

An “insourcing” first for the Broadcast Industry?

Red Bee Media and dB Broadcast established a framework agreement back in 2011, which in itself is not unusual. What is unusual, however, is the unique way the agreement has developed into one which provides Red Bee with a range of “insourcing” benefits which would be difficult to obtain without the investment of time and energy in relationship building that both companies have shared in.

Insourcing is where a third party is brought in to work inside a company's facilities. Red Bee, one of the world's leading media services companies, has an impressive client list across leading broadcasters: from the BBC, UKTV, and Ch4 to Orange and Nike and, most recently, BT Sport.

“In October 2011 it was clear that the company's business model needed to change to manage and implement an increasing number of technical projects ,” says David Popper, Red Bee's Head of Technology Transformation, “This also meant that we needed to establish a new type of relationship with a broadcast technology expert. In the summer of 2011 Red Bee undertook a review of possible partners and after a competitive tendering process appointed dB Broadcast. Red Bee has an exceptional creative and innovative culture and we were looking for an organisation which would be able to add real value to ourselves and our clients.

Some of dB Broadcast's work at Red Bee

- **Red Bee:** the consolidation and technical refresh of core elements of the broadcast infrastructure including the installation of a new AVID ISIS system
- **BBC World News:** design, build and test of a completely new playout system and control suite.
- **New channel BT Sport:** design, build and test new playout facilities for the new sports channel.
- **New channel 4Seven (for Channel Four):** the development and build of the continuity booth, and integration of the new channel into the existing Channel Four infrastructure.
- **BBC Worldwide:** a technical refresh of playout technology and support in launching new service.
- **BBC Signing Studios:** designing and building two new HD Signing Studios remote from other facilities.
- **BBC2 HD:** creating and managing the migration to a new playout system and upgraded HD monitoring control suites. Undertaken to integrate with existing BBC infrastructure and ensure service continuity.

System integration from studio through to transmission



We wanted expertise in playout facilities, but also a company who could provide us – well, challenge us – with their approach to cutting-edge technology across the complete broadcast chain.”

dB Broadcast (dB) is one of the UK’s largest and most successful independent systems integrators. With clients ranging from the BBC, Sky and Turner to the

Indian Parliament, and ATV Jordan, dB is expert in broadcast system design and installation from studio through to transmission.

“We were, of course, delighted to be asked to work with Red Bee,” comments Mike Bryan, dB’s Red Bee Project Manager, “but what has been particularly rewarding has been the opportunity to work really closely within their organisation, to the extent that we are now involved in the very early stages when they develop new business tenders – that’s very rewarding for the team as it recognises the real value we can add.”

The two companies have agreed a Service Level Agreement but also an open-book accounting approach and a gain-share arrangement, where both companies are incentivised to seek and share financial benefits.

“With the agreements in place,” advised Robert Luggar, Technology Build Manager at Red Bee,” and as dB knows our operation so thoroughly, we realise advantages in a number of areas. For example, given the amount of work we do together, we spend very little time on commercial arrangements, while at the same time, having the dB team in-house, we get a much higher exposure to new technological solutions than our competitors do. We’re also able to pull on dB’s large internal team of engineers and so have easy access to expert resource across the complete broadcast chain and the different phases of any project. As part of the on-going relationship, dB has invested time in training its own staff to better understand the technologies and specific equipment at Red Bee. This

“Insourcing” Benefits Red Bee realises from dB Broadcast

Efficient communications

- dB is viewed as an “internal department” so closer relationships develop
- “Open commercial terms” means that minimum time is spent on negotiations and contracts. dB share weekly financial reports as projects progress so that current spend and end of project spend is totally clear.

Resource flexibility

- Red Bee gets resource scale from dB who can enlarge or reduce the team as requirements change
- Red Bee realises flexibility without knowledge loss as dB uses the same team of engineers and wiremen who gain an intimate understanding of the technology and processes

Time/cost savings by

- Red Bee and their clients don’t need to detail specifications as dB already have detailed knowledge of Red Bee’s system
- A commitment to a “one team” relationships where everyone is focused on delivering the best technical solution and “getting costs out not just down” – for the short, medium and long term.

releases our and our clients' teams from many time consuming project tasks. For example dB is currently undertaking the configuration of the Centra control system.

“We have a similar relationship with Turner Broadcast who has been a client of dB for 7 years”, adds Tom Swan, dB’s Sales and Marketing Director. “We believe that for many organisations seeking a modern procurement approach in

broadcast systems and infrastructure, this is the way to realise the biggest advantages because of the speed of change and the need to access the very latest expert thinking easily. Jointly, we can focus on getting costs out – not just down. With us, Red Bee are also able to work to much tighter timescales than many of



Some of dB Broadcast's Technology Partners at Red Bee

- Axon
- Evertz
- Harmonic
- Junger Audio
- Miranda
- Pixel Power
- Screen Subtitling
Systems
- Snell
- Sony
- Suitcase TV

their competitors, as unproductive time is reduced which, in turn, helps keep budgets low – a must as broadcasters seek new models in the changing media landscape. Our aim is to future- proof as much as we

can – we spend a lot of time understanding the broadcast equipment and systems market, and come to each client with an independent perspective on what their requirements could be and how they could best be met. We’ve been involved in developing a host of new broadcast services and playout facilities upgrades at Red Bee and for each we’ve tailored the approach – be that installing the new AVID ISIS system as part of an overall creative refresh of the infrastructure, to designing and building a

complete new playout system and control suite for BBC World News.”

“Red Bee is a creative leader in the industry and a great client for us,” David Bird, MD of dB Broadcast says, “We bring our unrivalled technical expertise and skilled, resource flexibility to the partnership and together we challenge the way the broadcast industry operates. The insourcing relationship means we can both focus on value for money, and delivering excellent customer service within Red Bee and to their client base.