

SWS... BEST NEWS

Let's Prepare to Celebrate!



Andrew Sweeney

Not so long ago I was writing about how we would be facing a challenge due to the looming recession. We weathered that storm and came out the other side a stronger and more determined business. We have since invested heavily in our training programmes to ensure that we have the most up to date skills and knowledge to compete in our sectors. And it is paying off. We have established successful training courses and operational models which we

can now share. This was most recently demonstrated when colleagues from Canada visited the UK for training to see how others are successful.

The passage of time is a recurring theme in this issue of Best News. Firstly, we have a number of individuals that have spent many years as part of the business. Some have experienced the journey from day one. The number of you who have surpassed a decade increases each year. At the last count this was a remarkable 110 employees representing 15% of our entire workforce. This is very reassuring and suggests that we must be getting something right. I won't mention individuals as there are too many of you but thank you all for your long service, commitment and loyalty to the business – it doesn't go unnoticed.

Then there is the SWS Group of companies and their own individual histories and heritage. Matrix Training has reached 15 years in operation this year having flourished further since being part of the Group. Many of you will have already noticed that The Best Connection has a significant birthday next year as we reach the 25 year mark. Over this time, we have grown from a single office in Birmingham in 1991 to a £300M international business. It will be a great achievement and one that needs to be celebrated in true fashion. With that in mind, I have great pleasure in sharing with you all that we will be holding a Group-wide event on Saturday May 7th 2016. Put this date in your diaries.

Such is the size of the company we have had to find a venue large enough to accommodate all of us so the party will be held at the

ICC Birmingham. Partners will be invited and accommodation may be provided for those that need to travel. As well as celebrating our own success, growth and longevity we thought it would be appropriate to make this a memorable fundraising event as well. Collectively we can make a difference and it will be great to see branches and individuals using their creativity, flare and energy in aid of a good cause.



We have chosen Fisher House as our charity for this occasion. As a national charity, Fisher House is based at Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham and is a 'home away from home' for every injured British Armed Forces member that has sustained life-changing injuries or illness and their loved ones. The facility relies on public donations to exist and undertakes rehabilitation work for those injured. Please take the time to see what work they do; www.fisherhouse.org

This edition of Best News continues to highlight the success of our business, our people and teams from across the SWS Group of companies. Success breeds success and reading how this is possible, with the right approach and determination – even from a challenging position - is indeed inspiring. Our collective endeavours continue to make the business what it is and what it will become in the future

Andrew Sweeney
Chief Executive



NEXT ISSUE...

Could you please contact Jan Blann if you have any topics for inclusion in the next issue of Best News or with subjects for future Press Releases.

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New Grimsby office

The Best Connection has opened a new office in Grimsby to cater for continued growth in the region. The new location is ideally situated on the High Street in Grimsby town providing easy access for those seeking temporary work and requiring advice and face to face meetings. The office can also offer Basic Food Hygiene Training to the company's temporary staff working in the food industry.

Commenting on the move, Neil Yorke, said: "Grimsby is one of Europe's largest food towns and has a high demand for temporary workers to support its core industries. It is also a strategic location for our business which is served by many of our existing clients. We are delighted to be investing in the future in Grimsby and look forward to building on our existing relationships and developing new partnerships."



L to R: Vicky Cooper (Admin), Phil Hancock (C1 HGV), Jackie Hamby (Senior HGV Consultant), Marc Dawson (Branch Manager, Grimsby and Scunthorpe), Kyle Taylor (Apprentice Resourcer), Jayme Sephton (Senior Ind Consultant)

Welcome the SWS Decade Hitters!

Doesn't time fly when you're busy? And there have been a lot of busy people we must say! Best News is delighted to share the news that the following people have clocked over 10 years' service. A huge congratulations to you all and thank you for your hard work, commitment and loyalty.

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Susan Price | TBC Walsall |
| Sue Harwood | TBC Topaz |
| Richard Butler | TBC Derby |
| Nicholas Whitehouse | TBC Dudley |
| Kerry Jones | TBC Kidderminster |
| Lee Crimes | TBC Stoke |
| Ian Lloyd | TBC Warrington |
| Beverley Harris | TBC West Bromwich |
| Virginia Martin | TBC Topaz |
| Neil Hawkins | TBC Walsall |
| Joe Feeseey | TBC Worthing |
| Karen Whyte | TBC Topaz |
| Maria Panek | TBC Hanger Lane |
| Lydia Lombardi | TBC Tysley |
| Matthew Wooding | TBC Chesterfield |
| Ami Smithers | Bailey Care Services |



Pictured are some of our Decade Hitters being congratulated

Training and Development Department launch new Strengthening Client Visits course

In April, TBC's training department launched Strengthening Client Visits (SCV). The new, three-day course is designed to give managers and senior consultants the additional skills and techniques required to improve their sales performance. The course builds on the existing Introduction to Client Visits and forms an ideal preparation for the Advanced Client Visits course which is aimed at volume sales.

The course encourages sales people to self-assess how they currently perform on client visits and what they may be able to do differently in order to make improvements. With a focus on questioning techniques to determine client needs and to gain stronger client commitment, it also looks at how a stronger client focus, alongside rapport building and empathy, can help win more sales.

The course runs over three days and covers communication preferences and the impact this has on how people sell and how clients

want to buy. Delegates take part in role-play to practice new skills with the final day involving an external client.

Alan Clarke, Branch Manager, Nottingham, who attended the first workshop said: "I thoroughly enjoyed the course. I found it brought back basics to a visit that over time can be forgotten, for example, asking the client from the outset what they wanted to gain or achieve from the visit from their point of view! It is a three-day course but due to the ebb and flow of the programme it seemed to fly by. This was thanks to the great content and the fact that I took on board lots of information that was relevant and beneficial."

Wayne Tighe, Branch Manager at Walsall, attended the second SCV course and has since found the questioning techniques helpful in gaining client buy-in. "Instead of FAB-bashing, I now ask the client to tell me the benefits of our solution. I would highly recommend this

course to anyone as I honestly believe no matter what stage you're at in your career with The Best Connection this would enhance your skills."

Simon Thompson, Branch Manager, adds his experience: "With over 17 years' experience at TBC, I am always looking to develop my skills. The Strengthening Client Visits course revisited areas that I either hadn't utilised for a while or used to the fullest. It showed me new ways of expanding clients' issues, instead of just trying to sell at the first opportunity. More importantly, it posed the question - what did the client want to achieve from the visit?"

