

BEST NEWS

March 2013

Teamwork Lightens the Load!

The world is a very different place nowadays. Even since we started The Best Connection in 1991 the economic, commercial, cultural and technological landscapes have changed beyond all recognition. These changes have created many benefits but also challenges.

The economic changes have generated different industries and opportunities. Long gone are the large manufacturing bases which were the mainstay of the British economy, instead we have service and assembly businesses.

Commercial pressures and cultural changes have influenced the retail sector in both the high street and superstores. Jobs and prosperity have been created but in order to satisfy 'consumer needs' prices and quality have been driven down, so much so that horse meat is now part of our staple diet!

Technology has enabled us to check our bank balances online and move pictures and documents effortlessly from here to the other side of the world, nevertheless we often struggle to actually speak to someone who can both understand the issues raised and be empowered to resolve them.

Everyone is more demanding than ever. We expect to shop when we want and to be able to have what we want when we want it. I don't believe that this need has been driven by consumers. I believe it has been driven by markets and commerce.

All these pressures change the way businesses operate and employees think and behave. The Best Connection is not immune from these issues. Our job has become more demanding than ever. The tasks our branches perform have become more complicated and time-consuming. It follows, therefore, that the role of the Branch Manager has changed and expanded to ensure The Best Connection's branches operate efficiently and within the law.

The most recent change in legislation has been the Agency Worker Regulations (AWR). We all know what these are and they seem pretty straightforward at first glance. However, things are never that simple. The principle may be easy enough to grasp at first but managing the AWR is a minefield. There are, however, some key pointers to consider. It is a very big job to manage the process singlehandedly. The Branch Manager is responsible but it is essential that everyone in the branch does their bit of the process. The beginning is to ensure that we and the client fully understand the comparator details and the information is accurately recorded. The weekly AWR reports need to be reviewed by consultants, administrators and managers alike.

When all the hard work has been done in the beginning to establish comparator rates and to gain agreement from the client to pay the higher rate (and charge it!) after 12 weeks, it seems a bit silly to me

not to ensure that after the 12 weeks these temporary workers are paid the going rate for the job. After all, that is what the AWR was all about, equal pay and/or conditions.

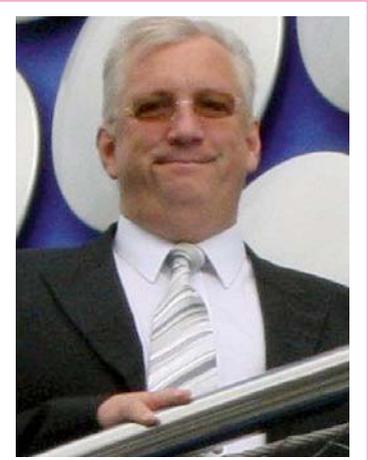
As you are aware the regulations provide for a 'pay between assignment contract' for the temporary worker. These offer the security of pay to the temporary worker where assignments end but for this benefit the temporary worker does not receive the comparator rate. It is therefore important to accurately establish those assignments which require such a contract and to ensure that workers assigned to such clients are on the correct contract.

New, exciting things coming up soon include Autoenrolment Pensions and in Real Time Information – an HMRC requirement – but more of this next time.

I am aware that everyone is under pressure at branch level (particularly managers) and also that there can, on occasions, seem too much to do for one person. But please ensure that everyone in your branch understands the Agency Workers Regulations process and takes responsibility for their piece of the process so that we minimise the exceptions and issues raised by the regulations.

As usual I thank you all for your hard work and determination and wish you all good luck for the coming quarter.

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 Best News or with subjects for future Press Releases.

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Intergreen Contract Continuing to Blossom in Hull

The unique partnership between Intergreen, part of the Dutch Flower Group and TBC continues to blossom as the contract to supply temporary staff to the Newport site near Hull enters its second year.

The recruitment programme for 2013 started in the first week of January in preparation for the Valentine's Day peak, closely followed by Mother's Day volume production for flower bunching and bouquet production for one of the client's largest high street supermarket customers. The site has also identified a temp-to-perm process to bolster their own full time employee headcount with a number of temporary workers being awarded key roles in Quality Control and Intake positions.

