

For Immediate Release

24th January 2008

PUBLISHING RECRUITMENT FIRM MAKE AN INSPIRED DECISION

Critchleys Corporate Finance team acted as lead advisers to the shareholders of specialist publishing recruitment firm Inspired Selection Limited on the sale of the company to Steppingstone Associates Plc, a recently formed recruitment group.

Keith White, Corporate Finance Partner, directed the transaction with the support of Katy Bruce, Corporate Finance Manager.

After attracting offers from trade players and potential MBI candidates, the shareholders of Inspired Selection decided it would be in the Company's best interests to join the Steppingstone Associates group alongside Hamblyn Selection, a London based recruitment agency specialising in media appointments. Steppingstone Associates Plc was listed on the AIM stock exchange at the same time as acquiring Inspired Selection. The combined group offers continuing growth opportunities for the niche recruitment agency.

Katy Bruce, *"Critchleys have acted as the accountants of Inspired Selection since 2000 so were on hand to advise when the shareholders began to consider the long term future of the company. The growth of the company during this time has been impressive, and we are delighted to have negotiated an excellent deal for the shareholders whilst finding a sound partner in Steppingstone Associates who can guide the future of this promising company."*

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Jo Bowerman, Inspired Selection, "The successful sale of the company was totally dependent on the "right" buyer and ongoing situation for the company. It was of paramount importance to us that the buyer had the same business ethos and excellent standards in service levels. We pride ourselves on the service we offer to both our candidates and clients, and this had to be matched by any prospective buyer. We met a lot of interested parties over a long period of time, but we held out until the right person came along who could offer the right future and potential to our company and employees. Throughout the process, Critchleys have shown tenacity and patience in getting us the right deal – they understood our requirements from the outset and have been excellent and knowledgeable advisers and mediators along the way. We are delighted with the result and feel that Inspired Selection will benefit from the association with Steppingstone in terms of growth potential and, at the same time, continue to offer our candidates and clients the level of service they are accustomed to."

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Notes

As a leading firm of chartered accountants and business advisors, Critchleys is committed to providing quality advice to businesses and individuals. Our approach is based on expertise, excellence and personal service. Critchleys' services include: audit and accounting, corporate finance, corporate tax, corporate recovery, financial outsourcing, financial planning, insolvency and bankruptcy, management accounting, payroll, personal tax, trusts and VAT.

Critchleys is a member of the UK200Group of independent chartered accountants
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