

Strategic Systems Solutions

Company Profile





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1 Organisational Profile

SSS provides information technology and business consultancy to the investment banking marketplace. We are uniquely positioned to address the technology and back-office requirements of the entire financial services enterprise; efficiently, with flexibility, and on a global scale. Our proven experts are highly skilled at solving the complex software application and multi-platform challenges inherent in today's large-scale transaction processing environments. An innovative location strategy, **that we call Smart-Sourcing**, featuring offices near to the major financial centres of the UK, US, and China ensures superior, cost-efficient partnering with our clients.

1.1 Business Strategy

Strategic Systems Solutions began as a small UK-based IT shop and has grown into a global consultancy that can support the full spectrum of technology and business processing needs to the financial services industry. Our firm's growth has followed a clear path based on the founders' business strategy of anticipating and meeting our client's global processing needs, keeping costs low, and building a firm of high quality professionals. Provided below is a brief history of how Strategic Systems Solutions has grown and changed over the years while adhering to these core principles.

In the early 1990's, our founders, ex-Investment Bankers, Steve Bramwell and Mark Williams, identified an IT skills shortage in global financial centers, such as London and New York. This scarcity resulted in high technology costs for major corporations. The solution was to form a technology company based in geographically cost-effective areas where IT skill levels were high. This resource-based location strategy has been very successful and has allowed us to expand from a UK-based firm to a company that is truly global - in 2003 we opened offices in the United States and China.

On our consulting engagements, we found ourselves involved in numerous re-engineering efforts. While these projects were a success from an IT perspective, they did not always achieve the client's desired fiscal savings. Typically, they failed to meet this goal because the Operations or Controlling support role and/or personnel were not changed accordingly. It was at this point, in early 2002, that we decided to launch a Business Process Outsourcing Practice and offer the full range of re-engineering design, delivery, and support options.

In mid-2004, the Executive Management team determined that our rapidly growing company should migrate to a Practice driven organization. While growth was a positive sign in a tough global economy, we realized that we needed more specific areas of expertise in order to better support our clients. We have therefore positioned our core business offerings into the following practices: IT Service Delivery, Business Process Outsourcing, Project Management, Testing, and Connectivity Solutions. The groups are autonomous, which allows for independent thought leadership and growth, but employees from all practices work seamlessly, side by side, on client engagements. These groups are described in the next section.

We can now provide clients with on-site, near-shore, and far-shore technology and business resources. We deliver these services through our Smart-sourcing Model. Smart-sourcing means that we will select the optimum sourcing strategy for each client situation in both location and skill type. On-site, near-shore, and far-shore depends on your perspective globally, as we have 5 offices in the North of England (Liverpool, Newcastle, Preston, Leeds and Nottingham), one near Philadelphia, Pa. USA; and two offices in Hangzhou, China.



1.2 Products and Services

At SSS we have more than 550 professionals, all of whom are permanent employees located in the UK, US and China, ready to support a wide range of technology and business challenges. Our consultants understand that on many occasions there is not enough time to spell out in detail the nature of a system problem or what the desired outcome is. We have the know-how and the people with the right blend of financial services expertise, technology skills, and mental toughness to cut through complex business problems and deliver high-quality solutions. Our clients find these skills especially valuable in today's fast-paced, high-pressured business environment.

We have recently reorganized our global service offerings into the following practices:

1.2.1 IT Service Delivery

It is from the IT Service Delivery group that SSS was founded. Our personnel have the experience to complete full system life cycle projects and to support critical production applications 24/7. We provide these services in a traditional consulting or in an outsourcing role. The IT Service Delivery Practice offers a wide range of development and integration services to our clients for both distributed and mainframe technologies including:

- business process re-engineering
- systems development
- database design, management and administration
- performance improvements
- integration with legacy systems and 3rd-party products
- application enhancements and support
- 24/7 production management, support, and performance monitoring.

Our technology professionals range from technical architects and developers to production support analysts. The majority of these professionals have at least seven years of application development experience and have obtained industry certification from Java, Microsoft, and Oracle. We utilize various development methodologies including DSDM, RUP / UML, MSF, and UP. Our consultants are based in each of our regional locations and on-site with our clients.

1.2.2 Project Management

The Project Management practice was created to offer thought leadership across the practice groups in the running and managing of engagements of all types. Our professionals include project managers, team leaders, and business analysts. Besides leading an engagement or project, our consultants can also provide insight into optimisation of staffing in varying global locations and additionally into transition management.

