



# Getting the Most out of An Interim Manager

We asked some of the UK's most successful interim managers and seasoned interim users to share their advice on how companies can ensure they get the most out of an interim manager. Here's what they told us:

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## Steve Shoulder

Interim Ops Director/MD (Factory Fixer)

### ③ Get the Fit Right

Make sure you get the right interim in terms of organisational "fit". Some companies need the bulldog approach and others need the velvet glove. Before appointing them it is important that the interim knows what approach is going to be expected - they will then be able to say if they fit that criteria or not.

### ③ Senior Support

The most senior person on site must communicate to the whole business what the interim will be doing and how critical their efforts are to the business. Also let everyone know that the interim will be reporting to the most senior person on a regular basis.

### ③ Objectives

Top interims won't operate without objectives. Within 3 weeks of joining the interim should have made a full assessment of the current reality and report back to the board what needs to be fixed. In the next week a set of objectives should then be agreed for the duration of the assignment, with specific measurables which can be reported back on at least each month.

### ③ Empowerment

Give the interim the tools and the latitude to achieve what needs to be done. There should be no areas "off limits" or no person deemed untouchable. In order to get a different result you need to do something different and that means allowing the interim to fix what needs to be fixed with no handcuffs.

### ③ Regularly Meet

Most interims operate at a far quicker pace than employed staff, so if the interim's work is heading in the wrong direction, for whatever reason, you need to catch it very early on. That's why regular meetings are important - so you can ensure things stay on track.

### ③ Open Praise

If the interim is doing the right things and getting great results then praise them publicly.

### ③ Don't Hang On

Most career interims have a shelf life and they do not respond well to the routine stuff. If they have reached a natural exit point then let them go on their way. Do not prolong the assignment simply because they are good to have around. Get good value from your interim and you will be more likely to use the service again in the future.

### ③ Think Outside the Box

Interims by their nature have a varied skill set. They may well be able to help in many parts of the organisation outside of the original brief. Develop a good working relationship with your interim and get to find out what else they can offer. You may be able to kill several birds with the same stone!

## William Offen

Group Interim Manager at deVere Group...

### ⌚ Be Clear

Establish and agree clear and exact criterion for the project in hand and include this in documented agreements. Grey areas will lead to misunderstandings and dissatisfaction on both sides and undoubtedly result in failure!

### ⌚ Have Faith

Don't take on an interim unless there is complete faith in their ability to produce the results without interference or micro management. Buying a dog and barking one's self comes to mind!

### ⌚ Regular Reporting

Ask for regular and clear reports and updates - a good interim should be able and willing to keep the client happy and satisfied with progress.

### ⌚ Be Open

Be prepared and open to accept new and different techniques and methods. One of the benefits of an interim manager is the knowledge gained from a wide variety of other organisations.

### ⌚ Expect Involvement

Don't treat the interim or let them act like a consultant. An interim should get totally involved in the project and should be active and instrumental in the results. They're not there to simply advise!

### ⌚ Be Prepared to Pay

Expect to pay more than the rate for the normal incumbent - a good interim is not just a temporary infill - He or she is a highly qualified specialist with a much higher and diverse level of skill and experience.

### ⌚ Be Prepared for Change

Both parties must be aware of the probable changes that may be required, especially if the interim project is concerned with improving areas such as sales or management performance. It is easy for a client to dream about higher performance and profits, but does the client understand that he/she and the people around them may have to work harder or differently?

So often the MD or the CEO has no idea what it takes and they are not willing or capable to do what it takes - this will result in a tsunami running throughout the organisation and the CEO being the worst supporter of the change required.



## Emily Montgomery

Director at Montgomery  
Healthcare Services...

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### ⌚ Don't Dump

When clarifying the role and expectations, be mindful that the interim is a specialist and not someone to 'dump' all the work other staff may not want or like to do.

### ⌚ Support Publicly

Mutual respect is crucial and supporting their decisions publicly will be essential as there are always those permanent members of staff who may resent and attempt to undermine decisions of a new 'interim'.

### ⌚ Not delivering? Don't delay

If they are not delivering as an interim have that honest conversation at the earliest opportunity, time is money and it may just be a misunderstanding.

## Simon Marks

Procurement & Purchasing  
Interim Manager

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### ⌚ Feedback Regularly

Regular formal and ad hoc feedback is important. The interim doesn't need to be told how well he/she is doing, but will be happy to hear they are on the right track, have read the culture correctly and are acting appropriately.

They need to know if they have made mistakes, upset or alienated people or are on the wrong track. They are probably moving fast so a small error could become compounded if they are not told promptly.

Sometimes permanent staff give the interim a 'bum steer' because they want the interim to fail. If this is the case the interim needs to be told quickly. They will thank you and will not take it as a criticism but an opportunity to put things right. Don't let them flounder by omission.

## Martin Chisholm

Operations Interim...

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### ⌚ What's Success?

Have a very clear, unambiguous and documented scope with a focus on what success looks like! Too often there is the danger of "scope creep" particularly if the interim is seen as successful in the assignment they have been asked in to do.

### ⌚ Prepare the Business

The business needs to be prepared for the interim. That means telling relevant personnel (typically the interim's peers, team and the rest of the senior management team), why the company is taking on an interim, what the scope is, why the specific interim fits the bill, how long the assignment is for and what the expected outcomes will be.

## Michael Phillips

Founder and CEO,  
[broadbandchoices.co.uk](http://broadbandchoices.co.uk)...

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### ⌚ Right Skills & Experience

We used an interim for our technology team. My tip would be ensure the interim has strong and proven leadership skills, plus experience from challenging environments/situations. They need to be able to make a rapid assessment of people and processes and make decisions quickly.

To find out more about deploying an interim manager in your organisation – or for help finding the perfect interim manager for your specific needs – call Monica Thaman or Richard Chiumento on 0203 043 8640 or e mail [mthaman@rialtoconsultancy.com](mailto:mthaman@rialtoconsultancy.com) or [rchiumento@rialtoconsultancy.com](mailto:rchiumento@rialtoconsultancy.com)