



Thrings meets... James Napp, Head Honcho at Bechtle

James Napp, managing director of IT solutions company Bechtle UK and voted winner of the Business Person of the Year at the 2018 Wiltshire Business Awards, tells Thrings partner and awards judge, Alex Pinhey, what makes Bechtle and Wiltshire a special place to work.

What's your business about and how has it changed?

When we started, we largely just sold IT products. But if you work in tech and don't move with the times, you fade out of the market. So we invest in the latest technological trends but, crucially, have moved into offering IT services too. Now we're a strategic partner to companies and organisations around the country, offering full IT infrastructure solutions - hardware and software - as well as the ongoing support and services needed for them to operate efficiently and securely.

Bechtle seems to be doing extremely well...

Absolutely. We've gone from £36 million turnover in 2016 to almost double that this year after moving to our purpose-built base in Methuen Park. We've invested heavily in technical and business support staff over the past five years and that's been a key factor in our growth. There's this idea that IT professionals are the 'geeks in the corner' but that's just not the reality these days - IT now sits on the board of many companies, helping to decide strategy. Without the right IT programmes driving change, flexible working, innovation and process efficiencies, businesses risk falling behind the competition. These days IT couldn't be more integral to business success.

So it's about the people?

A huge factor in our success is the great people we have - in every area of the business. We've tried to create an environment which is fun, with lots of autonomy and where people can really thrive. They're working with the same energy and desire for success that management does and

that has a huge impact. Taking as much feedback on board as we can and listening to our staff's ideas has really helped us improve as a business. We also recognised that investing in our workforce was really important and so launched a training programme and sales academy, which are going really well. Rewarding loyalty is a big part of our culture.

What's the best thing about running a business in Wiltshire?

Although Bechtle is a global company, we've been in the UK for 21 years and have spent most of that time in Wiltshire. Again, it's about the people. There are some really talented and potentially loyal individuals out there, you just have to find them. Wiltshire has a strong sense of community too and we've enjoyed getting involved where we can, like with our bake-offs and promotions in aid of Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

Would you recommend getting involved in the Wiltshire Business Awards?

One hundred percent. Having somebody come and look at your business with fresh eyes is incredibly valuable. Since the judges tend to be high up in their own companies, they have a lot of business experience themselves. It's like having consultants come and ask you lots of difficult questions that really make you think about how you run things day-to-day. We've built some great business links through the awards, like with sponsors RSM and Thrings, but also with participating businesses like Active Potential Therapy who now run monthly yoga classes for us.

What's next for Bechtle?

We're striving to reach £100 million turnover in the next few years, but beyond wanting to be the biggest and the best IT company in the UK we want to be the nicest company to work with too.

For more information about Thrings, please visit | www.thrings.com or email Alex | apinhey@thrings.com