

# Case Study

## Networks for Construction

Construction is an important sector within the regional economy. It employs almost 5 per cent of the total workforce, with annual expenditure running to £850 million.

But many companies find it hard to obtain the up to date information they need to win contracts for large projects. This is often due to the fact that they are unable to reach key decision makers, and also because there is little opportunity to network with other firms across the sector.

**This is what prompted the launch of a business alliance called Networks for Construction in 1998.** It is one of several successful business alliances to be launched by Business Link West since the mid-1990s. Business Link has taken the idea of companies pooling their resources to form an alliance, a practice traditionally confined to large companies, and shown how it can be used in the SME sector.

Over the past seven years, Business Link West has formed over 20 new limited liability alliance companies, each of which has a combined turnover between £1 million and £65 million.

**The Networks for Construction alliance holds breakfast events,** featuring talks by key project managers and decision makers in the construction industry, who guide delegates through the major components and timescales of large construction projects. Crucially, attendees are advised on how to be considered for the contract works.

**Networks for Construction continues to flourish,** and now has well over 500 sector-related companies on its database, with an average attendance of over 60 at each of their breakfast events.

Local firms participating have been able to win work on a number of high profile, multi-million pound developments after attending Networks in Construction events. These include Harbourside, Temple Quay and Broadmead in Bristol, plus the prestige Portishead Quays site in Portishead.



“It is now recognised as ‘the’ forum for the building and construction sector, and this has helped us to gain a lot of respect and credibility within the industry,” says Business Link West’s Business Alliance Adviser, Peter Downing.

“As the forum evolves we are now beginning to look at industry issues as well as developments. A new programme of events is prepared each quarter and is very much designed around industry requests, and we have recently launched a similar programme in Bath that is proving equally successful.”

**National Business Alliance Service**

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**0117 973 7373**

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