The course is realistic, with a final role-play with an outside HR Manager. The SCV course will help to develop and encourage consultants and managers at all levels.

Any experienced senior consultants or managers who are looking for an opportunity to develop their sales potential further should talk to their managers about being put forward to attend.

Renford Drives for 20 years

With nearly 30,000 hours of driving completed over a twenty year period for TBC Walsall, Renford Smith has set a TBC world record!

Over this period he has been an exceptional C+E night driver with an exemplary accident and attendance record.

"I recollect 18 years ago receiving a call from the manager of a large container distribution in Walsall. I had sent Renford to the company the night before on The Best Connection's first opportunity to supply. The job was to take a container to the docks for an important delivery into Mainland Europe on a scheduled ferry crossing. I was fearful of why the manager was calling me personally and expected a problem may have occurred.

"The manager explained that on Renford's arrival the truck wouldn't start and they were trying desperately but unsuccessfully to call out a mechanic in time to make the ferry crossing, causing panic in the transport office. They explained the problem to Renford and asked for his patience - expecting him to complain about the delay. However, to their surprise Renford in his usual calm manner said: "No problem, I'll go and get my tools!" As a previous HGV Mechanic and lecturer, he promptly fetched his toolbox from his car boot, fixed the truck within 10 minutes and made the ferry crossing. The manager stated that his transport team were left dumbfounded and that

this was the best experience with an agency driver they had ever had and insisted on paying Renford double time," explained Andy Wilson.

Andy told Best News that since then, his legend lives on and nothing makes a Walsall driving consultant more assured when needing a driver to be an ambassador for a new important account than Renford in the knowledge that he will always say . . . "no problem, I'll do that for you!"



Renford Smith (right) receiving his long service award of Love2shop vouchers from Andy Wilson

Swindon strikes-back!

Business can be unpredictable. It's great when it's booming and can be tough when it's not. A mark of a good business is how you bounce back when events take a challenging turn. Last year, Swindon branch provided a prime example of this. By their own admission, following some account changes which had dominated activity in the region for some time, the TBC office was turned into a ghost town. Business took a downturn and Swindon was soon slipping down the ranks of performing branches.

What to be done? Not to be beaten, a fresh, enthusiastic and energetic approach was required to get back on track. With a new pair of inexperienced recruits, Aaron Loftus-Baker and Louis Cunningham, supported by their Divisional Manager, Matthew Phillips, it was back to the drawing board, applying a recruitment-basics approach to filling bookings and sales. And, as they say, the rest is history. From a low position the team gradually gained traction and began to win more and more business.

"The Swindon Industrial 1 plan was in the bottom 10 in the country last year. This is now ranking 8th in the company for June 2015," commented Danny Keyes, Area Manager.

A key development was winning a new household retailer in the region and growing this from four temporary workers to over 120 per week. The high level of service delivered has gained TBC on-site status, pushing out local competition that had dominated the account for many years. Due to the success and hard work of the team they have now re-opened Swindon IND2.

"Both Aaron and Louis, despite having only 15 months and seven months recruitment experience respectively, are now in control of their own plans. Aaron is rising to the challenge of growing a new plan of 36 temporary workers out to exceed 90 by December 2015. Louis is now responsible for an onsite operation which is expected to peak this year at nearly 200 temporary workers, for one of the fastest growing and highly regarded high street supermarkets." said Matthew Phillips.

The team is now supported in new sales by John Crane, Branch Manager of Redditch, who has dusted off his old sales patter and is eager to join in the challenge of new growth in a difficult market. A great success story – well done to the Swindon team!



L to R: Aaron Loftus-Baker, Louis Cunningham and Matthew Phillips

Sales Competition - a family affair



Darren Ainge's Regional Sales Competition for May has been won by Chris Glover from Warrington. But only just! Hot on his heels and in a very close second place was his brother, Shaun, making this a TBC first. Nothing like a bit of sibling rivalry to raise the stakes!

"After many years of knocking on the door, Shaun has converted a major target account and has so far seen his numbers rise into the 20's, with potential for many, many more. This is testament to a 'never give up attitude', which is undoubtedly needed to convert these larger users, never believing they are sewn up and always looking for that different angle – well done Shaun," commented Darren Ainge.

The competition saw three Warrington consultants in the Top 5, closely marked by two Preston consultants. Shelley Pike, fresh back from maternity leave, has knocked over five conversions and Yasmin Msetfi who now, given the time to sell, has managed three new clients. Both are on course to be future winners!

Congratulations to Claire Littler and Lorraine Gandy, the Warrington and Preston managers, who have clearly brought a 'can-do', competitive attitude to the teams - long may it continue!

SWS Training & Development Centre

SWS Training & Development department has moved into newly refurbished offices at 9 Birmingham Street, Halesowen. The team officially 'cut the ribbon' on Monday 24th August and opened the distinctive purple door to begin its essential role in new surroundings. All SWS Group training will now take place at this location.



Access to the SWS Training & Development Centre will now only be possible through the purple front door on 9 Birmingham Street. Just press the buzzer! Delegates will have access to the welcome and refreshment area before being greeted by

one of the team and guided through the centre facilities and to their training area. The centre now offers a total of four training rooms meaning that no more hotel-based training will be required in Halesowen. In addition, most training at the centre will not be run on Mondays, reducing the necessity for delegates to travel at weekends.

The rebranded Hallmark Strathallan remains the primary accommodation for delegates undertaking the following courses: Foundation Course, Core Skills, Driver Tech, Strengthening Client Visits and Introduction to Client Visits. Hotel accommodation for all Management Courses will remain

at The Eaton Hotel.

The team has asked Best News to pass on some procedural information. If you have a query regarding training matters such as new delegate information, course cancellations, hotel requirements, dietary requirements and course allocation requests, you can email training@thebestconnection.co.uk. All pre coursework is to be scanned and emailed to coursework@thebestconnection.co.uk and should include the delegate's name and the course name in the email subject area. Please do not fax any pre coursework.

The team look forward to seeing you at their new home. Purple door, No 9 – don't forget!



