



WELCOME TO



First Call

Contract Services Limited



David Mankelow, CEO
First Call Contract Services Limited

The First Call Contract Services Story

Set up in December 1996, First Call Contract Services is now celebrating its 20th anniversary. The company's directors reflect on the journey so far and reveal company plans for the future

Currently listed 124th in RI's Top 500 Report, First Call Contract Services is going from strength to strength. Its turnover is set to hit £63m in 2016, marking around a 30% increase in growth year-on-year. David Mankelow, CEO, has witnessed the privately-owned company grow organically each year since its inception, with PBIT (profit before interest and tax) in 2016 expected to hit £2.2m.

Prior to setting up First Call Contract Services, David Mankelow worked for CSG (now Impellam). Starting off as a "driver's mate", David Mankelow climbed his way up the recruitment ladder, having previously worked at Noel Employment and The Optel Group. He reflects, "I've done every single job within recruitment, I didn't start off as a director, I started as a driver's mate really and worked my way up within the industry." Launching on his own in December 1996 after a £20,000 investment, David Mankelow began the First Call Contract Services story. Operating in the industrial and driving sectors, the company's first office was opened in Waltham Cross, which is still part of the business today.

Fast forward 20 years and the company has 23 offices in South East England and the Midlands. Expanding into new sectors, including food, print & mail and aviation, First Call Contract Services has faced the challenge of the most recent recession and now faces the impact of Brexit. The team, however, remains

confident that their combined experience and knowledge will enable them to weather any storm. They continue to invest in both their clients and candidates; this year, First Call Contract Services opened two dedicated recruitment centres to keep up with clients' demands, ensuring the best candidates are found quickly and effectively. Dean Nixon, sales director, tells RI, "This is the first year we have had to do this due to the sheer volume of new business awarded and client demands, which demonstrates our flexibility to support our clients."

Brexit effect

Brexit has already had an impact on the sectors in which First Call Contract Services operates. The domino effect of the result, which has caused the decrease in the value of the pound, David Segust, compliance director, explains, has led to a 5% decrease in the recruitment of EU workers between June to November for the company, compared to the same period last year. Although Brexit is likely to impact all the company's sectors, its main concern currently is its food sector, which constitutes around 33% of its business. Segust says, "The food sector is predominantly supported by migrant workers. The lack of available migrant workers has been an ongoing concern over recent years for the farming and growing community. Brexit could exacerbate the issue and have a profound effect on



From left to right - Daniel Mankelow, Ian Bayley, Dean Nixon, David Segust, David Mankelow and Garry Jordan

From temporary operative to branch manager



Beginning life at First Call Contract Services as a temporary operative in 1999, Ann Alderton is now celebrating 17 years' service at the company. Since taking over her sister's job as an administrator in 1999, Alderton has never looked back, progressing to become first a consultant and then a branch manager in 2007. Alderton currently manages one branch and two on-sites for First Call Contract Services. She is one of the company's many examples of team members who have worked their way up in business. Discussing her job, Alderton enthuses, "I love the challenges my job brings me daily. The fact every day is different. I get to meet different people and form relationships with clients and see those grow. I get to work as part of a team and see the company I helped progress in to the business it is today."

Although she admits recruitment is hard work, she believes the career to be a rewarding one, particularly within the First Call Family: "The chance for progression within First Call Contract Services is always good for people that prove they want it and are willing to work for it." Looking to the future, Alderton is optimistic there will be chances for her to adopt further responsibilities. With First Call Contract Services promoting from within wherever possible, there is every chance Alderton will be able to take on an extra branch, or even become an area manager, with the company.

the entire food industry. Without doubt, there will be difficulties ahead but we will face them head on and find resolutions as we usually do."

