

IN PLACE OF STRIFE

The Mediation Chambers



Mediation Style and Approach

Charles Middleton-Smith can be relied upon to deal with the inevitable surprises of the mediation process with calmness, authority and optimism. He actively seeks new learning on negotiation, gap closing strategies and mediator options. Charles describes his style as prioritising the commercial aspects, the future and reality, momentum, humour, courtesy and flexibility.

With over 25 years of commercial experience, Charles continues to be appointed in a wide variety of business and legal contexts, with a consistent approach no matter what the sums involved might be.

From 1991-2007, Charles was a partner at Hammonds in London whilst also mediating and is currently their consultant on ADR. He is now concentrating on his main interest and successful practice as a commercial mediator, with excellent ratings over several years.

Feedback Digest for

CHARLES MIDDLETON-SMITH

Charles has received recommendations in Chambers Guide to the Legal Profession and Legal 500 since 2001.

His current **Chambers** listing states

‘Charles Middleton-Smith is regarded as a “charming mediator” who “combines a wonderful sense of humour with a firmness that allows people to take him seriously.” He is highly qualified in mediations relating to complex commercial, IP and media and entertainment issues. Interviewees note that his success is in part due to the “calm approach he adopts to dispute resolution.”’

His current **Legal 500** listing states

“Middleton-Smith ... projects ‘Zen-like’ calmness onto proceedings, while coolly identifying issues to address. His client-handling skills and years as a commercial litigator play well with a range of clients, who note his ‘rare ability to adapt his approach to deal with any client from the corporate bully to the independent artist’. He is a gifted mediator described as ‘impressive’ and ‘assured’, and is widely recommended.”

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Themes emerging from feedback

Calmness, persistence and authority which makes him especially effective with very sophisticated parties.

“Suited to sophisticated clients and not afraid to challenge them”

“An excellent mediator who remains calm and communicates effectively with both parties”

“A beacon of calm ... lowers the temperature at critical stages during the process”

“Has patience in abundance and a very calming nature, which belies an ability to communicate sentiments and important messages effectively; subtle.”

“Creates the right atmosphere; built rapport; excellent engagement skills and quiet objectivity”

“Uses silence well”

“Did all the right things in outlining the strengths and weaknesses...did keep the dialogue going longer than expected. Felt that they had given it their best shot”

Thorough preparation and consequently understanding of the issues and capable of dealing with complexity

“Calm and contained handling of matters of great complexity”

“Marvellously thorough, understated and fair”

“Thoroughness, persistence, and management skills”

“Extreme knowledge of the case – well prepared”

Code of Conduct

In Place of Strife

Mediator Links:

Member of In Place of Strife, The Mediation Chambers.

A good sense of priorities and the ability to deal with a wide variety of people

“Puts the party first ... understands that the client is the most important person in this situation”

“Coaxes parties into settlement with ease”

“Excellent, very personable, took an enormous amount of trouble explaining things to the party who was very appreciative. Very practical and impressive”;

“Reads people extremely well – often predicting in advance their likely responses to situations and picking up on emotion – identifying the need to “have their day” in one participant in particular;”

Process management

“Dealt with all the issues within the time frame very well. Very calming and very objective. Subtle, made the party in question think carefully about the action”

“Worth every penny...seemed to know how to handle it and have all the experience. Didn't allow it to drag on when he realised that we weren't getting anywhere, he called it to an end”;

And one quote which brings very nearly all these together:

“Did a very good job...assimilated the facts and details of the case quickly and had thoroughly read the papers and understood all the issues enabling him to get under the surface of the legal and factual issues. Therefore extremely useful in the discussion that ensued and had a very effective subtle approach that worked particularly well in this case, particularly with the personalities involved”.

These comments, taken from direct user feedback, represent a fair and balanced summary of the responses received.

Amanda Bucklow, Commercial Mediator, London.