



THE POWER OF PEOPLE WITH EMMA SWAIN

With a career centred around people and their development, it was clear to us that Emma Swain would be our new Head of People and Culture. We spoke to Emma about her plans to roll out the People First strategy and why she decided to join the Shawston team.

Emma Swain
Head of People and Culture.



New Challenge

After many great years in my previous role, I knew that I needed to step out of my comfort zone and seek a new challenge. Whilst it had been an incredible journey it became clear that the time was right for a new venture. I knew I still needed a fast-paced, medium-sized business with huge entrepreneurial spirit and ambitions for growth, and along came Shawston.

As a people focused professional, everything needed to be about, you guessed it, the people. And as a natural skeptic, I was always going to subconsciously question whatever was sold, however, the recruitment

process well and truly silenced the skeptic in me. The clear passion for people, the sheer care, and the various people I met along the way, all giving the same, personalised view from experience, sold it. It was a very honest process, from both sides; it was also clear there was a values alignment with a People First approach, leading to an opportunity to create a truly proactive and added value role and this was extremely exciting to me.

The Employee Ownership Advantage

I did recognise the EO status of Shawston as an influence, but not how you might expect. I saw it as a great area in which to gain experience and obviously I knew the statistics that come with employee ownership such as greater engagement etc, but the key part came down to the values of the business and why EO was the chosen route. It was about as big a People First practice as you

could get. The decision to make a business employee owned says a lot about its culture and to be honest, it was this combined with the thoughts from those that I met throughout the recruitment process which made it a no brainer to decide to join.

Putting People First

Having been with the business for nearly four months now, I can safely say that I was right to take the leap of faith. Seeing and hearing the attitudes of our teams, the speed at which they adapt to change and embrace the thought of continued growth and development is extraordinary. Clearly, this is what makes Shawston special and how it has become the market leader in the fire sector. From a people perspective, the level of care given, and time taken to discuss our people has been a joy to be a part of – it really is People First. Which is a delight to witness.

I intend to build on the existing platform by adding value and continuing to drive the People First Strategy forward. Progressing the creation of a growth environment and ensuring our teams have what they need in place to enjoy and facilitate Shawston's exciting journey that lies ahead is a key goal of mine. An environment whereby communication is open and honest, and our culture continues to make Shawston a great place to work.

Great foundations are set in place already, and the attitude we have from our teams is exciting and something to leverage. It will be a case of driving existing initiatives with a strategic and consistent approach, with the flexibility to fit the nature of the business.

On a personal level, I am looking forward to growing with the business and giving a different perspective. There will be a lot of learning along the way which I will embrace and lots of people to get to know – the best bit if I am honest!

Creating an Environment for All

I like to think that I have already brought a different perspective to the team, and I am hopeful that people are starting to see this through our time spent together.

Moving forward as I continue to build relationships, my intention is to provide a calm, supportive and proactive attitude that spans across the entire Shawston Group.

I am really looking forward to seeing and helping people grow, both personally and professionally whilst continuing to focus one of the many things that makes Shawston great - our culture. Change is an inevitable part of business, and it is always great to see how people handle change, offering a wealth of support to them throughout the journey and seeing the results. Often when change is occurring, we see personal and professional values really shine through - this is something I look forward to witnessing and being a part of through my role. I'm looking forward to seeing all the great things the team can achieve as a collective and listening to peoples' reflections ♦

Shawston is an employee owned business. This means Shawston is wholly owned by its employees who have purchased shares in the company through investing their own hard earned money. Our co-owners are empowered, valued, committed and full of motivation to take ownership of their various roles and responsibilities within our business. And that's the essence of Employee Ownership. We encourage a freedom of expression rarely seen in business, we push people to be better versions of themselves, and we give them the space to make choices.

So, if you're interested in a career with Shawston, make the choice to email us your CV and a covering letter to hr@shawston.co.uk or [visit our website](#) to read more about choosing to hop on board to a new career.