Lee Harris, regional manager, commented: "Michele Smith's innovative changes at Intergreen including the introduction of staggered shift patterns, alongside TBC's excellent team has enabled the site to achieve record breaking production figures."



Michele Smith, Site Manager, Intergreen

Commenting on the supply of labour from The Best Connection, Michele Smith, site manager, Intergreen, said: "Once again The Best Connection excelled in order to cover the significant increase in numbers across shifts. Together we were simply the best!"

Sheila Eland added that she would like to thank Hull branch for assisting in the additional staffing needed at short notice



Sindi, Wioleta and Monika - onsite co-ordinators, Intergreen

when the labour requirement increased to over 30 per shift within two days of the volume peak starting. "I believe a local branch plays an important support role in sourcing labour quickly from an active footfall," said Sheila.

Intergreen has also taken on temporary worker Paulina Jasniowska in a permanent role. She reflects on her experience with TBC:

"I was so happy working with The Best Connection and found they were friendly when I registered for the work at Intergreen. This is the first agency in the UK that is professional at all levels and I have registered with others in the past five and a half years. If I had any questions they were answered quickly and I have had no problems with my pay so I have no hesitation in recommending them to anyone who is seeking work. It was through The Best Connection that I was offered a permanent position with Intergreen."

Paulina Jasniowska





TBC in Sunday Times 250 Fast Track companies

The Best Connection has been positioned 248th in the Sunday Times 250 UK Fast Track companies. The ranking is based on Britain's leading mid-market private businesses based on sales figures. The Best Connection shares the list with many household names including Virgin Active, Aston Martin and Selfridges. A typical Top Track 250 company has sales ranging between £150m and £600m, is owned and run by established families and entrepreneurs, with around 30% by private equity firms and has between 100 and 5,000 staff. The accolade is an endorsement of The Best Connection's growth, success and market strength and reflects the hard work that has been put in year on year by every branch throughout the UK.

Well done everybody!



Neil Yorke & Andrew Sweeney



Westland Contract keeps growing ...

The successful partnership of nine years with Westland Horticulture and The Best Connection, managed by Shaun Walker, Senior Consultant, Hull Branch, has enabled a successful temp-to-perm programme to satisfy the customer's seasonal labour demands. The relationship has resulted in The Best Connection being awarded a three year SLA contract. Commenting on the relationship, James Farnsworth, General Manager, Westland Horticulture, said: "We have been impressed with the consistent support we get from The Best Connection. After almost a decade both parties understand

each other's requirements and the process of labour supply is almost seamless.

"In any circumstance like this the relationship with the Account Manager is key and we certainly get full support from Shaun. We are demanding of the quality of staff we make permanent and so 100% rely on The Best Connection to supply staff of this quality in the first instance. Would we recommend The Best Connection to anyone else? - most certainly."

Shaun Walker, Senior Consultant, TBC Hull who heads up Westland Horticulture and Intergreen contracts



New Offices for Tees Valley

The Tees Valley team have relocated to a ground-floor office in Brentnall Street. The new location provides easy, street-level access for candidates and an improved working environment. Senior Manager, Jeff Gray has been tasked with overseeing the move and will manage the branch team alongside Newcastle and Sunderland.

Neil Yorke, director, said: "The new location is a much more pleasant environment which provides practical, street-level access. It will now be much easier and efficient for the branch to engage with applicants and clients."

Now in its fourth year, the Middlesbrough team is an established and well known operation in the region.

Jeff Grey was appointed Senior Branch Manager last year joining TBC from Prime Time Recruitment. Jeff has just started training for the Great North Run in September and aims to raise funds for the British Heart Foundation.