TBC Hull local HGV driver's initiative

HGV Consultants from The Best Connection are experiencing a reduction in HGV & LGV driver numbers across the country. It has also been well publicised that there is a national shortage of drivers in the haulage business. In Hull, like so many busy international ports, there is heavy dependency on the logistics sector. Across the broader Humber region, the driving sector employs over 20,000 workers which represents 5.7% (GVA) of the local economy (NOMIS, 2013). Freight transport by road is the largest logistics activity so any reduction in the accessibility of drivers could have an adverse effect on business operations.

The availability of HGV drivers will

inevitably take some time to redress in order to meet demand. In the meantime, it is encouraging to see local initiatives that can make a difference and TBC Hull is a great example.

Hull job centre has received Government funding for a trial for 30 people in the Humber area to be placed through a CPC and Class 2/1 (C/CE) course. To pave the way for the soon-to-be drivers, the job centre approached companies in Hull to ask if they would be interested in employing these people after they have completed their training. They also contacted several agencies, including The Best Connection to gauge interest. TBC Hull, and particularly one individual, was eager to become involved and to make a difference.

Following the Driver Retention Course at TOPAZ and fired-up with new enthusiasm, Ian Woodcock, Senior HGV Consultant (and ex-Class 1 driver), Hull, approached two clients who agreed to run an open day for the candidates to show them how the haulage business works on a day-to-day basis with a view to arranging appropriate work experience at a later date.

"We need to help build the future of the driving industry and networking with local clients can assist with this. This is by no means a quick fix though I believe that establishing a future for HGV and LGV drivers in the temporary and permanent areas is vital to maintaining the best possible service we can offer," commented Ian.

TBC South 6-a-side

The annual Manor Royal 6-a-side football competition had the presence of the bright pink TBC South team this year. This was TBC's first ever team entry so hopes were high and reputations were on the line. The Crawley office is based on the Manor Royal business district so the team were competing against quite a few customers which made it all the more fun!

TBC's Rene Hawkes organised the event and arranged for free kit from Central Safety who kindly provided the logo'd bright pink shirts. Best News is informed that the team played very well, giving their all in winning two games, drawing one and losing one. The result wasn't quite enough to see them through to the final but training has already started in preparation for next year's contest.



Team TBC South players were:

Back row left to right: John Reader (GU) Team Coach, Ceejay Jones (PO), Hiten Pankania (HE), Lewis White (CW), Steve Williams (HE), Chris Jehan (GU) & Rene Hawkes, director of football.

Front row left to right Warren Gibson (CW), James Griffiths (PO), Tom Smith (HE), Howard Wrate (CW).

BrightHouse BrightHouse selects ctsDRIVE

Retail business, BrightHouse, has selected cts DRIVE from City Transport Solutions to manage its temporary workforce.

With 300 branches and over 270,000 customers, BrightHouse is the UK's leading rent-to-own retail chain, providing quality branded home electronics, domestic appliances and household furniture to customers on affordable weekly payments.

In June this year, the business expressed an interest in using a system that would give them greater visibility of their agency spend. Sue Harwood and James Morgan of The Best Connection invited City Transport Solutions to attend a meeting to present cts DRIVE to BrightHouse.

"During the presentation, BrightHouse was impressed with the range of features the solution has to offer and the benefits cts DRIVE would bring to its business. The Best Connection's team complemented this by delivering a clear vision of how they

would be able to fulfil BrightHouse's operational needs. By the end of the meeting the customer was keen to engage with TBC and cts DRIVE as soon as possible," said Mark Gooden, Managing Director, CTS.

The project was delivered smoothly in three weeks. This was due to the outstanding teamwork and communication between Sue Harwood, James Morgan and Linda Hartley at TBC and Kirsty Merryfield and Kerry Stratton at CTS.

"Together, we have formed the foundation of a great implementation team. BrightHouse began transacting workers on cts DRIVE on 20th July 2015 without a hitch.

"Well done to all concerned for this cross-business teamwork! The transition was so trouble-free that we now have a template in place for the swift implementation of new customers into cts DRIVE." added Mark.

Central Managed Solutions (CMS)

As the SWS Group expands its markets and operations, more opportunities will emerge to sell to our customers the many services and solutions the Group has to offer. This will provide a competitive edge and strengthen relationships. One such example is Central Managed Solutions (CMS).

CMS provides a fast and efficient method for requesting temporary labour across multiple nationwide locations. Manned by a team of experienced consultants from The Best Connection (TBC), CMS is able to provide a single point of contact that interfaces between its clients and TBC's network of offices.

CMS started as an experiment around four years ago. In its infancy, it supported the Interserve contract - a facilities management company providing cleaners for Homebase, Boots and Argos. Interserve wanted one point of contact to coordinate all of its requirements across the UK.

At this time and following many discussions between the Regional Managers and Directors, it was agreed that the Group would benefit from some form of web-based system to facilitate a centrally-based control of a geographically widespread requirement. As fate would have it, one of TBC's Regional Managers was undertaking business with City Transport Solutions (CTS). A pre-requisite of doing business with CTS was having all TBC's drivers managed on CTS' DRIVE system. If TBC was unable to comply, they risked losing the business with a particular client. (Does this sound familiar to anyone?). This led to an approach by Andy Sweeney to acquire CTS in order to secure the business and the DRIVE software. As you will know, CTS is now part of SWS Group.

Meanwhile, Marcus Fenton, an ex-TBC consultant in Birmingham, was recruited to manage bookings on a daily basis. This then led to the idea that the business model could be developed further to benefit other clients.

Matt Burford was assigned to the project to manage, develop and investigate its potential. Clients' demand for a centrally managed solution was immediately evident with BRS providing 7.5 ton drivers and drivers mates for its home delivery service across 60 B&Q Warehouse sites. As this client grew, Chris Wallis, who was working as an Apprentice Resourcer, was drafted in to help support the additional workload.

"There are significant benefits in using this service. These include a single point of contact, requests made by phone or email, centrally coordinated payroll, single invoicing, uniformed service levels across multiple locations, standardised pricing structure, improvements and initiatives implemented across all areas, 24 hour service and service level monitoring. CMS is manned by experienced TBC consultants and is a very simple and uncomplicated process which provides fast implementation

and is very easy to switch on & off," said Matt Burford.

During the successful experimental phase, the client base expanded and the capacity for offering clients a single point of contact was born. In October 2014, the team moved to Topaz, to work more closely with the National Sales team who identify and secure business for CMS. The service now provides a single point of contact for 19 national clients and handles approximately 250 bookings per week and around 400 calls per week from clients and TBC branches.

