



MATT LEE'S THE WAY FORWARD

James Collins
Divisional Managing Director

James on Matt Lee

At Shawston we are always trying to retain our competitive edge and indeed a healthy business by ensuring we always meet the demands of our many stakeholders, both internally and externally. As a sustainable employee-owned business it's vitally important to us that when recruiting we look at the individual's personal values first and their skill set second.

On a recent business evaluation carried out by the SLT it became clear that we had a gap that needed filling; we were looking to expand and energise our existing Mechanical Services range, we already have excellent relationships with our supply chain, a logistics network that is unrivalled and a customer service offering that is unmatched, so we were ready to take our business to the next level. To fill that gap we wanted an experienced



and knowledgeable individual with a proven track record in the Mechanical Services industry. Enter Matt Lee.

Matt is known to the Shawston SLT for his many years in the industry and he is someone that we have admired from afar without ever having the right opportunity to offer him a role at Shawston.

However, our recent discovery of a new avenue for the business was the perfect opportunity for Matt to join the Shawston team. Matt also comes highly recommended by members of our supply chain and other industry professionals – even more compelling reasons to have him on board.

It was clear to me from our very first meeting that Matt has the trade savviness, experience, and wisdom to further strengthen our Mechanical Services offering and his high level of emotional intelligence would undoubtedly boost the skillset of the existing SLT. A modern manager who will be well placed to offer advice and support for our branch teams in the South.

I want to take this opportunity to say that Shawston are



beyond thrilled to welcome Matt to our family, not only because of his experience and proven track record, but because he is a great fit for our business too. Our culture at Shawston has an ethos that many covet, we are a people centric business which means we like to really think about who we invite to join our family, because you see it's not just about the bottom line, it's also about our people, our co-owners, our branches, and our business. We are building a forever Shawston, so we want forever people to help with the build. Welcome Matt.

Matt Lee *Product Director*

Matt on Shawston

So, I found myself in June this year reflecting back on my career and I had reached a crossroads. I have spent a large percent of my working life in large national distribution businesses and PLC's and I was beginning to start thinking about realigning my work / life values. It was at this point that Shawston got in touch in the form of Graham Wilkins. Graham and I have been friends for a long time, and even though our lives have changed and developed in various different ways, we always tried to keep in touch. Graham mentioned that Shawston would be interested in me joining the team, even though there wasn't a specific role for me, but they [Shawston] just knew that culturally I would be a good fit and look here I am!

I was lucky enough to be in a position that I had a few options on the table, but when I looked at Shawston and



their culture it just blew me away. I realised that there was an increased alignment with my personal values, the world I want to live in and the kind of company I want to work for, we have very similar values Shawston and I, so the suggestion that I could become part of the team was very appealing to me. Even though I had spent the majority of my working life in a PLC – which was a great experience for me – I really wanted to get back into a business where everyone is a decision maker and plays a key part in driving the business forward.

The more time I spent learning about Shawston, the more I realised this was definitely the place I wanted to be. I really liked the people that I already knew here, Rob and Graham they carried a lot of weight with me and I trusted them too. Trust is a big deal for me, so it felt natural and organic to pick up conversations with these guys. It also became clear to me after meeting with James Collins a couple of times that we [James & I] would work really, really well together.

Graham, Rob and James told me that I would be a great fit for the business, they said nice things about me and it's uplifting to know that I am wanted for my attributes and personal qualities as a direct fit with the company's culture and values, rather than for a potential customer list and/or to work an 80-hour week!! The ethos of Shawston is very much about finding the right fit, the right person to link into the values and the culture of the business and I really like that.

To be honest, when I was realigning my work vs life wants and needs, I thought I would go for a job really close to my house, the plan was to cycle to work each day. Fast forward to the present and my role at Shawston takes me 90 miles from my house, but this role was just too interesting to miss. Shawston is progressive. I don't know what this company will turn into in the next 5/10 years and it is interesting to be in a firm that feels like it's in the next stage of its evolution. The running of the company is beginning to be handed over more and more to the employees, which means we will have a direct impact on its success moving forward.

Shawston is about re-investing in the branches and the business as a whole. It's not a profit feeding machine, the profits are re-directed into further enhancing their customer service offering or stock accuracy, replenishment etc. It's very much centred around being the very best it can be, both as a company and an individual. It's a really refreshing approach and one of which I'm really excited to be a part of.

Matt on the future

I'm looking at gaining a bigger share of the building services market. Fact. We clearly under index in that market and I'm planning to rectify that really soon. I want to have one of everything, but that one of everything

needs to be a really good product, a credible product with great service excellence attached. These key products will complement our existing ranges and make it easier for our teams to learn and know the range inside out, which makes it easier for our customers too. We have the knowledge and experience amongst our teams to drive value all the way back to our manufacturers.

Shawston has a great reputation in the industry, known for its service excellence and eye for detail, I see these new additions to our existing product range as ticking all the boxes. We're already sending a truck load of products to customers so why not fully load up the truck with products from the rest of the range? It seems simple doesn't it, so that's the plan for 2021.

The New Year will also see the launch of a couple of new product ranges, work has already started on these additions so watch this space. I for one am really enthusiastic, energised and motivated about my role in 2021, there are many opportunities heading our way. Shawston is already seen as a business to watch amongst our contemporaries and if I were a betting man, I'd bet on a stronger, more focussed Shawston in 2021.