The team includes Helen Bainbridge, Senior Consultant, who is also new to the team. Helen has a degree in marketing and extensive experience in the industry. Stephen Belton, HGV Consultant, is in his third year with TBC and joined from the RAF where he managed candidate selection and studied leadership and management to degree level. Jessica Alderson, HGV Consultant, joined TBC from Resource Management Solutions where she managed a full engineering and

industrial desk and has been instrumental in growing the driving section. Samantha Edwards, Industrial Trainee Consultant, moved from the retail sector where she was involved in web advertising, up-selling and lead generation. As Branch Administrator, Louise Speight provides the essential support for the smooth operation of the branch. Louise has two children and a keen interest in learning and has completed several college courses in business administration and computer skills.

The branch supports some of the region's largest businesses providing temporary staff for a range of assignments in the industrial market sector and HGV C+E and C drivers.



Back row (l to r) Helen, Jeff, Jessica and Stephen. Front row (l to r) Samantha and Louise

Wolves finally win something!

Their local football team may not be having a great time of it, but The Best Connection branch and Steve Causer in particular can continue to hold their heads high.

"When I launched this sales competition last month, there were certain people who you knew would want to see their name at the top of the league and Steve Causer was one of those people," said Darren Ainge, Regional Manager.

"We thought it would be a great idea to recognise individuals who consistently achieve new business sales other than through the commission scheme and after a few trial runs came up with a points system that took account of existing business and rewarded that consistent sales effort. In the first four weeks, Steve managed to convert three new clients whilst servicing an existing client base in excess of 30.

"As well as the monthly prize, there is a quarterly competition that I am sure Steve will already have his eye on, however, just like the recent Cheltenham Festival, you should never take your eye off the outsiders, some of

the recent new starters around the region have their sights well and firmly trained on the next prize pot!" added Darren.



*Steve Causer (Left) - Senior Industrial Consultant
with Darren Ainge - Regional Manager*

A week in the life of the Training Department's Ranjeet Mand

The training department is a very busy and fun environment to work in and the role of Training Administrator is varied. My duties involve a great deal of pre- and post-course preparation, communication with delegates and reporting. It all has to work like clockwork for the experience to be great and we do everything we can to make that happen.

Part of my work involves booking people on courses, checking the arrival of pre-course work for the trainers to mark - along with delivering their feedback, chasing late pre-coursework and printing course material for delegates. I also have to create and update PowerPoint presentations and hand-outs.

Communication takes up a significant part of my daily activities. I have to arrange bookings for hotel accommodation and ensure all refreshment and dietary

requirements are met throughout the day. Confirmations are also issued and monitored to make sure all joining instructions are received and understood.

Reporting is another important part of my regular duties. This involves updating the training database with information on cancellations and delegates booked and ensuring numbers are adequate for the courses offered. Non-attendance updates are also sent to directors and weekly training schedules to all RM's and Regional PA's. I also liaise with RM's and BM's about new starters and update Foundation Course Records.

From time to time we do receive cancellations - often late in the day - and this does generate a lot of additional work, cost and disruption to the department as we have to arrange course materials, hotel bookings and food well in advance. On

occasions, courses are cancelled due to low numbers and then need to be rescheduled. This can be a logistical challenge! There's one thing for sure, there's never a dull moment in the training department and it's a great place to be and work!



Ranjeet Mand

A Day in the Life of ... **Andy Clark** Branch Manager, Maidstone

How do you start your working day?

"Wednesdays at The Best Connection's Maidstone branch are always busy so I make sure I arrive around 7.30am to check my emails and start preparation for the day ahead. As the Branch Manager, I oversee one of the busiest HGV desks in the region, two thriving industrial plans and a burgeoning project into the Dartford area so I know the day is going to be full-on! By 8 o'clock the team has arrived at the office so we start with a team briefing to run over recruitment KPIs, checking performance at the beginning of the week and advising for the following few days. Together, we brainstorm new and innovative ways to bring in quality temporary workers and put them to effect immediately."

What does a typical day at work consist of?

