

**Assignment Brief for the position of  
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER (CIO)**

**for**

**A.F. BLAKEMORE & SON Ltd**



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Dear Candidate

**Re: Chief Information Officer, Technical Services Division**

Thank you for taking an interest in our business.

Within this pack you will find a lot of relevant information that should help you understand our business in more detail. In addition to sharing this information with you I also wanted to take the opportunity to tell you about my personal belief in this organisation.

We have been around for nearly 100 years and my objective is that we have a sustainable future as a family owned business.

The **Purpose** and the **Values** that will secure this long-term success are outlined in what we refer to as The Blakemore Way:

**Our Purpose:**

*To grow a family business in ways that are profitable and sustainable for the benefit of our staff, customers and community.*

**Our Values:**

- Maximise staff potential and their contribution to the company's success.
- Give great service to all our customers and add value to our trade partners.
- Make a significant, positive contribution to the community.
- Attain excellence in everything we do.
- Behave with honesty and integrity in all our relationships.

We introduced *The Blakemore Way* to ensure that the identity and unique culture of the company is maintained and to empower all of our team to play a role in the future success of our business – these are not just words on a mission statement but values that you will witness in our everyday work.

Thanks for taking the time to get to know us and I wish you well with the recruitment process.

Yours sincerely

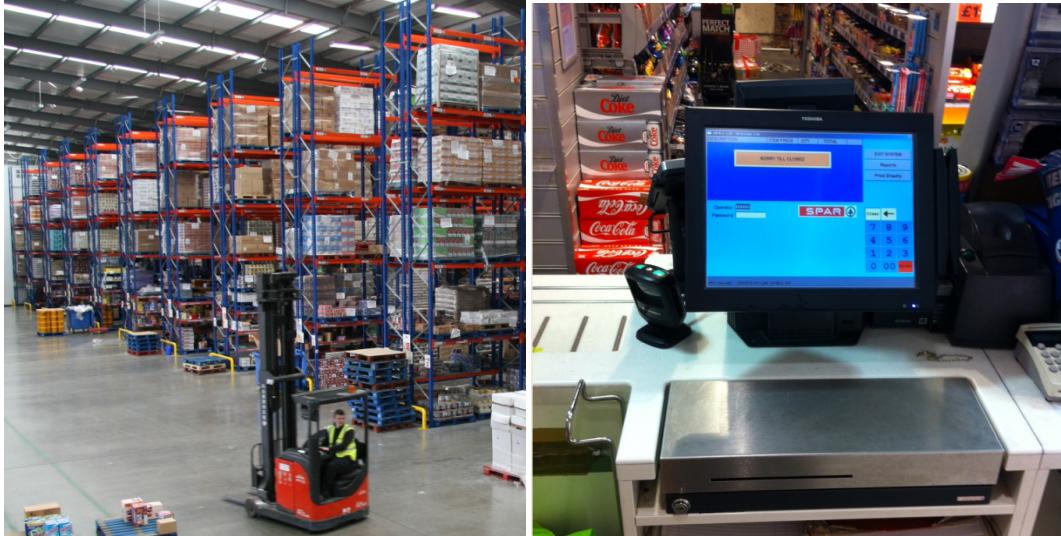
Peter Blakemore  
**Group Managing Director**

# Candidate Recruitment Pack

## Technical Services

### *Chief Information Officer*

### *(CIO)*



## 2. The Company

**A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd began life in 1917 as a single counter service food store in Wolverhampton and has grown into a grocery wholesaling, distributing and retailing company that now employs almost 8,000 people with a turnover of more than £1.2 billion.**



A.F. Blakemore has become one of the biggest and most successful family-owned enterprises in the UK, in part because of what it stands for and the way it does business. *The Blakemore Way*, which is the company's official values statement, outlines the company's longstanding commitment to developing a loyal and dedicated workforce that is focused on excellent customer service and behaving with integrity. The company has always emphasised the importance of building partnerships with suppliers and trade partners and never underestimates the role that it plays within the communities it serves.

