BEST NEWS December





Time to Celebrate!

Welcome to Best News December 2023. In this edition, we feature several wonderful examples of an enduring theme we have witnessed over the years - and that's giving back. This is expressed through your acts of kindness, going above and beyond, supporting charitable events and activities, volunteering and training to name but a few examples. Many of you go out of your way to make a real difference to other people's lives who are, in the main, total strangers. This year, thanks to you all, our annual company fundraising event, Better Connected, was an absolute triumph. Whether personally motivated or simply energised to give back in some way, so many of you entered into the spirit, in creative ways, to raise funds that ultimately benefitted 28 different causes. Thank you all for your selfless work and for sharing your experiences and of course, your pictures. It was clearly a lot of fun and heartwarming to see the branch teams and everyone based at Topaz working together in this way. In other stories, many more of you have followed your own path in supporting charities, which has involved sacrificing your time and taken great effort.

Another enduring theme in every Best News is the act of celebration, which must never be forgotten, and in this issue we share a host of delightful stories that do just that. And there is no better place to start than the day you join the business. So, I would like to welcome our newcomers to the company and wish all of you much success in your roles. I hope you have taken time to congratulate yourselves and toast this achievement. Many of you also have good reason to celebrate achievements in your day-to-day work as you strive to become better at what you do or expand your abilities and knowledge in new and existing areas. I am always delighted to read about new business wins, joint client initiatives, renewed contracts and stories that demonstrate how challenges are met, relationships are forged and opportunities are uncovered and in this issue you have not disappointed!

There have been so many reasons to celebrate throughout 2023. Some colleagues have moved to fresh new premises, others have received external awards for outstanding contributions to their industry. These events reflect success and should be recognised and commemorated. The list of reasons to celebrate does not stop there, however. As an established

and expanding business, we have an ever-growing number of long service awards to mark and personal life events from births to birthdays to share with you.

With Christmas approaching we prepare to mark the end of another year and can look back on our individual journeys. I hope yours has been successful and enjoyable and that you have achieved your personal objectives. So, what will 2024 look like for you? With the talent we have across our business, our enviable reputation and experience of the markets we serve, I am feeling very



Andrew Sweeney

optimistic and excited for everyone and I hope you do too.

I would like to thank you for your loyalty, hard work and dedication this year and wish you all a very Happy Christmas.

Andrew Sweeney
Chief Executive



NEXT ISSUE...

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

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Darren rides for Blood Bikes

Hospitals rely on regular blood supplies to maintain stocks to cover emergencies. It is a critical and lifesaving service. Have you ever wondered how blood reaches a hospital if stocks are low? One mechanism - would you believe – has been sending a taxi, which can be an expensive round trip. Thankfully, in more recent times, volunteers on motorcycles have come to the rescue in the shape of Blood Bikes.

Blood Bikes is a charity which has been granted the Queen's Award for voluntary services. It provides transportation of blood products, medication, milk and a variety of other items to all NHS hospitals free of charge. In this story, our very own Darren Shillam, Divisional Manager, TBC Telford, decided he would like to represent the charity in his locality and joined the Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire Blood Bikes (SSCB). This is his story.

"To join the SSCB charity as a rider, I had to undertake a number of activities before I was accepted. Firstly, I needed an advanced rider's certificate which I didn't have at the time, so I joined another group called IAM Roadsmart. This company is primarily operated by volunteers and it took me 11 months to complete my training and pass my test. After this, I took another riding test with the SSCB, completed my induction to the charity, took a blood handling course and had the final induction to their garages and bikes. It was a long road!

"September 2023 - I have now completed a few shifts and thankfully I can say, that despite all the training and challenges I faced to get here, it has been well worth it. I had the pleasure of a gentleman explain to me that the services of SSCB have helped him on four separate occasions and without the charity

he perhaps wouldn't be here today. I delivered medication to a lady who cried when I arrived at her doorstep as she was extremely anxious about missing her medication. The work is life supporting, life changing and extremely rewarding.

"If anyone is thinking about joining a charity as I was, please take that step, it's worth the effort," explained Darren.

Kudos to you Darren for making your charitable aspirations a reality after the time and effort you have put in and for your invaluable contribution to NHS services.



Darren Shillam

Shout out for Kerrie-Jade!

At TBC we hear many wonderful stories about people going above and beyond so that clients experience the best service possible. We also receive personal 'shout-outs' for colleagues and friends who are just doing their jobs – but often incredibly well – under challenging circumstances. These are our unsung heroes.

One such individual who deserves a huge 'well done you' is Kerrie-Jade Corbett from Central Managed Solutions (CMS). We are reliably informed that Kerrie-Jade has been managing a very demanding B&Q store-to-home delivery contract for one of our CMS Accounts, GXO. Her application to the role, hard work and

success have not gone unnoticed. Kerrie-Jade has undertaken what has been necessary to ensure the client comes first and that has included whatever it takes - lots of out of hours work, detailed reporting and running regular review meetings to keep everyone in the picture.

"I would like to thank Kerrie-Jade for her tireless work with this account. She is a true team player and works with her colleagues across the branch network to ensure that customer experience comes first. This is an extremely important customer for CMS and very challenging to manage. We are grateful to have her as part of CMS," said Matt Burford, Senior Manger, CMS.



Kerrie-Jade Corbett



10-years' service list grows longer

Once again, we celebrate colleagues who have reached work milestones of 10 years and more and on this occasion, we would like to say well done and thank you for your service to the following:

Kevin Whalin - Recruitment Consultant, Plymouth

Harry Keates - Senior Consultant, Earls Court

Marcin Socha - Consultant, Earls Court

Jason Melia - Area Manager, Manchester

John Crane - Senior Manager, Redditch



L to R: Danny Keyes, John Crane & Dave Schilling

Harry and Marcin both reach 10 year milestone

Richard Fenton, Senior Manager, TBC, has reason to celebrate as two members of his team at TBC Earls Court have reached a 10-year milestone with the business. Let's see who they are.

