

SWS... BEST NEWS

Covid-19 Pandemic forces change

Welcome to SWS Best News, June 2020. Since the publication of the March edition, the world has been turned upside down by the COVID 19 virus, the consequences of which have been felt across our society, industry and business. The human impact has been devastating with many people sadly losing their family members, loved ones and colleagues to the disease and many thousands of vulnerable individuals having to shield themselves from the outside world.

Such was the speed of its arrival and severity of impact, little could be done to lessen its effect. Many parts of the economy have been devastated by the impact. Some are slowly opening for business once more but at a very much reduced level of activity. Some are still struggling to see when they will be able once again to trade. In particular, the travel industry which impacts on many sectors within our economy along with hospitality businesses; hotels, bars and clubs, theatres, event venues ... the list is endless. Further hit is the demand for motor cars and the knock-on effect to manufacturers and the supply chain goes deep into the UK economy.

It will be no surprise, therefore, that I have to tell you that our business, along with many of our customers, has been hit severely leading to new working practices and processes being implemented and crucial social distancing and hygiene practices applied. Unfortunately, due to the downturn in business, many colleagues have been furloughed. Whilst this action was necessary to address the severe downturn in business levels, the decision was not an easy one. What has ensued from March until now was the inevitable and rapid slow-down in customer demand for our services across many sectors and a future shrouded by uncertainty.

It is, however, very important that we draw positives from our current situation and there have been many. We have been fortunate to have continued trading with the message 'We are open for business – behind closed doors' resonating well with our clients and temporary workers. We have continued to place our customers front and centre of all our activities and this has been recognised, appreciated and acknowledged by many. Some testimonials have been exemplary, demonstrating the 'above and beyond' work that has been undertaken. I am also very proud to hear how you have responded to the situation by finding opportunities in new areas, winning new customers from our competitors and the incredible efforts made in supporting those involved in delivering essential services to the NHS, supermarkets and other key industries. We have been

instrumental in supporting the fight against the virus and helping to 'keep the country going'.

Throughout our branch network and at Topaz HQ, life has yet to return to some form of normality. With little or no face-to-face contact across the company, morale has been helped along by our internal comms team who have received and shared many good news stories along with 'Lockdown not Shutdown' calendar, virtual bake off and events including virtual BBQ's and quizzes that have helped to keep many of us upbeat and abreast of progress and a reminder that you are not alone during the lockdown. Thank you all for your encouraging and positive contributions.

Current levels of business are being monitored closely and there are some green shoots appearing. Enquiries are being made of clients as to when they are planning to resume business, in particular, of those for whom we have furloughed their temporary workforce. The Government have clearly recognised the severity of the problem and have extended the Job Retention Scheme even further.

We are starting to make the slow and steady climb out of this current climate and I personally wish to thank you all for your support and cooperation, however demonstrated.

Andrew Sweeney
Chief Executive



Andrew Sweeney



NEXT ISSUE...

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

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Jay joins Bailey Care Services

We are pleased to extend a warm welcome to Jay Nichols who has joined Bailey Care Services, Newport, as Senior Consultant. Welcome to the company Jay, your journey has just begun!

Jay joined the business in January 2020 prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, so it has been a bit of a rollercoaster introduction to the role. This is his first job in the care industry having worked in recruitment for nine years, mainly in the education sector, but also managing permanent roles, human resources, vocational training and contact centres.

"I joined Bailey Care Services as a Senior Consultant but aim to progress my career within the company as quickly as possible. Before venturing into recruitment, I was a fully qualified primary school teacher working with 4-11-year olds in schools in the Newport area.

"As I reach six months with the company, COVID-19 has certainly provided some unique challenges. At the start of the pandemic, the area we work in was one of the most severely affected in Wales which meant clients became very strict about who visited them. Thankfully, because Bailey Care Services runs such a thorough induction and training programme, our homes are confident using our staff which is a great accolade," shares Jay.

Outside of work, Jay is kept busy with his two children, Lily aged 9 and Freddie aged 6.



Jay Nichols

Resourceful Linzi joins Bailey Care Services



Linzi Mansfield

Please shout a loud 'welcome to the team' to Linzi Mansfield who joined Bailey Care Services, Poole, in February this year as a Recruitment Resourcer. It is great to have you join the team Linzi – welcome to BCS and SWS!

Linzi brings with her a wide range of experience gained from resourcing and administrative work in the care industry. Previous roles as a Health Care Assistant have given her a good grounding in the work expectations at the 'chalk-face' providing her with first-hand knowledge and understanding of the roles she is recruiting for. Linzi has learnt some valuable questioning and recruiting skills which gave her the confidence and the

ability to hit the ground running in her new role.

"I joined Bailey Care Services as a Recruitment Resourcer in February this year, having a background in both recruitment and care services. Since then, it has been a testing period, but I have enjoyed the challenge and look forward to the future," says Linzi.

"Linzi is a great asset to the team in Poole. She has picked up the role quickly and made it her own. We have seen a huge increase in new starters and registrations have doubled even through the current pandemic. I'm excited to see what the future holds for Linzi," said Joe Rolfe, Manager, BCS Poole.



Helping Fine Lady Bakeries to deliver three million loaves

With over three million loaves of bread produced every week, Fine Lady Bakeries supplies leading supermarkets, wholesalers and the sandwich manufacturing industry with its wonderful produce. Of course, it all must be transported across the country to its customers and to do this demands a team of professional HGV drivers to deliver the goods. Enter TBC Oxford.

For several years, TBC Oxford's driving division has been supplying HGV Class 1 Drivers to Cherwell Valley Transport (CVT) as a 2nd tier supplier to service the Fine Lady Bakeries account. This involved covering up to 10 shifts a week for when the client's own drivers were unavailable.