"After the team briefing I check with each plan to see what they are on for the day. I like to find out the branch total on a daily basis so I can project our gross and net margins for the end of the week. With a cup of tea in hand, it's now time to check my diary to see what I have planned for the day. The next task is to go through one of my consultant's personal development plan. It is important that we nurture our members of staff to ensure we offer the best opportunities for career progression. I make sure to spend at least an hour going through this, covering all points, addressing any queries and setting smart objectives for continuous improvement. Later in morning I have scheduled a sales visit from a new call I made last week but before leaving I make sure to squeeze in a few sales calls. I like to lead by example on this and will typically spend 30 minutes in one of our interviews rooms, calling through my prospects. I then leave to get to my customer visit which goes well! The client has had bad experiences with agencies in the local area and would consider using The Best Connection due to our national reputation. I confirm bookings for both driving and industrial."



Andy Clark

What keeps you going through then day?

"My day is varied and very busy. The buzz of new sales wins, gaining new customers and beating targets drives me through the day and keeps me motivated and positive. To keep my energy levels up I make sure to have a healthy meal as well as snacking throughout the day. Although it is important to work hard, I understand that you get the best performance from people who are happy where they work so I encourage a little fun whilst working and enjoy the team banter and camaraderie."

What's a good day for you?

"A good day is when everyone is happy and I can see progress. As a branch, Maidstone is lucky enough to handle two large, value added clients. I make sure to take a trip to them at least once a month to maintain my rapport with the client and ensure everything is running smoothly. I attend with the account manager and my consultant, walk the floor, liaising with all key players and deal with any managerial queries. After returning to the office, I summarise the day with each plan, spending time with my senior consultants on each division to ensure the smooth operation of the branch. This information is then passed on with my area manager before I leave for the day. When it runs like clockwork it's a good day!"

We thought you might like to know what **Andy Clark** did to prepare a new branch...

When Andy Clark took the reins at Maidstone in 2008, he soon set his sights on maximising the potential for growth in the Kent area. With this in mind he had the task of building a team that would help him achieve his and TBC's goals. Over a three year period, the branch was gradually expanded, resulting in a team of motivated, sales and service-orientated consultants.

Andy saw Carl Davis as a potential 'right hand man' as he had shown great commitment and ability, enjoying success with business development through his hard

work. He was very supportive of the branch's growth when his plan was split to form the division he now manages. Carl now juggles this responsibility with the day to day running of industrial business in Maidstone.

The reorganisation led to the recruitment of another Carl - Carl Johnson. Andy recognised Carl's future potential as progressing from consultant to heading up a branch and bore this in mind when he started looking for potential areas for a new branch. Due to its heavily industrialised

makeup, Dartford was considered to be a good choice and further research confirmed that there were significant levels of business ripe for development.

Five years on since the Maidstone branch made its presence felt in the region, the team are now within weeks of moving into new premises in Dartford. From the start of the focus on the new branch, TBC has built strong relationships with many companies in and around Dartford and Maidstone is now established as one of the leading branches in the region.



Lynn Whyte

Lynn Whyte – 60th

One of the Best Connection's longstanding members, Finance Controller, Lynn Whyte, celebrated her 60th birthday on January 8th this year.

Happy birthday Lynn!

Affectionately known as Aunty Lynn to her colleagues, she joined TBC HQ in Halesowen, in 1998, after being interviewed by Neil Yorke and Andrew Sweeney in what is now a McDonald's in Druid's Heath. In her spare time, Lynn is an intrepid traveller and has ventured to the far reaches of the world. She plans to visit Australia later in the year. When not jet setting around the globe, Lynn can be found relaxing in her caravan in Evesham –bliss!

Tracey Whitehouse - 40th Birthday

Payroll also had good reason to celebrate recently after Tracey Whitehouse announced she had reached 40. Congratulations Tracey!

Her fellow team members played a cruel trick by presenting the flying-phobic Tracey with a false hot air ballooning voucher – shame on you 😊 Her anxiety levels later returned from the sky to normal after the hoax was disclosed to a much relieved Tracey. We are told she took it in good spirit!



