



Fulmination 2023

Public v private sector: what I have learnt from both sides of the fence

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Director**

My Background

2006 – 2021 UK Government Roles:

- British Army – Royal Engineer (EOD), Commissioned Officer, Afghanistan deployment
- Thames Valley Police – CSI (police staff)
- Dstl – Principal Explosives Engineer

2021 – Present:

- Founder and MD of defence SME





Public Sector

Key personal/ learnings developments:

- Understanding of the 'system' – commercial, R&D, operational, ethos, etc.

Positives:

- Job security
- Interaction and collaboration with industry and foreign agencies

Challenges:

- Working at pace
- Banded structures
- Annual funding cycles

Why Change?

Decision based on timing of opportunity and not timing of leaving

- Firstly, is there a gap/need
- Collective opportunities within the market the sum of which are significantly greater than their individual parts
- Add in agility, responsiveness and a simple business structure and there was a viable business



Private Sector

Key personal/ learnings developments:

- General business acumen
- What the industry is truly like

Positives:

- There is one rule – ‘If it is legal, you can do it’
- Shaping something in its entirety – you own every decision and every outcome

Challenges:

- Doing everything
- Choosing the ‘right’ opportunities
- On average you win 1 out of 10 – that’s a fair amount of rejection



A Practical Example

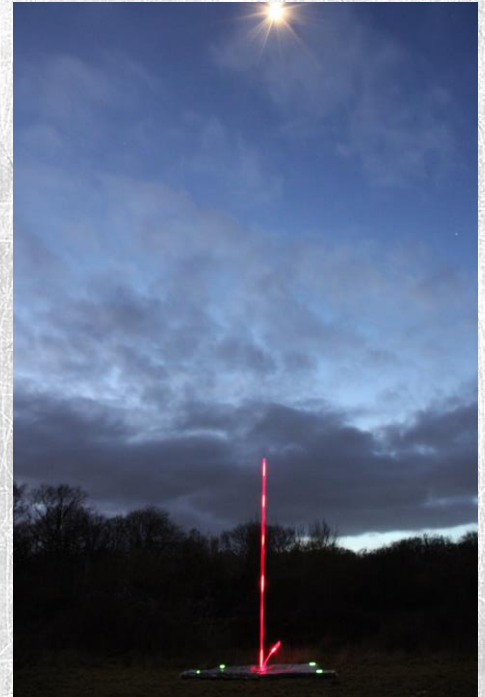
An example that spans my time in both the public and private sector involves the deploy of effects on remote platforms.

2018 – 2021 at Dstl:

- Very broad scope in terms of user and capability
- A lot of national/international collaboration = large amount of stakeholders

2021 – Present at Thor Industries Ltd:

- Rapid development iterations
- Selective focus



Summary

- **The key is the 'right' opportunity not necessarily the 'right' time – there are opportunities everywhere, but there may never be a 'right' time**
- **In the military the saying goes that 'no plan survives first contact with the enemy', when starting a business add in that everything is always twice as expensive, takes twice as long and you have half the funding you needed**
- **On both sides it is about balance and where best to focus effort and resource – lots of distractions and endless noise out there**



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