CMS has worked with City Transport Solutions (CTS) in utilising the DRIVE platform to help support with the BRS business, Furniture Village and more recently, BrightHouse, with bookings for new store openings. As operations evolve and expand, the provision of CMS, National Sales, National Accounts and CTS interacting with one another will inevitably ensure that SWS Group becomes even stronger.

For further information please contact Matt Burford on 0121 504 3085.



Left to right: Matt Burford, Marcus Fenton & Chris Wallis

UK Team runs Training Workshops in Canada

Selling has a universal language and common understanding that spans the globe. It is also a skill that can be honed and practised to be more effective and powerful. CPA is no different from any other company in the SWS Group in recognising the value of upskilling its staff in this discipline. With this in mind, CPA's Managing Director, James Wilkins and TBC's Group Training and Development Manager, Iain Brown, planned training workshops for CPA Canada and set off across the Atlantic to share some time helping the team to develop their talents. This is what happened.

After departing from London Heathrow on Wednesday April 22nd, there was little time for James and Iain to recharge their batteries in Canada before diving straight into the course on Thursday morning with the entire CPA team. The key themes explored during the day included, Money, Authority and Need (MAN), Pain and Objection Handling. On the following day, training moved in-branch and was based on live coaching with a specific focus on developing Pricing and Negotiation skills. A well-earned weekend gave the team time to digest their learning before a lively Monday morning start covering the key area of client commitment and how this can be assessed.

The following day the branch team assembled at a local hotel to learn how to gain a better understanding of candidates using in-depth screening as well as how to identify and make best use of leads. The course concluded on Wednesday 29th with further live coaching and reviews before James and Iain returned to the UK on a night flight.

In addition to the classroom sessions and in-branch coaching, team building activities were also included. On the Monday evening the team were faced with putting up a tent blindfolded - forcing the participants to work and communicate together effectively. It was cold but great fun and followed by a well-deserved meal and refreshments! The team also attended a baseball game to chill out and have some fun.

"CPA Canada are a great team and a pleasure to work with. They engaged fully with all the training, contributing to the discussions and workshops and gave everything a go to see if it would work for them. It was interesting and challenging to write and deliver a programme in another country, with slightly different language or phrases and to understand the challenges that the team face in a market the size of North America. It was a hugely enjoyable trip and great fun to work with such a

fantastic and welcoming team," said Iain Brown.

Luke Briscoe, Director of Recruitment, CPA Canada, commented: "Iain and James organised and delivered an enlightening and interactive training programme that the Canadian team and I thoroughly enjoyed.

"We have put many of the new ideas they gave us into practice and as a result, our last quarter has been the most successful we have ever had and we have just achieved a record month of sales in the month of August. Thanks Iain and James!"

James Wilkins, managing director, CPA Recruitment, commented: "Training gave everyone the opportunity to step away from the day to day pressures of billing in an 'out of the office' environment. As a result, experiences and procedures along with training topics were discussed with great enthusiasm, openness and a willingness to learn. This highlighted how close the team had become and how well they work together, especially when Iain brought out the blind folds!

"This has clearly benefited everyone as they have gone from strength to strength with both Monica and Jamie making their first placement and in August the office smashed all previous billing targets!"



CPA Canada Team

CPA Recruitment move to Watford (in the end!)

When CPA Recruitment organised the move to new offices, everyone thought it was going to be plain sailing - but then again it's dangerous to make assumptions as the unfolding events would demonstrate!

According to James Wilkins, CPA's MD, it was an exciting start to the year with everyone looking forward to the forthcoming office move. Work started in earnest in first week of January and was finished on schedule by the end of the month. Progress was great. In fact, the office looked really good and the plan was to move by 20th February.

However, sometimes it's the little things that can trip you up. "There was the small matter of a good internet connection standing in the way. Due diligence had confirmed that there was a BT fibre being supplied to the building, so this wasn't seen as an issue," said James.

Three months later, four blockages in the road, and the team were finally able to move in to the office at the end of June! Hurrah!

"We closed down on the Friday at 4.30pm and with a late Friday and a long Saturday of working, thanks to the help of Dave Morton and the IT Team, we were up and running

without any further disruption on Monday morning," added James.

Feedback is that the team are now loving the new office environment and of course having the convenience of being a very short walk away from central Watford. Thankfully the gym is less than 100yds away as having all the food shops as well as the food market close by is proving too much of a temptation for some!



CPA Watford team

Fuel Efficient Driving – Top Tips from FLEETMASTER Part2



In a previous edition of Best News we introduced Part 1 of FleetMaster's guide to fuel efficient driving which gave 6 Top Tips for improving fuel economy and reducing costs. In this second of three series FleetMaster shares a further 6 simple and practical ideas for you to try.

Top Tip 7 Plan your journey! It always pays to plan your journey in advance. That way you should arrive there quicker and use less fuel en-route. The most direct route is usually best but adapt it to avoid congestion and to use faster roads. Motorway travel is always more fuel efficient than stop-start urban trips. If possible, think about making journeys at times of the day when the roads are quieter and don't make multiple trips if you can kill two or three birds with one stone. A vehicle's engine uses more fuel while it's warming up so a single journey with three or four stops on the way is better than heading out and back on three or four separate occasions.

Top Tip 8 Don't get lost! Getting lost is a great way to waste fuel. Missing your motorway exit or driving aimlessly around a labyrinthine one-way system for half an hour is also pretty frustrating and a major cause of in-vehicle arguments. Don't do it! Proper route planning is essential but mistakes do happen so take a decent map as a back-up and investing in a satellite navigation system may also be a good idea. The latest sat-navs can re-route you around traffic problems or even suggest the most economical route to your destination.

Top Tip 9 Turn off the aircon! In-cab air-conditioning was once the height of luxury but nowadays it's a part of life. Contrary to popular belief though, we can't just drive along basking in icy cool air without paying a penalty in fuel consumption. Air-conditioning and other electrical systems place heavy demands on a vehicle's battery and it's the engine that has to do the work of re-charging it. In some circumstances, using the air-con can hit fuel economy by a massive 20%.

Top Tip 10 Shut the windows! So what if air-conditioning gets the

chop in our quest for greener motoring – at least we can open the window. Can't we? Well, yes and no. At low speeds, an open window is definitely preferable to air-conditioning but the faster you go, the more the aerodynamic effect comes into play. At motorway speeds, the additional drag from having the window open can effect economy and air-conditioning systems become more efficient because of the increased air flow.