Our first colleague to receive his wings for 10-years' service is Marcin Socha. Marcin joined TBC on 14th October 2013 as an Onsite Co-ordinator at the University Hospital of London for the Earls Court office. Since then, Marcin has developed his knowledge of the industrial recruitment sector and is now a Recruitment Consultant. Although his role is mainly focused on servicing national account clients for TBC, he is expanding his sales activities into the A-Z Industrial market.

Second up for long service honours at the branch is Harry Keates. Harry joined TBC on 16th September 2013 as a Trainee Consultant based at TBC Cannock and was promoted to Senior Consultant three years later in 2016. In June 2021, Harry transferred to TBC Earls Court where he leads the Industrial 1 plan. In addition, he is currently managing

the implementation of supply for a new client - Harrods, Knightsbridge. No pressure Harry!



L to R: Richard Fenton congratulating Harry Keates



L to R: Richard Fenton congratulating Marcin Socha



Jason Melia

Jason celebrates 10 years

The list of long serving employees gets longer by the month and on this occasion, please put your virtual hands together and give Jason Melia a little ripple for his achievement. Jason, who is an Area Manager based in Manchester, has reached a 10-year mark with TBC. Many congratulations Jason on this wonderful milestone in your career.

"I can sincerely say that I have thoroughly enjoyed my last 10 years working for The Best Connection. From the first day I was interviewed by Mike Cooper to working for Darren Ainge today, I can honestly say that I enjoy my job and look forward to coming to work every day. Over the years I've met and worked with some amazing people throughout the business and I look forward with excitement at what the next 10 years will bring. Thank you to all the people who have helped me in my first 10 years with the company," shared Jason.

The Pride of Britain Award for outstanding bravery goes to...

John Rastrick, of course! You may recollect that in January 2019, HGV driver, John Rastrick, who is a temporary worker with TBC Chesterfield and real-life hero, rescued a lady from a burning car, saving her life. Such was the nature of this courageous, selfless act, he has been recognised yet again for his bravery. On this occasion John has been presented with the prestigious 'Outstanding Bravery' achievement award at The Pride of Britain Awards. What a fantastic accolade. Very well done and congratulations to John.

OUTSTANDING BRAVERY

John Rastrick

John was returning to his assignment in Chesterfield, travelling northbound on the M1 on January 17th, 2019. As he approached Junction 20 at around 5:45pm he could see stationary traffic ahead. John was alerted by a car that had been struck and was on fire.

John explained to East Midlands Ambulance Service: "I saw the car spin two or three times when another car collided with it and the vehicle immediately set on fire - I just knew at that moment that there was no-one else around to help and I had to do what was right."

The vehicle was driven by Pari Mistry, a young lady who was on her way home from work. The petrol tank had been damaged by the impact and the car had instantly burst into flames. In response, John pulled over switched-on his hazard lights, jumped out of the cab and ran towards the burning car. As he opened the driver side door, he could see the inside of the car was engulfed in flames. John found Pari in an unresponsive state and had to wrestle with the seatbelt in order to release her. After freeing her from the vehicle he moved Pari to a safe place where she was later attended to by the East Midlands Ambulance Service.

Huge congratulations on your well-deserved award, John.



Rishi Sunak, John Rastrick and wife, Janet

Pride of Britain Nomination for Dipak

Dipak Patel, Senior Manager, The Best Connection, is simply intrepid! As a Trustee for his local school, Avanti Fields in Leicester, he has been on a mission to raise money for a range of projects at the school from a defibrillator to an impressive community garden. And his efforts haven't gone unnoticed as he was nominated for a coveted Pride of Britain award.



Prity and Dipak Patel

Along with his wife Prity, daughters Tanisha and Meisha, fellow parents and teachers, Dipak has helped to raise a staggering £75,000 since the school opened five years ago. Wow! Now here's a thing - a lot of the fundraising is generated from baking cakes which we understand is a passion close to Dipak's heart. He organises 4-5 events each year and sells around 1,000 cakes at each one.

"We almost have a production line going, there are late nights and then we're in school the following day selling items. If you can imagine 800 - 900 kids wanting cakes – it's hectic!" explained Dipak.

The largest project to date was the creation of a community garden that also works as an outdoor classroom space. Dipak helped to secure grants to supplement the funds required to pay for

the £40,000 works.

"I didn't make it to the finals, but it was an achievement to be one of the last four in the region as there were hundreds of nominations," added Dipak.

Win or not Dipak, the company is very proud of you for your amazing work and achievements. Many congratulations and keep up the sterling work! And who knows, The Great British Bake Off may beckon one day!



Administrator Services Academy launched with great success!

What would we do without our brilliant administrators who keep the wheels turning for the business? Well, truth be told, everything would probably fall apart! Due to the importance of this role in the company, training is an essential part of honing the skills of our admin staff. In this interview with Jo Davies, Learning and Development Specialist, we find out how the Administrator Services Academy, aka ASA, is keeping everyone at the top of their admin game.

Jo, can you explain what the ASA is?

The ASA is a training programme for administrators. It has two learning routes. The first allows the learner to gain a Customer Service Apprenticeship qualification over 12 months. The second is the 'Academy-only' route which is shorter at nine months but covers the same content and provides the learner with an internal qualification. This virtually based training consists of six modules that contain a mix of e-learning, recordings to watch on learning events, podcasts, videos, virtual 'drop in' sessions and workbook tasks and questions to consolidate learning.



Jo Davies

How did this all come about?

After a training review, it was identified that administrators had not received training since March 2022 following the withdrawal of the old Administrator Programme for refresh. The old programme was not aligned to a Customer Service apprenticeship qualification and in some places, was out of date or missing key parts of information, so there was a gap in our provision of training to our administrators in the business. And so, the ASA was born.

What is the aim of the ASA?

Firstly, it provides comprehensive training for TBC administrators, delivering key skills, knowledge and behaviours to carry out their role and providing the business with trained, skilled and engaged administrators. Secondly, it provides a documented process on credit control, payroll and StaffPlus and the

opportunity to continually review this in line with key business strategies and priorities.

In addition, it raises the administrator's profile and encourages branch compliance along with imparting 'softer skills' that help administrators manage the wide range of internal and external customers they may deal with day to day.

How was the ASA content created?

