

Recruitment agency tackles driver shortage head on through training

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A SPECIALIST recruitment company's innovative approach to training is playing a major role in helping the UK tackle driver shortages.

While the industry is reporting difficulties in finding quality drivers, national recruitment agency Drivers Direct has invested heavily in training to ensure it provides drivers of the highest calibre.

And the results have already spoken for themselves with Drivers Direct providing quality drivers to major blue chip clients throughout the UK.

New figures have revealed 60 per cent of all road haulage companies are struggling to fill vacancies, while the top 100 biggest companies are suffering even more with 72 per cent having a severe shortage of drivers.

Overall, transport and associated vacancies increased by 60 per cent on October last year from 54,460 to 87,422 this year. Vacancies for HGV drivers increased to 25,720, up from 11,041 in 2009, and from 17,344 in 2007. And van drivers increased from 7,000 last October up to 10,193 this year.

But experts at Drivers Direct maintained it was having no difficulties in providing quality drivers for the industry, largely due to the level of training it offers.

Managing director Gethin Roberts said: Many in the industry have expressed concern about severe driver shortages. With vacancies up by 130 per cent since last year, we at Drivers Direct have had no trouble in doing our bit to provide quality drivers to our clients, which include some of the UK's well known brands in home delivery and logistics. We're also well placed right now to cope with the increased demand during one of our busiest times of the year in the lead up to Christmas. This is down to us attracting good quality drivers because of our reputation, and also being able to train drivers ourselves very effectively to the high standard our clients expect.

Drivers Direct delivers NVQ level vocational which is the equivalent standard to GCSE grades A to C. The Driving Goods Vehicles course includes safe and efficient driving techniques, security awareness, how to load and unload vehicles correctly and how to manoeuvre in a restricted space. Its Carrying Delivered Goods course for van drivers follows the same format but also includes customer service training.

Drivers Direct also delivers DCPC training for HGV drivers where the law dictates anyone driving a vehicle above 3.5 tonnes must complete 35 hours of approved training within five years and every subsequent five years.

Mr Roberts added: Training is perhaps the key to ensuring we attract more people to the profession and that is what Drivers Direct is committed to. We have stringent checks on the drivers we use and we don't cut corners because we've got our customers' best interests at heart.

We have a thorough driver registration process and the training courses we are delivering ensure our high standards are maintained because the current situation in the industry can't continue.

Drivers Direct specialises in the recruitment and placement of temporary and permanent drivers of all classes. It employs 28 staff and has branches in Runcorn, Feltham, Sutton, Preston and Eastleigh and has franchises in Nuneaton, Northampton, Leicester and Ashford. The firm has been

listed as a Fast 50 company in the recruitment sector for the last two years.

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Editor s Note:

Drivers Direct was set up in 2002 by four partners. Today, it is owned by three partners and run by Gethin Roberts, managing director and his management team, all of whom have backgrounds in both Recruitment and Distribution. The company specialises in the recruitment and placement of temporary and permanent drivers of all classes. Drivers Direct prides itself on the ability to work closely with clients and applicants to ensure that a quality service is provided overall. Drivers Direct employs 28 staff and has branches in Runcorn, Feltham, Sutton, Preston and Eastleigh and franchises in Northampton, Nuneaton, Leicester and Ashford. The company s core business is driver recruitment and it has always tried to employ people who know about transport rather than just recruitment. Almost all of its consultants come from a transport, rather than recruitment background.

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