Top Tip 11 Empty the boot Extra weight in your vehicle puts extra demands on the engine and leads to higher fuel consumption and emissions. It also hampers most aspects of the vehicle's performance from acceleration to handling and braking. Some weight is essential and few people would consider going on a diet to save fuel and it probably wouldn't have much effect if they did but we all carry stuff around in our vehicles that we don't necessarily need. It's estimated that every 30kg carried in a vehicle reduces fuel economy by 1%. That means removing the miscellaneous items cluttering up your vehicle could bring real savings

Top Tip 12 Turn the engine off Lots of modern vehicles have what's known as stop-start technology, which automatically shuts off the engine when the vehicle is stationary to save fuel. If your vehicle doesn't have this feature, you can still make savings by turning off the ignition yourself. An idling engine burns around 3.5 litres of fuel an hour so all the time we spend stuck in traffic, waiting at the lights or parked-up with our engines running can add up to a lot of fuel burned and a lot of CO2 released without actually going anywhere. The key thing to remember when driving to maximise fuel economy is to be smooth. You can't turn off your engine every time you come to a standstill but if the vehicle is going to be motionless for more than around 15 seconds, you'll probably save fuel by turning it off.

Focus on Mel Farrow CTS

Mel Farrow is the Operations Manager of the Managed Services Division at City Transport Solutions. She has led the team for the past two years.

Mel's day-to-day responsibilities include overseeing a busy operations team whose daily challenge is to meet customer expectations when providing ASAP or emergency replacement vehicles and drivers.

Mel is 'all ears' she says, which is a very useful attribute to have during the morning and late afternoon peak times when she is in the midst of activities supporting her team, fencing escalated issues and helping everyone with actions and words of encouragement. Despite the pressure, Mel loves the challenge of the peak times!

Away from the frantic daily action, Mel devotes some time to coaching her team and plays a key role in contributing to the CTS management forums. Her action-oriented style ensures she is never short of ideas and solutions.

When not busy at work Mel enjoys the open air and has been trekking across the Sahara. Closer to home she enjoys relaxing walks along the beautiful South Downs close to her home in Hove with Mabel her Cockapoo and husband Nick. Mel practices yoga and is working through a training programme to get fit enough to complete a 10Km run next spring. Despite her daily protestations no one in CTS, we are told, has any doubt that she will smash it! Good luck Mel!



Mel Farrow

TBC CANADA

A day in the life of . . . Hileema Mitchell



How do you start your working day?

At 5.45am my alarm goes off and it's time to prepare for the day. I get my daughter ready for her gymnastics class and try to remember to pack a healthy snack to make Emma our Administrator proud! The journey to work begins. To get into the zone for the day ahead I listen to loud music in my SUV - I like sweet Caribbean music. By the time I arrive at work it's like I have been to the Caribbean and back!

What does a typical day consist of?

I arrive at work by 8:30am with a positive attitude and a big, beautiful smile, greet my fellow workers 'Happy Tuesday' and get ready to take on the day. Our client, Apetito, is already on the phone as they are currently in production of a large order of meals for British Airways. I know it's going to be a busy day.

My first job is to check with the client to ensure all the temporary workers have arrived on time. After speaking with the client I have learned she needs an additional 16 temporary workers for the following day. Luckily, I have a backup of availability that I prepared from the day before so although a bit overwhelmed, I still feel confident that the order will be filled and my desk partner Alex and I immediately start calling. Before I know it, I'm in hysterics because Elliot is delighted and belts out "way to go IND02" because the orders are filled. Once more the laughter continues. This is the medicine that keeps me going!

Within five minutes, our excitement is short lived before the



Hileema Mitchell

next challenge arises. We receive a call from another customer who is down a Forklift Operator which leaves us short. Meanwhile, my colleagues are

nagging me about what to order for lunch and the English folk are moaning they can't get their sandwiches and tea. Of course, I look at them strangely and continue to open my can of Canada Dry. After lunch, I'm welcomed with a timesheet checking report alongside an application pack with an employee waiting to be interviewed and the fun begins all over!

Nearing the end of the day, Joe sits me down to go through the interviews I have had today. He gives me one look and before I know it starts highlighting various places of the application pack to help me improve my TBC ways.

What's a good day for you?

Having experience with Canadian companies, working with English people is always a new adventure every day. I can definitely say I have never enjoyed every day at work like I do here. Having those high fives from my colleagues that another order is filled and making my clients happy is all I need to keep me going. To finish the day, I jump back into my SUV, start my favourite reggae tune and head home! It's been another great day at The Best Connection Canada.



Matrix Training secures IOSH Managing Safely course approval

Matrix Training has become approved to deliver the IOSH Managing Safely course. This nationally recognised and respected qualification for team leaders and managers is delivered over four days and consists of eight separate modules. Delegates are required to attend all four days of training, pass a multi-format test paper and complete a risk assessment project to qualify.

The first course was delivered in March year with all four delegates passing with flying colours. Three of those attending were trainer-assessors from Matrix Training.

Sue Tunks, the approved trainer for the course, said: "I was very impressed with the commitment that everyone put into the course resulting in extremely high grades being achieved in the formal tests. I would like to personally congratulate Chris Fletcher, Alison Sibley and Aaron Biggam on their achievement."

Chris, Alison and Aaron were presented with their certificates at a training team meeting.



Left to right: Aaron Biggam, Alison Sibley, Sue Tunks, Chris Fletcher

Matrix Training Celebrates 15 years in business

Matrix Training has reached a significant point in its timeline as it celebrated 15 years of business in July this year. The company was initially established by Derek Ford and Philip Hutchinson in 2000 to deliver training on a local basis and has since expanded its reach to offer vocational training to young people and adults from across the UK. Over the years Derek and Phil expanded the business and developed the company's reputation as a high quality training provider.

As the business became more

established it expanded its base, taking on new people to address growth and demand. Most recently, Jane Strangwood joined the team of Directors to develop marketing and sales. Along the way, Matrix has won many awards for the quality of its training delivery and has gained approval to provide a wider range of qualifications that include NVQ's and Apprenticeships. Matrix has also undertaken two external inspections by Ofsted gaining a grade 2 'good' judgment on both occasions.