The project team for ASA comprised branch administrators from across the business as well as assessors, trainers and members of the e-learning design team. We then worked with and collected feedback from departments within the business such as the Digital Systems Team, Legal, CQA, Payroll, Credit Control and Finance. This helped us to establish the desired business and training outcomes.

What challenges did the project face?

Time! All in all, it took us a year to put everything together. This was well over the time we expected it would take to deliver the project. It highlighted to me the absolute pivotal role that administrators play in the branch. It was no mean feat to document and put together every process that an administrator has responsibility for – which is a lot!

What did you think were the key successes?

I think a huge success was the power of collaborative working. Close collaboration with the business allowed each of the lessons in the modules to be tailored towards administrators. As I mentioned earlier, the training team worked together by creating a 'project group' that contained a mix of training members to achieve a holistic approach to the project. The breadth of participation ensured that each subject had been carefully tuned to meet the training needs of the business. Feedback from administrators and managers, post project launch, has been very positive.

How has it been going so far and what's next?

We currently have 21 Academy learners and 9 learners on the Customer Service Apprenticeship since its launch in September this year. So far, we have seen lots of engagement and positivity around the programme. Each learner has been working on a 1-2-1 basis with a member of the training team. We actively request feedback at every review or conversation we have with administrators and have already made some tweaks to content, as a result of this iterative process, that we hope has improved the provision.

We hope to be running our first 'Drop In' session soon where we would like to see a learning community of administrators created and a chance for some of our business experts to join us and answer any burning questions on our processes, \$9\$ shared Jo.

A day in the life of ... Adam Potter

Branch Manager, B2 Birmingham



How did you get into recruitment?

After spending 10 years working in retail since the age of 16, I was keen for a career change and wanted to challenge myself in a different industry. I was approached by a family friend who, at the time, was the manager of the HGV division here in Birmingham as there was a Trainee Consultant position available in B2. The rest, as they say, is history!

What is it about recruitment that gets you out of bed in the mornings?

I really enjoy working in a team environment and dealing with people. The working atmosphere we have created in B2 is very positive and it's always a pleasure to come to work. We work extremely hard and have a giggle along the way. I am very lucky that I enjoy my job. The Mrs would even say I enjoy work too much!

Do you have pre-work duties?

Not really. I live 25 miles from work, therefore, it's a get up and make my way in. We have a new-born baby due in January 2024 which will make my pre-work duties a lot more stressful, that's for sure!

How many meetings do you attend in a typical week?

No working week is the same in recruitment, meetings can vary depending on business needs week to week, however, I really enjoy going out on visits and meeting with current/prospective clients.

How do you begin your working day?

Usually with a strong coffee, 2 sugars!

What's the first thing on your mind when you get in your car?

Fingers crossed the M42 is quiet.

What is your favourite lunch venue/meal?

During lunch at work, I always bring my own food in, however, the team love a breakfast sarnie every Friday and we love a cheeky Nandos at the weekend.

What part does travel play in your role? How much do you enjoy your car and driving?

I wouldn't say driving is my strong point and my sense of direction is awful, but I've recently purchased a new BMW and I'm very happy with it. My journey to and from work consists of one radio station only, TALKSPORT. After a long day at work my journey home gives me a chance to reflect on the day and plan for tomorrow.

What would you do without your mobile phone?

I can't even answer that question!

What makes you laugh a lot at work?

My Team! We have some brilliant personalities within B2 and we all get along very well. Recruitment can be stressful at times, therefore you have to create a fun, working environment.

What's your biggest bugbear?

I am that person who constantly drives around with the petrol light on, I simply cannot stand stopping for petrol, even though it's a necessity!

Has your day job evolved naturally since you joined TBC?

Yes! I've been lucky enough to climb the ladder at TBC from Trainee Consultant to Branch Manager in eight years. My duties have therefore changed naturally whilst progressing, however, I am still very much involved with my team and happy to jump on the tools when needed.

What's your favourite client and why?

It's a difficult question as we have some fantastic clients in B2 that we have worked with for a number of years, however, I would say a company called SULZER is my personal favourite. The reason for this is the Operations Manager and the Production Manager both started as temporary workers through The Best Connection many years ago and the working relationship we have formed is hard to beat.

What do your friends and family think about the work you do?

They are very proud of the journey I have been on since I started my career at The Best Connection, however, I don't think any of them really understand what I do on a daily basis.

What is the most challenging part of your day-to-day job?

Due to the volume of work in B2, we payroll roughly 400 workers per week. It can therefore be challenging to manage the temporary workforce to ensure all roles are being filled on time and efficiently and that we are maintaining a good, consistent level of communication with our client base.

Do you have any obsessions? Chocolate, fizzy drinks, tidiness?!

My team will tell you; I am a nightmare when it comes to tidy desks, neat boards and general organisation, I do love a highlighter! I used to take pride in my work whilst working on a plan and I ensure my team do the same, 'Tidy Desk, Tidy Mind'!

What's the most common request from your colleagues?

"Who's making the brew?!"

How do you balance work and leisure?

Balancing work and leisure is very important in life. My wife and our five-year-old son, Jake, love to go abroad when we can to relax, go out to nice restaurants and I take Jake to watch Aston Villa play at Villa Park every other week. He already has the football bug and he would love to be the next Jack Grealish!

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I really enjoy training and developing people. We have recently taken on three new starters in B2 due to continuous growth which can be a challenge, however, to watch them grow, develop and perform to a high level is always pleasing. I also look forward to Friday mornings when the weekly margins arrive, it's fantastic to see our hard work on paper and it's great to celebrate success together.

How do you deal with tasks you would prefer not to do?

I have a great team around me and I try utilise them to support me with tasks I perhaps cannot prioritise. I report into an excellent management network in Pete Christie, Senior Manager and Danny Keyes, Area Manager, who always support me on a daily basis.

Home-Grown Apprentices

Apprenticeships have become an essential part of our 'home-grown' approach to building our talent pool and teams across the country. Our apprenticeship programme is a strategic business success with many individuals building long, successful careers with TBC. This year has been particularly busy for our training department who have been flat-out delivering hundreds of courses and sessions to help make our apprentices the best they can be. To put this into context, let's take a look at the figures.

