

Base Connections

The company

Base Connections is a telemarketing specialist that helps companies generate new business and retain customers.

Sector	Other services
Location	South East England
Turnover	£1.2million in 2003

The workforce

Number of employees	52
Percentage women	67%
Percentage of staff with the company for 3+ years	49%
Percentage of staff with the company for 5+ years	37%
Percentage of staff with the company for 10+ years	9%

The challenge

To return to work after having had children and the issues around finding stimulating work whilst balancing home life.

The response

Establish a new company! Base Connections was started in 1994 by two women looking to return to work after having children. The aim was to provide excellent customer service while employing high quality staff who required flexible working conditions.

One of the reasons the company was set up was because people wanted part time work to fit around families that was both fun and stimulating and that used their skills. When planning how to cover the work, the different days and differing length of days are taken into account. When each person is interviewed the hours they can work are established and individual working hours and days are agreed for that person. As peoples' commitments change over time they are able to change their hours. People have started part time and gradually become full time while others have reduced their hours. Each person belongs to a team and it is their responsibility to find out what they need to know since they were last in, so communication is of the utmost importance. A company intranet helps with this.

The benefits

Staff enjoy the ability to take a gap year or sabbatical, spend more time with their children and be involved in their school activities, care for a relative, accrue more days off, or avoid rush hour.

The company has high staff retention - 49% of staff have been with the company for more than 3 years and 37% for more than 5 years. 11% of the current staff have left the company at one time to pursue other interests, only to return. High staff retention means managers can be hired in-house, who get to know intimately the niche market that the business services.

In practice

Every employee takes advantage of flexible working to a varying extent. Examples include one employee who joined Base Connections in 1994 part-time, working from home around her new baby. Her hours increased as the baby grew and a couple of years ago she was able to return to working in the office full time.

Another employee has been with the company since 1996 and worked fewer hours in the holidays to look after her three children. She has had three different roles within the company.