In 2013 Matrix became part of The Best Connection Group and subsequently

SWS Group. This has allowed the business to expand its team to 25 people and broaden its geographical reach and services.

"Matrix has come a long way over the past 15 years and during that time we have helped over 5,000 people to gain qualifications and develop their workplace skills and careers. We have exciting times ahead as we continue to grow our Apprenticeship programmes and fully utilise technology, such as the One File e-portfolio and the Nomad 'App', to help us deliver higher quality programmes more efficiently," said Phil Hutchinson.

Bailey Employment Services Goole hits a Record Week!

Whilst for many, August represents a lull in business as customers take a summer break, BES Goole has bucked the trend and smashed a record! August turned out to be a fabulous month for BES as they celebrated their best sales figures ever.

The previous week hit a near chart-topping figure only to be surpassed in week 20 as the branch achieved an all-time record.

"This was a fabulous achievement seeing peaks in figures right across the office. Our call centre/Lloyds contract has close to 200 temporary workers out a day; Howdens around 370 and Driving and Industrial 45 and 100 per day respectively. It has been a collective success," said Michelle Oxborrow, Branch Manager.

In the next few weeks, the branch hopes to top this achievement, taking the record to new highs as normal peaks are resumed in October.

"Many thanks for all the hard work from my team, some days we have to remember to breathe but we keep smiling!" added Michelle.



BES Team

Driving desk at full throttle at BES Goole

The driving desk at Bailey Employment Services, Goole is manned by Kevin Driver. Yes it's true! Allegedly, he was asked to change his name when he joined the business because customers would like it and it's always a talking point!

Kevin has been with BES for nine years and is a fountain of knowledge for local customers who appreciate the high level of service he provides on a daily basis. The driving desk has grown over the past 14 years and is strongly supported by local business with most customers and employees located within a 10 mile radius of the office.

"A wonderful area that we have developed over the past 14 years is car driving roles. This is a great fit for the retired and semi-retired employee bracket that gives men and women the option to choose their days of work and they love it! We have around 30-50 registered car drivers who work on national car

delivery work throughout the UK and even more undertaking local deliveries and test station visits. They all pop in to the office each week with their timesheets and many of our stalwarts are in their late 70's, often reacting to the customer's needs at an hour's notice," explained Michelle Oxborrow, Branch Manager.

On the HGV business, Howden Joinery remains one of BES's biggest customers in the region. They have just engaged BES as their second agency for HGV drivers and have recruited 10 people in just over a week.

"This is great new business! The drivers love to work at Howden's. I have never seen so many happy driver's faces and that's rare! We made sure all our new Howden's drivers had a Yorkie on induction and we declared a Yorkie day in Transport in Howden's logistics department!" added Michelle.

Record Margin for TBC Worthing

Work hard, play hard. That is exactly how the team at TBC Worthing like to do it. In June this year, the team managed to set a branch record for net margin for the business which is an amazing achievement. Well done guys – same again next month!

In celebration of their hard work and success, a summer barbeque was in order – and why not! Eat your heart out Ainsley Harriet!



Well done to Rene Hawkes and his fellow-walkers from Screen Solutions who completed a 100km non-stop walk in July and raised over £5,000 for Oxfam and the Gurkha Welfare Trust.

BCS develops branch network capability

Bailey Care Services (BCS) specialises in providing professional care staff and home care services to both the residential and home care sectors. It is a competitive and rapidly growing area of care provision in the UK. BCS operates in two distinct areas of the Social Care market; Domiciliary Care and Residential Care. The Abingdon, Swindon and Trowbridge offices are responsible for providing support for domiciliary clients. BCS is committed to helping people live an independent life in their own homes. Recognising that everyone's needs are different, care packages are tailored to suit the individual. This may range from full-time home care to short-term convalescence programmes.

BCS Melksham and Worthing offices are responsible for providing a variety of staffing solutions for nursing homes and residential homes. They offer a quality recruitment service that provides temporary agency staff for short or long-term staff cover, whether it be a shift to cover sickness, planned holiday or a maternity contract. All BCS temporary carers complete rigorous pre-employment checks and recruitment procedures as part of a comprehensive quality control programme.

Since coming under the SWS Group umbrella, Bailey Care Services' brand has undergone standardisation and expanded its services across five geographical locations at Melksham, Swindon, Trowbridge, Worthing and Abingdon in Oxfordshire. The business is widening its traditional operational boundaries and securing new business opportunities as part of its strategic development plans.

Keeping the brand fresh and its locations fit for purpose is, of course, key to competing in its market as is being at the

forefront of the customer's mind when looking to purchase professional care services. In view of this, BCS has recently relocated its Oxford office, where it has become an established domiciliary care provider, to spacious new offices in Abingdon. The move will provide the additional rooms and storage necessary to allow for future expansion and the capacity to extend its services portfolio.

"Our previous offices were tucked away in a managed service office on an industrial estate close to Oxford City centre with no signage to identify our presence. The Abingdon building is familiar to us as TBC occupies the 2nd floor. For BCS, the new 1st floor is large enough to accommodate the care services team. It will provide us with ample storage along with our own training room, meeting room, separate interview room and own kitchen space. The move will give us the opportunity to become more established, drive further growth and launch our residential services provision," said Lisa Rothnie, Operations Manager.



Bailey Care Trowbridge Office

Dementia Course Success

Bailey Care Services now have two fully qualified 'Dementia Champions' with Jayne Knight at Swindon and Julie Charters at Melksham having completed a thorough training programme.

The Dementia Trainers Accredited course was undertaken over a five-month period and included five days' attendance at an external venue.

The aim of the course is to support improvements in dementia care, through the development of knowledge and skills in dementia care leadership and training. Through the sessions, participants were

able to gain an awareness of the feelings and needs of those suffering with dementia along with their carers and to learn and share from others' experiences. The course also focused on how to make best use of resource and time, the benefit of reflection and developing the skills, understanding and knowledge necessary to deliver training to others.

Congratulations to Jayne and Julie for achieving the certification. They are now the 'go-to' dementia champions who will be able to provide help and training to others in the business.



L to R: Julie Charters, BCS Melksham and Jayne Knight, BCS Swindon

Say it with Flowers

It's always nice to receive (and send) flowers to people as a gesture of thanks and appreciation. On this occasion, Bailey Care was the recipient of a magnificent bouquet of flowers from the Matron at Queen Alexandra Hospital Home as a thank you for all the hard work the team had made in meeting the needs of the hospital.

