

BEST NEWS

December 2012

New Year New Markets New Opportunities

Another year is drawing to a close. Records have been broken but frustratingly we were just short of a record-topping Group turnover figure of £200m. Very well done to everyone - we will make it next year, that's for sure!

I am putting pen to paper with just 20 shopping days left until Christmas, I hope that's enough! We have had a very busy year and lots of exciting things have happened. It may not always appear that way from your branch perspective. It is important to remember, however, that we do live in an ever-changing world and we need to adapt and develop to survive. We need to build a secure structure and broaden the Group's activities to enable us to take advantage of all opportunities which present themselves.

The Best Connection brand is very strong and is now 21 years old. We are respected within the industry for our success and straightforward approach to business. I believe that the brand will grow and continue to be a market leader. It is also my belief that the Group needs to grow and broaden its services so that the challenges of the future can be met. To that end the Board has made a number of strategic acquisitions in the later part of 2011 and during 2012.

The acquisitions form part of the growth plan for the Group. Whilst The Best Connection will grow steadily, with new branches, this will not be fast in terms of percentage growth. I want it to become a household name and be seen to 'do what it says on the tin' ... The Best Connection for Flexible Workforce Solutions. To help with this, we are investing in Training and Development to enable managers within all the regions to step up to the challenge to drive us to this goal.

The companies we have added to the Group represent different brands in their respective markets. We will continue to grow their presence and success alongside The Best Connection whilst retaining their brands. New Group company, CPA, has opened two new offices since it was acquired. This is a 200% expansion for CPA and is therefore very significant.

City Transport Solutions joined the Group around 12 months ago and is working closely with TBC to add value to TBC's client base. Its complementary services and innovative software products will undoubtedly grow from strength to strength by virtue of our new relationship.

Bailey Employment Services Ltd (BES) is one of the latest additions to the Group. With this brand we will take TBC into

the growing and lucrative Care Services market. BES has a long established reputation within this sector and I firmly believe that with our proven experience of brand development, we will be able to grow this business into a market leader.

Finally, just a week ago we added Matrix Training and Development to the Group. Matrix develops and delivers training supported, in the main, by the Government's Vocational Education and Training Strategy. It is important for our future economy to invest in developing core skills. This is underpinned by the need for the UK to win the global race to invest in the skills base of our working population. Matrix delivers skills based training throughout a broad cross-section of companies in the West Midlands.

As with the other parts of our Group I intend to support and develop the Matrix business model throughout other areas of the country, thereby broadening the Group's activities and strengthening our position.

I am very excited about these developments and hope you too can see a more secure and interesting future with the Group.

I hope you all had a good Christmas and wish you all the best for 2013

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.

tel: 01926 843693

mob: 07976 284248

email: jan@marketnotions.com

Branch Competitions improve performance

Online payslips or emailed payslips

Setting up and administering email payslips and increasing awareness of these options to enable temporary workers to make an informed choice might be seen as a bit of a chore to some but, according to Lee Harris, even the most demanding tasks can be made a little more bearable when there are prizes at stake. As these important tasks improve efficiency, Lee thought it made perfect sense to incentivise the teams across five branches to get as many people signed up for these services as possible – and the results speak for themselves!

"The effort put in by all the teams was extraordinary. We now have 57% - that's over 2,250 workers in our region - receiving their payslips by email or have signed up to the internet receipt. As new people register this is growing by the week!"

The newly implemented Travel to Work scheme has added a complexity to the interview and process in the branch. Ensuring the scheme is properly explained and administered and the information required for the scheme is correct and accurate, is critical. To that end, West Bromwich has won £150 for ensuring all temporary workers are fully briefed about the scheme and the Derby branch has won £150 for being most accurate with respect to methods of transport undertaken by temporary workers.

Scunthorpe won £125 1st Prize for best increase in email payslips and £100 Prize for best overall % in email payslips while Chesterfield received £75 2nd Prize for best increase in email payslips. The prizes on offer included gift tokens, spa days and restaurant vouchers.



Nicola Christie with Marc Dawson (branch manager)

"I hope to run another incentive scheme soon for CPC Training as this will be vital to our continued success within the driver market. A special mention for Ewa in Thorncliffe, ably supported by the administration teams in Sheffield, Nottingham and Chesterfield as well as the onsite teams who helped set up well over a 1,000 email accounts for workers at Sports Direct and Marks and Spencer - a bunch of flowers will be on their way as soon as I can get to a florist," added Lee.