Due to a strategic change in the business, CVT made the decision to streamline its transport business which resulted in ending its driver contract with Fine Lady Bakeries. Not to leave them in the lurch, the company approached the Oxford team to ask if TBC would like the opportunity to become the main HGV Class 1 supplier – which they duly accepted. In addition, they were willing to transfer all 26 of their HGV drivers working on the assignment with Fine Lady Bakeries to The Best Connection at no cost to the business. CVT also endorsed TBC to Fine Lady Bakeries and was involved in several conference calls during lockdown to ensure a smooth transfer.

After a period of negotiation by the Oxford team, Fine Lady Bakeries agreed to the transfer of service. For TBC Oxford, winning this contract has been uplifting and motivational for the team who have been affected by the coronavirus restrictions and having staff on furlough.

"The team in Oxford have worked extremely hard on building great client relationships and the driving division pride themselves on the quality of the drivers they supply to a variety of customers in Oxford and Banbury. Winning this contract and securing all the Class 1 drivers will be a game changer for the driving team in Oxford. A well-deserved win, a fantastic effort by all, well done to the team in Oxford!" commented Sharon Latif, Senior Manager, TBC Birmingham, Oxford, Banbury.

"Having gained a thorough understanding of Cherwell Valley Transport's new business model, Sharon did a superb job identifying what the future business relationship with Fine Lady Bakeries could look like. Following the conference calls with all parties and in the knowledge that CVT's drivers were moving to TBC, the client was confident that we had their best interests at heart and the best solution for the future," added Darren Pollard, Director, TBC.



Michael Hendry - Administrator

Team TBC Oxford (social distancing!)



Sion Roberts - Consultant



Russ McCarthy - Consultant



Mike Checkley - Branch Manager



Millie Hooper - Consultant

20 Call Centre Operatives in 3 days?

Now that's a challenge!

Many of us have watched home makeover programmes on TV which result in a remarkable transformation, usually to a tight deadline. The premise of this viewing is to come to the rescue of a needy individual or family by secretly renovating their house or garden in an insanely short timeframe – and the outcome always exceeds expectations – come rain or shine! Good viewing and a satisfied customer/s with a few happy tears at the end.

This story outlines a similar sentiment. You might be thinking, how did team TBC manage to source non-core roles, let alone find and prepare them for work in an astonishingly short timeframe? The solution emerged from a combination of unfortunate circumstances and network contacts.

The client - a multi-national logistics and supply chain – was experiencing an upturn in business due to its involvement in supporting the delivery of essential services to the NHS. As a result, The Best Connection was called upon to provide additional temporary workers to support their requirements across the UK.

As well as recruiting for traditional, core roles, including drivers and warehouse staff, there was an urgent requirement for 20 call centre operatives in Birmingham to support the NHS contract.

The challenge that confronted them - wait for it - they were needed for Monday and it was Friday, the clock was ticking! Not to be deterred, TBC's team including Danny Keyes, Peter Christie and Gary Hitchman, dug deep working from home over the weekend and managed to source, conduct and record online interviews, gain approval and create work packs for 19 people with customer service experience ready to start work on Monday morning.

Now to the background. One of the early, significant business casualties that emerged from COVID-19 was the travel industry. Planes across the major airports have been grounded and the concept of holidays evaporated overnight. Danny Keyes had a contact that had experienced the unfortunate turmoil of change in this industry on two occasions. Firstly, she was made redundant following Thomas Cook's liquidation and then missed out on a job with Virgin Airlines when the offer was withdrawn due to the industry's meltdown. The impact has been devastating with many skilled people left looking for work.

In an effort to support Danny and the TBC team, his contact was able to share several of her airport associates and make recommendations to help fill the client's customer service roles. Due to the aviation sector's focus on customer service and use of contact centres, many of the pre-requisite skill sets that were sought by the team were met in most of the candidates interviewed.

In this instance, a single contact opened the door to a pool of people who were motivated and available to work. Nevertheless, it did not reduce the amount of work and time the team needed to spend over a weekend to undertake the preparatory work that had to be completed.

The challenge was met head-on, the team pulled together, used their resourcefulness and were determined to make it happen – and they did! Not surprisingly, the client was very grateful that team TBC had pulled it out the bag. No tears of delight on this occasion but no doubt a few smiling faces on Monday morning.

What an amazing effort and a great example of putting the customer first and doing what it takes to get the job done!



Francis and Claire have a new baby boy

What a picture of utter and complete happiness and contentment . . . and baby looks pretty relaxed too! Happy dad Francis Frost, who is a driving consultant for TBC in Sunderland and his partner Claire, celebrated the arrival of their new son, Theodore, who was born on Saturday 22nd February at 6.35pm and weighed in at 6lb 15oz.

Theodore shares his birth date with some famous celebs including James Blunt, Nikki Lauder and Bruce Forsyth and it is truly 'nice to see you, to see you nice'!

Many congratulations to you both.

Francis Frost with new son, Theodore

XPO Logistics

XPO B&Q contract back on track



Paul Holland, Logistics Manager, XPO

At the beginning of March 2020, TBC Hull was busy finding Product Checkers for Jenni Scarah, XPO's Transport Planner, to enable training to take place before the start of the B&Q plant contract. In addition, the team had sourced 12 drivers who were booked to undertake XPO's assessment and ready to start their assignment on 2nd March operating from Hull. Everything was moving smoothly and deliveries started as planned, however, due to the coronavirus lockdown, on 23rd March the sites at Hull, Middleton and Manchester were unfortunately shut down.

A month on and happily, due to the

government's easing of the lockdown allowing companies such as B&Q to re-open their doors, The Best Connection was able to respond quickly to the call for all 12 drivers to be reinstated when the contract resumed on 4th May.

