

# BEST NEWS

July 2011

## REFLECTING ON THE PAST TEN YEARS AND LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE . . .

In the last edition of Best News I reminded everyone that TBC was 20 years old in April, with that in mind and before writing this message I thought I'd take a look through back-issues of Best News and reminisce. It is sad that we didn't start producing our newsletter until January 2001 because browsing through the 26 issues there is so much that I had forgotten about and it would be great to have had the first ten years chronicled.

The first issue was January 2001 and one of the headlines in that issue was "The Best Connection ventures South." The article went on to say "following the success of our 20 branches throughout the Midlands and the North, we have now ventured South, with the launch of a Crawley operation, under the guidance of branch manager, Marcus Jepson." Neil Yorke went on to say "We see the move South as the first step to offering a national service and hope to increase the network by a further ten branches."

This current issue, a little over 10 years later, features quite a bit about Marcus's region and the various happenings within the Southern branch network. Ten years ago we set out to build a new region of ten branches to replicate our success in the Midlands. I think it is safe to say that our objective has been achieved, and some. Congratulations to Marcus and all his team.

You too could be the focus of an issue of Best News, but first you have to contact Jan and inspire her to put pen to paper - the ball is in your court!

However, we have managed to squeeze in some items from other regions including; a few unknown facts about Darren Ainge, Regional Manager, success for our in-house training programme which was short listed for an award, new training facilities at Derby along with the introduction of CPC training.

On a different note, as you will all be aware the AWR implementation date approaches quickly, 1 October 2011. Many clients have been visited and spoken to concerning the AWR implications and ramifications. Further workshops are being held by Mike Cooper at present with all senior members of the branch management team and details concerning the new systems and procedures - to ensure our compliance - are being presented

at this time. All this should be filtering through to all of you so, if AWR means nothing to you, please ask your manager and they will be able to enlighten you and point you in the right direction.

This wouldn't be a message from me unless I mentioned the numbers. As I said in April, 2011 got off to a really good start. That has continued, but as the budgets are starting to ramp up we must keep focussed and keep our foot on the gas. I know you will all meet the challenges ahead with your usual determination to be The Best.



Andrew Sweeney

Good luck and have a good summer, Andy.

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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## The Best Connection In-house training shortlisted as one of the best in the industry

The Best Connection was shortlisted for the Recruitment Consultant Industry Awards for best In-house training. The award entry submitted outlined the industry-leading training programme that has been developed at TBC and how it has helped people throughout the business to develop essential work skills and facilitate career development. The on-going programme has been very successful and this is reflected in both performance and low levels of people leaving the business. Within the past twelve months, 61 new members of staff have participated, with a 93% course completion rate; of those we have a 77% retention rate. Feedback from participants ensures continual improvement:

What did you find most useful in the training course?

"Overcoming and handling direct objections that have arisen from my actual client canvass cards. Learning the Sales Cycle and Questioning structures . . . I found the course very beneficial and would recommend it to anyone, regardless of experience." Joe Feesey, Worthing Branch

"A reminder of probing questions and identifying needs . . . If financially and logistically possible, I think this kind of training could be useful every couple of years even as a one day refresher. I have got much more from this course than I initially expected." Mick Doyle, Bolton Branch

"I liked the fact that the trainers tailored the course to our specific training needs as we are

quite an experienced group . . . this is one of the more beneficial courses that I have attended." Duncan Light, Crawley Branch

"Following the sales courses, my efforts have been rewarded as my calls are now much more structured and I am confidently asking for the business. Also, I have been fast-tracked from consultant Level 3 to consultant Level 1 with a resulting increase in business of 300%." Kevin Atkinson, Carlisle Branch

All company staff benefit from the training programme. New starters complete a staggered, five day Foundation Course of eight modules covering key elements and legal aspects of recruitment followed by a two-day Introduction to Sales course. Consultants attend a three-day Core Skills residential sales course tailored specifically to their requirements. This is followed up by regular refresher courses. The most recent training course is designed to assist managers maximise performance of their teams and utilises actual situations in-branch with a view to developing positive performance management techniques to be implemented with support from regional managers. A three-day Driver Technical Course is also offered to driving consultants and managers, providing specific sector awareness and knowledge to ensure they are working within legal guidelines. A refresher course ensures changes in legislation are addressed. This is a pass or fail course and in the past twelve months 105 people have attended with a 97% pass rate.

