

BEST NEWS

September 2012

All That Glitters is not Gold!

Welcome to the August edition of Best News. I had thought that the year was going quickly but not that quickly as I have just received an e-mail concerning the Halesowen Christmas celebrations. I seem to have missed a few months somewhere, but it seems we are keen to test out new Google shared documents to ease the task of collating information from disparate sources. When deciding to invest in this powerful new application this was not quite the use I had envisaged, but congratulations to Natalie for your initiative! Seriously though, Gmail and all it brings has arrived at TBC and I would encourage all managers and administrators to embrace the potential and communicate via David Morton and/or the Google website to ensure its capabilities are fully explored. This edition once again has many and varied articles which I hope you find interesting.

At the Best Connection we deal with a wide spectrum of businesses and clients who have varying requirements and relationships. Some are a lot more demanding than others and likewise, some have greater opportunity for growth and profitability. To make the best of these relationships we need to focus on what we do best and that is the provision of flexible workforce solutions as it is this emphasis that separates us from the competition and strengthens our future business. We have an industry-leading sales force that we should be proud of and need to focus our attention on those areas where we can be most successful. It is important that all of our customers understand and appreciate the value our experience and expertise brings to their business. Sadly, this is not always the case and we face servicing some clients for little profitability and a large management overhead. As such, it is helpful to understand where our business comes from and its relative importance to The Best Connection.

I believe we can apply the Pareto 80/20 rule to this with around 80% of customers appreciating what we bring to their businesses and the remaining 20% focused mainly on cost. You might be surprised to hear that within the 80% the numbers of temporary workers are less than 20 working each day yet they represent the lion's share of our total business! Contracts with larger companies contribute around 20% to our business – and although important, many place disproportionate demands on us to service their requirements. Nevertheless, as a business we continue to target large users - possibly at the expense of smaller opportunities. Winning contracts with larger businesses often entails a formal tender bid process which can be tedious and expensive and often designed by the customer to drive costs down and to mitigate any risks. In reality, they are driven by cost alone and this can result in an inflexible customer-supplier relationship that operates under the guise of a 'partnership'.

Whilst larger clients will always be part of the customer mix at The Best Connection, we must consider redressing the balance of our focus so that we become less reliant on this sector – and there are sound reasons for doing so. It is my view that such clients have shifted the balance of relationships to an unsustainable position. Competition is high, profit margins are low, risks are high and contract security is poor. Managing these relationships can also be difficult and pressurised. In addition, overheads are always high - servicing such customers can consume the resources of a plan or even a branch. We must remind ourselves that the success of The Best Connection is based on each and every plan across our branch network along with the two

consultants working on those plans. A plan with 75 to 150 temporary workers at 20 to 30 clients, and a branch with two, three or four such plans is extremely secure and profitable. It is often made up of clients who value our service and seek our advice. They are clients where we are best placed to provide the secure working environment our temporary workforce requires.



Andrew Sweeney

Whilst we are still in a very unstable economy our service and professionalism is vital to small to medium sized companies. This is the private sector which is striving to expand to help get the country back on its feet. Such businesses need flexible workforce solutions in these times of uncertainty and we are experts at providing just that. I know that we will always be in the market where we will be requested to supply large clients and the temptation to pursue the big contract win is always strong. This sector can be fickle, however, so it is not prudent to base your future success on securing these contracts alone.

My message to you is that when I review the figures and see what is behind them, I do recognise those branches and plans which have commercially sound, good quality business in a large spread of clients. This represents the best model for strong, long-term business growth and stability for The Best Connection, so I urge you to focus your time and effort where we can be most successful and deliver what we do best – flexible workforce solutions.

As the holiday season comes to a close we are entering our busiest time. I know we haven't had the best summer weather wise, but I hope you had a good break this summer and enjoyed the marvellous spectacle of the Olympic Games. Team GB did exceptionally well and I know that Team TBC can do even better!