"I can only thank the Hull driving and industrial team at The Best Connection for their support this year during these unprecedented circumstances and look forward to working with them on this contract next year," said Paul Holland, Logistics Manager, XPO.

Congratulations to the Hull team. It is good to hear customers starting to resume normal business activity.

It's a boy!

But Norman knew it all along!

Not that long ago, discovering the sex of your unborn child was – well - a 50-50 guess. You had to wait for the main event for the midwife to announce the big reveal. Choosing the paint colour for the nursery had to wait along with the selection of clothes and accessories. Today, it is not uncommon for couples to learn the sex of their baby as soon as the scans can reveal it. At least it ends the pink or blue debate and preparations can be made well in advance. The anticipation can also be made a bit of fun and in Peter Christie's case, the identity was hidden away from him and his wife, Heather, in a 'surprise box' they had made.

Now, who best to predict the answer? Enter Norman the clairvoyant cat!

Norman is no stranger to SWS Best News having been featured along with Peter in a previous issue. On this occasion, he was called upon to reveal the answer concealed in the box. After pawing over the question and taking a short catnap, Norman made a categorical judgement and predicted the baby would be a boy due in September. To the amazement of Peter and Heather, after the box was opened it was confirmed that Norman was on the money! With no access to a CAT-scan the question is, was it luck or was it a sixth sense? All we know is Norman is right and he's certainly the cat's whiskers!

Many congratulations to Peter, Heather and of course Norman!



Peter and Heather Christie & Norman

Fleetmaster launches e-Risk training

Fleetmaster is on a mission to reduce driver risk and improve road safety. It is tackling this by investing in the development of new and innovative training products and services and has recently launched a new self-assessment and risk assessment software package that provides organisations with a cost-effective online training and development solution for drivers.

The self-assessment element helps to build an accurate profile of employees' driving experiences and personal data relating to driving whilst the risk

assessment element is divided into specific fleet categories and assesses employees against company specific policies, attitudes and behaviours, driving skills, the Highway Code and legal and compliant requirements.

Following the online training, every employee is risk-rated as high, medium or low. The results provide a complete picture of the driver's abilities that allows the business to identify drivers who have a high-risk rating. The data can be sent directly to the employee's manager if required.

Using the assessment data, Fleetmaster can recommend specific training to improve a driver's ability and knowledge. In addition, the risk assessment tool can determine areas of weakness and provide the candidate with up to 10 additional modules to complete which count towards their overall risk rating.

To aid administration and access to management information, Fleetmaster also provides access to an e-management portal, online resource portal and paperless reporting.

Fleetmaster launches a new Driver Risk Management platform (My-DRM)

One of the main risks fleet operators face is managing their drivers. Some drivers will be more experienced and better trained than others with less capable drivers often experiencing a higher occurrence of incidents and near-misses. In order to monitor the collective risk across a company's fleet of vehicles and to identify which drivers may need additional training and support, Fleetmaster has developed its My-DRM platform.

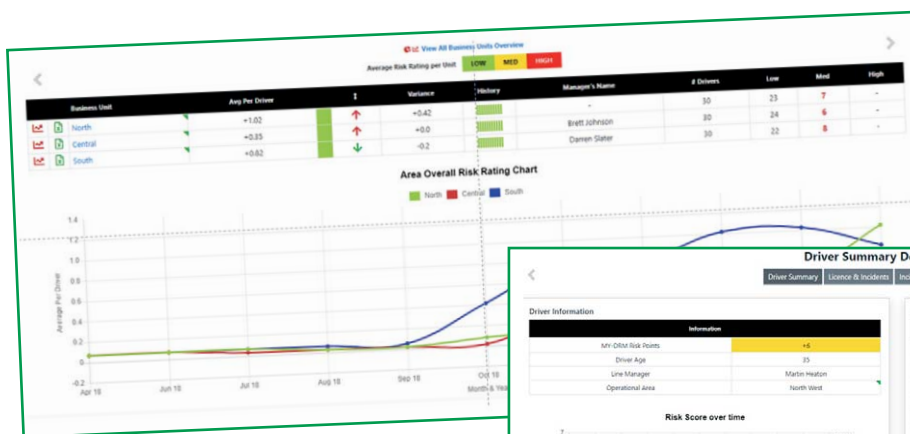
My-DRM holds comprehensive data on each driver including licence history, vehicle checks, previous incidents, endorsements, vehicle telemetry and training, which is combined to create an individual's risk score. The higher the score the greater the individual's risk rating.

The application can be configured to manage any type of

vehicle fleet including grey fleet, company car, van and specialist vehicles and can be defined according to management requirements such as by driver, team, region, driver demographics, line management and asset type.

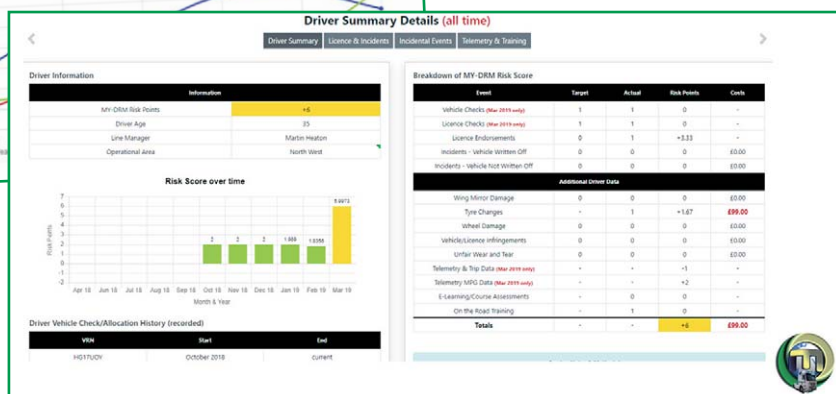
In addition, My-DRM holds records that are required for any grey fleet driver, including MOT, business insurance, vehicle servicing with configurable automated alerts available to prompt managers about upcoming renewal dates.