Peter Blakemore, the current managing director, joined the business in 1965 and in 1975 took it into the SPAR UK organisation. Since then, through organic and acquisitive growth, A.F. Blakemore has become the biggest division of SPAR UK, owning 300 SPAR stores and serving 950 in England and Wales. A.F. Blakemore is the largest member of the Landmark Wholesale group and a significant supplier to the independent grocery sector across the UK.

A.F. Blakemore & Son Ltd is organised into divisions, each with its own board of directors:

Blakemore Technical Services is made up of the Finance, IT, HR and administrative teams serving the expanding Blakemore group of companies. The division employs more than 220 members of staff across its offices in Willenhall, West Midlands and Talbot Green, South Wales.



Blakemore Wholesale runs a national food distribution operation, serving delivered customers across the UK via an 84,000 sq ft depot at Apex II in Great Bridge, West Midlands.



Has 310 people servicing multi-temperature food service contracts across the public, multiple and free trade sectors from sites in West Yorkshire and the West Midlands.

Serves meat traders, wholesalers, manufacturers and butchers across the UK and the rest of Europe. Has 55 employees and operates from a purpose-built facility in South Staffordshire.



A unique business which serves local suppliers, delivering their products on their terms to their customers. With only ten dedicated employees, this is a community-driven enterprise, not a profit-driven one.

Owns and operates 300 SPAR stores and is the largest independent convenience store operator in the UK, with 5,700 employees and a head office in Willenhall, in West Midlands.



Supports A.F. Blakemore's independent SPAR estate, which comprises around 400 independent SPAR retailers who together own 630 stores.

Distributes to 950 SPAR stores across the UK, with 800 employees working across ambient, chilled, frozen and recycling operations, from warehouses in South Wales, East Sussex and the West Midlands.



Supports Blakemore Trade Partners, offering concept design and project management to the independent convenience store industry.

### 3. Purpose and Values



The purpose and values of A.F. Blakemore were redefined by the Main Board in 2008 within ***The Blakemore Way***, to ensure that its identity as a family business with a strong ethical heritage is maintained for future generations.

The purpose of the company is:

***"To grow a family business in ways that are profitable and sustainable for the benefit of our staff, customers and the community."***

The five core values, which are very much in evidence within the business and are integral in achieving its ambitious growth plans, are:

1. **Maximise staff potential**
2. **Give great customer service**
3. **Contribute to the community**
4. **Attain excellence**
5. **Behave with honesty and integrity**

These values have driven A.F. Blakemore's corporate commitment to positive and friendly relations between its staff, its customers and the communities it serves. One expression of this commitment, which is unique in its application, is the Blakemore Foundation, which donates at least 2% of the company's pre-tax profits to a range of small, local good causes in the company's trading area.

The values of the company are also captured within its Corporate Responsibility programme, as an increasingly recognised exponent of responsible business practice across the territory it serves. Business performance is measured through separate objectives for the workplace, marketplace, community and environment as part of this commitment to growing a sustainable business.

A.F. Blakemore's sales have almost tripled from £446m in 1998, and the growth momentum has accelerated in the past two years. The family business is well funded, ambitious and well placed to continue to grow in the short, medium and long term.

## 4. The Role

<b>Title:</b>	Chief Information Officer (CIO) Blakemore Technical Services
<b>Location:</b>	Corporate HQ in Wolverhampton, West Midlands
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Scott Munro Morris, Group Finance & IT Director Blakemore Technical Services
<b>Direct reports:</b>	Group IT Director