Tracey Whitehouse

Sophie Moonwalks for Charity

TBC's Sophie Hanna from the Gloucester office will be participating in Moonwalk - a 26 mile power-walk charity event on the 11th May 2013. The event is organised by Walk The Walk to raise money and awareness for Breast Cancer causes as well as aiming to encourage men and women within the UK to become fitter and maintain healthier lifestyles.

The marathon takes place in Battersea at midnight with thousands

of men and women power walking their way through the 26miles. Sophie will be taking on the challenge with three friends.

"I decided to do the Moonwalk as a personal challenge and aim to achieve the 26miles in less than five hours. I also wanted to do some charity work as part of my own personal goals as well as the voluntary work I undertake weekly. I have not personally experienced any loss or upset caused by Breast

Cancer, however, I am aware of the tragedy it causes to many lives across the world and look forward to doing my part in helping to fund research campaigns," said Sophie.

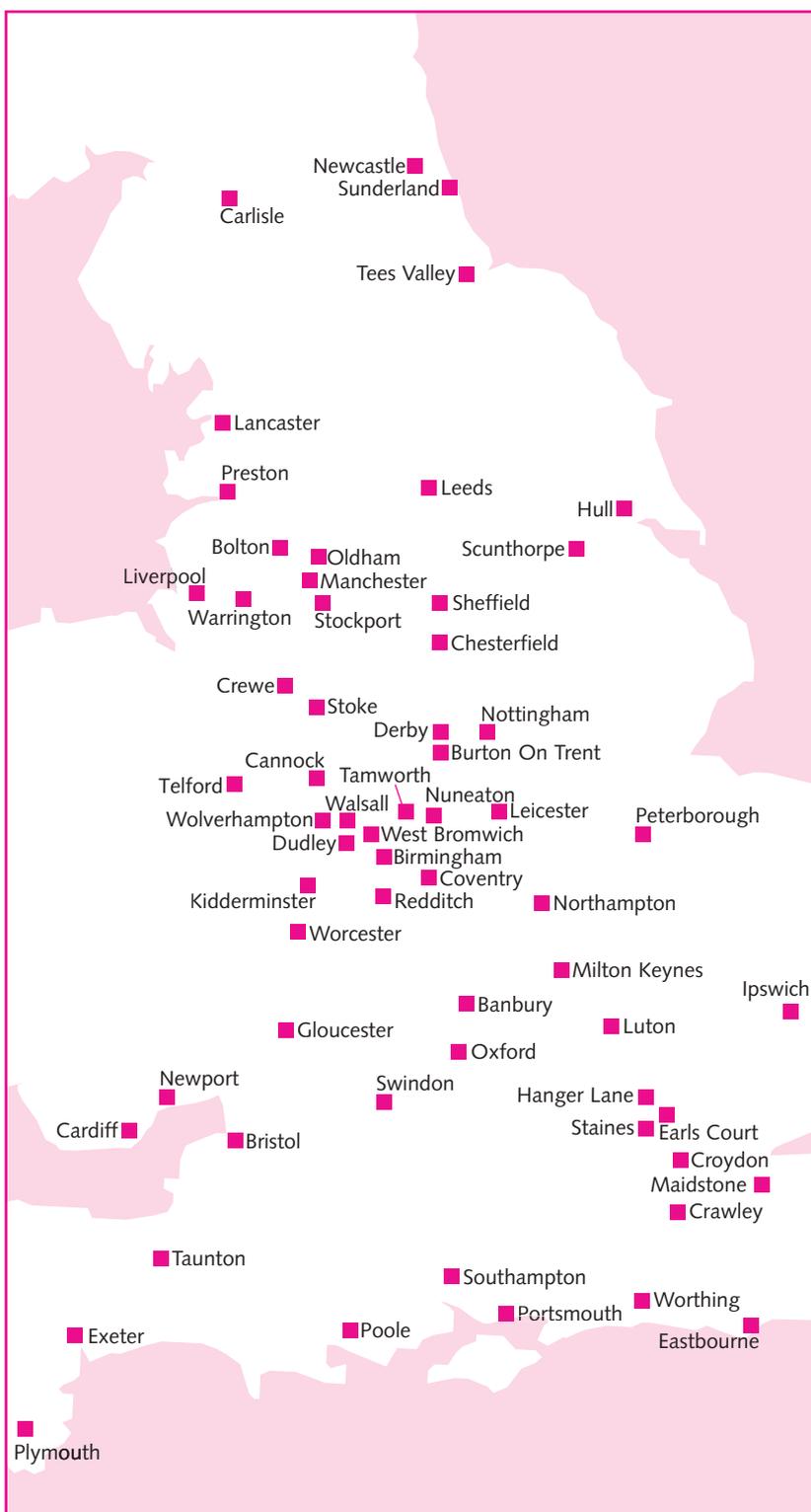
Anyone wishing to support Sophie to help raise money can contribute online at:
www.justgiving.com/Brabie-Girls