By providing comprehensive management data, My-DRM will help fleet operators to identify risk factors that can be addressed through closer driver engagement and training. In turn, this will improve driver competence, road safety and reduce operational expenditure.



Graph showing a company's overall driver risk rating

Example Driver Risk Summary



Fleetmaster wins 5-Year contract with UK Power Networks



Let's shout it out from the roof tops! Fleetmaster has secured another prestigious driver training contract in the electrical distribution sector. Fantastic achievement and very well done to all involved!

Almost a year ago, we reported Northern Powergrid had chosen Fleetmaster to deliver its New Driver Inductions and Driver CPC Training. On the back of this success, following a competitive tendering process, Fleetmaster has now been selected by UK Power Networks to deliver its driver training programme.

UK Power Networks owns and maintains electricity supply cables and lines across London, the South East and East of England. The company manages three licensed distribution networks covering 30,000 square kilometres and serves around eight million customers.

"We are delighted to have been selected by UK Power Networks to deliver new starter driver training and driver CPC. Our tailored training programme will support the company's ambition to become one of the safest fleets in the country," said Jamie Boocock, Fleet Director, Fleetmaster.

Transition to Remote Working a joint CTS success

From late February to early March the CTS management team switched into overdrive making preparations that would protect employees and the business from the fallout from Covid-19.

Team leaders assessed their own business areas and by mid-March a framework was in place. All departments covering operations, administration, sales, finance and IT each had their own challenges to overcome but worked hard as a team to find the best solutions. The management team, led by Melanie Farrow and Kerry Stratton, met every morning for daily briefings following the latest Government guidelines and recommendations to ensure the teams were fully briefed.

All employees were given guidance on hygiene practices with policies put in place to ensure that anyone displaying symptoms

of Covid-19 knew what actions to take and managers were instructed on how to handle several potential scenarios. All staff were issued with 'work from home' packs and training on IT software packages. With some expert help from our IT team, provided by David Morton and Natalie Floyd at Topaz, the preparations resulted in a smooth transition to remote working - at the switch of a button. Everyone at CTS played their part in rolling out the plans, gathering information and implementing the necessary changes.

Despite the changing and challenging circumstances, the responsiveness, reliability and customer-centric approach, which sits at the heart of the CTS service model, has ensured that clients' businesses are fully supported, and quality standards have not diminished.



PPE visor search has happy outcome for NHS nurses

In this personal story, Wayne Tighe, Senior Manager, TBC Walsall, responded to a desperate request from his sister-in-law to find protective visors for nurses working with Covid-19 patients at the Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley. This story is also a great example of the depth of relationships we build with our customers that makes our client base so strong.

Wayne received a phone call from his sister-in-law on the evening of Friday 3rd April. She had just finished a 12.5 hour shift at the hospital working on a Covid-19 ward with only a pair of glasses and a face mask to protect her as they didn't have any other PPE for the nurses to wear.

"As you can imagine the conversation was highly emotional and a lot of tears



Wayne's sister in law with new visor

were shed. My sister-in-law is a single mother with two children so her concerns regarding the risk of sharing the virus were huge. She asked me to

help her locate reusable visors as all the websites she had visited had a waiting period in excess of three weeks," explained Wayne.

Wayne's first port of call was the National Transport Manager for a client company with whom he has a strong relationship developed over a long period of time. He asked for help sourcing reusable visors as they had previously been available on the client's website. Wayne wanted to obtain as many of these visors as possible.

A few days later, Wayne's contact informed him that he could have 20 reusable visors free of charge which resulted in 20 NHS nurses feeling much safer when working with patients.

We would like to thank Wayne and of course, his client, for their generous actions.

Onsite team pass PRINCE2 training

We are delighted to announce that Carly Meads, Alex Dirman and Gabriel Sirghie from the Onsite Connection team have successfully completed PRINCE2 project management training. Congratulations to you all.

PRINCE2 (Projects in Controlled Environments) is an accredited project management methodology widely adopted by businesses around the world. There are two PRINCE2 certifications; Foundation and Practitioner, available for the professional project manager. Carly, Alex and Gabriel achieved both qualifications having successfully passed their examinations for each course. In total, they each spent over 50 hours training.

The team, who have been applying elements of the PRINCE2 in their current roles at The Best Connection, will now be adopting the methodology more broadly with future projects.



L to R: Carly Meads, Alex Dirman & Gabriel Sirghie

Celebrating 20 years with TBC!

In past editions of SWS Best News we have recognised many employees who have reached a long-service milestone with the company and on this occasion, we have four more individuals that have collectively clocked up 80 years at TBC!

Many congratulations to Simon Thompson, Senior Manager, Bedford & Milton Keynes, Lorraine Corbally, PA to Lee Harris, TBC Walsall, Paul Young, Area Manager, West Bromwich, Cannock, Bradford, Huddersfield and Mansfield and Matthew Leech, National Sales Manager, TBC.

Thank you for your loyalty and contribution to making the company and its culture what it is today.



Lorraine Corbally



Simon Thompson



Paul Young



Matt Leech

TBC Preston & Blackburn raise £100 to help foodbank shortage

One of the adverse effects of the coronavirus lockdown restrictions has been a reduction in contributions to foodbanks that have become an essential lifeline for many vulnerable people across the UK. The impact in Preston and surrounding areas has been particularly noticeable as demand has soared over recent months. In response to this, the TBC teams in Preston and Blackburn decided to do something about it in the form of a sponsored dress-down fundraiser. With client visits on the backburner for now, it was the perfect time to don the casuals in exchange for some much-needed cash. Each member of the team contributed £5 a week which soon mounted up to a grand total of £100 which was used to purchase goods for Sainsbury's Food Bank in Preston.

