

BRIAN STONES

EXECUTIVE VICE-PRESIDENT EMEA, PATNI COMPUTER SYSTEMS

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OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS



Brian Stones used to be Senior Vice-President and Chief Executive for the European operations of a large US business process outsourcing company. But his role changed in 2006, so a call from Harvey Nash in December of that year asking if he knew anyone who might be interested in a new opportunity couldn't have come at a better time.

“I met Kirti Lad, who is a director in the technology practice at Harvey Nash, but there was a cloak of anonymity over the whole thing, which always makes me sceptical,” recalls Stones. “But Kirti did a good job in getting me to the starting line, because I was being approached by other headhunters and could easily have gone off in a different direction. Even when I found out who the company was I was dubious about whether or not I wanted to go back into an IT-focused organisation, having broadened out considerably over recent years.”

Patni is an international company of Indian origin, with a market-facing business in the US. Its executive team is split between the US and India, and it is quoted on the New York and Bombay stock exchanges. It has been in Europe for nearly ten years, and its European headquarters is in London.

“They saw Europe as the cradle for further opportunities and needed strong leadership to help them exploit those opportunities,” he says. “This year Europe accounted for about 14% of global revenue, and we have to double that in the next three years. That sounded to me like an exciting opportunity.”

- Brian Stones, former Senior Vice-President and Chief Executive of the European operations of a large US business process outsourcing company, decided to look for a new job when his role changed
- Harvey Nash called him to see if he would be interested in a new opportunity, but the job was shrouded in secrecy
- Despite Stones' early scepticism about moving back into an IT company, he was excited by the challenge at Patni Computer Systems, and joined the company in May to spearhead its growth in Europe

Stones was impressed with the way Harvey Nash handled the assignment both before and after he had accepted the job. “Harvey Nash was very supportive of and responsive to both me and Patni throughout the process, but they never tried to take a leading position,” he says.

In contrast to some headhunters who don't return calls, treat candidates with disdain and then pretend to be their best friend when they land up in a new role, Harvey Nash – and Lad in particular – have “a wonderful style,” says Stones, who joined Patni in May. “Kirti is also very sharp and has a clear understanding of the business and candidates' suitability for the role. The way she worked with me as a candidate gives me confidence that we will continue to recruit the right people through Harvey Nash in the future.”