

Case study 1: employer engagement

Vedas is a commercial recruitment agency which also provides back to work programmes funded by the European Social Fund and the Working Neighbourhood Fund. There is a strict division between its commercial operations and funded programmes.

Through its funded programme, Vedas supplies all staff to BCW, an advanced engineering company producing parts for the automotive and aircraft industries. The relationship between Vedas and BCW dates back several years to BCW's foundation as a small family business with just three employees and one machine. Today the company employs more than 100 people with Vedas helping to fill a wide range of roles from managerial to shopfloor positions.

Lesley Burrows, Managing Director of Vedas, stresses that the relationship with the employer is just as important as that with the job applicant. She believes that the basis of a successful relationship with an employer lies in understanding their business and staff needs. This involves initial research into the industry sector, company background, business plans and potential growth.

Vedas and BCW are in touch every day. Vedas attends regular strategic and recruitment planning meetings. They are also in contact with BCW's external training partner.

BCW's ethos is to offer employment opportunities to people who may find it difficult to find work elsewhere. These include the long-term unemployed and people aged 50+. BCW Manager Trevor Cassie says that as a result, they have a very committed workforce: "We need to invest a little in our people; they might need more support at the beginning but it pays off. Ninety-five percent of the employees we get through Vedas succeed at BCW."

Vedas provides both induction and ongoing support to people joining BCW. Their personal development plans include goals which extend into employment. Vedas monitors their progress and helps address issues and concerns as they arise.