"Training at The Best Connection is not always a

room of delegates who are all at the same level on the career ladder. What I liked about the recent Driver Technical course I attended was that the group consisted of junior driving consultants upwards. This allowed for discussion and shared experiences which I personally benefitted from as my career path has been predominantly industrial based but the understanding gained now allows me now to fully support my team."

Darren Ainge, Regional Manager.



## New Premises for Poole Branch

The Best Connection's Poole branch has relocated to modern premises near to Poole Quay. This will provide greater capacity for recruiting additional team members and will enable a broader client-base to be supplied to businesses around the Poole area, including industrial, warehousing, logistics, HGV, technical and engineering sectors, with both temporary and also temporary to permanent and permanent positions.

Neil Yorke, director, said: "In and around Poole, we have seen signs of encouragement as many local businesses are beginning to show evidence of growth. In such circumstances, companies often need to find people quickly to fulfil obligations and customer commitments so demand has been increasing steadily during 2011."

Dave Stanford, senior branch manager, commented: "The team at Poole are proactive, professional and enthusiastic about developing the branch and they have a hunger to continue growth. In this time of austerity, we have bucked the trend and continue to push boundaries and we look forward to continuing to do so throughout 2011 and beyond."



From back left to right: Joanna Sobczak, Ozlem Ozuner, Dave Stanford, Olivia Collinson, Kelly Harris, Mike Fitzgerald and Sean Munyati

# New Training Room for Derby Branch

Following its move to bigger and better premises, TBC's Derby branch has invested in creating a new training room within the branch with the aim of utilising the room as a local centre for driver CPC training.

The first training course was delivered on Saturday 16th July by John Poulton Training Services, one of two external training providers recently appointed



The inaugural CPC driving course is underway at Derby's new branch

by TBC to deliver training nationwide to our drivers.

John Poulton already has a further two groups booked at Derby over the next fortnight which consist of drivers from TBC's Derby, Chesterfield and Nottingham branches. Colin Sheasby, Derby driving divisional manager who has been organising the training courses, said: "Since we started offering CPC training to our drivers, the feedback from them has been excellent and they seem genuinely pleased that TBC is assisting them in attaining this vital qualification. We hope that the new training facility will build on our reputation as a leading supplier of drivers in this area."

John Poulton was "over the moon with the facilities," and said that the room is an ideal size - offering everything a trainer could want. He confirmed that so far he has delivered several Module 1 driver's hours regulations classes to TBC drivers and has been amazed at the immense knowledge already possessed by our drivers, re-affirming the quality of TBC's temporary driving workforce.

The training room can also be used as a central meeting point for Lee Harris' area, as well an alternative location for the in-house training department to deliver their current course schedules.

Further CPC details will appear in an article in the next issue of Best News.

# South East Competitions

Throughout 2011 the south-east region is running a number of competitions. Each will focus on certain aspects of the recruitment consultant's role. The main focus will be on conducting new visits, but to add variety, we will also look at other areas such as service visits, lead generation, most spec calls, most new calls and most rates letters - to name a few!

The competitions have been designed to provide a competitive environment, increase margin, enhance career advancement and to add some fun. There will be a trophy for the winner of each competition, which they get to keep until the next competition is won. The winner of the most competitions by the end of the year will be given £500 in travel vouchers and a bottle of champagne.

"Congratulations to Jim Coull of Maidstone who has won the first two southern region competitions of the year," said senior branch manager, Rene Hawkes.



South East Trophy being awarded by Andy Clark, divisional manager, to double competition winner, Jim Coull of Maidstone



# TBC's Maidstone Branch

has shown phenomenal growth through 2008 to 2011 - going from one plan achieving £1,000 per week to regularly hitting £14 and 15K per week over three plans. Congratulations and keep up the good work!

Front row left to right: Danielle Hunsdon (C1IND2), Andy Clark (BMIND2 promoted in June), Alex Harpur (C1HGV1) & Louise Wright (Admin)

Back Row left to right: Carl Johnson (C1IND1), Carl Davis (SCIND1 promoted in June) and Jim Coull (C1HGV1)

## Personality Profile: Rene Hawkes



Rene Hawkes

gave me a real passion for ensuring that whatever profession you work in, the customer experience is paramount." He made the leap to recruitment and joined an agency which served the hotel sector. "I decided to move into recruitment as I used an agency to recruit all my temporary catering staff, chefs, managers and waiters and quite frankly just thought I could do

If there was ever an example of a varied and successful career progression at TBC, Rene is it! Before embarking on his journey with TBC, however, Rene cut his teeth in the hospitality sector at Forte where he was an operations manager for eight years. Rene said: "I think that this experience

it better." In 2000, Rene joined TBC. Rene continued: "I trained with Dave Walters in the Walsall branch where I learned how to fill in a green card and also learned how to defend myself from what is affectionately known in recruitment as 'witty banter', otherwise known as 'character assassination'!" Armed with his newfound abilities Rene opened Crawley with Marcus Jepson and Peter Hemmings. "I was the first consultant in the south and opened the first southern region desk, CWIND1. As this was my first experience of a real IND desk it was an eye opener but also incredible fun.

"I can still remember some of the great temps' excuses for not getting to work - including the classic - 'my girlfriend has been attacked by a fox' and 'I have just run over a squirrel' while also learning that it is possible to have more than three sets of grandparents die in a single month."

In 2002 Rene moved to the Worthing branch as a senior consultant, opening both industrial and HGV desks, which became extremely successful including supplying the new Rolls Royce Manufacturing Plant in Chichester. In 2003 Rene was promoted to Divisional Manager and took on the Portsmouth branch working with Sam Campion who is now the branch manager. "We regularly hit £5/6k; one of our biggest clients was the local Royal Mail depot, the

manger of which, Chris Gordon, can now be found heading up the Southampton Branch of TBC so we must be doing something right!" In 2005 Rene gained promotion to Branch Manager and took on the additional responsibility for the Earls Court branch. He was later given responsibility for Crawley including the integration of the SMS branch. In 2008 Rene was given the responsibility to open TBC's Croydon branch, followed by Maidstone which has grown to become a great success story. In 2010 Eastbourne was entrusted to Rene, which is managed by Mark Bowley, who previously worked with him in Crawley. As a result of all his achievements, in August 2010, Rene was promoted to senior branch manager.

Rene is married with three children and enjoys sailing, sea kayaking and mountain walking in his spare time and is currently training to become a Sea Scout leader.

As for his working ethos, his colleagues may recognise these words of wisdom, "Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, whilst the present remains an opportunity" another personal favorite is; "There is no such thing as failure, it is merely a transitional period between the peaks of success."

**Congratulations to Rene on his success to date and long may it continue!**

## Dave Stanford returns to the fold



Dave Stanford

Although this seemed like a different world, Dave felt the experience allowed him to gain valuable information on local markets. At the same time as being offered promotion with his new company, Dave was also made an offer by TBC to return and in his words, it was a 'no brainer'! Dave said: "I was at my happiest at TBC and gained a lot as a person and consultant. I had opened Southampton in 2002 and subsequently also managed Portsmouth. To TBC's credit, the majority of the teams in Poole, Southampton and Portsmouth remained the same. Several had moved to senior positions and this, coupled with the opportunity to base myself in Poole where I live, was too good to miss. Although it has proved to be very challenging for many different reasons, it has been the right decision."

Many of you will know Dave Stanford from when he worked at The Best Connection prior to moving on to pastures new for three years. However, on 1st October 2010, we were pleased to welcome Dave back to TBC. Dave had previously worked in the branch network and then subsequently spent two years with National Accounts. For personal reasons, Dave needed to be based near to his home and since at that time, there were no opportunities within TBC Poole, Dave joined a local agency.

We asked Dave to explain in his own words, his views about re-joining The Best Connection:

**Q** What do you enjoy most about working back at TBC?

**A** I respect the people I work for and in my experience believe the level of integrity at TBC cannot be equalled in the recruitment industry. The support teams at HQ and back-up from TBC is consistent and having been away for three years, I totally underestimated its value until my return.

**Q** What are your responsibilities now and how do they differ from your past TBC role?

**A** Senior Branch Manager for Poole, Portsmouth and Southampton. There is more responsibility and the field of play has become more sensitive with rates and third party organisations. Keeping to the path and sticking to the basics has proved to be the most successful tool in beating this.

**Q** With regards to TBC, what are your future plans?

**A** Establish a stable platform in the branches I now manage through 2011. Use this as a springboard to create opportunities for personnel to develop into new geographical sectors in early 2012. Become a more aggressive competitor to local agencies and have a bit of fun doing it.

Welcome back, Dave and congratulations on your role as Senior Branch Manager.

## Some things you didn't know about . . .

Darren Ainge, Regional Manager



Darren Ainge

and I entertained, normally making last minute 'adjustments' to homework and trying to find items that they kicked off and/or threw in the cupboard as they returned from school the previous day.