The bouquet (pictured) was sent to Ami Smithers and Penny Garlick at Bailey Care, Worthing.



Bailey Care Services is sponsoring the 'Unsung Hero' category in this year's West Sussex Partners in Care Accolades which will be held at the Wetlands Centre, Arundel, on October 15th.

FleetMaster CPC Modular Driver training receives TBC approval

FleetMaster is to deliver the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) nationally for The Best Connection Group (TBC). Mandatory CPC training was introduced in 2008 for bus and coach drivers and 2009 for lorry drivers. The certificate is renewed every five years with a minimum of 35 hours' refresher training to remain legally compliant.

To overcome the 'last year' rush that was witnessed in 2013, FleetMaster will be delivering a module per year. The course fee has been offered at a preferential rate to encourage drivers to complete the modules in this way. TBC will also be able to extend this offer to its client base, thereby providing another mandatory service to its customers.

"With each TBC branch supporting on average around 100 drivers this equates to 7,000+ drivers across the business, all of whom need to complete 35 hours of training. It is a major undertaking that needs to be tackled sensibly. We understand that there may be reticence from some drivers to undertake training in this manner but it circumvents the prospect of a chaotic, unnecessary rush and the associated business impact. From TBC's position, FleetMaster's modular approach will minimise the driver downtime in the final years of the five year cycle and ensure that TBC contracts remain compliant for our customers. It will also deliver consistency along with cost efficiency," said Mike Cooper, Director TBC.

Classes of 18-20 drivers will be delivered locally to minimise travel time for drivers with the one-off fee including the cost of all training facilities. If preferred, smaller numbers can be accommodated in-branch.

FleetMaster was the first company in the UK to be awarded the Driver CPC standard of excellence on the 2nd of October 2014. As well as providing the most up-to-date training material, FleetMaster has accredited a module specifically for The Best Connection's drivers. This will ensure all material is standardised and distributed across the TBC branch network.

FleetMaster will provide booking sheets for all branches and a confirmation will be sent once a date has been agreed. To book your courses, contact FleetMaster's Ian Lettice, National DCPC Manager, ian.lettice@2fmo.com



TBC CANADA

TBC Inc. opens branch in Mississauga

TBC Inc. has made so much of an impact in such a short time in Canada, it is opening the doors to a second branch situated in Mississauga, the sixth largest city in Canada. The location is noted for its infrastructure, business friendliness and economic potential and hosts Toronto's airport. In addition, the majority of North American corporations choose Mississauga as their preferred location, along with their distribution centres and manufacturing facilities, making this an ideal place to fly the TBC Inc. flag!

To capitalise on this great new venture, TBC Inc. has assembled a winning team to launch and operate the new branch. The team members include:

Milica Zivkovic who brings with her five years of recruitment experience in the local area along with her Human Resource designation and great sales ability.

Kanika Sharma will join after her initial

training and brings with her international recruitment experience. Her infectious personality is well received by the temporary staff she meets.

Tom Stenlake is transferring from TBC Worthing to share his knowledge with TBC Inc. and is looking forward to succeeding in the Canadian marketplace.

Elliot Mendoza, branch manager, said: "Mississauga is an ideal location for TBC Inc. as the City has a high demand for temporary workers to support the ever growing list of major businesses that are located here. Demand in the automotive, food, pharmaceutical and aerospace sectors for manufacturing, warehousing and driving staff is particularly strong. To support its growth and ambitions, the City also has one of the country's most advanced and well developed transport infrastructures. With all the ingredients for a successful

operation, TBC Inc. Mississauga is destined to be a great success!"

The team are opening doors with existing business on the plans and moves have already been made to engage with local businesses whose peak periods tie in with TBC Inc.'s launch. The entire team look forward to working together to grow The Best Connection Inc. into the go-to-agency for industrial staffing in Canada! Good luck guys!



TBC Inc's Mississauga Team

TBC Inc. comes to town!

With international operations stretching across the Atlantic, it is exciting to host visiting employees from Canada who benefit from excellent training and immersing themselves in the TBC culture. Most recently, TBC Inc.'s Suzanne Lavigne and Alex Laurents made the long trip from Toronto to the UK for this very purpose.

Suzanne and Alex arrived at New Street Station, Birmingham, on 1st June 2015, greeted by Richard Owen from the training and development department and were taken to the Head Office of SWS Group where they were introduced to the heads of department and other contacts who they deal with on a day to day basis. The main purpose of the visit was to familiarise themselves with TBC procedure; to help them understand what has made TBC such a successful company in the UK market in order to enable them to transfer these procedures to the Canadian market. They also attended a 3-day Core Skills Sales course designed to help and support individuals.

Suzanne's experience - in her words . . .



Suzanne Lavigne

"Nine months after opening our Canadian doors, a fantastic opportunity brought me to England. Following a long journey, Richard from training met us at the Birmingham station and took us under his wing to meet everyone at Head Office. Five minutes into our sales training, my nerves had disappeared, allowing me to fully engage in every call without reserve. My time with Richard and William has given me the confidence and ability to sit with my orange cards and get the most out of every call I now make. To say the least, our inseparable training group was memorable and full of good times!

From training at Halesowen, I was finally able to see The Best Connection's English style at the very friendly Earls Court office. The board system gave me immediate familiarity and the team could not have been more welcoming. Being a Friday I was involved in their follow-on and even got to go on a client visit.

After spending a weekend in London seeing the sights and getting caught in the Queen's Birthday Celebrations I was off to Worthing! I was happy to reunite with my cousin who coincidentally lives there and then spent my last four days refining The Best Connection 'way'. From working on one of the most successful plans in the south east and experiencing a visit to their loyal client, Manhattan, I then observed the fine-tuned processes on other plans and admired the cohesive team that is Worthing. Traditional tea and biscuits were always on offer to accompany the hilarious stories of previous Operations Manager, now Canadian, Joe Middleton. A signed Visi vest given to me from the operational team was the perfect ending

to a great trip! In the words of my English colleagues, 'Cheers, bye!'"

Alex's experience - in his words . . .