In an effort to combat the effect of Brexit on the business and the food industry, Segust recently became a member of the ALP (Association of Labour Providers) Brexit Labour Policy Sub Group, which will work with other food industry bodies to form a collaborative industry approach. The role of the group is to develop policy and provide underpinning statistical evidence which will be shared with the EU Exit Teams and other Government departments. The company feels this active approach will place them in better stead than adopting a 'wait and see' approach, as David Mankelow explains, "The recruitment sector would be a very different place without the open market and the flexibility provided within the EU for migrant workers."

Tackling compliance

For a business that operates in the food industry, compliance remains one of the biggest challenges. The company, which is licenced by the GLA, a member of the ALP and a Stronger Together business partner, has an experienced, dedicated team that makes sure they are fully compliant. One of the main issues currently is maintaining standards, as Segust explains, "Due to our structure, dedicated support and technology, our team maintains compliance even at the busy times during peak periods." He adds that with more demand from clients comes less time, but this is an operational challenge they are able to manage easily.

Training is a key part of maintaining compliance at First Call Contract Services. All employees dealing with any compliance

issue surrounding candidates, from auditing to handling their paperwork, are fully trained through the company's comprehensive continuous training. Segust emphasises the necessity of this training by highlighting, "We have had experienced recruiters join us from other recruitment organisations who have had very little exposure to the areas covered within our training."

The training aspect of life at First Call Contract Services, whether for compliance or recruitment, is of great importance to the leadership team. Daniel Mankelow (David Mankelow's nephew), operations director, reveals, "We're now really heavily investing in our people, training, guiding and showing them again and again, which promotes excellent staff retention. Our investment in people and opportunity given to those individuals is far greater than I've seen in the marketplace." Looking after employees is of the utmost importance at First Call Contract Services, so much so that they refer to themselves as the First Call Contract Services Family.

Being part of the family

All the directors at First Call Contract Services are hands on in the business; having worked their way up in the company, they continue to build strong relationships with their clients and work on a culture of promoting from within whenever possible. "We drive the business, we're all long standing employees, it's a community," David Mankelow says. Nixon adds, "It is like a family, we're very close, the directors are hands on, we're in the office all the time, we're really approachable and open; new starters generally meet the board within their first week." The directors make sure they share news with the company, from new offices to new starters, celebrating the First Call Contract Services Family and life within it.

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First Call Contract Services boasts a low internal attrition rate at around 1%, and the family feel of the business allows staff to leave the business to pursue other interests, then return, with Daniel Mankelow emphasising, "We never close the door on anyone." In addition to being an open and approachable business, they also consider their pay as key to their high retention rate. Nixon says, "Whilst basic pay rates are within market value, it's a sales environment where every individual who generates margin earns a bonus, meaning employees' earnings are not restricted, creating exceptionally high OTEs. There's a combined element of earning the right money, getting looked after in the right way, having outside benefits. There aren't many companies like us that have as many social events throughout the year, everyone's involved." Nixon adds that whilst working in the industry, employees stay with First Call Contract Services because of the transparent approach to shared management information: "The staff see what they have achieved and what they are going to earn for doing so. There are fixed goalposts, with a real emphasis on reward and recognition."



David Mankelow

Gatwick areas. It has around 250 temporary staff working daily in this sector, covering anything from in-flight catering, lounge hostesses and check-in staff through to LGV & forklift drivers. Despite operating in the sector for many years, previously, Daniel Mankelow explains, the sector had "never been targeted in direct sales capacity."

The sector is a complex one, which relies on a people process, as well as an extra process involving selection, vetting and enhanced vetting. The time involved with completing these extra processes can make it a challenge to find staff. For Nixon, this makes aviation a unique and exciting sector to work in, stating, "[It's about] how you manage the people, or how you retain them, because that's a four-week process or could be longer. It needs a different viewpoint and a different strategy to get people through the process quickly." Despite the longer registration process, Nixon reveals that once registered and

As well as celebrating employees internally, the company also celebrates its temps through its Outstanding Colleague Awards. These awards are given out to any temporary member of staff who has been working well for First Call Contract Services and positively promoting the business to a client. Instead of being given out each month, the awards recognise a temp colleague whenever they do something worthy of an award. Anyone who wins an award is given gift vouchers, and also gets recognition on the company's website.