**What is your favourite lunch venue/meal?** "Lunch is for wimps" Gordon Gekko – Wall Street 1987 – how old am I?! Seriously, it's normally a sandwich in the car at some motorway service station, driving whilst trying to eat an M&S prawn mayonnaise doesn't make for a good look when you arrive at your next destination!

**What part does travel play in your role?** My region spreads from Dudley to Carlisle so travelling is a huge part of the role, I don't think there's a service station on the M6 I haven't been to – that sounds wrong doesn't it?! I was lucky enough to be able to change my car last year and the new one is definitely kinder to my bones, I wouldn't go as far as to say the journeys are a joy but they are definitely more comfortable and with all the mod cons that cars come with these days – it's like a mobile office.

**What would you do without your mobile phone?** As sad as it sounds I really can't imagine operating without one now. As well as the calls and the odd text about less important issues, the new smart phone enables me to check emails on the go without the need to get out the laptop and plug in to the network.

### How did you get into recruitment?

Like most people, I fell into recruitment by accident, having tired of the world of Insurance I took a temporary job through an agency and was spotted on the client's production line by the local Branch Manager conducting a service visit – it must have been the fact I was operating a press dressed in a suit that gave the game away.

### Do you have pre-work duties?

Quite often on the days I am in the North, I leave the house before any of the family is up and about. When more local, getting four young sons motivated for school keeps my wife

**What makes you laugh?** My children usually and their ability to spend pocket money or 'pupil of the week' rewards at least five times over. I'm sure they are taking advantage of my failing memory every time they start a conversation with "Dad, do you remember last week . . .?"

**What's your biggest bug-bare?** Manners, or the lack of them. As the saying goes, they cost nothing and I think they are fast becoming a thing of the past! How old am I . . .?!

**What football team do you support and why?** I have committed a cardinal sin on this one. As a youngster, I started out as a West Bromwich Albion fan and then transcended the border to Wolverhampton Wanderers for reasons that shall remain nameless. I have since returned from the dark side under the constant pressure of four sons that are all Baggies' fans - and as Wolves were bottom of the league for most of last season!

**What do your friends and family think about the work you do?** My boys just say when they grow up they want a job like mine so they can have a nice car - I have to keep reminding them it doesn't come easy - you have to work for it! Most people I get introduced to, when they find out I work in recruitment usually ask, "Can you find me a new job?"

**Do you have any obsessions? Chocolate, fizzy drinks, tidiness?!** My wife used to say I was obsessed with my iPhone and I can't disagree, Twitter and Doodle Jump have played a large part in my life since I had it. However, she won't have to worry about that soon as I'm asking Santa for an iPad for Christmas.

**How do you balance work and play?** I always manage to spend some quality time with the family in the week and at weekends, all my boys are into football which has required me to develop an interest, dads and lads play 5-a-side at least once a week and my garden fence panels are evidence of plenty of kickabouts in the late summer evenings – what summer we've had so far!

Name your favourite:

**Book** Losing my virginity by Richard Branson

**Film** Pulp Fiction

**Place** Premier Travel Inn, Carlisle, on a wet and windy Tuesday night - at least I get to watch what I want to watch on television. Failing which, at home in the back garden with the BBQ lit and a bottle of Budweiser whilst the kids play demolition derby at the fence panels with a football.

**Song** Still the one – Shania Twain (our wedding song - all say aaaaaah!)

**Hero** Margaret Thatcher (after Mike Cooper of course)

**Music** Quite a varied taste really, The Streets is currently on shuffle in the cd player

**Crisps** Cheese and onion – only Walkers variety though

## The Reluctant Ramblers PLOD on through the night to smash sponsorship target

A south-east team of Marcus Jepson, Rene Hawkes, Dave Stanford and Mariann Powell took part in a gruelling 40-mile night walk (PLOD) on June 11th along the Cotswold Way in aid of the charity, Action Medical Research. PLOD is the ultimate endurance challenge and according to the team, is not for the faint hearted! The team set off at midnight in Dursley in south Gloucestershire, along a challenging course that follows the escarpment of the Cotswold Hills, giving panoramic views (during daylight!) across the Severn Vale, passing through beech woods and open pastureland and picturesque villages. The challenge finished at Cleve Hill – the highest and stunningly scenic point along the ancient long trail. The Reluctant Ramblers' raised £2,457.00 in sponsorship for Action Medical Research, smashing their target of £1,500.00. Action Medical Research is a children's charity dedicated to improving the health of babies and