Thank you to all involved for your contributions and generosity. Your actions will make a positive difference to people's lives during an exceedingly difficult time for many.



L-R: Chris Cottle, Praxy Patel, Lorraine Gandy, Elly Higgs & Jadwiga Ficek showcasing charitable receipt whilst adhering to social distancing!

TBC in demand as NHS supplies ramp-up

With the country weathering a period of lockdown, many businesses are either closed or functioning behind closed doors. Conversely, many of those companies supporting the supply of essential services have seen an upturn in demand and this, in turn, has had a positive impact on the need for temporary staff. The NHS has, not surprisingly, been at the heart of many of these services and TBC has been involved in helping to keep the supply chain moving.

In Chesterfield, the team, led by Darren Smith, Branch Manager, has been working tirelessly to ensure vital supplies, including face masks, gowns, gloves and sterilising wipes, reach health centres, doctors' surgeries and other NHS locations. Prior to the pandemic, TBC Chesterfield supplied five drivers to the NHS storage centre in Alfreton. This quickly ramped up to 30 drivers in a matter of weeks due to the increase in demand. However, before drivers were able to start, they needed to complete a 1-day induction to prepare for the role. The Chesterfield team worked hard to make sure every single booking was filled, with a little help from neighbouring branches in Derby and Nottingham.

"This was a great team effort and I would like to express special thanks to Dave, Matt and Ash in the driving team for the hours they put in to make it happen. It's great to know

that TBC is working hard and able to support the NHS during these difficult times," said Darren Smith.

"The Chesterfield branch certainly did their bit in helping to provide our Frontline Services like the NHS and Care Homes with the PPE required.

"The logistical challenge was met full on by the driving teams, supplying almost 30 drivers in a very short space of time and with the help of their colleagues in neighbouring branches we managed to meet the expectations and needs of the client head on.

"Well done to all the teams involved," commented Lee Harris, Director, TBC.



Supply Chain

ArrowXL hails TBC Norwich for great service

As a service-driven business, what our customers tell us is what really matters – whether this is a comment from a temporary worker on an assignment or a major client - it gauges our relationship. Feedback is often prompted when



things are not going so well and issues need to be addressed. Whilst this is important it is also rewarding to receive positive feedback when things are going well. In this story, TBC Norwich received a glowing testimonial from its client, ArrowXL.

"I just wanted to drop a line to thank you for all of your support during these difficult times. Having partners and their teams who you can rely on gives us the confidence to plough on and delight our customers. We have seen widespread gratitude from consumers for our consistency of service and for braving the conditions around the country," Peter Loudon, COO, ArrowXL.

"We are incredibly grateful to Peter for taking the time to provide this feedback. Thank you – and well-done team TBC Norwich - keep up the good work!" commented Dave Schilling, Director, TBC.

NESI Salutes TBC Grimsby for 'top supply'!



In July 2017, TBC Grimsby began its business relationship with Albert Darnell Seafood, part of New England Seafood International (NESI), as a secondary supplier. This involved ad-hoc bookings for small numbers of temporary workers. The team was always on hand and as the primary contractor began to fail to supply, TBC was soon filling regular bookings which eventually resulted in TBC achieving sole-supplier status.

In early 2018, NESI decided to integrate the Albert Darnell operation into the Group, changing the name to New England Seafood and re-structuring senior management teams. Demand for temporary workers remained consistent throughout 2018. Over the following 18 months, changes at senior management and production management levels meant that an extremely flexible approach was required to address individual needs. In early 2019, NESI introduced a weekend shift to service a new contract which drove demand for additional temporary workers from 5 to 20.

For the TBC team, this was extremely challenging as the location did not benefit from a regular bus service at the weekends so weekend on-call could be quite eventful! Nevertheless, the TBC Grimsby team worked closely with the client to make it all happen.

At the start of 2020, NESI made some new appointments at a senior level at the Grimsby site. During the initial meeting with the new management, the team

discussed where improvements could be introduced. One area identified was reducing the existing two-day onsite induction period by undertaking elements of this prior to workers attending site. Although this approach resulted in additional work for TBC at the start of recruitment process, it had the benefit of creating a larger pool of temporary workers who were available to meet the client's needs at shorter notice. Due to the success of this method, NESI changed its induction process, allowing the TBC Grimsby team to begin the new service model prior to the coronavirus lockdown.

Over recent months the team has expanded its supply of staff from around 25 factory workers, Monday to Sunday, to include new roles such as a Continuity Improvement Officer, Administrator, Accounts, FLT, yard staff and additional factory workers totalling 80 people and the signs are that this will only increase as NESI grows. In April, NESI signed a 1-year rolling PSA with TBC which has consolidated the relationship.

"I am extremely proud of the team who have worked tirelessly on this contract. We were a secondary supplier but never let our standards drop - even when supplying ad-hoc factory workers. We have always conducted service review meetings, kept in daily contact and built strong relationships which have allowed us to deliver a consultative service," says Simon Hewson, Branch Manager, TBC Grimsby.



*Daniel Todd, Retail Operations Manager,
NESI, Grimsby*



*Hannah Portess, Senior HR Officer,
NESI, Grimsby*

*"Our salute to The Best Connection
for top supply!" says Hannah.*

Backline Recruitment & Training

Zoom ahead

The Covid-19 pandemic has presented business, individuals and governments across the world with significant operational challenges. How do you establish some form of business continuity? In response, many companies – including Backline Logistics Support Services - have turned to video collaboration to answer this question.