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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News from Scunthorpe and Hull

A request was made to Best News by Sheila Eland to extend a huge thank you to Lee Nash for his continued support in the region. (Lee is project manager for MSD). Lee has been a tremendous asset to the Hull Branch with the Birds Eye Peas and NDL contracts in Hull as the contract enters its fourth year. His help during the implementation and support to Intergreen has also been invaluable following the contract award in November 2011 and throughout three peak periods from January to May 2012.

Well done Lee - keep up the good work!

The Scunthorpe branch has been trailblazing with a host of new contract awards in the region. These include Via Coldstores for Industrial who are using around 80 temps from June and Hoyer Logistics who have awarded TBC three of its divisions; Bitchumen, Heavy Fuels and Food Logistic. This will provide on-going work for up to eight drivers with potential permanent placements. In addition, the Scunthorpe branch has supplied Hargreaves in Immingham with 20 Industrial temporary staff onto permanent contracts along with C+E drivers from its 63 acre site. This follows a National Contract drawn up in August 2011 by Lee Harris.



Mike Gater

To assist TBC with the growth of tender responses and complex bids, we are delighted to welcome Mike Gater to TBC as Bid Manager. The new role will help the company to become more effective in developing public sector business and responding to major opportunities. Mike has over 14 years' experience in finance and bid management and

Mike Gater is TBC's new Bid Manager

has held senior positions at Spring Group and Jark plc. He will report to Mike Cooper and will be based at Halesowen.

"My role is to support the sales teams in compiling and responding to Local Government, NHS and Higher Education tenders and framework agreements, acting as the primary interface between finance and sales, operations, IT and key clients. In my previous role at Jark we were very successful at winning extremely profitable major contracts and I am keen to use my experience to generate the same success at TBC," said Mike.

Mike is already working on some exciting new opportunities including public sector

frameworks and tenders and we look forward to hearing about some great new wins in the future.

"We have created this exciting new role to address the time and focus required in putting together successful, commercially viable, large bid responses. Mike has the breadth of experience to help the business to achieve this across our target sectors. His role will greatly assist sales in delivering consistency and maximising opportunities," said Neil Yorke.

Mike, who lives in Burton upon Trent, is married and has two sons Andrew (14) and David (11). When time permits, Mike heads for the golf course for a round or two and plays the guitar.

New 'Strengthening Your Canvassing Skills' course receives positive feedback

As we mentioned in the previous newsletter, TBC has always recognised the importance of training and continuous development. The launch of a new sales course designed to give established sales people new ideas to develop their existing sales skills has been a resounding success. This exciting new course will still work on the core elements of the Sales Cycle and also gives sales people the opportunity to challenge their ability with more advanced techniques. Anyone who has not had a sales course in over 18 months should be pushing their manager for the opportunity to be considered.

'When I was asked to attend the 'Strengthening your Canvassing Skills,'

course I must admit I was slightly sceptical. Having worked in recruitment for 13 years, I honestly didn't see how this course would be of benefit to me. However, I attended the course with an open mind and can genuinely say it was one of the most useful courses I have been on. It was motivating, relevant to existing canvassing material and a great opportunity to practice new ideas in a safe training environment. I believe everyone who attended the course would agree as they went away with some valuable new skills and would definitely recommend the course to others looking to expand and improve upon their current sales knowledge,' commented Carina Taylor, Tamworth.

Virgin Active Health Clubs - London Triathlon

Neil Russell (divisional manager, TBC Nuneaton), Simon Crouch (branch manager, TBC Luton) and colleague, Rob Gregory, from the National Grid are competing in the Virgin Active Health Clubs London Triathlon on Saturday 22nd September 2012. They are dedicating their efforts to raising funds for the congenital heart defects (CHD) charity, **KEEPTHEBEAT**.

The Olympic Team Relay includes a 1,500 metre swim by Rob, a 40km cycle ride by Simon and a 10km run by Neil. The event is televised and features some world's best triathletes and thousands of fundraisers.