children in the UK. For almost 60 years the charity has been behind numerous breakthroughs such as the UK polio vaccine, ultrasound scanning in pregnancy and more recently, the foetal heart rate monitor - a new state-of-the-art device - that could help save thousands of at-risk babies. Action Medical Research relies entirely on donations to fund a range of research projects that address serious childhood conditions and improves quality of life for children with disabilities. The charity also undertakes research to reduce premature birth, prevent pregnancy complications that threaten babies' lives and find the best ways to care for sick and vulnerable babies. If you would like to make a donation to this worthy cause, please go to [www.action.org.uk/sponsor/thwreluctantrambler](http://www.action.org.uk/sponsor/thwreluctantrambler) Please tick the Gift Aid box if you are a UK tax payer as the UK Government will contribute an additional 25% on the money raised. Rene 'El Capitan' Hawkes, TBC senior branch manager and



Left to right: Dave Stanford, Marcus Jepson, Rene Hawkes and Mariann Powell

leader of the team, Marcus 'JEPP0' Jepson, TBC regional manager and team humour facilitator, Dave 'The Tank' Stanford, TBC senior branch manager and team navigator (Dave was in the Tank Regiment!) and Mariann 'Marathon' Powell, TBC administrator, Team Trainer and fitness advisor, would like to say a big Thank You to all those who supported their midnight PLOD. **Well done from all of your colleagues and friends at The Best Connection for completing the challenge, which was blighted by six hours of torrential rain.**

# The Best Connection

EMPLOYMENT GROUP



Location	Tel Number	Fax Number
Birmingham	0121 628 8000	0121 628 8001
Bolton	01204 394400	01204 394455
Bristol	0117 957 6999	0117 970 8559
Burton	01283 545333	01283 545075
Cannock	01543 468260	01543 579248
Cardiff	02920 494700	02920 483188
Carlisle	01228 590690	01228 590790
Chesterfield	01246 209222	01246 209333
Coventry	02476 228040	02476 228042
Crawley	01293 515333	01293 516333
Crewe	01270 251100	01270 251117
Croydon	0208 256 0120	0208 256 0129
Derby	01332 291444	01332 291222
Doncaster	01302 341114	0114 275 8188
Dudley	01384 230003	01384 239691
Earls Court	0207 373 1129	0207 373 1770
Eastbourne	01323 887111	01323 430459
Gloucester	01452 383303	01452 521351
Hanger Lane	0208 998 9910	0208 998 6227
Hertford	01920 468770	01920 460272
Hull	01482 610160	01482 610686
Kidderminster	01562 665555	01562 825695
Lancaster	01524 383438	01524 383638
Leeds	0113 243 1033	0113 243 0951
Leicester	0116 251 2363	0116 251 2364
Liverpool	0151 236 0111	0151 236 0999
Luton	01582 405444	01582 488280
Maidstone	01622 664999	01622 664218
Manchester	0161 237 9333	0161 237 9444
Milton Keynes	01908 699466	01908 699477
Newcastle	0191 230 2007	0191 230 2008
Newport	01633 842164	01633 842135
Northampton	01604 629888	01604 627444
Nottingham	0115 958 5880	0115 958 5884
Nuneaton	02476 382211	02476 382233
Oldham	0161 626 4222	0161 626 4777
Oxford	01235 550077	01235 554024
Peterborough	01733 555672	01733 341073
Plymouth	01752 256360	01752 252680
Poole	01202 682282	01202 682482
Portsmouth	0239 286 4411	0239 286 4422
Preston	01772 201777	01772 201888
Redditch	01527 591141	01527 591142
Scunthorpe	01724 876111	01724 876222
Sheffield	0114 275 8181	0114 275 8188
Southampton	023 8033 3188	023 8033 3199
Staines	01784 450555	01784 450122
Stockport	0161 968 1964	0161 968 1965
Stoke	01782 209666	01782 209777
Sunderland	0191 567 1100	0191 567 1133
Swindon	01793 542211	01793 514213
Tamworth	01827 533333	01827 53090
Taunton	01823 330621	01823 256240
Tees Valley	01642 672655	01642 672654
Telford	01952 898242	01952 246065
Walsall	01922 639000	01922 636500
Warrington	01925 629666	01925 629777
West Bromwich	0121 553 7755	0121 553 7766
Wolverhampton	01902 773000	01902 773001
Worcester	01905 731777	01905 731888
Worthing	01903 234500	01903 234555

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