At Backline Recruitment & Training, in order to protect staff during the pandemic and allow the business to continue functioning, Zoom (other applications are available!) conferencing and remote working have replaced the ubiquitous office face-to-face meetings.

Such has been the widescale adoption of this transformative technology, Backline now interviews all candidates and checks all documentation remotely and most significantly, now delivers all courses on-line. The social distancing restrictions have also led to the DVSA allowing Driver CPC training to be undertaken online – this is something they would not have countenanced pre-Covid-19. Taking the initiative, Sam Hay, who oversees Backline's training division, applied and was granted permission to schedule courses online. To cover the delivery of these courses, Ben Longhurst-Prior, one of the company's full-time trainers on furlough, was reinstated to assist.

As part of the online experience, delegates enjoy the same presentations and videos they would in the classroom situation thanks to the 'share screen' function. They can also ask questions and interact with other candidates via their respective video feeds. Candidates can be placed in virtual 'breakout rooms' for smaller group exercises and can even raise their (virtual) hand if they need to use the facilities! Just kidding!

Online training has taken some getting used to, but Backline's trainers, Sam and Ben, have found the delivery of the training to be a positive activity – not just commercially - but also from a candidate experience point of view. Check it out here: bit.ly/online-cpc The success of remote training has raised the question whether this delivery model should become a focus for the development and expansion of Backline's training division.

"We've always been highly flexible when it comes to the delivery of training – adapting to meet the requirements of our clients and the marketplace more generally. Whilst the regulation of some training we offer might mean we're not able to offer our full portfolio of training on a remote basis, I'll certainly be exploring what opportunities there might be going forward," said Sam Hay, Manager of Backline's training division.



Check it out here:
bit.ly/online-cpc

BOOK YOUR COURSE TODAY

Could Online be the new 'normal' for Driver CPC?

This is an interesting question. And there are definitely arguments in favour of both positions on this.

Why should we keep it?

We've already outlined a few benefits of Driver CPC going online:

1. It's easy for candidates to access
2. It's easier for JALUPT to ensure that training standards are being maintained
3. Attending from home means less travel and a more comfortable setting for candidates

But the benefits don't stop there.

Resources

Virtual meeting spaces like Zoom make it much easier to share resources with candidates to enhance their learning experience. This could be, for example, links to information or a particularly useful guidance document.

Value for Money

Hi!
You can send us a message here if you need help with anything :-)

TBC Ipswich receives glowing testimonial

The best reference you can receive is the one from your customers - particularly if it acknowledges the strength and partnership of the business relationship. In this instance we turn our eyes to TBC Ipswich whose determined efforts in supporting DHL have been duly recognised. Here is what the customer had to say.

"I have no hesitation or trepidation in giving a testimonial to the collective team at The Best Connection Ipswich . . . On

the Argos DHL contract, I know that we can be a very difficult customer, but this has never wavered the support that we have received . . . Genuine guys, great team, superb work ethic, quality results . . . that's The Best Connection Ipswich."

Adrian Smith, DHL.

Across the length and breadth of the UK, TBC teams are doing their utmost to support customers no matter how challenging the circumstances may be.

Most of you are unsung heroes that may not receive such glowing written recognition but are still delivering a remarkable service - come what may.

Congratulations to the TBC Ipswich team for your fantastic customer feedback, it is a great reflection of the relationship you have developed and here's to those of you across the business that have your own personal anecdotes of success. Please do not be bashful - we would all like to hear about them.



2020... a start to a year like no other

The team at Backline Logistics at Leighton Buzzard started their new financial year in January 2020 on the back of a sterling performance in December 2019 – spirits were high. A quieter period followed in January and February – as expected and then, we all know what happened next!

Mass panic buying in March drove the supermarkets into overdrive. Fortunately, Backline was ready to support its key clients, including Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Asda, who needed to book as many vehicles and drivers as they could to service the spike in demand. The pressure was on!

One of Backline's unique selling points is the ability to respond quickly to businesses whose volumes flex up and down. Increased demand resulted in the busiest March in the company's history followed by the quietest April and May

on record as the lockdown began to bite. Sadly, the post Covid-19 landscape resulted in many vehicles being taken off-hire and team members being furloughed. Whilst there was little the business could do to lessen the impact of the situation, every effort has been made to communicate with staff, clients and drivers on a regular basis to maintain morale.

Being reactive and flexible has allowed Backline to put its customers at the centre of everything the company does regardless of the circumstances. With this key operational imperative, Backline was able to deliver a great customer service to support the delivery of essential services that has been critical to supporting the UK's recovery.

"Our thanks go out to everyone in the business at Leighton Buzzard, to those people who are furloughed and those who remain in the business keeping the flag flying. We value you all equally and are ready to respond to our customers' needs when some degree of normality returns," said Louise Gaunt, Transport Operations Manager, Backline Logistics and Mark Gooden, Director of Strategy.



Furloughed not Forgotten

It has been a harsh reality of the current circumstances that many work colleagues have found themselves on furlough. This is a term, that until recently, has rarely been heard or used by most of us. What this has meant to many has been a separation from work routines and the friends they see, meet and talk to daily. What is important is that those on furlough have not been forgotten.

Paul Young, Area Manager, explained: "Furloughing has thrown everything up in the air for our teams. Within a short time, what we all experienced as predictable work suddenly changed. Those fortunate enough to be kept operational have had to endure change and challenges whilst those on furlough have been faced with managing their time at home and this has not been as easy as it might sound for some. My impression is people generally want to get back to a settled work-life routine and this just isn't possible at the moment.

"My Managers and I have been keeping in touch with our team members who are on furlough. Normally, this would be weekly or every other week just to say 'Hi, how are you and how are you getting along?' Nothing structured or formal. It is important to check on everyone's wellbeing during this time

and this may vary significantly depending on personal circumstances.

