

Ian Langley hails ‘inspirational’ Tony Berry

The chairman of global giant Airswift, the workforce solutions provider, hailed his ‘mentor’ Tony Berry at the client launch of a new recruitment brand.

Ian Langley was speaking to guests of Wild Berry Associates, the new London agency of Berry Recruitment Group (BRG), of which Tony Berry is chairman.

The pair spoke to the guests about their business history within the recruitment sector and how each had helped the other develop companies.

Last year Ian Langley’s Air Energi business merged with Swift Worldwide Resources to form a \$1.2bn turnover company.

It works within the energy, process and infrastructure industries and has more than 800 employees in 50 offices across the world.

Ian, a serial entrepreneur, set up Air Energi following experience in the oil and gas industry and credited the ever-modest Tony Berry with helping him achieve his high levels of success.

He said: “As a young business person I observed Tony Berry through the newspapers and it seemed such exciting stuff building a big business.

“He was a swashbuckling character and did amazing things growing Blue Arrow and then acquiring the US power house – Manpower. I made a mental note about how incredible it was.



Tony Berry (left) and Ian Langley

“When my business Air Energi got to a certain size I was advised to find a non-executive director.

“It was something that I needed to do and the first person I thought of was Tony, but I didn’t think he’d ever come on board.

“But we met and he agreed to join us. Not only was he valuable for the business, but he has acted as a personal mentor to me.

“When I had a question about things such as fundraising, M&A, private equity or senior management issues, I’d go to Tony. He’d always have time and would give the best advice.

“He really was a source of inspiration to me as I grew the business.

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“Finally he stepped down from the Air Energi board and at about the same time I was able to repay the compliment by joining the board of Berry Recruitment Group. That was about six or seven years ago.

“Berry Recruitment Group is very strong and has grown considerably; it’s a unique business with good morals and ethics, combined with a driven attitude to growth and customer service.

“Tony had previously headed Blue Arrow and Manpower and Berry Recruitment Group has developed in a different way.

“It’s had good growth and prosperity and the launch of Wild Berry Associates is the latest development and with experienced and motivated staff it will grow further and make the most of the expanding market in the capital.”

Tony Berry told how joining the board of Air Energi was not a foregone conclusion.

He said: “On leaving Blue Arrow I had many opportunities to become a non-executive director, but I turned them all down.

“Then I met Ian and was impressed with him at our very first meeting.

He was the driving force behind a very go-ahead business.

“Of all the offers his was the only one that really appealed. His drive combined with the business was why I joined the board.

“And I was delighted when he later agreed to join the board of Berry Recruitment Group and become our deputy chairman.”

Wild Berry Associates was formed after Berry Recruitment Group purchased three agencies in London and brought them together in a modern, large and centrally located office.

The Wild Berry name is taken from the group’s two brands, Berry Recruitment and Wild Recruitment.

It focuses on recruiting in the office and professional, sales and customer service and finance and accountancy sectors.

With almost 20 experienced consultants overseen by BRG director Michelle Stewart, Wild Berry Associates aims to develop further with continued support and backing from the group.

The new office launch saw dozens of clients and friends visit the plush new offices in Tottenham Court Road.

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