The Best Connection

EMPLOYMENT GROUP



Location	Tel Number	Fax Number
Birmingham	0121 628 8000	0121 285 1056
Bolton	01204 394400	01204 238059
Bristol	0117 957 6999	0117 200 0003
Burton	01283 545333	012833260012
Cannock	01543 468260	01543 621001
Cardiff	02920 494700	02920 090178
Carlisle	01228 590690	01228 830057
Chesterfield	01246 209222	01246 747001
Coventry	02476 228040	02476 109996
Crawley	01293 515333	01293 311001
Crewe	01270 251100	01270 260072
Croydon	0208 256 0120	0203 137 9695
Derby	01332 291444	01332 402006
Dudley	01384 230003	01384 901001
Earls Court	0207 373 1129	0203 137 3073
Eastbourne	01323 887111	01323 700028
Enfield	0203 1379870	0203 1378690
Exeter	01392 435468	01392 690233
Gloucester	01452 383303	01452 204001
Hanger Lane	0208 998 9910	0203 137 2334
Hull	01482 610160	01482 900008
Ipswich	01473 210584	01473 379007
Kidderminster	01562 665555	01562 214001
Lancaster	01524 383438	01524 291002
Leeds	0113 243 1033	0113 859 0268
Leicester	0116 251 2363	0116 347 0002
Liverpool	0151 236 0111	0151 329 2289
Luton	01582 405 444	01582 214 002
Maidstone	01622 664999	01622 523000
Manchester	0161 237 9333	0161 375 9551
Milton Keynes	01908 699466	01908 410237
Newcastle	0191 230 2007	0191 328 0900
Newport	01633 842164	01633 901000
Northampton	01604 629888	01604 280002
Nottingham	0115 958 5880	0115 824 0232
Nuneaton	02476 382211	02476 109408
Oldham	0161 626 4222	0161 375 8079
Oxford	01235 550077	01235 250009
Peterborough	01733 555672	01733 514002
Plymouth	01752 256360	01752 414005
Poole	01202 682282	01202 237184
Portsmouth	0239 286 4411	0239 316 2028
Preston	01772 201777	01772 441000
Redditch	01527 591141	01527 431001
Scunthorpe	01724 876111	01724 571000
Sheffield	0114 275 8181	0114 359 1005
Southampton	023 8033 3188	02380 000049
Staines	01784 450555	01784 603001
Stockport	0161 968 1964	0161 375 3895
Stoke	01782 209666	01782 435004
Sunderland	0191 567 1100	0191 580 0384
Sutton In Ashfield	01623 857976	01623 272101
Swindon	01793 542211	01793 250065
Tamworth	01827 533333	01827 230024
Taunton	01823 330621	01823 240039
Tees Valley	01642 672655	01642 688103
Telford	01952 898242	01952 780041
Walsall	01922 639000	01922 214043
Warrington	01925 629666	01925 320015
West Bromwich	0121 553 7755	0121 285 3309
Wolverhampton	01902 773000	01902 504102
Worcester	01905 731777	01905 700027
Worthing	01903 234500	01903 680092



Opening soon, Bedford, Dartford and Sutton in Ashfield

The e-mail address for each branch is the branch@thebestconnection.co.uk
e.g. burton@thebestconnection.co.uk