.

Bill speaks passionately about his job at Emerald, recounting how interesting it was to go into an organization which recognized that it needed to move to a more customer-based focus. He acknowledges that important first steps had been made by Bev Bruce and that, when he arrived, the company had reached a turning-point. Creating a high profile for the Emerald database and getting the journals heavily used were top priorities. In Spring 2001 the Emerald database went to the Ingenta service where it was discovered that 40% of Ingenta's then journal usage came from Emerald titles – but Emerald only made up 2.5% of titles hosted on Ingenta! This information reinforced Emerald's focus of targeting the

world's top 100 Business Schools as their core market. Emerald also wished to be a key publisher in the library and information science arena and acquiring the Aslib stable of journals was a critical purchase. Working with information science departments came a little later and Emerald now have a flourishing research relationship with City University. Further statistics from OhioLINK in June 2001 showed that Emerald articles were very heavily used by consortia members – probably surprising many with the high levels of usage. The focus on customers, quality and branding was beginning to pay off. Bill takes huge pride in the fact that the company has turned round and re-launched in such a short space of time and is no longer regarded as an 'outsider'. He also feels proud of being a "good industry player"; he likes "being surrounded by clever people" and finds the environment "very mentally challenging".

How does Bill see the industry in five years' time? Well, he believes that usage statistics – and possibly pricing utilizing an element of usage – will make discussions between publishers, intermediaries and librarians more meaningful. Acknowledging that we are now in a mainstream digital world means that we need to examine how our industry has changed, work positively with the changes and be savvy enough to make it work for all of us. Open access is one part of this. After all, in 1999/2000 we thought the information industry was going to be turned on its head by the dot com revolution but that did not happen as mainstream businesses responded and adapted.

As well as being a good industry player Bill enjoys time with his family and he finds time for leisure interests. He is still hooked by the travelling bug and spends several weeks each year travelling for business. In order to keep himself fit for his cricket he enjoys running up and down the Pennine Way (!) and body surfing during the summer in Cornwall. For less physically challenging activities he will opt for a visit to the cinema or for reading books by Hemingway, Peter Fleming (older brother of Ian Fleming) or J K Rowling. What a great work-life balance.