



BUSINESS VIEW

SECURITY WITH A FRIENDLY FACE

The personal security industry is not one you would usually associate with a sensitive approach.

But combining a highly professional attitude to security with a flair for customer service has helped MAN Commercial Protection Limited become one of the top 30 UK leaders in its industry.

At the same time, the company has grown to achieve annual revenues of £25m, or £1m for every year of its existence.

Growth hasn't been steady, though; turnover has almost doubled in the last four years as MAN Commercial Protection's customers, which range from rock stars to multinationals such as DHL, have acquired a taste for the company's personal touch.

It helps that the company is still in private hands and the founders' names are on the door. MAN stands for McCallister, Atkins and Neighbour, and Iain McCallister still leads the business as managing director.

"Our company's unique selling point is its service when compared to the larger security companies," he says. "We are more personal, more responsive and can make decisions more quickly."

MAN Commercial Protection's focus on people is not only a hit with clients but also helps to reduce staff turnover. Some employees have been with the company for almost two decades.

Newcomers, meanwhile, are carefully selected and trained, with the company making good use of the Apprenticeship Levy.

The business, which almost literally started out as a man-with-a-dog operation, providing guard shifts with a German Shepherd called Zac, now counts more than 1,000 staff and is the biggest privately-owned security company in the West Midlands.

Based in Solihull, MAN Commercial Protection has had to move headquarters five times to accommodate its growth in employees. But the company has remained faithful to the Birmingham and Solihull area.

"Birmingham offers an excellent base for national contracts, with so much of the country being within two hours' reach," says McCallister. "This is vital for key holding and other operations across the country monitored from our 24-hour control room in Birmingham."

Another advantage of the area is that property does not come with the premiums associated with London, he says.

McCallister's only complaint is that small-to-medium enterprises such as MAN Commercial Protection do not get the level of access to local and central government that is afforded to big companies. This is a concern shared by BDO.

BDO's New Economy roadmap for a post-Brexit Britain notes: "The UK's mid-sized, high-growth and entrepreneurial businesses are an essential and dynamic element of the UK economy. Yet these businesses are frequently overlooked and undervalued by policymakers."

To help redress the balance in Birmingham, McCallister suggests local businesses should work in partnership with local government to promote the area more. "We have a lot to shout about," he says.