West Bromwich – Bev Harris & Toni Smith



Chesterfield - Kat Boszka & Natalie Wardle



Scunthorpe – Richard Store, Alison Law, Jackie Hamby, Nicola Christie & Matt Forrest



Derby- Inese Lide, Dana Robinson & Rebecca Horsley



Onsite – Ewa Borzecka

New Software Transforms Customer Pay Process

The Best Connection has introduced new software that will revolutionise how pay and timesheets are processed for customers. Automate+ allows Time & Attendance (T&A) information collected from TBC's in-house system, a client's system or manually entered data from a clock card or signing-in system, to be merged into StaffPlus. This reduces the time it takes to enter information to as little as 30 minutes – regardless of the number of timesheets processed. Customers can now receive immediate detailed cost reports, speeding up agency cost allocation and forecasting. The software also enables a single site invoice report to be produced.

Automate+ was first introduced and piloted in Hanger Lane's NDL onsite and has been successfully implemented in eighteen key accounts with a further four roll-outs planned. Using combined site peaks, Automate+ is currently processing 4,500 timesheet transactions per week. This is anticipated to rise to 6,000 by the end of the year. Feedback suggests that the time savings that have been achieved have been well received:

"My branch and onsite teams have benefitted from Automate+. It ensures that all pay and charge allocations are accurate. We have also leveraged the benefits of the system to win and retain clients."

Lee Harris – regional manager

"The impression it creates for our customers is great. We are seen as progressive and easy to do business with. This is a competitive edge we welcome."

Darren Pollard – regional manager

"Before the introduction of Automate+ a basic spreadsheet was produced and emailed to the branch for further processing. The new system will automatically populate StaffPlus, saving time and reducing errors."

Lee Crimes – area manager

"I have two contracts using Automate+. In both cases we have reduced the level of administration so that we no longer need to recruit additional support."

Phil Simmonds – regional manager

"Automate+. Just a push of a button - it's as quick as that!"

Lynne Price – Administrator, Leeds

"We payroll 150 temporary workers a week and the timesaving Automate+ has given us is very impressive."

Martin Miller – Senior Consultant, Leeds

Customers can receive immediate detailed cost reports. This is a huge benefit when running multiple payrolls."

Shaun Grimshaw – onsite consultant, Leeds

"Automate + has helped to develop greater trust with our customers."

Adam Tilly, onsite consultant, Kidderminster

"The new system is quick, effective and easy to use."

Mandy Bennett, branch manager, Kidderminster

"The program is very flexible and guarantees a high quality of service to our customers."

Maureen Kennedy, branch manager, – HangerLane

Well done to the implementation team: Faye Harrison (MSD Administrator), Scott Meredith (Senior Project Manager), Lee Nash (Project Manager) and Steve Rowney (IT: Software Support and Development) and thanks to the following branches for supporting the product development: Burton, Chesterfield, Crewe, Hanger Lane, Hertford, Hull, Kidderminster, Leeds, Maidstone, Nottingham, Sheffield, Stoke, Sunderland, Swindon and Tamworth.

Spotlight on Scunthorpe



Paintball Wizards

Inter-branch 'healthy competition' was taken to a whole new level recently as members of the Scunthorpe and Hull TBC branches decided to battle it out on the paintball fields of Elsham's 120 acre Activity Centre. The day was organised by Scunthorpe's Marc Dawson who went on to see his troops gain victory in a fiercely contested and colourful battle. Feedback was they all had a great time despite Matt (Rambo) Willis's best efforts to rally the Hull team. A return match is surely on the cards.

Contract Renewals

Congratulations go to TBC Scunthorpe for securing two important PSA renewals. After developing a strong relationship over some years, Global Logistics and Transport Company, DSV, has extended its commitment to TBC for class one drivers. Via Coldstores, which began operating in June 2011, has also signed a PSA for pickers, packers, ride-on pallet truck drivers and fork lift truck drivers. Well done to all involved.



Left to right: Matt Forrest (snr ind cons), Alison Law (HGV cons), Richard Store (ind cons), Nicola Christie (admin), Marc Dawson (branch manager), Jackie Hamby (snr HGV cons)

Richard Owen migrates to the Training Department

Richard Owen, who has worked for The Best Connection for the past eight years, has joined TBC's Training Department at Halesowen.

