

# FIRST FLIGHT - Non Executive Directors: CASE STUDY

## About Simplyhealth

**Simplyhealth believes in helping people access affordable healthcare and delivering exceptional personal customer service**

**Simplyhealth helps two million individuals look after their health**

**11,000 companies choose Simplyhealth as their healthcare provider**

**Simplyhealth is the name for all companies previously known as HSA, BCWA, HealthSure, LHF, Totally Active, Remedi or Medisure**

**Simplyhealth has a 139 year pedigree**

**Simplyhealth is committed to its mutual values and supporting our communities. With no shareholders we only invest our profits into running the business or distributed to worthy causes**

**Simplyhealth is the UK's biggest cash plan provider and a major player in the private health insurance and mobility markets**

**80% of Simplyhealth customers would recommend Simplyhealth to a friend**



Romana Abdin

With its proud corporate slogan of 'We can be bothered', Simplyhealth is one of the UK's largest, strongest and most successful healthcare companies. It places its customers at the heart of everything it does. Interestingly, Simplyhealth has a strong mutual ethos and no shareholders – although it is very much a commercially run business. It is committed to reinvesting profits back into the business or redistributing them to worthy causes, and each year it donates over £1 million to UK charities and community projects.

The organisation began to change in 2011 with the acquisition of several smaller healthcare companies. At this time one of their Non Execs was retiring so a review of the Directors' skills and competences was undertaken. It was decided that the recruitment of a new Non-Executive Director would be the ideal way forward to balance the board.

"We had used other Non-Exec agencies in the past" explained Corinne Williams, HR Manager "but we had a mixed response to their performance so we decided to select a new resource". As a result, Simplyhealth chose First Flight as they inspired confidence in the recruitment panel consisting of Corinne Williams (HR Manager), Romana Abdin (Executive Director) and Ken Piggott (Chairman). "Chris Spencer-Phillips at First Flight listened very carefully to our brief and we were able to talk openly about the sort of person we hoped to find" explained Corinne. It was at this point that Chris mooted an idea that Simplyhealth needed two different Non-Execs as the personality traits, skill sets and experience outlined in the initial brief, were unlikely to be met by one person. It also became clear that Simplyhealth had decided with First Flight's encouragement not to appoint typical "generic" Non Execs to their Board. The brief evolved and the First Flight team undertook a significant amount of preparatory work in terms of vetting potential candidates and narrowing the search down to 5 names, complete with full psychometric testing. First Flight worked hard to ensure the proposed candidates would be a good cultural and personality fit.

Chris's early prediction was realised with Simplyhealth deciding to appoint two First Flight Non Execs: Michael Hall and Tim Brooke - each with different backgrounds but significantly one still operating as a CEO and the other recently leaving a CEO role but who complemented each other and the existing board perfectly. Bringing their considerable commercial and operational experience to bear they are constructively challenging the Board and their contributions are starting to facilitate a change for the better; furthermore their support is being strongly felt throughout the senior management team.



Tim Brooke



Michael Hall



Michael Hall, has over 35 years' experience in healthcare and 20 years at board level including a minor Non-Exec role within the charity healthcare sector. His CV is littered with impressive names such as Standard Life Healthcare and BUPA of which he was CEO and a director respectively. His passion for ethical business and authenticity in the way a business develops its culture, manages staff and looks after customers were qualities that appealed to Simplyhealth. "My experience in the healthcare sector enables me to give the board perspectives that are relevant and important in building the success of the overall business. My previous roles give me the confidence and knowledge to challenge constructively" explained Michael. "I am thoroughly enjoying my time at Simplyhealth. There has been significant M&A activity and I have had direct input in assisting the team to develop strategies for business integration and performance improvement. The board's NEDs and executive team are highly professional and integrating has been an easy and enjoyable experience. This is a culture in which everyone is open to challenge, learning and progressing. First Flight was admirably professional throughout and very thorough. The company is a good match for Simplyhealth as they both showed friendly, efficient and highly competent professionalism" he commented on the selection process.

Tim Brooke has an impressive background with some of the UK's most well-known institutions including Reuters, Lloyds Merchant Bank, JPMorgan Chase & Co, Yorkshire Building Society and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. He brings global, board level experience and total commitment to the values of Simplyhealth. "I was attracted to supporting the new phase that Simplyhealth is now in" commented Tim, "Simplyhealth's board has a bank of talent and is easy to work with – we share common goals and a sense of mission and vision. What you do - and how you do it - is vitally important and Simplyhealth's socially responsible approach appeals to me." Tim went on to explain how he was enjoying working within a mutual as it is highly commercial with satisfying results for its customers and the charities it supports. Tim is currently MD at Protiviti, a company specialising in risk and business consulting. He has a Non-Exec role with Thackray, a Leeds medical museum where he chairs the audit and risk committee. By having both Executive and Non-Executive roles, Tim feels this enables him to bring more current thinking to his Non Exec role. Tim's expertise in risk management will prove to be of huge benefit as Simplyhealth moves forward and grows.

"We are delighted with the outcome of this process" declared Corinne. "We have the experience and credibility of Michael supported with the passion and interest of Tim. They work very well together and empathise with everything Simplyhealth stands for. Ultimately, 'doing the right thing' is our driver at Simplyhealth, it's a vocation, not just a job and we know we have found the right Non Execs to help us with its continued success" she finished.

"First Flight was instrumental in shaping the opportunities at Simplyhealth, recognising the types of people that the board required and working hard to fill them. The processes were thorough and produced the right results for us. This was a complicated brief that evolved over time but we were able to work extremely well together and build a valuable relationship that we hope to take forward into the future" concluded Romana Abdin, Simplyhealth Director.



## About First Flight

**Specialists in providing clients with Non-Executive Directors who add real value**

**Largest active Non Exec candidate database - includes experienced Non Execs, entrepreneurs and ex Directors of blue chip companies**

**150 successful Non-Exec projects completed**

**Highly knowledgeable account directors and management team**

**We look to understand the skills and personalities on the Boards of our clients to enable us to provide candidates who will fill missing skill gaps and provide the right personalities to balance the Board**

**First Flight was the sponsor of the "Non-Executive Director of the Year" at the Quoted Company Awards**



Chris Spencer-Phillips