

8th November 2007

Latest News from Business Link West Midlands

£3m contract haul is a virtue for record breaking Solihull firm

A £3m contract haul in just eight months has put SG Maintenance Services (SGMS) on course for the best period in its 68-year history.

The building maintenance specialist, which employs 240 people from its Solihull headquarters, has tapped into a long-standing relationship with Business Link West Midlands to transform the company into one of the fastest growing businesses in the region.

The latest 'wins' with Iceland (£750k), Marks and Spencers (£2m) and Craegmoor Healthcare (£750k) illustrates the firm's ability to provide a single source answer to mechanical and electrical maintenance, retail refrigeration services and installations.

They also reinforce a long term contract with Sainsburys, where SGMS look after 50% of the retailer's store portfolio, which in layman's terms means 330 stores from North London to the North of Scotland. Other large blue-chip clients include Woolworths, Boots the Chemist and leisure sector companies, such as Mitchells and Butlers and the Spirit pub group.

A delighted Terry Smith, Operations Director, explained:

"What is our unique selling point? Well, to be honest I guess it's the way that we can offer a tailored approach to our clients, so they can choose one part, two parts or even every aspect of our service.

"This gives us great flexibility, a flexibility that appeals to a wide range of industries, including retail, healthcare and general industry. Social housing, education and the Ministry of Defence are three other major growth areas - we have a constant presence totalling some 60 people at RAF Cosford, RAF Valley and MoD Donnington, plus numerous other MoD sites."

He continued: "We are also active in specialist sectors such as art galleries, where we have the in-house skills to cater for environments where precise control of temperature and humidity is vital to the care of highly valuable works of art.

"With the 'pipeline' of work taken into consideration, I'm confident we will turnover in excess of £16m this year."

Originally set up as a plumbing operation in 1939, SG Maintenance's growth started in the early eighties when the company moved into central heating, ventilation and air conditioning.

This proved a huge success with the firm winning new clients by the week and it wasn't long before the business was providing a one-stop option for its wide range of blue chip customers, not only in its original core fields of operation but also in many diverse activities, such as catering equipment maintenance and building fabric repair.

"We were expanding rapidly and it was at this stage that I first came into contact with Andrew Cooper, a Business Link adviser at the Solihull office," added Terry, who has been with the company for nearly 30 years.

"This was the start of a twelve year relationship, which has been extremely beneficial to our organisation. We've had business planning advice, help with financial forecasts, IT, branding and in gaining important quality and environmental awards, not to mention significant one-to-one mentoring."

He went on to add: "I think the most important feature is the ability to pick up the phone to Andrew and ask him a quick question or who we should talk to about a particular issue."

Business Link West Midlands has brought in the National B2B Centre on the latest project, which is looking at e-marketing and communication with customers.

SGMS is undertaking a free diagnostic around its use of mobile technology and is planning to upgrade its 'electronic pens' system currently in use with its 200 field engineers.

Whilst this form of real time communication is at the cutting edge of the sector, the management team believes the advancements in PDAs mean that two-way communication can be achieved that will provide the client with quicker and more in-depth information.

"This is just another reason why the company is so successful, doing that little bit extra to enhance the service it provides," explained Business Link West Midlands' Andrew Cooper.

"When we first started work with SG Maintenance in 1995, it was turning over just under £5m and employing about 50 staff. Twelve years on and, after using a host of external expertise and guidance, the company has tripled turnover, created nearly 200 jobs and is on the verge of exploring new avenues across the UK."

He continued: "These are the type of businesses that are really going to make a difference to the regional economy and ones we are engaging with on a daily basis."

Business Link West Midlands is expected to help over 70,000 businesses and individuals thinking of starting a business with information, with a further 16,000 receiving intensive support by 2010.

This level of support is expected to generate a £400m improvement to the economic performance of the West Midlands.



Individuals and companies interested in speaking with Business Link West Midlands should contact 0845 113 1234, visit www.businesslinkwm.co.uk or email info@businesslinkwm.co.uk

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Notes to Editors

Business Link West Midlands provides the information, advice and support needed to start, maintain and grow a business. The quality and delivery of the Business Link service is the responsibility of the Regional Development Agency Advantage West Midlands and supported by a number of other Government Departments, Agencies and Local Authorities.

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