

John Holden – Tinderbox Working Capital

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John Holden

Following several announcements about alternative finance in the recent Budget; BLM met with John Holden, Founder of Tinderbox Working Capital – to learn more about his business and single invoice finance.

An experienced venture capital investor of some twenty years - including eight years with 3i in Bristol and London - John Holden recently took the plunge and launched his own business – Tinderbox Working Capital.

Having seen first-hand how early stage ventures could benefit from better access to working capital funding, John's ambition is to make Tinderbox the first port of call for high growth businesses.

Durham University

Following graduation from Durham University and a couple of years in London with a large stockbroking firm, John left the business with his mentor, who was starting up his own operation.

Going from a traditional City environment to a basic office, starting out with just a kettle and a leased photocopier, John found himself at the sharp end of life in a start-up.

Spending all week on client work with weekends reserved for writing new business pitches, John learned a great deal about working hard and staying focussed.

After six years of learning everything he could in the City, John decided it was time to return to the books and consolidate his experiences at Cranfield University on a full time MBA course, graduating with distinction.

3i

In the mid 90's John joined 3i, where he worked his way up to become Investment Director in Bristol covering the South West region.

Since leaving 3i in 2003, John worked at ANGLE, an AIM listed plc which specialises in commercialising intellectual property, and most recently as Director of Investments at Imperial Innovations plc.

Growth of invoice finance

According to John there are a number of credible alternatives to traditional finance readily available to businesses in need of a cash-flow boost.

One such alternative gaining momentum in the market is single invoice finance, which is what inspired Tinderbox.

John comments: "Invoice finance's sexier younger sister, single invoice finance burst on to the scene in 2011 with the launch of online platform MarketInvoice attracting widespread attention from press, investors and businesses alike.

"Not to be confused with traditional invoice finance facilities, involving long term contracts with all of a company's invoices used, single invoice finance provides a straightforward short term cash boost to businesses.

"It is based on a simple premise where a business sells an invoice of their choice to a funder for an immediate cash injection, it's easy to see the attraction of single invoice finance to boost working capital."

Long term plans

Longer term John plans to grow Tinderbox alongside its customers.

He comments: "As they grow their need for working capital and other finance will increase, and Tinderbox aims to be there to provide them with the funding they need.

"This could be around asset finance or larger and longer term working capital facilities."