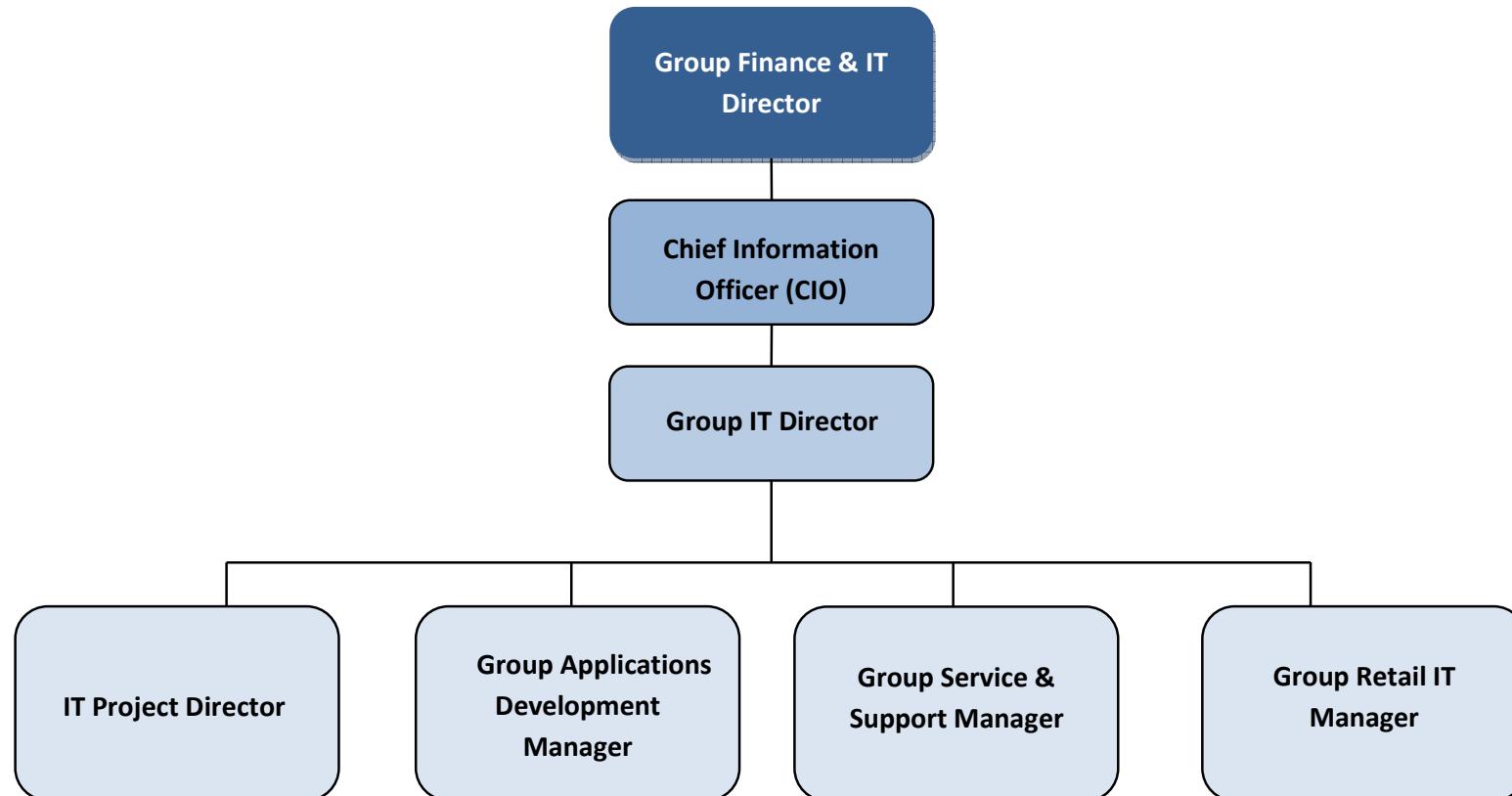
### Main Purpose of the Role:

***'To lead the continuing development and implementation of IT strategy across the AF Blakemore Group to include the implementation of new and replacement IT systems following the recommendations of a KPMG IT Strategy review'***