Training and Apprenticeship Department 2023 in Figures

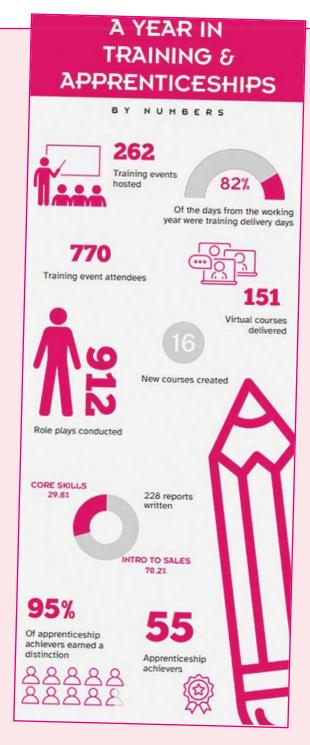
Check out the accomplishments achieved during the past 12 months by the Training and Apprenticeship Department illustrated on the graphic.

Phew, what an exhausting amount of work! This represents an enormous investment in our future so it's not surprising that TBC has developed a huge, enviable reputation in the industry for the provision of training excellence. Training at TBC is simply the best!

Hats off to everyone in the Training and Apprenticeship Team who make it all happen – year in - year out. You just need a few more hours in a day!

Fabulous Feedback











"I think the course was realty well structured and even with the sales experience I have gained so far within The Best Connection, this course definitely helped me learn some new things. I will definitely be implementing them more into my calls, specifically the "pain point" questioning."

> Jamie Vaughnn Recruitment Consultant Liverpool

> > The Best Connection

Jake welcomes Alfie

We are delighted to share the wonderful news that Jake Maddison, Senior Consultant, TBC Oldham and his partner, Chloe, have a new addition to their family. Alfie, who joins his big sister Indie, made his debut appearance on the 16th September weighing in at 6lb 12oz.

Many congratulations to mum and dad on your beautiful little boy.

Jake with Alfie





New Baby Joy for Jordan

Many congratulations to TBC Sunderland's Jordan Winlow, Senior Consultant, whose wife Emma gave birth to a beautiful baby daughter, Olivia, on 24th October 2023.

Jordan's friends and colleagues would like to send them both their best wishes for the future with their adorable new baby.

Jordan, Emma & baby Olivia

TBC Manchester welcomes Kelsey

Please give a warm welcome to Kelsey Shirt who has joined TBC Manchester and will be working on the HGV Desk. It is great to have you on the team, Kelsey!

"We wish Kelsey all the best with her new career at The Best Connection. We are sure

she is going to do a great job and become an important part of the team in Manchester. Kelsey joined our young ambitious team in October and is already settling in well," said Jason Melia, Area Manager.





Cranswick awards TBC Milton Keynes Grade A

One the responsibilities of managing onsite clients is ensuring that six monthly or annual audits are conducted and passed - preferably with flying colours! In a recent example, the team at TBC Milton Keynes went through this process with Cranswick Convenience Foods and were awarded Grade A.

"Cranswick is an important client employing around 380 temporary workers a week. It was a huge relief to receive a positive outcome to the performance assessment. The 50-page

audit report was very thorough and gave TBC a clean bill of health. A big thank you to Marius Dirman and Kamil Miareczka, our Onsite team, for doing such a brilliant job," said Trudy Carr, Branch Manager, TBC Milton Keynes.

Cranswick Convenience Foods, Milton Keynes site, was acquired by Cranswick in 2006 and subsequently merged with its Sutton Fields site in Hull and its Valley Park site in Barnsley to develop its Convenience Foods operations. The site specialises in curing, cooking and

smoking British meats, from sliced cooked meats and whole hams to British Corned Beef.

Many congratulations to all the team members involved for maintaining such a high standard with this client.





TBC Kidderminster branch moves after 20 years

After 20 years in the same home, TBC Kidderminster branch has moved into a new office after being made homeless. After receiving the shock news from their landlords that they needed to vacate the premises they had occupied for two decades in just a couple of weeks, the team headed to the TBC training offices at Halesowen to camp out for almost half a year.

"After five months working out of boxes at the Halesowen office, we have finally moved into our shiny new, town centre offices where we belong at the heart of our local community. The team are over the moon," said Colom Maye.

The new office is located in a prominent position at 114 Coventry



TBC Kidderminster back on the map

Street, Kidderminster, close to the town centre and opposite the entrance to the Swan Centre and pedestrianised shopping area.

"It's so important that we have a local, welcoming office, so that our clients and workers can drop in to see us for work advice or queries at any time. We prefer meeting people face to face as it's more personable. The kettle is always on! I would like to thank my team for their patience and for enduring the travelling and the roadworks whilst the office was being prepared, it has been testing and challenging at times but well worth waiting for," added Colom.



Colom Maye

Happy Birthday Mr Morton

Many Happy Returns to David Morton! Don't you just love a birthday and particularly a special one such as a 50th? Oops, did we give anything away, David?!

David and his team have become the go-to people to fix all our IT and telecoms problems for over 26 years. He even managed service tickets before service tickets were invented! Back in 1997, when David joined the business, the company had 6 branches, 12 computers and a single server. Mobile phones had black and white screens, but you could change the fascia on your Nokia 5110 - if you had nails!

Today, the task of managing a nationwide network and the IT needs of hundreds of employees is a very different job that requires a skilful team of professionals. In fact, we now have 12 people in the IT department covering Service Desk, Infrastructure and Information Security.

David shared with us that his 50th anniversary celebrations were spread over two weekends and included family meals, Laser Tag, Ice Skating, a BBQ and a birthday cake. Congratulations and here's to the next 50!



David Morton



Nostalgic Nokia phones



Better Connected raises £8,100 for good causes

Wow! You did it. After a magnificent team effort across the business throughout September, you managed to raise a whopping £4,063 for charitable causes which was added to by the business to give a grand total of £8,100. Fab-u-lous and thank you to everyone who got involved in TBC's annual charity fundraising event. As a result of your activities and generous contributions, 28 individual charitable causes, including the company's chosen charity, Samaritans, will benefit. Every penny really does count and makes a positive difference, in some way, to people's lives. Very well done to all of you!

