

EMPLOYMENT

# Skills culture at the heart of success for top firm so proud of loyal workforce

No matter the size of the company, it is often the people that work for it that make or break whether it is a success or failure. This is most definitely the case with Burton firm Lorien Engineering Solutions. ROB SMYTH spent time with senior figures at the engineering design and project management organisation to learn just why they describe their employees as their key asset.

"People" is the simple, one-word answer as to why a rising Burton firm is continuing on its road to success.

Bill Treddenick, operations director at the Centrum 100-based company, revealed that the workforce of more than 100 staff was the main reason behind its success in the area and across the industry as a whole.

He said: "We are a team of engineers, consultants, technical specialists and project managers, and it is these key assets that our customers value the most.

"For more than 30 years now we have concentrated on what we term 'hygienic manufacturing'.

"This means advising customers on the design and construction of new plants making beer, drinks, food and drugs, and being with them every step of the way from the inception of an idea through to full realisation.

"To enable this you need to have a pool of talented and experienced people.

"Most of our people are either from the Midlands region or have relocated here. We have a deep tradition in this area in brewing, but also now food processing and pharmaceutical products.

"Lorien has grown its expertise based on serving the needs of this growing industry, and key to this has been attracting the best people we can find."

The firm has operations in Burton and in Wroclaw, Poland, and delivers manufacturing projects in the brewing, drinks, food and life sciences industries.

Lorien was recently awarded its 24th Gold Award, and a 10th Order of Distinction for occupational health and safety in the construction, by Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

The firm is not resting on its laurels. In fact it is working hard to maintain its high standards and is making sure that Burton plays a key role in that hard work.

Mr Treddenick said: "The business was first born out of the brewing sector some 31



The top team at Lorien rely on 'a pool of talented and experienced people'.

years ago when we were part of Allied Breweries. Naturally, we wanted to stay close to some of our major customers [both Allied Breweries and Bass Brewers as they were then - now Molson Coors].

"Also, the Midlands is home to quite a number of 'processing' companies such as food, beverage and pharmaceutical and over the years we have had the privilege of working with the majority of these local firms.

"The profile of our business has been changing in recent years, for instance we are now part of an American-owned corporation and we have many more international customers.

"It is important to be local to your customer base, and to do this for us it means that our people need to be mobile and work in locations around the world.

"Also, six years ago we opened an office in Poland in order to support our customers establishing manufacturing within Poland and Eastern Europe.

"Being based in the central Midlands, and with airport options of East Midlands and Birmingham within easy reach, this provides an excellent base from where we can reach our customers around the world, and the direct flights to our base in Wroclaw, Poland, also helps."

Moving away from Burton is most definitely not on the agenda for the firm as it looks to growth and the future.



"Our people are our assets, and so we can't envisage a move away from the region," said Mr Treddenick

Burton is a great location for us. However, our key customers tend to be globally represented, and even as an independent business pre-2013 we were dealing with customer locations across Europe and Asia.

"Today, Lorien is part of a global technical services business, GP Strategies Corporation.

"We have people based in 27 countries and at multiple locations, and we do business in more than 70 countries

around the world. The future will see our people working internationally more than ever before, and collaborating with other groups in GP Strategies to bring more benefit to our customers."

Lorien, like many other firms featured in The Week in Business during the past few months, revealed one of its biggest obstacles was finding a supply of qualified engineers.

To try and combat this issue, the company has launched a graduate engineer scheme, which takes in students who have graduated with an engineering, qualific-

ation and develops their skills so they can attain chartered engineer status.

With plans in place to tackle this issue, it looks like bosses at Lorien are well placed to continue to improve on the past success of the previous 31 years.

At the forefront of this effort will be remaining in Burton and ensuring that its workers are the unique selling point when it comes to beating the competition.

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