

Business Connectors

The Business Case

The Business Connectors programme aims to change the culture of how business and communities work together to tackle social issues. Business Connectors are talented individuals seconded from both public and private sector organisations, trained by Business in the Community and placed in local communities of greatest need. They bring together local businesses and community organisations to create mutually beneficial partnerships which improve the lives of people in the area.

To date, 47 organisations have seconded a total of 234 Business Connectors to the programme.



As the programme grows from strength to strength, it has leveraged more than £37 million, igniting support in local communities of greatest need and our pioneering participating organisations tell us they are seeing benefits in the following ways:

Building trust and enhancing reputation: The programme can help build and improve your organisations profile and reputation among customers and key stakeholders at local and national level. A food producer who seconded with us found that seconding in a location where they were closing a key site was crucial in ensuring the business left a positive legacy and mitigating any damage to their reputation in the area.

Improving local commercial performance: There has been evidence from retail and banking Business Connectors that performance of the local store/branch has benefited tangibly. Exposure to feedback from customers and small businesses has given insights into customer trends and attitudes, products and services, helping to identify new marketplace opportunities.

Increasing employee engagement and loyalty: a Business Connector can increase employee engagement indicators in a local workplace/depot/office by facilitating volunteering opportunities for employees and building their local relationships in the community. This can benefit low performing sites, new branches / depots or locations. Once part of the network, participating organisations can benefit from these engagement opportunities in all their sites where BITC have a Business Connector - even if they are not seconding in these locations themselves.

Developing organisational networks and supporting supply chains: The recruitment model initiated by Anglian Water in Fenlands has enabled a group of locally aware and involved businesses from their supply chain to work collaboratively to enable a Business Connector to be released, creating a new depth to their partnership working.

Delivering organisational community investment objectives: The insight into real local community issues and needs witnessed during a secondment enables Business Connectors to feedback local intelligence into corporate strategies. Seconding a Business Connector in a location where you are honouring Social Value Commitments can add real and tangible value to the work you are already

“The pre-employment work I’ve done with Leyland for the new depot has changed existing thinking around online applications and group interviews to help steer us to include significant groups of the population who are currently excluded from our recruitment offer.” Business Connector

undertaking for example. One financial services company used a Business Connector secondment to understand how they could better engage target groups in their existing programmes. Lastly, when our Business Connectors return to their companies they continue their relationship with the community as volunteers or trustees and become role models for their colleagues.

Providing a unique opportunity to network across sectors: Business Connectors are given the opportunity to see how other sectors work and how organisational cultures differ. They build contacts for future business development, which leads to organisations from the same and diverse sectors working collaboratively together. In an ever changing market, these networks have proved invaluable to our leading participating organisations as they have opened-up new and innovative opportunities in sometimes unexpected places.

Developing talent and securing leadership succession: The personal development opportunities that a secondment as a Business Connector provides are significant.

“In seconding Business Connectors from Fujitsu, I have been struck by the way our people have developed, both as individual and as managers, in just six months. That’s why I am increasing the number of secondees and including the business connectors programme as part of our overall approach to talent development, previously we may have sent our potential leaders to Harvard or INSEAD, but now if people want to be a senior leader in Fujitsu, I will be asking ‘have they been a Business Connector.’”

Duncan Tait, Head of EMEA and Fujitsu Group Executive Committee member

BITC can help you with...

Marketing the role and engaging key stakeholders; defining the recruitment process to identify the right secondee.

Media, PR and Press guidance with our communications team to help you make the most of this profile opportunity.

Regular updates about the programme; highlighting the difference your commitment has made and specific stories about the achievements of your Business Connectors.

Opportunities to network with other participating organisations from across the public and private sector to share community insights and learnings from their experiences.

Regular evaluation meetings with key parties to assess the progress of the secondment, particularly from a development perspective.

Guidance on making the most of the secondee’s experiences once back in the organisation.

Participating organisations