Our theme this year was 'Better Connected' emphasising the importance of our personal wellbeing and being connected to each other and our communities. Over 1,600 individual activities were undertaken. Donations were made to a diverse range of causes supporting health-related conditions and common societal challenges including cancer, mental health, Muscular

Sclerosis, end of life care and suicide, along with animal rescue and care and medical research, all of which involves the help and support of others.

As well as being a resounding success, participating was also great fun and very rewarding. Well done to those of you who abstained from connecting with your mobile phone! Of all the activities, this must rate as one of the toughest to tackle, others were more hands-on than hands-off. Donating and delivering essentials to foodbanks made an immediate impact on the local community. Sowing seeds and detoxing with water were also popular choices along with eating a healthy lunch, reading a book and decluttering, to name a few! This is another fantastic example of the business pulling together for a common cause and once again reflects our ethos of being 'Best as One'!

They say a picture tells a thousand words - Thank You for sharing yours for us all to enjoy!



Glasgow make us laugh challenge



Ashford recycling



BCS (Care Connection) Worthing



Bedford sow a seed



Bolton read a book



Bolton foodbank donation



Bolton water challenge



Bradford sow a seed



Burton digital detox



Carlise no spend day



Carlise sow a seed challenge



Carlisle sow a seed challenge



Carlisle sow a seed challenge



Carlise workout challenge



Coventry sow a seed



Chesterfield foodbank donations



CQA Topaz sow a seed



Crawley sow a seed



Crewe healthy lunch



Darlington digital detox



Darlington foodbank donations



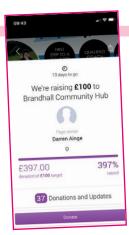
Darlington read a book



Darlington sow a seed



Darlington water challenge



Darren Ainge Topaz fundraising



Darren Ainge, Topaz foodbank donation



Dartford donations





Doncaster Onsite Team healthy lunch



Eastbourne healthy lunch



Eastbourne read a book



Eastbourne workout challenge



Exeter donation







Exeter foodbank donations



Grimsby foodbank donations



Grimsby healthy lunch



Guildford Macmillan coffee morning



Guildford read a book



Guildford water challenge



Halesowen foodbank donations



Halesowen recycle



Halesowen Macmillan coffee morning



Hull read a book



Hull sponsored walk



Hull water challenge



Worthing sow a seed



Glasgow make us laugh challenge



Liverpool donation



Manchester healthy lunch



Mansfield sow a seed



Middlesbrough donating to client foodbank





Middlesbrough foodbank donations



Middlesbrough healthy lunch



Middlesbrough practice gratitude



Middlesbrough read a book



Milton Keynes sweets fundraising



MK sow a seed



Newcastle charity donations



Newcastle charity total



Northampton recycling

Michelle Brownen walks for Alzheimer's Society

Backline Logistics Support Services' Michelle Brownen, Recruiter, has completed the Trek26 South Devon Coast 26-mile walk to support Alzheimer's Society. The walk took the fundraisers through the English Riviera taking in the stunning views across the water, through woods, along cliff tops and past stunning beaches.



Trek26 Route map

The annual event, organised by Alzheimer's Society, made sure that trekkers were well prepared and looked after throughout the day and this included:

• A friendly team to support walkers every step of the way with fundraising tips and ideas

- Bespoke digital training plans put together by the charity's professional training coaches
- · Access to the event Facebook group
- A fully supported route including regular rest stops with snacks, drinks and toilets
- Free breakfast, lunch and hot drinks included
- Trek leaders and medical support
- A medal and glass of bubbly on finishing the route!

Michelle completed the course in a time of 12 hours and 45 mins, which on any day is fantastic, but especially so on the hottest day of the year. She raised over her initial target which was a great effort. Well done, Michelle!



Michelle Brownen

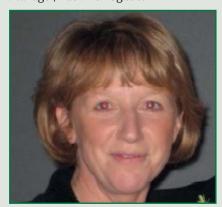
Backline assists Wilko store closures

It has been heartbreaking to witness so many prominent retail brands entering administration this year. High interest rates and the cost-of-living squeeze have certainly contributed to the demise of the High Street. Sadly, the much-loved hardware chain, Wilko, announced it was shutting up shop in August due to poor trading conditions. Wilko became the largest retail victim since Woolworths in 2008, affecting over 400 stores and around 12,500 employees.

"Wilko going into administration is a major loss to the high street. I can remember going into Wilko to buy all my stationery for school with my mum. It is one of those stores you could find yourself in even if you never had any intention or need to go in there," said Liam Murnaghan, New Business, Manager, Backline Logistics.

As part of the closure plans, Backline Logistics was drafted in, along with other hauliers, to move stock from closing stores to those remaining open. "Off the back of this assignment, we are currently in discussions with a business administration specialist who has asked us to ready ourselves to support another UK retailer operating 70 stores that may fall into administration in the New Year. For reasons of confidentiality, the company in question has not been named, however, once the outcome is released publicly, we will need to spring into action to manage the store closure project," Liam added.

"Whilst nobody wishes to see companies fail, the fallout does create opportunities for others. It's the hard reality of business life. Despite the ebb and flow of retail business, life must go on at Backline Logistics and with Christmas just around the corner the team are busy planning what needs to be done to meet our customers' peak requirements," said Louise Gaunt, Transport Operations Manager, Backline Logistics.



Louise Gaunt

BLSS Welcomes New Recruits

We are delighted to welcome some bright new faces to the team at Backline Logistics Support Services who join the business in Yeovil, Christchurch, Andover, and Avonmouth. Let's see who they are and what they will be doing.

Firstly, we say hello and welcome to Lucia Sevcikova who has taken on the role as a Business Development Manager. Lucia has a wealth of experience in the transport sector, having held positions at Wincanton and DHL. Great to have you on the team Lucia.

Our second new face is Fiona Johnson who has taken the reins as Branch Manager of the Christchurch office. Congratulations Fiona! Fiona brings valuable sales experience to the role that will help Fiona and the team to drive the business forward.



Lucia Sevcikova

In Andover, BLSS welcomes Nyah Toogood. Nyah, who has previous experience in the hospitality management sector, joins as a Trainee Consultant and will be helping and supporting the branch with day-to-day duties. Great to have you on the team Nyah!