"I visited England in early June and it was an experience I will never forget. It helped me so much with my progression in The Best Connection Inc. The learning began the moment we met Richard Owen and the rest of the training team in Halesowen. Working with the training team in the sales course was very enlightening. Personally, coming from a non-sales



Alex Laurents

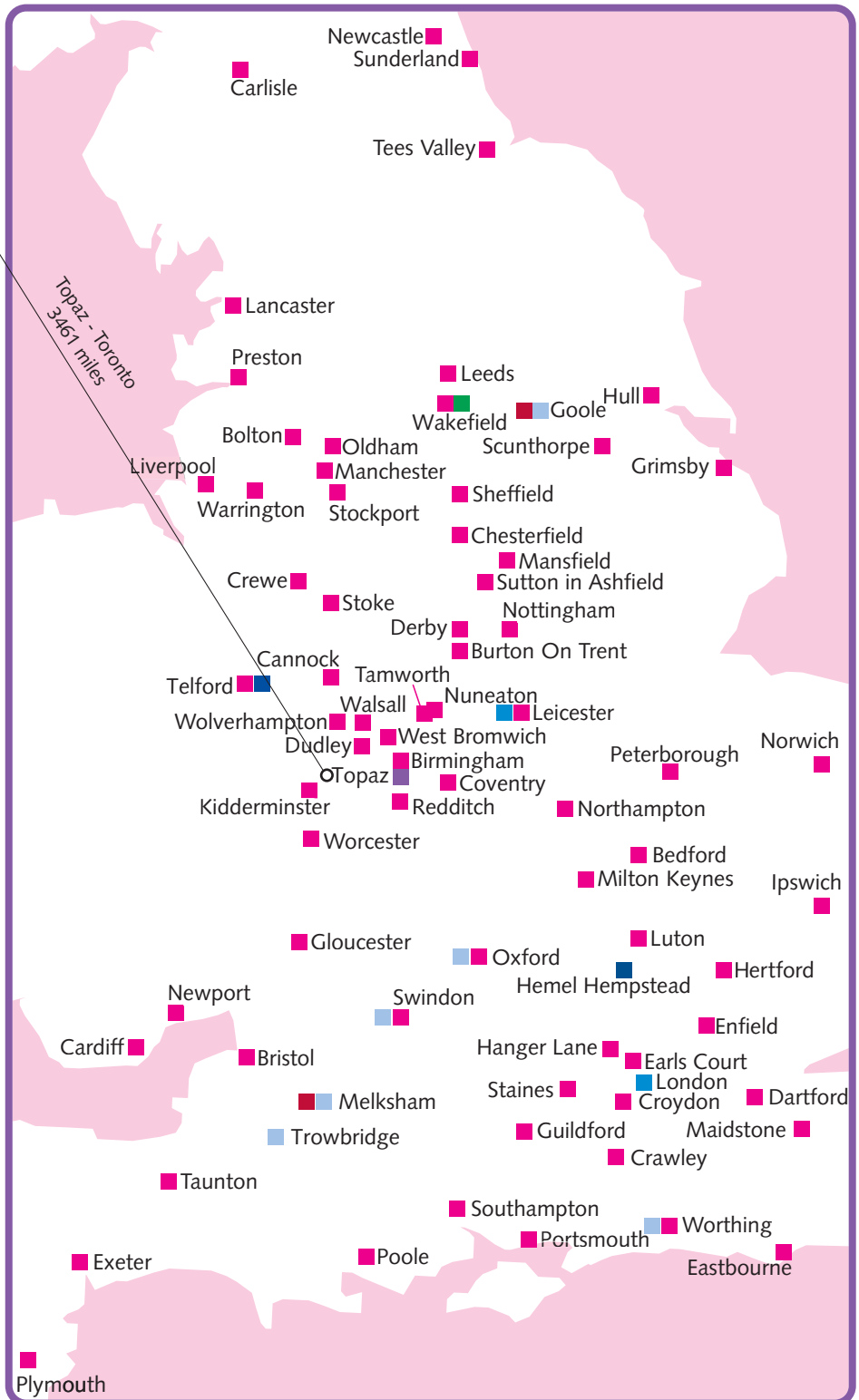
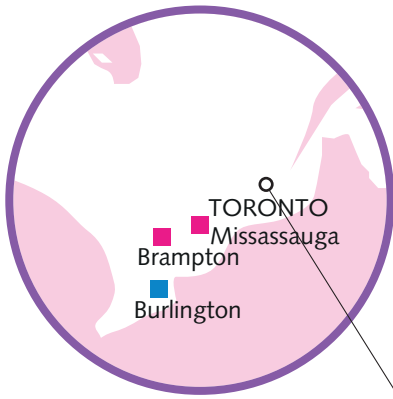
background, I found the exercises a lot of fun and it helped build my confidence when talking to client prospects. I feel that since coming back to the branch I have been able to use my improved knowledge of the Sales Cycle to gain valuable information about the companies I've been prospecting and actually have made significant progress with some, in fact closing on a few.

After completing the course I went back to the Earl's Court Office, where I immediately felt like I was back in Brampton. The similarities are uncanny, if it's looking at the boards for check-ins, completing the follow-on, or updating the plan, I felt like I was back in my own branch. Overall the experience was amazing, and helped me learn how The Best Connection operates and how to bring that knowledge back to Brampton to help grow and make the Best Connection Inc. run more efficiently and smoothly.

After leaving Earl's Court, I was sent to work in the Maidstone Branch. I believe I learned a significant amount while working with Andy Clark and Carl Davis. Seeing how a team of three people (two recruitment consultants and one resourcer) were able to manage a plan of over 250 people made me realise the level of efficiency I would need to have to get my plan to be in those ranges. They were able to work in tandem, knowing exactly what each other was working on. They did not waste any time. Another important thing I was able to take away from this learning experience was when I noticed Carl speaking to a client - he received a booking and within minutes it was filled with what seemed to be a reliable and eager temporary associate. There was no fuss, no hesitation. The order had been filled with a high level of efficiency. This is something I hope to improve on myself, sourcing the best possible person for each position and filling jobs with ease.

I think this experience has greatly helped with my progression. I feel that especially being over in Canada, this allowed me to fully realise the true potential of the opportunity I have working for The Best Connection Inc. I look forward to visiting the friends I have made and taking courses with the training team in England in the future."

How to find us



TBC
www.thebestconnection.co.uk
www.thebestconnection.ca

MATRIX
www.matrixtraining.org.uk

FLEETMASTER
www.fleetmastergroup.com

CPA
www.cparecruitment.com

BES
www.baileycare.co.uk

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