As a father of two daughters, Rob Gregory sees

the event as an opportunity to raise much needed awareness for **KEEPTHEBEAT** as well as competing in a prestigious triathlon event. Neil, a keen middle distance runner, has competed in six half marathons and aims to make a difference through his ability to run. "If I can run and raise money then that can only be a good thing," said Neil. Simon has been competing on bikes since the age of 13 and has ridden thousands of miles for charity including a 150 mile ride across the UK this year for **KEEPTHEBEAT**.

KEEPTHEBEAT provides support to the families affected by congenital heart defects. The inspiration for the charity came from Albert Ellis Tansey after being diagnosed with Hypoplastic Left Heart

Syndrome (HLHS) at four days old in August 2009.

"Albert's father and I have been friends for over 20 years so I know the family and Albert very well. As far as I am concerned there are not enough miles to pedal, roads to run or water to swim that will raise enough money and awareness for the kids and parents that CHD affects - bring on the London Triathlon!" says Simon.

If you would like to support the team, visit www.keepthebeat.co.uk or the fundraising page at Virgin Money uk.virginmoneygiving.com
Good luck to Neil, Simon and Rob.

Congratulations

to Lisa Mitchell of Leeds branch on winning the first quarter of Phil Simmonds' regional sales competition.



Phil Simmonds presents a bottle of bubbly to Lisa Mitchell



Paul Crocok presenting Anna Dixon with a bottle of bubbly to celebrate her achievement

Anna Dixon wins Darren Pollard's Administrators' Competition

Congratulations to Anna Dixon from TBC's Taunton branch who has won the Administrators' Competition for Darren Pollard's region. Anna has achieved the highest percentage of temporary workers' email addresses entered onto the staffplus system.

This process allows temporary workers to access their payslips online or to receive them by email.

Congratulations again to Anna and we hope you enjoy your prize as a reward for your continued hard work and effort.

Sam Ashton and Bex Gibson win Administrators' Regional Competition

In November 2011, Darren Pollard, regional manager, tasked the branch administrators within his region to make an all-out effort over the following six months, to deliver more temporary workers' e-mail addresses in an attempt to encourage 'temporary workers' to download their pay slips.

Sam Ashton, (pictured right), who has been with The Best Connection since February 2006 and Bex

Gibson, (pictured left), since April 2010, rose to the challenge and topped the region for achieving the highest percentage increase.

Colom Maye, Branch Manager, TBC Worcester, said, "It is encouraging to see the girls' hard work recognised and rewarded."

Congratulations to Sam and Bex.



Bex Gibson, Column Maye and Sam Ashton

Leeds Branch Firewalk for Charity

TBC's Leeds branch recently took part in a Charity Firewalk at Wincanton's annual

family fun day and raised £600 for children's cancer charity, Little Heroes.



Lisa Mitchell, HGV consultant, Katie May, senior HGV consultant and Martin Miller, senior industrial consultant all braved the flames for the good cause.

Through its onsite operation, TBC Leeds currently supplies Wincanton with 140 temporary workers. This will increase to 200 from September. The branch has supported Wincanton's charity fundraising with a raffle prize of TV/DVD combo for the past two years.



Leeds team brave the flames for charity

New Finance Manager Joins TBC from BDO

We are delighted to welcome Gurinder Khatkar aboard as our new Finance Manager. Gurinder, who is based in Halesowen, joins TBC from professional services firm BDO, where he has spent over five years in the audit team and achieved ACA Chartered Accountant status along the way.

I am really excited to be joining The Best Connection and look forward to developing my experience and knowledge of the employment industry. In my previous role, I was fortunate to work with TBC as a client and got to know many of the people in the team. This swung it for me. They are a great team and I look forward to being

part of the business," said Gurinder.

Gurinder will play an important part in the company's plans and will take responsibility for the production of management and statutory accounts and general support of the company's finance and operational needs.