In Avonmouth, we welcome to the business Shane Jackman who joins the team as a Trainee Recruitment Consultant. As part of his role, Shane will be supporting fellow colleague and Trainee Branch Manager, Joe Drew, to build on the solid foundation Joe has laid down in the Avonmouth region. We wish you all the best Shane.

Great to have you all onboard for the journey!



Nyah Toogood

It's four FORS for Backline Outbase!



There's no standing still in the world of transport, particularly when maintaining quality standards and safety. At Backline Outbase, Exeter, the operation has recently undergone its annual Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (FORS) audit which it has maintained for four years. The great news is that it has passed and retained its accreditation with a Bronze. Well done to all involved in this impressive achievement.

FORS is a voluntary initiative that addresses vehicle and driver management, safety and operations and is open to businesses that operate a fleet of vehicles including vans, lorries, mini-buses and coaches.

"Maintaining health and safety standards is central to our business ethos. Achieving the FORS accreditation reaffirms how seriously we take this," said Rob Sargent, Shift Operations Manager, Backline Outbase.

Kelly celebrates career milestone

We are delighted to share that Kelly Hughes, General Manager, Backline Logistics, has reached an amazing 20-year milestone with the business. Many congratulations Kelly. Thank you for your long service and loyalty.



Kelly Hughes

Driver Training bookings on the up!

The training division at Backline has experienced a welcome increase in demand for its training services over the past couple of months as we have moved into the winter season.

As the colder weather takes hold, the demand for Accord Dangereux Routier (ADR) dangerous goods training requests has seen a step change which will keep Trainer, Andy Callan, very busy. To achieve an ADR driver card, candidates need to hold a current HGV licence and Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) to start. They then need to pass an exam and may need to undertake additional training depending on the goods being transported.

With a CPC September 2024 deadline on drivers' 'must-do' list, trainer, Tony Sheppard, has been coping with the steady influx of bookings which is expected to increase significantly in the New Year. All professional lorry and bus drivers must carry out 35 hours periodic training every five years to maintain a CPC. Trainers, Neville Yates and James Hamilton, who have both been covering Material Handling Equipment (MHE) training on FLT and HIAB work, will also be supporting CPC training to manage the anticipated influx in 2024.

At the helm, ensuring the operation is working like clockwork, is Training Manager, Richard Stentiford ably supported by Wendy Lau, who continues to successfully balance customer demand with trainer availability.

We have no doubt that 2024 will be a busy and successful year for the training team at Backline who have worked incredibly hard to build a reputation for the delivery of industry-leading courses. Very well done to all the team.



Richard Stentiford



Fantasy Football SWS Group Premier League Rollercoaster Expert Commentary by Kev Neale, Divisional Manager, TBC Enfield

October witnessed Operation Nut Job, under the guidance of Andy Nuttall, securing 224 points.



Kev Neale

Welcome back to the tumultuous rollercoaster ride that is the SWS Group Premier League! We've crossed the 13-week threshold and it's been a whirlwind of unpredictability and excitement.

Ah injuries – the unwanted guests crashing the fantasy football parties. Who hasn't been caught scratching their heads, pondering over whether to play Maddison, Saka, Odegaard, Estupinian, Burn, or Botman? It has, however, been

that kind of season, where even the most astute managers are left grappling with decisions, unsure of who'll make it onto the pitch and who'll end up on the treatment table.

But amidst the chaos, there's been a shining star rising steadily above the rest. Lads on Toure managed by Harvey Daley have taken the lead, boasting an impressive 823 points! What's more astounding is that Harvey has played it cool, utilising only a single FPL chip so far. Now, that's a masterclass in strategic gameplay.

Let's take a stroll down memory lane with our monthly top point scorers. August saw Crowfish Athletic helmed by Paul Crocock, racking up 208 points. September was the realm of Prince FC, led by Chris Prince, amassing a whopping 298 points. And Interestingly, Harvey hasn't clinched a single monthly win, yet he reigns supreme atop our leaderboards. It's like they say, "consistency is key," a mantra we've picked up from our trusty sales training at TBC. Turns out, it holds true even in the realm of Fantasy Premier League.

As we charge forward into the heart of the season, brace yourselves for more twists, turns, and probably a few more unexpected injuries. Buckle up, folks, because in the SWS Group Premier League, the only certainty is the thrill of the unknown. Stay tuned for more updates and may your FPL decisions be ever in your favour!

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Caitlin joins TBC Stockport



Caitlin Saville

The team at TBC Stockport are delighted to welcome a new member to the branch. Caitlin Saville joins as a Recruitment Consultant to bolster the team's presence in the region. Welcome to the business Caitlin!

We asked Caitlin to share a few words about why she chose to join The Best Connection and this is what she had to say.

"I wanted to work in recruitment at The Best Connection to expand my knowledge and as the company provides extensive training, I knew that would help me to achieve this. I have always had a passion for helping people and that's a huge part of this job. I enjoy engaging with people which is great because at The Best Connection I spend the majority of my time speaking to clients and candidates, understanding their needs, keeping leads warm and networking," said Caitlin.

With a combination of TBC's industryleading training and a passion for people, you are surely destined for great things Caitlin and we look forward to hearing more about your progress in the future

Volunteering makes a difference



An important aspect of The Best Connection's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy is giving employees the time and opportunity to volunteer to support activities that benefit those less fortunate in society who may be struggling due to life's ebb and flow. Giving back in this way can make an immediate impact and be hugely rewarding.

In a recent example, Jo Pritchard, Lea-Ann Thompson and Laura Powell from our training team in Halesowen and Internal Communications Consultant, Poppy Payton, joined forces to dedicate three hours of their volunteering time to help out with the community dining service at the Dudley based charity, FoodCycle. This involved greeting community members, preparing and serving meals and creating a welcoming, comfortable space for all visitors.



FoodCycle combines surplus food obtained from supermarkets, spare kitchen spaces and volunteers to create three-course meals for people at risk of food poverty and social isolation. FoodCycle is located across the UK with 79 community dining locations, offering various different volunteer opportunities.

Laura Powell, Training & Development Consultant gives her account of the experience. "We spent time volunteering with FoodCycle which was really enjoyable. I wasn't sure what to expect as I had never volunteered before, but it is something I would really recommend. I am passionate about what FoodCycle stands for. They reduce waste and give back to the community and have created something really amazing for the Dudley community and many other communities across the UK.

"FoodCycle provides a 3-course meal and a safe space for people to come together completely free of charge, something that is of real benefit to many people in the current cost of living crisis. I was involved in hosting the day which allowed me to meet lots of different people which was incredibly rewarding. I would recommend this experience to anyone and encourage people to use their volunteer days."

Full details on how to sign up for volunteering days can be found in the CSR Policy. More details on FoodCycle, the organisation's initiatives and locations, can be found at foodcycle.org.uk.

Thank you for your contribution and for sharing your story. If you are inspired to volunteer, why not give it a go.

Macmillan Coffee Morning Fundraiser

One thing we have learnt over the years is that we have some extraordinary cake makers in the business. We have also seen these skills being put to great use to help raise funds for charitable causes. Well, the team of bakers have been at it again and recently ran a Macmillan Coffee Morning event to raise money to support the amazing work the organisation does in providing specialist healthcare, information and financial support to people affected by cancer.

The event was organised by Tarjinder Singh Bassi, with generous assistance from the Key Accounts and CMS teams. Many departments chipped in by baking cakes or providing sweet treats. We would like to give a special mention to Credit Control and Accounts for their significant contributions.

We are pleased to announce that the event, held at Topaz, raised a total of £316. What a fantastic result. Well done and thank you to all involved.

BIGOT

"We want to express our sincere appreciation for the collective efforts made by our TBC Head Office team. They have made a meaningful impact in supporting Macmillan's important work. Your dedication is greatly valued," said Liz Budden, Key Account Manager.











Joanne Bradshaw, Credit Control

Jonathan and Zoe Celebrate Year One

No matter how small or insignificant, we should always find a reason to celebrate something good in our lives. For Jonathan Estibeiro and Zoe Vanderputt, it is one year with TBC Swindon! They told us that time had passed in the blink of an eye. What's more, they are still smiling!

We understand that Jonathan and Zoe have both had a great start to their careers at TBC. Jonathan manages the branch's largest contract and is known for his charming and humble nature while Zoe, who completed the Certificate in the Principles of Recruitment Practice, brings a positive energy and fun to the team and has demonstrated her aptitude for winning business.

Congratulations to you both, we hope you had a great 1st anniversary and you have many more occasions to celebrate.



Jonathan Estibeiro and Zoe Vanderputt



TBC Swindon -No Tricks -Only Treats!

It's funny how putting on a costume can transform one's personality – if only for a day. There was certainly no holding back for the team at TBC Swindon as they celebrated Halloween in true spooky fashion. The cast consisted of a rag doll, Super Mario brothers, a Harlequin, The Joker and a pumpkin cat. Well, why not? You don't often get the chance to rock up to the office dressed as your favourite horror fantasy – more's the pity!

TBC Swindon in full Halloween regalia!

Promotion for Luke Davies

In every edition of Best News, we are delighted to be able to share news about individual career progress at all levels across the business. On this occasion, we would like to report that Luke Davies, TBC Exeter, was promoted to Senior Consultant in September 2023. Many congratulations Luke on your achievement.

"Luke joined the team in September 2019 as a Recruitment Consultant apprentice on the HGV desk when he was only 18. He demonstrated drive and enthusiasm to ensure the HGV desk remained one of the top performing plans in the country, peaking at almost £11,500 margin per week. Luke maintains great relationships with his temporary workers and clients and strives to build his list of A-Z clients by performing well in sales," explained Holly Hooper, Branch Manager.

Luke is a great example of what can be achieved when applying the skills developed through The Best Connection's training programme and by adopting TBC's core Beliefs & Values. Luke has learnt from his peers and injected his own personality into the role. By doing so, he has developed the Exeter HGV desk into the go-to HGV agency in Devon. Given Luke's success so far, we are excited to see what he can deliver in the next chapter of his recruitment journey.

Well done and congratulations Luke - very well deserved!



Luke Davies

Fleet Live Exhibition

Members of the Fleetmaster team recently attended Fleet & Mobility Live at the NEC where two of its major customers, Network Rail and Mitie, featured guest speakers describing their respective journeys to fleet zero-emissions.

The occasion provided a great opportunity for attendees to learn about the transition to zero-emissions and the best ways to implement vehicle changeovers. Fleetmaster featured prominently in both talks.

"James Rooney, Head of Road Fleet, Network Rail, delivered an insightful presentation and explained the differences in transitioning cars compared to vans. He placed a lot of emphasis on both practical training - especially for vans – and self-learning when making the change to EVs. He also emphasised that training not only improves the safety and knowledge of drivers, but it can also reduce much of the apprehension around the change to electric," said Jamie Boocock, Director, Fleetmaster.

Fleetmaster has provided Network Rail with many training avenues, including practical, on-road training, e-learning and classroom sessions, to ensure that their drivers are both safe and comfortable in their new electric vehicles.

Stefan Szrama, QHSE Lead, Fleet & Procurement, Mitie, spoke about their plans for EV transition and reiterated the need to be flexible with one's approach towards meeting a zero-emissions goal.

"To support Mitie's strategy, Fleetmaster created several bespoke e-learning packages for the core light commercial EVs that Mitie is introducing. Given that 52% (3,770) of Mitie's fleet is now fully electric, their hard work and dedication to achieve their zero-emissions goal should be commended," added Jamie.



Stafan Szrama, Mitie, presenting his road risk strategy

In order to deliver a successful migration to EVs, both companies endorse a pragmatic approach that puts research and training at its heart. By doing so, it helps to address any concerns around change and positions the transition for success.



Fleetmaster Learning & Development

Fleetmaster extends Eurocell Training Contract

Fleetmaster has been awarded a 3-year contract extension as the sole training partner to deliver Mechanical Handling Equipment (MHE) training for Eurocell across its branch and manufacturing sites. Many congratulations to the team.

