



The People Factor –

The “glue” that seals long term contract retention and expansion

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“The People Factor” is the “glue” that seals long term contract retention and expansion. A core focus on high quality collaboration and synergistic client engagement is crucial to client partnership excellence.

Technical operational evolution is critical BUT it always comes back to people in good times and bad. The Real Key to highly successful long term contracts is **“The People Factor”**. The fact is that people always have and always will be a measurable point of difference between organisations. A solid and powerful people culture is crucial to client partnership excellence. They require organisational commitment to building and maintaining rock solid relationships through an on-going focus on **“The People Factor”**.

“The People Factor” is all about the consolidation of absolute trust and confidence through relationships built on honest constructive future focussed communication, through conscientious initiative and innovation. It’s about tailored application of expertise and experience, proactive initiative, and total support. The Great Bear business has been built on exceptionally long term contracts and clients that have evolved substantially over many years through committed high quality partnerships and thoroughly engaged collaboration.

It’s all about a passionate commitment to “The People Factor”.

“Everything that you eat, drink, or clean with”

By delivering on its absolute commitment to strong customer focus, and agile, responsive, personal service support, Great Bear has established its strong reputation as a high quality organisation providing service excellence across its portfolio of client contracts.

Great Bear is an established provider of Storage, Warehousing, and Logistics support services to the FMCG sector – *“everything that you eat, drink, or clean the house with”*. Great Bear is an “enabler”, a comprehensive one stop shop, a smooth systemised effective route to market with excellent consolidation opportunities. Great for start-ups where contracts develop led by clients’ needs and desires, an experienced, long serving, stable, management team has a long term view to the business. It’s about retention, development, and stability.

Great Bear operate a decentralised management structure with local empowerment at every location enabling service dexterity and rapid decision making. High service levels are provided with the personal touch, and an entrepreneurial approach:

- Consistent strong personal individualised client management
- Consistent regular systemised, friendly client facing contact and interaction
- Maintenance of solid strong “Top to Top” personal relationships with clients
- On-going qualitative performance reviews – help us to help you better

The Great Bear approach is to develop a deep understanding of a client’s business and product profile to define, develop, and evolve specifically tailored high quality solutions. With a big reputation in the 3PL sector maintaining and expanding long-term relationships through outstanding customer service. Great Bear have substantial and proven start-up and change management expertise, having managed large scale warehouse design & build and network change projects for customers.

“Do the Right Thing”

Great Bear was founded by entrepreneurs David Williams and Colin McDavid in 1994, quite coincidentally the exact same year that Great Bear’s parent company Culina Group was founded.

Founders David and Colin were instinctive entrepreneurs and exceptional logisticians. They started the business with a view that “the people you employ will grow the business for you”. That remains the secret of Great Bear’s success today, with internal promotion ensuring that the experience and expertise needed to provide exceptional customer service stays within Great Bear.

Before contacting David to found Great Bear, Colin McDavid had gained important operational expertise at Hays Group, and DHL. Colin remained at Great Bear until his untimely and very sad death from cancer at the young age of just 57 in 2016.

David Williams had previously been with TDG, now part of XPO. He played a key role in TDG’s growth in the 80’s and early 90’s using farmer’s vehicles as its fleet with each carrying the farmer’s family name. David was offered the role of TDG Managing Director based in London

to set up a consolidated TDG with all fleet branded TDG rather than the individual farmer family names. His father was a farmer, and David was not happy to take on this brief. He declined the opportunity, and left the business, feeling that farmers would become demoralised affecting both TDG and its customers.

This was the catalyst for the foundation of Great Bear – David’s core value – **“Do the right thing”** – a value that runs as DNA runs through to this day.

“From Supermarkets to Oil Slicks”

Within two years of start-up Great Bear had three customers. However with 75% of the business with one customer, there was a need to manage risk by growing the customer base.

So despite primary focus of the company on warehousing, David bought the first Great Bear fleet - ten units and twenty trailers. It was delivered six months early and Great Bear had no means to pay, and no drivers. Then an opportunity arose, major FMCG supplier Lever Brothers had a big problem. A quality issue was identified with its market leading Persil product. Rather than cleaning it, Persil had been burning holes in clothing and all products from stores across the UK had to be recalled. The washing powder had to be taken from stores to a central warehouse for storage while Lever Brothers decided what to do.

David was approached by Lever Brothers’ Chairman and Great Bear was asked to help, and the new fleet’s wheels turned for the first time. Drivers loyal to David’s resigned from TDG en masse and came to help.

The Property Director at TDG, a friend of David, let him know about a warehousing space that was available. It wasn’t fit for food, but it became Great Bear’s first warehouse and the storage place for faulty Persil. The product was due to be stored for four weeks, so saying **yes** was a big commitment for a small return. Lever Brothers ended up needing the space for **three years** while they figured out what to do; the powder was eventually given to third world countries for industrial cleaning and re-worked to make big blocks that were tied together and thrown around oil slicks to contain them.

In follow up to this success, David reviewed Lever Brothers overall 3PL operations and recommended a solution to the company’s wider logistics needs. He suggested two

warehouses located close to two factories rather than the nineteen that it was currently operating and this is what they did.

“Understanding the significant challenges of ‘Taint’ ”

Mars has been an important customer of Great Bear. One of the first manufacturers to use a 3PL (bringing over an American idea) Mars is a company that shares many Great Bear values.

