



CASE STUDY



PDS In partnership with Van Monkey

Van Monkey is a fleet and finance provider for businesses across the UK. Van Monkey provides and maintains fleet vehicles for PDS. Carl Smith, Managing Director of Van Monkey, has a wealth of knowledge in the fleet vehicle sector after more than 15 years of experience.

Sean at PDS explained that he had contacted a variety of fleet vehicle specialists when making the venture into the last-mile delivery service. However, Sean was not able to build a business partnership that satisfied the same levels of trust and faith that he wanted his clients to have with PDS, **“The passion and desire are what we got from Van Monkey and that’s what we needed for the partnership to work.”**

In the same vein, the partnership between the two businesses was initialised by Carl and Sean sitting in Sean’s office for two hours, Sean said, **“We just chatted, nothing about vans, but I knew that was whom I wanted to do business with.”**

When PDS was working with the hot tub company to deliver to consumers, they realised to fulfill the client’s needs they needed a bespoke vehicle. Van Monkey was able to supply this as a direct request from Sean to Carl, **“that allowed us to effectively deliver our promise to our client.”**

The ethos at Van Monkey aligns with the values of PDS, complaints have to be met head-on. Sean said, **“If ever I have a problem, I ring Carl and we have a chat- because I know it is going to be sorted.”**

It is important to know that if something does go wrong, the business partnership will allow for an open and direct conversation to lead to a solution. The way PDS do their business bases on Sean’s simple principle, **“We work backward from the client and that is what makes us such a good fit with Van Monkey.”**





COMPANY PROFILE

Interview with Managing Director Sean Kiely

PDS has been in the transport and logistics business for over 40 years. From humble beginnings, PDS started as a one-panel van in West Bromwich. Sean Kiely, Managing Director of PDS, is the third generation to be at the helm of the business started by his grandad- a true family business.

The company has grown since 1979, PDS now employs 110 staff over their three Oldbury-based warehouses and the one in Scotland as well as a fleet of 85 vehicles. The growth that PDS has seen is due to some very simple principles, Sean said, **“We let our customers lead and allow us to follow as the solution.”**

To say the fragile goods that PDS transport have to be treated with care goes without saying, but the process PDS has worked on to minimise opportunities for damage by going direct from the supplier to the customer has been key to the service.

Sean works on what he calls a **“solutions-driven partnership”**, which means that business will be built around the client. However, it also means that the venture is a two-way relationship that works in the interest of openness and improvement.

With that in mind, in the event of something going wrong, Sean was keen to point out that “complaints will always be met head-on”. It would be false to suggest that businesses do not get complaints, but the key is to how they deal with them.

In the event of an issue, the employees on the ground would aim to resolve it immediately, if this is not possible- the Customer Service Manager would be tasked with resolving the problem. If necessary though, Sean himself would have no hesitation in getting involved saying, “that level of business accessibility is what we need to resolve any issues the client has... We don’t want to hide behind the bureaucracy of the business.”





COMPANY PROFILE

Continued...

PDS's core values of being:

1. Dynamic
2. Flexible
3. Passionate



Delivering all of their business with the same level of efficiency; accommodating client's needs; and enthusiasm for the work they do. This enthusiasm from Sean is met with the same level from PDS employees, **"One of my managers here has been with us for 33 years- that's the kind of employee retention we want to maintain."** The work itself and PDS's ethos is attributed to this, as the work they do changes every day which keeps it interesting but PDS employees are encouraged to make the job their own so that they have pride in the work and they actually want to do it.

In a time of great uncertainty, and many people leaving their jobs due to a lack of job satisfaction and worth- it is a restorative process to see employees being valued. Sean said, **"We are an open house family business, but we have to make sure we have corporate responsibilities for the wellbeing of our employees- we want the same level of engagement from our clients and our workers."**

PDS are constantly trying to look for ways to improve their company and the service that they offer, which is why they are investing in a new warehouse within the West Midlands to solidify their final mile delivery strategy. This allows for efficient deliveries to be made directly to customer, as the rise of online shopping has meant PDS have had to adapt to the modern market. Over 30% of deliveries that PDS service are now direct to consumers, which is a dramatic shift from the previous models of delivery. However, it has allowed for the development of the White Glove delivery service- which ensures extreme attention to detail with the product that is being transported. Not only that but the product can then be installed and commissioned at the destination.

The work that PDS has done with a hot tub company was fulfilled by this service- delivered and installed into customers' own back gardens, Sean said, **"The work we have done there has made me very proud."**

That means that PDS can be in control from supplier to install, which means that the values PDS stand for will be maintained throughout the process.



COMPANY PROFILE

For the future:

Sean would like to begin the process of improving the contact system they have with their clients. By using web chat services or simple, informal streams of conversation- will allow clients to be in touch with PDS more easily and continually improve the service that PDS offers.

PDS does not have a sales team as all of the work that they do with new clients is based on referrals from the clients that PDS already works with. That way, clients know that their work will be carried out effectively as has been demonstrated by the way they have handled the business needs of customers in the past. The other aspect of that is the trust that an effective and open partnership can be formed with PDS, as new clients will need faith in a distribution company to manage their product.

Sean's aims for PDS are simple, "to be the UK's leader in fragile distribution- that would be the headline." That is why PDS strives to improve in every way they can- it keeps their business and interests moving away from competitors and allows them to progress towards their goal. The simplest and most effective promise from Sean though was this, **"We can look after the product."**



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