Spotlight on aviation

First Call Contract Services has recently begun to market its aviation sector, where it has been providing air cargo, inflight services and facility support for over 10 years to some of the largest companies in the sector within the Heathrow and

ready to work, staff tend to remain in this line of work, as it's fairly secure.

To support this sector, the company has a director of aviation, Kevin Gray, and has invested in dedicated account staff, who focus on aviation only. They undertake the screening of all applicants to full compliance, which produces a fully compliant document in accordance with EC regulation 185, chapter 11 and UK single consolidated direction 2010A, chapter 11. As members of the Heathrow ID Scheme the company manages its own ID card holders on behalf of its customers and is now able to support clients with their vetting requirements.

Celebrating charity work

Since January 2015, First Call Contract Services has been fundraising for Macmillan Cancer Support and the company is on track to reach its £20,000 target by the end of the year. To raise money for the charity, First Call Contract Services has been involved in a host of events, including a Race for Life 5k Mud Run, coffee mornings, boat parties and fun days for employees and their families. The company's Christmas party, being held in London, which will celebrate the company's 20th anniversary, will also raise money for the charity. There will also be other fundraising events on the night, including an auction.

Previous to its present fundraising efforts, First Call Contract Services has helped other charities including Haven, a children's hospice in Essex, and the Teenage Cancer Trust. When it comes to selecting a charity to fundraise for, the directors always look to their staff for ideas and suggestions. The directors firmly believe the charity work brings the company together, with Nixon reflecting, "For a moving charity like MacMillan, despite

the negativity around cancer, when it becomes fun, people get behind it more, which actually gives it more recognition and promotion."

Eyes on the future

The future for First Call Contract Services is filled with optimism. The team are considering opening their first international office in Europe and are also planning to open more offices in the UK. The company has plans to launch a new office in the Midlands, but will also consider opening a new office wherever it feels there is the opportunity to develop business. Most recently, First Call Contract Services launched an office in Chatham in Kent, which complements its Ashford office and stability in the 'Garden of England'. By 2020, their target turnover figure is £100m, something they are determined to reach. First Call Contract Services continues to be a business built on openness and transparency, which has encouraged many of the company's clients to place First Call Contract Services in high regard, working with them for a long period of time.

So, what makes a company successful for 20 years and counting? David Mankelow reveals, "Hard work and decent people, leading from the front and employing the right people and keeping them. Our success is not possible without the dedication, commitment and hard work from our people."

If you're interested in finding out more about First Call Contract Services, contact David Mankelow on 07967 292 095 or email david.mankelow@firstcallcontractservices.co.uk

www.firstcallcontractservices.co.uk

Why choose First Call Contract Services?



Natalie Finch joined First Call Contract Services as a business development manager in 2006. Developing her skills through a variety of roles at the company, she has since progressed to become a senior area manager. Originally deciding on a career in recruitment because of the opportunities available to progress and develop, Finch's hard work and determination have been rewarded with her latest role, which she took up last year. During her time at the business, Finch has received recognition from both fellow colleagues and clients for her commitment and development in her role. She reflects that her time at First Call Contract Services has been a "great journey". Her next step at the company will be to open more branches, and the next logical career step for her will be to become a director.

What is it about First Call Contract Services that makes it a great company for Finch? "We look after people; we listen and we work together as a huge team. Being a manager here you are given the opportunity to make decisions without the need to contact head office or a director. The ability to do this with clients means we can take care of our business immediately. We are different and I honestly believe that our approach as a company is why we are so good at what we do and why we are where we are today."



From left to right - David Segust, Ian Bayley, David Mankelow, Daniel Mankelow, Garry Jordan and Dean Nixon.