"I am really excited to be joining the Training Department and I am looking forward to my own personal and professional development. There is certainly a difference between standing in front of a group of people talking

about a particular subject and interacting and supporting their learning as opposed to working in a busy branch of The Best Connection. I'm also looking forward to helping develop people through the Foundation programme as well as the Customer Service and Business Administration NVQ Programmes.

"I have been fortunate to work in many

areas of The Best Connection's business during my eight and a half years, covering Industrial in Wolverhampton and then Driving and Industrial in Telford as well as onsite with Wincanton Argos and I think that these experiences will be invaluable in relating to the day to day successes and challenges faced by the delegates.

We wish Richard the best of luck with his new role.

New Apprentice Resourcer Role

The Best Connection Group is proud to launch a new Apprenticeship Scheme

We are offering an opportunity to get young people (16 to 25) onto a long term career path. With costs of further education spiralling and the limited number of places available, we believe this offers an alternative for young people to choose a different path after completing GCSE's or A-Levels. This enables us to recruit the cream of young workers who are hungry to establish themselves in the job market and we have already successfully recruited several apprentices with a view to adding more by the end of the year. Working in-conjunction with external company, Matrix, our ability to advertise nationally, specifically for people looking to take up an apprenticeship, has increased the quality of applicants available to us.

Pete Sutherland, branch manager, Staines, recently commented that he was 'taken aback by the quality of the applicants' not just the application form content but 'how positive and professional they were'.

The Apprentice role will be the beginning of what we hope will be an introduction to a career in recruitment and prove to be the starting point for the majority of 'new to recruitment' employees, starting on their career path as a resource. Encompassing a Level 2 NVQ in Customer Service which is based on work that the apprentice will do on a day to day basis, the course will be predominantly evidence-based and designed not to add to their daily work load. It removes any sales focussed tasks and concentrates on the recruitment, selection and placement of temporary workers, giving the

Apprentice an opportunity to build their knowledge of the services we provide.

Luke Tucker, an Apprentice in Southampton, had impressed in his interview by seeming to memorise The Best Connection's website and according to Dave Stanford, senior manager, has 'proven to be very inquisitive, asking lots of questions and has brought a new element into branch.'

The apprentice resourcer develops skills in interviewing, selection and booking filling. This gives them the opportunity to see first-hand what is needed to make the next step to becoming a consultant. A graduated pay scale keeps the Apprentice focussed on the learning and earning potential within The Best Connection.

Thank you June Drew

After 13 years with TBC, many of you will know that June Drew made the decision to retire on her 65th birthday this September which was celebrated by a surprise party. June worked in the B2 payroll section of the Tyseley branch and was affectionately known as 'our June' by the customers she looked after so well. TBC News was told that it was rumoured she used to

send customers little sweets and birthday cards in the post and got to know many of her clients well. Now that's commitment!



Martin Recci and June Drew

June lives in Bartley Green with her husband Graham and is looking forward to spending more time in her garden and the over 60's social club. Thank you June for all your work and loyalty - you will be missed at TBC.

Back left is Rebecca Lucas, Samantha Truman & Cheryl Gardiner Front right Jane Ursell with June

Temporary workers recognised by Colleague of the Month Award



Terry Williams - warehouse colleague at NDL - pictured receiving the Colleague of the Month Award from Paul Atkinson – Branch Manager Stoke.

Paul commented: "Terry was chosen by the senior management team at NDL for his extreme flexibility in relation to working additional hours and differing shift patterns in order to meet the needs of the business, as well as assisting with training of new colleagues in the intake area."

The PLOD

For the second consecutive year, TBC entered the overnight PLOD walk for charity. The team was made up of the following:

Marcus Jepson – regional manager, Joe Middleton (BM Worthing), Becky Maddocks (SC Worthing).

The road team comprised Dave Stanford, senior branch manager and ex-TBC employee, Bryan Cole.

This year's challenge was to walk continuously for 40 miles over the undulating hills of South Downs, culminating in taking on the infamous Seven Sisters. The challenge started at midnight and the team would walk through checkpoints en-route to finishing some 17 hours later. The day starts much before midnight, however, with preparation and ensuring equipment, maps, drinks, etc., are ready. The road team were in a Land Rover Discovery that looked more like a caravan from Mad Max but it did the job. There were six check points and the team started with a massage, food, a motivational talk and then sent on their merry way. Dave Stanford commented: "All the credit goes to the walkers; they were exceptional and stuck together

as a team throughout. They yet again raised a considerable sum for their chosen charity, ACTION. This is a Horsham-based organisation that specialises in research into the prevention of diseases and disabilities of young children. They run many challenges, which are listed on their website. I have no doubt Marcus will lead another team in another challenge in 2013 - are there any new challengers from within TBC?"

