

# The Western Mail Business



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**US ENTERPRISE:** Cardiff consultant heads new UK base

## Photocopy cost-cutter sets up in South Wales

A CONSULTANCY which has saved firms millions of dollars in photocopying costs in America has established its UK base in South Wales.

Copywatch, set up by former US recruitment consultant Matthew Smith in New York, is headed in the UK by Cardiff man Huw Williams.

Mr Smith is seen as something of a pariah by copying companies across the Atlantic, such has been his success in cutting copying costs for clients including banks, private health firms, accountants and law firms since 1992.

He has now brought his firm, Copywatch, to these shores and has already recruited 10 associates across the UK.

The logic of the business appears straightforward. Mr Smith says most contracts which

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firms sign with photocopying companies see them paying much more than they should in fees.

"We go in to a company and look to make sure that the copying equipment they have is the right size and working to at least 60 to 80 per cent of its potential," said Mr Smith.

"However, most of the time it is working at just 10 to 30 per cent. We break the costs down to the simplest unit, which is how much it costs a company per copy they produce."

Copywatch approaches companies directly and Mr Smith admits that there is a high degree of scepticism from

potential clients. "We don't get defensive. We tell companies we can cut their copying costs and we take 50 per cent of the savings made during the first two years."

With copying expenses estimated at around 10 per cent of firms' overheads, that can be a significant figure.

Mr Williams said. "We work on the principle of no savings, no fee."

"It is purely results-based. What we do is very transparent in that we clearly show companies how we arrive at our figures."

"We have no connection with any copying firms and 99 per cent of the time the client we are working for stays with their existing copying company, but pays a reduced fee."

Mr Williams, a former char-

tered surveyor, saw the potential in cost reduction for companies and contacted Mr Smith in New York after he read an article about Copywatch in a national newspaper.

Despite offering glowing references to the savings that Copywatch has made, most of its major clients are reluctant to speak publicly about the company.

"It is very difficult for companies to admit that they have wasted money," said Mr Williams.

"We have gone in and saved accountancy firms a large amount of money and found that law firms had signed contracts which were not legal."

"We have many satisfied customers in the UK already; most were shocked at the savings we made for them."



**MATTHEW SMITH**



**HUW WILLIAMS**