Our Project Management professionals are located in each of our regional hubs and on-site with our clients. Many of our professionals have reinforced their extensive practical experience with certification from either PRINCE2 (UK) or the Project Management Institute (US).



1.2.3 Testing

Through our Testing practice, SSS now has a global capability to reduce our client's overall testing cost. We commoditize the testing effort through repeatable processes and procedures and eliminate resource constraints by leveraging our Smart-sourcing staffing approach. We provide rapid scalability, the tools to quickly assess progress and risk, standard metrics for management reporting, and standard defect tracking procedures.

Employees in the Testing Practice are knowledgeable in the two primary industry tool sets: Mercury Interactive (Test Director, Win Runner, Load Runner) and Compuware (QA Director, QA Run, QA Load, TrackRecord).

The Testing Practice has staff based in each of our regional hubs supporting three of our investment banking clients. Their roles range from Engagement Managers to those involved in Test Management (Test Manager, Analyst, and Execution Manager) and Test Execution (Case Leader, Data Leader, Simulation Engineer and Engineer).

A robust Quality Assurance process is a key component of our Testing Practice. Our approach is to create a multi-checkpoint process, producing a set of known deliverables using standard templates, allowing project stakeholders a view of progress, issues, risks and mitigation.

1.2.4 Business Process Outsourcing

The Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) practice provides back-office processing capabilities that allow clients to realize the cost saving potential of their IT re-engineering efforts. This practice has a proven capability in delivery model design, transition, and process management. When applicable, we also leverage the IT Service Delivery practice to develop technology solutions that solve business problems thus improving our effectiveness.

Our BPO group is comprised of senior managers, team leads, business analysts, and clerical workers. BPO employees are located in the UK and China supporting Operations functions for a major investment bank.

1.2.5 Connectivity Solutions

The Connectivity Solutions practice was built upon the expertise inherent within our internal Technical Services Group. The group's technology professionals have the expertise to rapidly set up a technical infrastructure within an office or data centre and then build connectivity to external clients and across a global office network. The Connectivity Solutions practice has implemented this process for each of our seven global offices and we are now looking to offer this type of service to our clients. Key areas of responsibility for our Infrastructure specialists include:

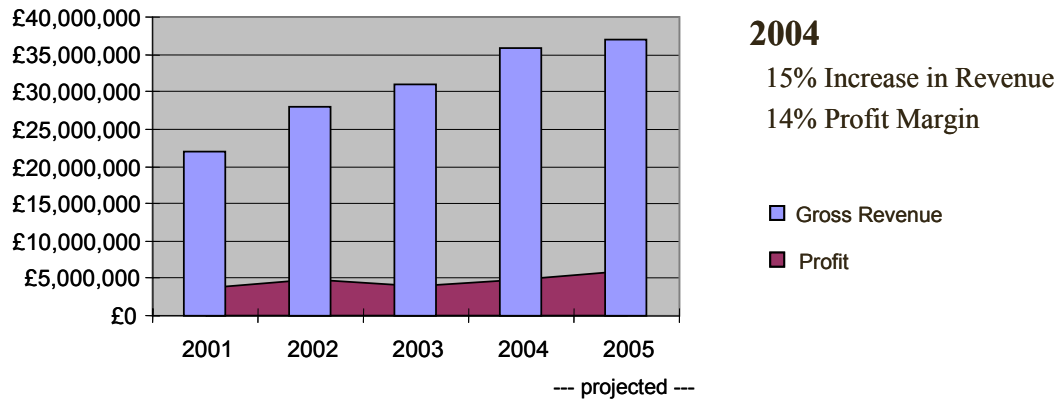
- identifying local suppliers and partners
- specifying office design and physical build-out
- implementation of telephony and associated communication hardware
- installation of network and server infrastructure for authentication, email, print
- setting up internet connectivity
- establishment of remote access / working models [e.g. Citrix, VPN, Dial up and so on].



1.3 Corporate Information

1.3.1 Financials

The Financial results for SSS for the past 4 years are listed below. Detailed accounting information as declared to Companies house can be provided on request.



1.3.2 Ownership Structure

Strategic Systems Solutions Limited is a private limited company incorporated in the UK, under a holding group structure. Our operations in the US and China are separate legal entities, to comply with Federal and state requirements, but are managed as one logical unit through the Board of Executive Directors.