For around six months preceding the event, the team undergoes substantial training to prepare for the mammoth task of walking forty miles up and down hills non-stop. Congratulations to all involved on another successful PLOD for charity.



The PLOD team embark on their latest challenge

Sponsored Triathlon Raises £1000 for charity

In the last edition of Best News, three intrepid athletes were preparing for a gruelling team triathlon to raise money for **KEEPTHEBEAT** - a charity that supports children born with CHD (congenital heart defects) and parents through very difficult times.

We can now report that Simon, Neil and Rob not only completed the event and raised over £1,000 - but did it in style. The team won the M35-39 Category and were 8th overall out of over 400 teams that entered – a fantastic achievement!

"The guys were simply awesome," said Simon. "They both emptied the tank to deliver the very best of what they were capable of. We didn't want to let the people down who had

kindly donated, the charity or most importantly, the children we were there for. As team Captain I am very proud of what we achieved."

Over £5,000 was raised for **KEEPTHEBEAT** over the weekend. "Once again, the three of us would like to say a big thank you to all that have donated and supported us. Now who wants a go next year?" added Simon.



On the podium Neil Russell, Simon Crouch and Rob Gregory



Rob Gregory limbering up before the off



Simon Crouch, pre bike ride and getting ready for the off



Simon Crouch, Rob Gregory & Neil Russell - relieved to be finished

Ryder Cup Chicago

A year ago, while attending the British Open, Marcus Jepson made a wild suggestion about a group of his team members going to Chicago for the Ryder Cup. They put their names down on the USPGA website for tickets in the ballot and were successful. The party of five then planned a 10 day trip to Chicago along with and trying to come up with creative excuses for their partners!

Prior to the trip, the group felt it would be a shame to go all the way to Chicago without actually playing Golf. Dave Stanford, senior manager, decided to make an event off it and started to look for companies that had some synergy with TBC.

"I sent several speculative emails to recruitment companies in greater Chicago. The simple story was, 'group of recruiters coming over for the Ryder Cup - would you like a friendly game?'"

A company called Elite Staffing responded, stating it was a great idea and that the company's President would contact TBC in due course.

Elite Staffing, like TBC, was formed in 1991 and specialises in the same occupational areas - industrial, driving, etc. The similarities were uncanny as conversations took place through the day.

Gary Cole (President of Elite Staffing) contacted Dave Stanford.

After half a dozen emails and inter-pond banter the game was on.

Marcus did not attend as he is in the embryonic stage of Golf and decided to plot a Cider map of Chicago(!). Representing TBC was Dave Stanford, Joe Middleton - BM Worthing, Bryan Cole - ex TBC Consultant and Eric Kenyon who works for the MOD.

"The day did not start well; we were late due to a little more traffic than we were accustomed to in the southern suburbs of the UK. On letting our guests know, we received a text from Elite stating "that's how we lost America in the first place!," said Dave Stanford.

Dave recalled: "On the day, we arrived to be greeted by our guests and our caddies! It was very friendly and an astonishing venue. To our surprise we had the course exclusively for our day. We were given full breakfast and on arriving and in the changing room we were greeted by five white NIKE golf shirts with Joint TBC and Elite Logos, including Ryder Cup badge. At this point we knew it was serious. Our buggies had a few bottles in and at one point you may even say they were sponsored by Miller Light. Both the golf and the course were great with superb facilities. The morning comprised pairs and after a good lunch things were mixed up and new pairs went out again. It was a close game with TBC losing 1-3, although there was only a hole difference in every game."

At the end of the day a meal and more Miller Light was provided for the teams. This was followed by photos before the valet brought their car complete with cleaned clubs and shoes - all the shoes had been re-studded.

"Representing Elite staffing were their senior team, Gary Cole, Harvey, Andy and Kevin. They were exceptional hosts and we could not have asked for a better day. There was much talk through the day about our industry and apart from the accent, the job faces the same challenges and opportunities either side of the pond. Suffice to say the communication is continuing from time to time and they will more than likely make a trip over here in 2014," Dave concluded.



TBC/Elite Staffing Mini Ryder

Our best wishes go to Julie Wilson - for a continued speedy recovery

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 53333	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

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



For a complete list of branches and contact details,
please visit www.thebestconnection.co.uk