"We are not doing anything that is 'out of the ordinary'. We simply call, text and have set-up various WhatsApp groups to try to keep everyone included and involved with what is happening. It is important to share success stories and other information that keeps people in the picture. By taking time to do this we hope it will help a little to keep spirits up."

Online quizzes have also been a popular way of keeping those on furlough engaged with their colleagues.

"When we were first in lockdown, I found that team members, many of whom have been together for several years, became closer and kept the banter going and I knew it was important to maintain contact. I had been using online quizzes to keep in touch with my family and thought it would be a good idea to do this with my colleagues on furlough which turned out to be a great success. Over the past 12 weeks, five quizzes have been held over Zoom during lunchtime. It's been great fun and good to have the chance to see everybody," explains Andy Presley, Senior Manager, TBC.

Some more Good News Stories ...

One good turn received (unexpectedly) one much bigger!

Even in business, it is immensely satisfying to help a fellow human without an expectation of receiving something in return. Those on the receiving end, however, may have a different view and in this story, it shows that kindness can have an unforeseen, positive outcome. In this scenario, it all began when the Area Transport Manager from a logistics client contacted TBC's Chesterfield branch to ask for help. On this occasion, it wasn't the usual request for his own business but for his mother as she had been affected by Covid-19 measures and forced to close her pub.

She was understandably concerned and was actively looking for work. In response, Kath Diamond, Senior Industrial Consultant, quickly found a suitable placement. What Kath wasn't expecting was the level of gratitude shown by her son, the Area Transport Manager, who sent a note saying that he was recommending to his head of rota planning that all future temporary drivers should be sourced through The Best Connection.

Well done Kath. It may have been 'all in a day's work' but the result was an incredibly happy client – and mum!

We're Amazing – it's official!

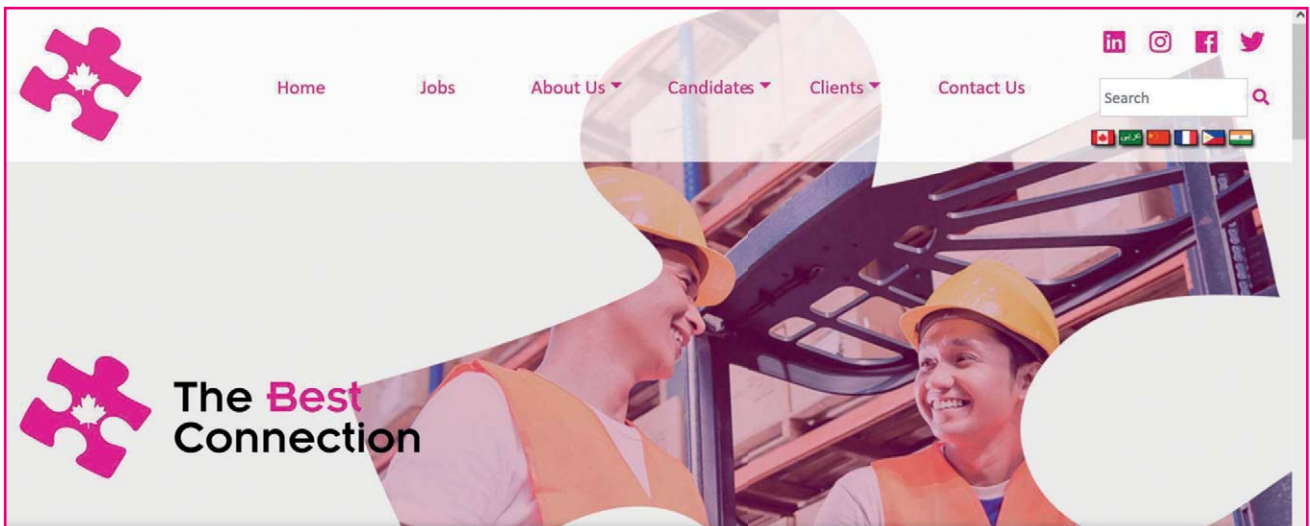
Why wouldn't you give your lapel a quick shine if you were told by your client that you were amazing – particularly if it is the fastest growing retail operation in the UK? – that's Lidl of course!

At Lidl's regional distribution centre in Magna Park, Lutterworth, it was all hands-on-deck to ensure adequate stock levels were met to address store demands. Over the course of two weeks there were some amazing achievements with over 125 temporary workers onboarded and trained, 1.5 million cases picked, and 16,000 pallets shipped.

"I want to say a huge **THANK YOU** and **WELL DONE** for all of your efforts over the crazy past two weeks . . . you should all be extremely proud of yourselves for giving our customers and stores this amazing service," Damien Lack, Regional Head of Logistics.

Congratulations to Nuneaton, Rugby, Coventry and Leicester branches all pulling together in order to fill the sudden spike in numbers so quickly.

TBC Inc. has a new Website!



Our colleagues at TBC Inc. in Canada are delighted to announce the launch of their newly designed website. Check it out at www.thebestconnection.ca

The website features a fresh modern design, additional information on local services and extra functionality for both temporary staff and clients as well as a social media-friendly logo.

"Our goal is to provide our visitors with

a simple way to discover more about us and the solutions we offer to our clients and temporary associates," says Elliot Mendoza, Manager.

The new features include integrated social media buttons for Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter to promote improved communications with clients.

"A big thank you to Roxi Sweeney and

Finesse Digital for helping with this project. We have received positive feedback from the team and our customers," added Elliot.



Bake-off competition unleashes creative flair!