### Key Tasks and Responsibilities:

- Building relationships and trust by working with the Main Board (including the CEO) on business plans to ensure IT elements are represented
- Maintain AFB's IT vision, strategy and plans (in line with Group policy)
- Being responsive to business and executive needs and wants, ultimately increasing the strength of partnership between IT and the business
- Able to set the direction for and to gain commitment of the IT function
- Being proactive, innovative and one step ahead of business thinking
- To take the lead on important IT policies and initiatives, and when required be prepared to take on responsibilities outside of the IT function
- Building a top class IT management team
- Ensure that the skills and numbers of IT staff are developed to meet AFB's needs
- Facilitate the business to identify IT opportunities and derive benefits from its IT investments
- Showing by example how IT can enable business change
- Direct the development and implementation of new systems either using in-house or external resources (within Group guidelines)
- Lead the development and maintenance of an IT governance framework and IT management processes within AFB (and contribute to Group IT Governance)
- Being seen as cost conscious

## Blakemore Technical Services – IT Organisational Structure



## 5. The Candidate

With the current long serving Group IT Director due to retire from the business in 2017, the business is looking to create a new strategic CIO role to oversee a smooth exit of the incumbent Group IT Director and to drive future IT strategy across the Group.

Reporting through to the Group Finance & IT Director, whilst this is not a Main Board position, this individual will have considerable access to the Main Board and they will also own and chair the IT Steering Committee which comprises mostly Main Board members.

A Strategic Director is therefore required who has exceptional leadership skills, vision, creativity and someone who can both visualise best practice and then inspire colleagues to adopt it, within the framework of The Blakemore Way.

**Qualifications:** Education to degree level or equivalent is preferred but not essential.

**Experience:**

An experienced IT leader with a track record of strategy development in a 'Head of IT' role, delivering outstanding services, 'right first time' projects and organisational change within a complex business environment. You will have had a wide exposure to delivering business value through technological advantage.

**Core Competencies:**

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Achiever:     | Has real drive to deliver results, is tenacious and self-motivated.  |
| Vision:       | Has a clear picture of the future in terms of what 'class leading' technology will look like towards 2025, which the individual is able to articulate and identify how this will be achieved.  |
| Empathetic:   | Has real empathy with the issues A. F. Blakemore's entrepreneurial customers face, all of whom depend to a greater or lesser extent on the services the company provides.  |
| Commercial:   | Demonstrable commercial insight with very strong numeracy.   |
| Communicator: | An excellent communicator, with the ability to both listen well, and persuade and influence others at all levels within the organisation.  |
| Organiser:    | Methodical and analytical. Able to get people to collaborate and work together.  |
| Pragmatic:    | This is an organisation with its feet firmly on the ground – looking for a like-minded individual. A realist with the ability to know what is likely to be successful and when things are likely to be acceptable / accepted. Patient and resilient. |
| Leadership:   | Strong team leadership skills; ability to build, coach and mentor high performing teams.   |

## The Candidate - Core Competencies (cont'd)

Politically Astute: Knows when to challenge and when to acquiesce; has the ability to communicate at all levels, can relate to people at all levels.

Creative: A creative thinker capable of developing innovative solutions for the unique A.F. Blakemore business. Generates solutions that are distinctive and can derive commercial advantage. Seeks out best practices and shares these for the common benefit. Conversely there may be five different ways of doing things, so flexibility is essential.

## 6. The Rewards

The terms and conditions to be offered will reflect the importance of this role and its potential to impact on the whole of A.F. Blakemore.

Salary: £ Competitive

Bonus: 0.15% of group profit before tax per annum (non contractual)

Car/Car Allowance: Executive car to the value of £32,000 (purchase price)

Private Healthcare: Yes – single AVIVA membership

Pension: Contributory Money Purchase Scheme – 10% Company, minimum of 5% employee contribution. Pension scheme members also attract PHI cover.

Life Cover: 1 x salary for non company pension scheme members and 6 x salary for company pension scheme members

Holidays: 26 days, plus 8 public holidays

Voluntary Benefits: Exclusive in-store and online savings

Additional Benefits include:

Company Sick Pay Scheme, Staff Discount Scheme, Long Service Awards, Childcare Vouchers, Cycle to Work Scheme and Employee Volunteering opportunities through our recognised responsible business programme.