

Mario Thomas
Managing Director
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Mario Thomas is the MD of Chapter Eight, one of the UK's leading digital web design and ecommerce consultancies based in Leeds and London. Clients include some of the world's leading brands: Gulf Oil International; Gatecrasher; Kent & Curwen and Lyle & Scott, alongside on-line success stories: Sock Shop; The Gift Experience and Builder Superstore. Yorkshire Country Cricket Club, Sunwin Motors and Newsco Insider are amongst Chapter Eight's many clients with true global status.

UK's first on-line regional newspaper

Thomas, who was born in 1974 in Wales, the son of a Welsh father and a Cypriot mother, started his career at the Leicester Mercury - the flagship regional newspaper title of Northcliffe Newspapers. Here he worked alongside Marlen Roberts (later to become the Managing Director of Newsco Insider) creating the UK's first on-line regional newspaper website. (An interesting challenge for a 22-year old.)

This was the mid-nineties. The on-line media project proved to be both visionary and ahead of its time: the Internet was starting to grow and Yahoo! arrived in the UK to corner the on-line classified advertising market. In 1997, Thomas joined SilverPlatter Information (now part of Ovid) in London, developing online electronic publishing products. Working in the UK software development team brought him several quick wins and promotion to managing the development of the company's flagship products.

UK's first profitable new media division

In October 1998, former colleague Marlen Roberts, head-hunted Thomas for a new role in Leeds. She appointed him as her second-in-command at Regional Independent Media (RIM) - the fifth largest regional publisher in the UK.

The task in hand was to create a new media arm for Yorkshire Post Newspapers and the other titles under the RIM wing (over 100) - Regional Interactive Media. Four and a half frenetic years, 110 staff, and 11 regional offices later, Thomas' project became the first profitable new media division of any of the "Big Five" regional publishers in the UK.

By 2002, Regional Interactive Media was turning over £4.4million and was in profit. Noting this success, Johnston Press swooped in to buy RIM and reverse the readership flow from print to screen, by closing down the new media division.

Within four weeks, Thomas had set up his own company to capitalise on changing media trends, bringing in six other members from his team at RIM. Chapter Eight was born. Within six years, Thomas has turned his start-up company into one of the fastest-growing and most successful digital agencies in the UK today.

A variety of roles

One of the country's youngest Chartered Directors (a Chartered Director at 32), Mario Thomas has held a number of Directorships including Trustee of the children's charity Kids Count (part of EMAP's Big City Charities), Director of Credit Style and Founder/Director of the management consultancy Intelligist, which works with clients in media and investment banking, advising on the UK media scene and potential opportunities in that industry.

Formerly a Member of the BBC New Media Advisory Panel, Thomas predicts new media trends with prophetic accuracy. He also advises The Institute of Directors on policy relating to the development of the Chartered Director qualification, as well as providing guidance on social networking and online communities.

An academic biographer of emerging corporate trends, he writes prolifically on the influence of the web in business and its effect on SMEs. With dual British/Cypriot citizenship, he has addresses in Limassol, London and Leeds, dividing his working life between Yorkshire and the Capital.

Mario Thomas Key Events & Dates

- 1974 – Born Neath, South Wales
- 1988-1994 – Educated Brynteg Comprehensive School, Bridgend
- 1993 – Educated Kyoto University, Japan
- 1994-1998 – BSc (Hons) Software Engineering, De Montfort University, England
- 1998-2002 – Regional Independent Media Group Plc, Group Internet Development Manager
- 2002 – Chapter Eight Limited, Managing Director
- 2003 – Intelligist Limited, Director of Strategy
- 2004 – 2006 – Leeds Media, Ecommerce Director
- 2007 – 2008 – Appointed to the BBC New Media Advisory Panel
- 2007 – 2008 – Credit Style Limited, Non Executive Director
- 2007 – 2008 – Kids Count, Trustee and Non Executive Director
- 2008 – Appointed to the Institute of Directors Chartered Director Advisory Panel
- 2008 – Contracted to DeMatteo Monness as a freelance investment consultant