"We are delighted to have Gurinder in our team. His auditing background, financial skills and knowledge of the company will help us to manage the support we deliver to staff and clients," said Andrew Sweeney.

When not balancing figures, Gurinder exercises his passion for soccer representing his local team on Saturdays and Sundays.



Gurinder Khatkar



Tom Meakin shows off his impressive catch

The One that didn't get away!

Tom Meakin from TBC's Earls Court branch has the Midas touch when it comes to fishing. This fine specimen of Common Carp weighing over 36 lbs was Tom's best ever catch and slightly bigger than his smile. We were assured it was put back into the lake to fight another day. Clearly persistence and patience pays off in the end!

Some things you didn't know about . . .

Phil Simmonds



Phil Simmonds

How did you get into recruitment?

It was completely by accident; I was in telesales and saw a job advertised, rang up and it turned out to be for a vacancy controller's job in a local recruitment agency.

Do you have pre-work duties? No.

How do mornings differ from afternoons?

They don't do they? Maybe more coffee and bacon in the mornings!

What is your favourite lunch venue/meal?

Weekdays it's usually a sandwich from the nearest deli/takeaway, at weekends it's my local – my favourite food is definitely seafood/tapas.

What part does travel play in your role? I travel a lot as I have branches in the north east which are a 2/3 hour drive on a good day. I enjoy driving so it's not an issue. The car, with modern technology is just like an office anyway, mobile phone and Dictaphone always at the ready - it's an ideal place to catch up on calls

What would you do without your mobile phone? Crikey, I couldn't imagine life without it

What makes you laugh a lot at work? Mike Cooper.

What's your biggest bug-bare? Mike Cooper!

Has your day job evolved naturally since you joined TBC? Yes, very much so. I started the Leicester office 14 years ago and after a short while I was asked to go to Manchester for a year. After 12 months I was asked if I would like to stay there permanently and develop a larger network of branches - we added Bolton in 2001, Stockport in 2002 and continued from there.

Do you have a favourite customer and why? I like them all - they are all important after all. My favourite ones are those who talk straight to you and expect you to talk straight back with them - they are much easier to develop on-going relationships with because you both always know where you stand.

What do your friends and family think about the work you do? I try not to discuss work too much with them, my family are proud of what I have achieved though.

What is the most challenging part of your day to day job? Fitting everything in - the role is so diverse and has that many different things that need to be done.

Do you have any obsessions? Chocolate, fizzy drinks, tidiness?! No.

What's the most common request from your colleagues? Usually something that benefits them!

How do you balance work and play? It's hard but it seems to work itself out quite well really.

What do you enjoy most about your job? The satisfaction of developing someone from a rookie recruiter through the ranks.

How do you deal with tasks you would prefer not to do? Get them out of the way quickly and efficiently so they aren't hanging over my head all day.

Name your favourite:

Book I'm not a big reader at all so no particular favourite

Film I love films and have a wide range of tastes so it changes quite often

Place Home or Spain

Song One my son made up it ends with 'daddy I love you'

Hero my son - he has taught me more in 7 ½ years than I learned in the other 40!

Music Very wide tastes but the main genre is rock

Crisps Salt and vinegar

Poem That one can't be printed here!



Wolverhampton team 'have their cake and eat it!'

A long-term temporary worker for TBC's Wolverhampton office received a welcome greeting last week when he arrived at the office bearing fruit of the best kind . . . fruit cake!

Dave Perry, who has recently turned temp-to-perm at one of Wolverhampton's clients commissioned his daughter to make the cake, complete with TBC logo, as a thank you to the team.

Other satisfied temporary workers reading this should be reminded Brett, Jayne, Steve and Alex also like chocolate and the occasional ice cream on warm days!



Wolverhampton team before they devoured the Cake!

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
Ipswich	01473 210584	01473 231693
Kidderminster	01562 66555	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 53333	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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