

Business Connectors - creating a culture of collaboration across communities

Business in the community (BITC) exists to create healthy communities with successful business at their heart. A Business Connector is a talented employee from either the private or public sector who is seconded to BITC to work across a specific city or area which typically has greater social needs. Trained by BITC, they seek to understand local needs and match them to business objectives. They bring together local businesses and community organisations to create sustainable and rewarding collaborative partnerships across sectors, to make a positive difference.

To date, 53 organisations have seconded a total of 277 Business Connectors in 131 locations.

Over the last 6 years £45.4 million has been leveraged as our Business Connectors work in the communities of greatest need.

"Responsible business today means giving more, but also doing more and changing the way your company behaves. Business Connectors embody this change, making a real difference in communities. They're buzzing with new ideas, more experienced and more in touch with their customers. This is the essence of responsible business. It's not about bolting on a bit of good work; it is doing good and doing well out of it."

David Cameron, Former Prime Minister



How it works

Secondment Models are flexible depending on the resources available to your organisation. We have supported full time, part time and job share contracts that have been anywhere from 6 months to 3 years long. Some organisations have seconded in a range of locations, while others want to build networks in one; seconding multiple Business Connectors there over time.

From 2018 with our new Place Strategy we will be focusing on 10 key cities which will act as a hub for the surrounding area and 10 Pride of Place locations, that will lead the way for a new approach to the way we work in communities.

The Business Connector Recruitment Team are here to help you every step of the way and secondments can be funded from a range of sources depending on which area of your organisation you see as benefiting most from this opportunity. Some ideas are:

- Community Investment / CSR budgets
- HR, Training & Development budgets
- An alternative to outplacement support where applicable
- Market research, outreach and marketing budgets
- Budget in the next financial year in order to forward plan a commitment to the programme
- Consortium funding with your supply chain or other interested parties in a particular location.

The opportunity can meet HR challenges in four main ways:

1. Developing future leaders with responsible business values, by giving them the experience to challenge their skills in an alien environment and ultimately bringing valuable insights back into the business ensuring your products remain relevant.

2. Re-energise current employees by getting them out into the community and using their skills in a new way
3. Begin a succession plan for a long serving colleague by enabling them to explore opportunities outside of the office, while you train their team in the role they leave behind.
4. Retain talented staff during a restructure by developing their skills in a new environment as well as gaining insights and developing local partnerships to recruit new talented employees and apprentices.

Whoever you decide to second and however you decide to do it, we have a wealth of experience and knowledge to ensure their Business Connector experience will meet their current and future career needs.

Why join us?

There are a range of reasons why organisations have decided to support the Business Connector Programme;

1. Enhancing trust and reputation among employees, customers and key stakeholders at both a national and local level
2. Developing talent through the ultimate Experiential Learning experience thereby giving future leaders a broader perspective
3. Building networks where you work and operate to support ongoing business strategy
4. Expanding current community engagement and employee volunteering initiatives by finding new local partners that can help you tackle the real issues facing our most vulnerable communities
5. Market intelligence and understanding to help develop new products, services and your local community investment strategy - ensuring you are a leader in your sector.
6. A visible and practical way for your organisations to deliver social value commitments in a location of commercial interest.

“Quite often it is the small process of understanding needs and looking at what companies can offer and linking them up that can make large differences to both parties, often on a long-term basis. And just as often, as we have seen in Waitrose, it is the business that benefits as much as the community.”

Helen Hyde, Personnel Director at Waitrose

“My job, my ambition, outlook and vision of the future are all different, as a direct result of my experiences as a Business Connector. After 26 years in the banking industry, I now invest my time differently, have greater self-awareness and a strong desire to work to my strengths.”

Mark Bridges, Business Connector, Lloyds Banking Group

If you are interested in exploring how the Business Connector Programme can work for you, then get in touch with:

Pauline Purves Senior Business Relationship Manager - Business Connectors at pauline.purves@bitc.org.uk / 07702 902639

Our Seconding Partners:

