



Case Study

Objectives

Our brief was to provide Carillion, who had won the contract to construct GCHQ's New Accommodation Project (NAP) in Cheltenham, with construction operatives to complete elements of the build programme.

The NAP project was unique in many ways and required a very specific approach to recruiting construction staff. As the largest single building ever procured by PFI and incorporating the transferral of Europe's most powerful computing facility from site to site (requiring the construction of a building the size of the House of Commons to contain a computer the size of Cheltenham Town Hall), construction staff had to be not only technically proficient in their field, but also able to work in very close teams under the most stringent of security restrictions.

SkyBlue's task was to find the right people, with the right skills to complete the work professionally – a task that was greatly facilitated by our approach to recruitment. We always maintain strongly bonded teams whenever possible, moving staff from one job to the next and, with our in-depth understanding of our people we were able to draw upon resources of construction professionals who we knew we could be confident would work well under very tight security measures.

Know-How

One of SkyBlue's guiding principles is that 'people make a difference'.

Finding 'the right person' means taking the time to understand everything our candidates have to offer; their professional qualifications and relevant experience are important of course, but it's more about finding out how they think, whether they work well in teams, how they react when faced with deadlines, what their hopes and aspirations are and where they see their career progressing.

We place great emphasis on team building and motivation and we do all we can to empower our operatives with all the training, support and help we can provide.

On the NAP project, our commitment to providing 'the right person for the job' required us, in the first instance, to ensure that we had a very clear understanding of the work our candidates would be required to achieve – something that our close relationship with Carillion greatly facilitated.

And our confidence in our people was fully rewarded by ready-made teams (e.g. M&E teams, expanded piling teams, etc.) fitting seamlessly into the works programme and producing professional build finishes to the client's satisfaction.

We delivered

A SkyBlue office just beside the site to ensure that both our operatives, and Carillion's civil engineers, could have quick and easy access to discuss employment, payroll, salary, contract and insurance questions, as well as being a 'first point of contact' for questions of Health and Safety Assistance for operatives drawn from outside Cheltenham in finding bed and breakfast and caravan accommodation facilities.

Recruitment specialists with vertical market experience in the construction industry. A formal and highly structured interview process to ensure accurate candidate matching. The confidence in our staff to place them in positions where they would face a security questionnaire, and where (once the building became operational) supervisors would face a 16 week government security clearance procedure. Our confidence in our people has been very well rewarded with not a single supervisor failing the necessary security protocols. The capacity to recruit over 1,000 specialist operators over the life of the programme. The skills to manage 250 staff on site at any one time.

We delivered

A broad perspective of the construction industry, its practical requirements, quality standards and safety issues gained from many years' experience. Teams of operatives with proven track records, the ability to understand and work with the tightest of security measures, and the highest of professional standards. Operatives who, having previously worked together on the Cheltenham River Defence Scheme, were transferred to provide ready made teams for NAP People with specific skill sets for specific tasks – for example the three SkyBlue Bristol Office operatives with the geological/geophysical experience to analyse core samples drilled prior to the construction of foundations. Operatives with skills in carpentry, steel fixing, pipe laying, concrete finishing, ground working, draining, kerb laying, tarmac, road and path construction, steel framing and forming and 'line and level' excavation.

Implementation

The candidate list put forward to Carillion was governed, of course, by the need to find people with suitable qualifications and experience combined with an appropriately professional attitude, but we also sought to draw this workforce (as far as possible) from local resources. As a major recruitment specialist for large scale construction projects, we are very much aware of our responsibilities not just to our clients, but also to local communities – which is why the local Job Centre forms an integral part of our initial recruitment search and 75% of the construction operatives on the NAP project lived locally to the site. However, where local recruitment in Cheltenham wasn't possible, we went as far afield as Wales and even Scotland to find exactly the right people for Carillion's needs. Our people are important to us – they're our representatives to our clients, they comprise our single biggest asset and we don't want to lose them – which is why we delivered an entirely CSCS qualified workforce.

Understanding

Registered with the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and awarded Investors in People, we take our role very seriously. This means treating candidates as individuals with specific skills and aptitudes and not just as 'people on our books'. SkyBlue is an equal opportunities recruitment agency; our commitment to finding the right candidates for our clients precludes any bias on the grounds of age, gender, race or belief.

As a result, we are now ideally placed to provide an expert recruitment service for large and small-scale construction projects across the UK.

All of which enabled us to place construction operatives on the NAP project with complete confidence in their skills, their trustworthiness, their team-playing attitude, and their professional reliability in a very security-sensitive environment. This confidence in our people is backed up by robust quality reporting. Operatives and their works are assessed after their first week and then on a quarterly basis.

For more details contact:

T: 0845 111 4334

F: 0870 129 3786

ask@skybluesolutions.com

SkyBlue Solutions provides temporary and permanent labour for clients in Construction, Civil Engineering, Highways, Utilities, Business Services, Facilities Management and M& E.



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