

## EVOLUTIONS

# A natural selection

The rent bill landed on Mike Jessey's desk and he knew it was time to move. Rob Buckley visits Evolutions' new offices - part post-house, part catering-facility, now with added windows

You know what it's like when you've worked somewhere for a while: you can list all the faults you wished you'd noticed before moving in; things you used to do every day (like cleaning) start to lapse; and, suddenly, it stops being in the fashionable part of town.

There's nothing quite like a rent-hike to get you thinking, though, and so when Evolutions' Nassau Street lease ran out last year, and Mike Jessey decided it was time to move. "I loved the place because I worked within a few yards of it for years. But offline areas were a bit detached, and if you wanted to get anyone a tea, it was a five-mile trek. It was a little bit of a rabbit-warren and it lacked things clients find attractive. Like windows."

Jessey, a former ITN telecine operator from the days when the controls were "just two joysticks," looked around Soho for a new site, since he's keen to get "those real posh clients in. But the rent on Gt Marlborough Street is about 30 quid per square foot." So Evolutions looked a little further north than that (but a little further south than Nassau Street)

to Berners Street. The eventual choice - number five, with six floors of space, a roof garden and a bit of pavement outside - gave Jessey a touch of déjà vu since he'd been divorced there when it was a solicitors' office.

The move, which has so far taken six months, is still going on. Some things are on the back-burner until summer as well, since the pavement belonging to the office is going to acquire tables and chairs for clients' relaxation.

Evolutions hopes the move will help it shake its broadcast and corporate-only image to start pulling in commercials work and poaching clients from M2, Nats and Oasis. To help it in its efforts, Jessey is expanding the staff and is looking for more kit, including a telecine.

"It's all to do with service. We've upped the number of runners to make sure the suites are clean and that when clients want something, there's someone there to do it. And it's all very well having a roof terrace and coffee bar, but someone has to deal with it."

Jessey has also started replacing freelancers with full-time staff who will be willing to



MARK TYNAN



Evolutions hopes new kit and offices will pull in the commercials

put in that little bit more for the company when the pressure's on. And to drop the company's salary bill as well. His source for these and future staff, including the planned telecine operator? Other companies: "We'll be going to 4MC soon."

Jessey believes that service from a privately-owned company is what will differentiate

Evolutions from the others. "I think television is all about relationships, quality of service and caring. It's more difficult in a big company to help out when someone says 'Mike, you've known me for a long time. How about a freebie pilot?' which happens all the time. I can do that. I've always been a bit of a servant." ■

## KIT SPEC

Evolutions has both linear and non-linear equipment. The former is made up of two Sony digital and two analogue edit suites, while non-linear gets a Henry V8, Editbox FX, two Avid Symphonies and a Softimage DS. It also has nine Avid off-line systems and two AudioVision mixing suites. Other services include multi-format tape-dubbing and standards conversion, an OB, Lightwave for 3D animation and quality control for tapes.