Both companies’ strive to understand the why – the need for change; and want to continuously improve and to strive for 100% quality for their customers in everything they do. Today, Great Bear has more experience than any other of delivering daily on over 99% audit scores against Mars’ stringent quality standards. As Mars says in their quality principles, ‘purchases [of our products] are among the smallest a consumer makes, yet they have financed our growth around the world.’

A major FMCG Warehousing and Logistics challenge particularly for Mars is product segregation. A key reason is “taint” one product transferring taste to another. Understanding how Mars’ products sit alongside each other and how to manage taint from mint, for example, is why Great Bear has recently taken in Wrigley’s lines at its Desborough site and do the same for James Wellbeloved pet food.

Great Bear are stringently careful not to mix up products that may taint, to ensure their arrival at the supermarket in the best possible condition. It’s a process that requires skill, expertise, and effective use of cling film wrapping. Great Bear always separate certain food types – rice, chewing gum and pet food, for example. “Taint” is a particular problem with mint for example – Chewing gum flavours can quickly transfer to chocolate when they are placed alongside. Great Bear are experts in eliminating “Taint”.

“Two Hand Held RDTs and a Laptop”

Great Bear put the crunch in Crunchie millions of times a year and ship over fifteen million Easter Eggs annually. Since 1995, Great Bear have had a long-standing relationship with Cadbury, now Mondelez.

Easter eggs have to be stored at 7 degrees +/- 1 degree. Founder Colin specified specialist warehousing equipment and processes to ensure the right temperature level at all times. Crucially, all products would be received with little blue dots, if these dots went red after storage then the final customer could refuse the pallet.

All the work was undertaken for just a short-term solution requirement. But Cadbury recognised the Great Bear commitment to achieving the necessary standards and agreed to work together again. Three years later, Cadbury established three super warehouses of 500,000 million sq. ft. each - unheard of in 1998 with three chambers at three temperatures.

Soon after Kraft bought Cadbury, the name of the confectionary division was changed to Mondelez. On winning the tender last time around, it was mandated that Great Bear also managed their complex SAP platform, which ran through a global Mondelez system. When Malware brought the global system down warehouse systems went too; Great Bear teams managed the operation from two hand-held RDT's and a laptop. Despite this and the significant works taking place on the building at the time, Great Bear didn't miss one delivery.

“Making it happen”

At all Great Bear sites across the UK, General Managers are the rulers of their own operations, with the direct authority and power to make things happen, and able to make rapid sharp end decisions in the interests of customers.

Special people who know how to communicate, how to manage processes, how to manage teams, are now responsible for running the Great Bear network across the UK. Powerful local decision-making flexibility is supported by a guiding hand from central leadership ensuring that Great Bear always stays close to its customers and can make decisions fast to maintain consistent high levels of service quality support. It's why customer retention at Great Bear is so strong and customers stay around so long.

Great Bear's people take responsibility for their actions and have pride in their work. They don't hold back when it comes to the time and energy required to complete each relevant task with accuracy and patience.

The biggest problem for Great Bear is no problems! It means that customers don't always see how great they are! Continuously learning, experience with one customer helps Great Bear to improve its service to the next. By raising the service performance bar for one, Great Bear can therefore raise the bar for all.

“Ambient 3PL Market Leadership”

Great Bear founder, David Williams once said - “*follow the housewife*” - it was the founding essence of the Great Bear business.

Now the company has evolved further and provides a full range of solutions for a wide range of leading brands across many sectors.

Great Bear are warehousing and transport experts, providing a wide range of shared-user and dedicated solutions. They are an ambient 3PL market leader provide a nationwide range of services, including co-packing and transport to and from Ireland.

Handling consignments ranging from a single parcel to full pallet loads of forty-four tonnes gross weight, across a comprehensive UK network and a growing transport operation of around 200 trucks and 500 trailers, which are renewed every two-and-a-half years. With one of the youngest fleet around and smart in-cab technology that helps all its drivers stay alert, Great Bear believe it's one of the safest operators.

Great Bear and its customers grow together. Successes with start-ups, co-packing, warehousing, and transport operations means that Great Bear helps to drive success for all its customers.

“Excellent People, Excellent Relationships”

Great Bear are proud to have grown by building excellent relationships with customers, many who have been with the company for decades. That's because Great Bear anticipate solutions to their needs and always strive to find new ways to make moving their goods to their customers more efficient.

By continually innovating service-solutions and being transparent about the improvements made, customers are confident in Great Bear because they can rely on them to perform

consistently well, not just when contract renewal-time comes around. It's all down to its special **people**, who together have 50,000 years' experience of the unique **Great Bear Way**.

Great Bear don't write it down, but just know how to manage brilliant start-ups and keep things moving and improving. They are collaborative problem-solvers, sharing customers' challenges and consulting on how to connect the best supply chains.

“The People Factor”

Every logistics organisation big and small has fleet, infrastructure, systems, processes, information technology, operations, sales, marketing, and administration.

BUT.

The glue is people. With the right people, with passion, with a top down commitment to excel, organisational growth can and usually is strong, stable and often spectacular.

Next Steps

Discover how “**The People Factor**” can transform your supply chain at – www.greatbear.co.uk