If you tried to purchase flour during the early days of the lockdown you may well have been disappointed when you saw the supermarket shelves bereft of plain, self-raising or any other variety of the product. It seemed the entire population was digging in for the long haul and baking was a past-time that many have indulged in. To tap into this passion, some of TBC's enthusiastic bakers showcased their creative talents in the recent bake-off contest that was part of our 14 days of Lockdown not Shutdown campaign organised by Lottie Jarvis. The mouth-watering results below were no doubt consumed within minutes of the pictures being taken – and we bet they tasted as good as they look. As it was a light-hearted competition, there had to be a winner and after much deliberation from a judging audience of 45, the cake that caught everyone's eye was the Lidl cake which was a TBC Blackburn branch-effort, created by Beckie Yates, Branch Administrator. Top notch baking and the character resemblance is astonishingly real. Congratulations Beckie – the Great British Bake Off awaits you!



Beckie Yates' Lidl cake depicting TBC Blackburn branch socially distancing!

Runners-up



Four-tier Victoria Sponge cake created by Emma Mardle, Senior Consultant, TBC Worcester



The NHS cake was created by Joshua Graham's mum! Joshua, who is a Divisional Manager for TBC in Crewe, enlisted some help (well why not?!) and mum didn't disappoint!



Lauren Fitzgerald, Consultant, TBC Bolton, made this very professional chocolate cake topped with dipped strawberries and Ferrero Roche and wrapped in chocolate finger biscuits. Looks too good to eat but you have to do what you have to do!

Congratulations to all the baking contestants. Your creativity is impressive and some light-hearted fun during Lockdown not Shutdown.

TBC Walsall supports Walsall Manor Hospital



Team TBC Walsall has been a supplier to Walsall Manor Hospital for the past 18 months. Since the pandemic, demand for temporary staff has increased by 100% covering various roles across the hospital including administration staff, cleaners and porters. It has been a huge challenge but by pulling together as a branch they have found the staff required to fill the posts.

"I would personally like to thank the team, Daniel Edwards, Charlie Hill and Jack Ainge as they have worked so hard to recruit the required staff and as you can imagine, the positions have been particularly difficult to fill," said Wayne Tighe, Senior Manager.

Congratulations to the Walsall team. We are truly Best as One working as a team. You have proved this to be the case.

TBC unites to staff Nightingale Hospital Manchester

At the peak of the pandemic, the Government was concerned that the spread of the virus and the resultant patient intake would overwhelm the NHS hospital infrastructure. In response, temporary 'Nightingale' hospitals were commissioned and built to act as an overflow capability. Within weeks, seven were set up across the UK.

One site, located in Manchester, was built in just 14 days! On completion, staff were required to make it operational and as well as doctors, nurses and other front-line professionals, this also included ancillary staff including cleaners, porters and supervisors as part of the set-up team.

The opportunity to provide staff came about thanks to the Key Accounts Team and in particular, Nicky Jarvis, who had developed a strong relationship with Interserve, one of the main contractors. Discussions about requirements started on Friday 3rd April, with a deadline set at Sunday 12th April. The team had a very tight timeframe in which to find, prepare and deliver the required number of people.

Jason Melia, Senior Manager, engaged and co-ordinated four branches; Manchester, Oldham, Stockport and Bolton, to find the staff. With James Aldridge, Divisional Manager, Manchester, acting as account lead, 70 willing candidates were found to embark on the stringent induction process for the new hospital. Finding candidates was not an easy task due to the conditions they would be working in, however, James and his team ensured that all workers knew exactly what the roles involved – including the risks.



The Nightingale hospitals have been set up to treat those with coronavirus who do not need intensive care and thanks to the detailed three-day inductions, including training on the necessity of PPE, temporary workers were kept safe.

"It was a great effort by the team with James Aldridge and Silvi Velaj giving up their personal time over the Bank Holiday weekend. Whilst it's been a testing time for the whole team, I'm delighted that we've pulled together for a good cause," commented Jason Melia.

TBC still has a number of staff placed at the hospital. Congratulations to all of you involved in this mammoth effort in supporting our NHS during the crisis.

TBC Chesterfield receives 5* Google review from motorway hero!

Do you remember Jon Rastrick? How can we forget the incredible true-life story when he rescued a lady from a burning car, saving her life? He is a real hero. Well, we would like to report that Jon is well and still working with TBC Chesterfield and has kindly provided some feedback that we would like to share about the relationship. In Jon's words:

"Been with The Best Connection well over a year now, Sam at the front desk is always friendly and helpful. I work as Class 1 driver and mainly deal with Matt or Ash - who is the new boy - they always have a professional attitude and are very helpful and have always found me work. I am normally on one contract

but with the option to move about so don't get bored doing the same thing. As a Trumper (UK Trucker slang for the driver of vehicle for long distance deliveries that may take several days), there is always a variety of work. I deal with Dave and Darren sometimes and could not ask for a better team. When I visit the office, the atmosphere feels like a big family. I would recommend The Best Connection to anyone that is willing to work, Best of Regards, Jon Rastrick."

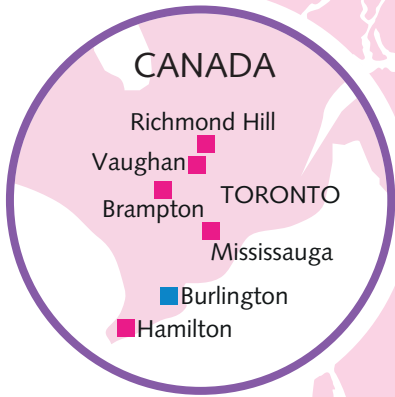
"A huge thank you Jon for your kind words and positive feedback about the TBC Chesterfield team. We are delighted you enjoy working with the team and feel part of the family –

because you are!" commented Darren Smith, Branch Manager.



Darren Smith

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