Eurocell is one of the country's leading manufacturers, distributors, and recyclers of building products. The business operates a nationwide network of more than 210 branches, supplying a range of uPVC roof, window and door products, along with the fixings, sealants and the tools required for every building plastics job.

"I'm thrilled that our partnership with Fleetmaster Group is now secured until 2026. Fleetmaster has worked hard to establish an excellent working relationship throughout our business. The payoff is tangible, with improved practice and confidence in the quality of FLT/MHE training for our manufacturing site operatives and branch colleagues who serve our large trade customer-base throughout the UK," said Claire Jones, Organisational Design & Development Manager, Eurocell.

"Since being awarded the sole MHE Training provider a year ago, the team have worked hard to build the relationship. News of the contract extension until 2026, is testament to a shared desire to deliver the highest standard of training and a robust delivery model in the safest and most efficient manner possible," said lan Lettice, Key Account Manager, Fleetmaster.

Fleetmaster has now delivered MHE

training to almost all the branches and distribution centres throughout the Eurocell Building Plastics network.

"We cannot thank the staff at Eurocell enough for the warm reception our trainers receive on a day-to-day basis. I would like to personally thank Claire, Pete, Monika and Lisa who have provided great support over the years, and I am delighted this will continue for the foreseeable future," added Ian.



Fleetmaster UK Fleet **Champions Award Winners**



The Fleetmaster team were presented with the Dr Will Murray Award for Analysis and Action at the UK Fleet Champions Awards 2023. Huge kudos to the team for this industry accolade.

The Awards recognise and celebrate organisations that are working hard to prevent road deaths and injuries and reduce pollution caused by their vehicles.

Road safety charity, Brake, has run a programme of fleet awards for the past 20 years and has celebrated hundreds of companies and individuals for their outstanding commitment to road safety.

Dr Will Murray, who passed away in 2016, was an expert in commercial road risk management. The eDriving-sponsored Dr Will Murray Award for Action and Analysis was introduced into the Brake awards in 2017.

"We are grateful to receive recognition for the hard work we put into improving safety standards on our roads. At Fleetmaster we want every driver to arrive home safely to their family and we are proud of the work we do to help achieve this," commented Jamie Boocock, Director.

On the night Fleetmaster was also Highly Commended in the Fleet Safety Innovation category.

"We were pleased to see that some of our long-standing clients also picked up various awards on the night. We know first-hand the amount of hard work and dedication they put into driver safety and we are delighted they continue to choose us to help aid this," added Jamie.

If you would like to book or enquire about the variety of courses we have to offer, please email us at enquiries@fleetmastergroup.com or call us on 01924 416624.







Fleetmaster would like to wish everybody a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We hope that this year has been successful and enjoyable for all and we hope this will continue into the New Year.

Care Connection is Born

As you may be aware, Bailey Care Services (BCS), which provides temporary staffing solutions to the health and social care sectors, has been merged with The Best Connection Group and renamed Care Connection. The rebranding includes a fresh new website – check it out at careconnection.co.uk

For those of you making the transition, congratulations on officially becoming part of TBC's community. We welcome you with open arms and wish you all the best.

Care Connection will initially operate from TBC offices in Newport, Portsmouth, Worthing and Melksham.

The BCS-TBC merger creates a more competitive care division

that will benefit from The Best Connection's branch network reach, experience and support infrastructure. In addition, there is an added bonus for Care Connection employees who will now have access to a range of benefits, training & development and new career opportunities. This strategic decision will help to drive new opportunities and growth in this sector for the business.

We will keep you updated about Care Connection developments in future comms.



CTS delivers for Plant Designs

Christmas is here and for some businesses it's pedal to the metal as work levels accelerate to meet huge customer demand. One such business is Plant Designs plantdesigns.co.uk which specialises in the provision of plant rental and associated services to businesses and private clients, primarily across London. Plant Design's green-fingered team lives and breathes greenery, helping consumers and businesses acquire the best quality plants in London.

At this seasonal time of the year, the company's legendary Christmas tree, scene props and lighting rental business goes stratospheric. And it's not a service that can be delivered late! For the past couple of years, the City Transport Solutions (CTS) team have helped Plant Designs with logistics to ensure its clients' needs are met and this year will be particularly busy with CTS providing 10 additional vehicles to service new and existing clients.

"We are excited to be supporting Plant Designs once again this year as the team deliver wonderful Christmas cheer to hundreds of people and businesses across London," said Washi Maziveyi, Regional Manager CTS, South of England.

"City Transport Solutions is essentially our supplementary Reindeer at this critical time of year. They help us deliver at a time of year when temporary and replacement commercial vehicles are in short supply at a competitive price. We're glad to have them on board and wouldn't hesitate to recommend them," William Braid, Managing Director, Plant Designs, commented.



William Braid

Spider-Man comes to Redditch!



Peter Christie is Spider-Man

Not many children can say that their dad is Spider-Man. For one very lucky young man called Harrison, who happens to be the son of TBC Redditch Senior Manager, Peter Christie, his dreams became a reality when dad transformed into the superhero to celebrate his son's third birthday at The Guild in Bromsgrove. But, did it go as expected?

"Harrison is a big fan of Spider-Man. We had a Spider-Man cake and badges, so thought it would be a great idea to dress up as Spider-Man and surprise him and the other children. Unfortunately, somehow, he knew it was me straightaway and really didn't like it, so I am not allowed to wear my Spider-Man outfit again!" explained Peter.

Unlike Hollywood A listers, we understand that Peter spent quite some time in the restaurant toilets with a friend struggling to 'jump into' his Lycra outfit. Whatever anyone says Peter, you are a superhero and super dad that's for sure. Thank you for sharing this story and by the way, how's Norman, the mystic cat?!

"On my LinkedIn post I put "The Best Connection are not only the BEST at recruiting, they are also the BEST at dressing up as superheroes," added Peter, sorry, Spider-Man!

SWS VACANCIES

SWS Featured Vacancies

In addition to the featured roles below, more jobs with full descriptions can be found at: www.thebestconnection.co.uk/joinus/ or for regular updates please follow The Best Connection careers pages on LinkedIn or Facebook!



Want more details?

Please contact Andy Guest on 0121 504 3065 or email andy.guest@thebestconnection.co.uk



