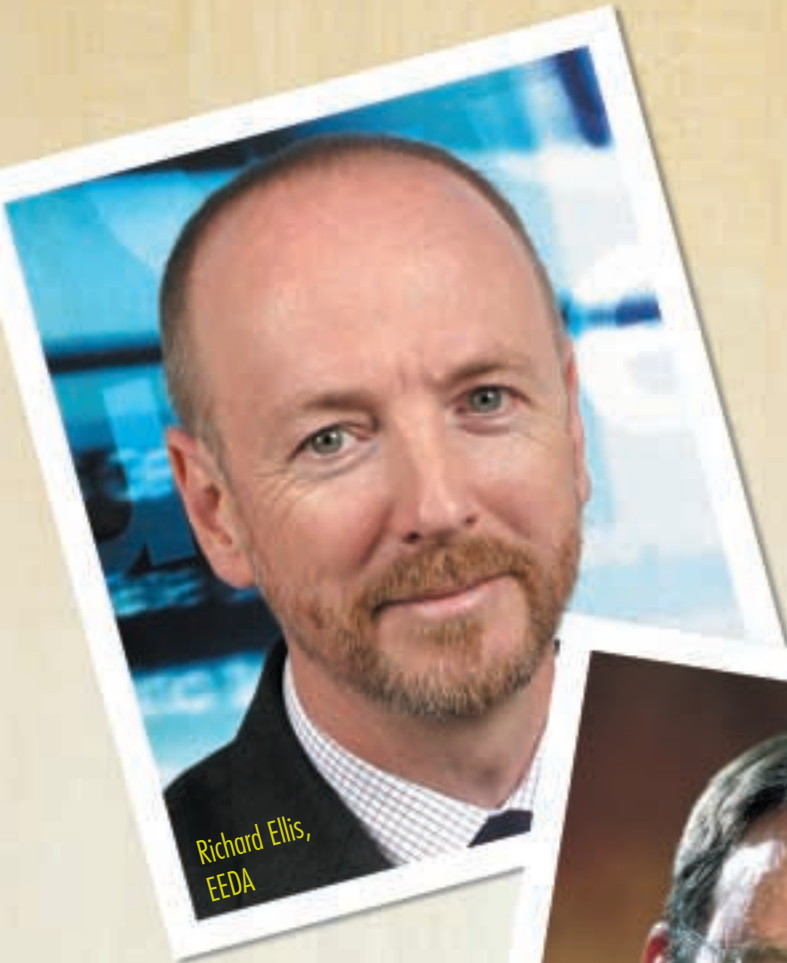


NRG in brief



Richard Ellis,
EEDA



Margaret Fay,
One North East



Terry Hodgkinson,
Yorkshire Forward

New chairs for
three regional
development
agencies



STRENGTH IN DEPTH ACROSS THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS | INVESTING IN SCOTLAND'S FUTURE | PICKING SUNNYSIDE UP |
SUPPORTING THE BUSINESS VOICE OF THE NORTH EAST | FINDING REGIONAL LEADERS | ASSESSMENT CENTRES FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR
BENEFIT CLIENTS AND CANDIDATES | NRG GROUP AWARDED S-CAT SERVICE PROVIDER STATUS | HELPING THE OFFICERS CLUB BUILD ON SUCCESS |
EXPANDING PRESENCE IN EAST YORKSHIRE AND NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE | NRG GROUP FIELDS A TEAM IN KIEDER CHALLENGE

Welcome

I'm pleased to report an upbeat view of activity across all of NRG's business locations. It is apparent that as many organisations and agencies within the Public Sector undergo a programme of change the drive to invest in skilled staff is high on the agenda. Working in partnership we've developed innovative solutions to ensure we can support that drive on a national basis. Finding the right person every time is the tall order we base our reputation on. When leading transport services organisation Arriva needed an HR Director on an interim basis to manage a large change project they asked us to do just that - in Cardiff!

Julie Allan, Human Resources Director at Arriva Trains said "I appreciated NRG's practical delivery focus, their responsiveness and their understanding of our business needs."

We look forward to working with you throughout next year on the challenge of finding the right fit for your business; whatever the location !!

Therese Liddle, Managing Director



Strength in depth across the public and private sectors



THE NRG GROUP'S OWN CONTINUING SUCCESS STORY WAS CONFIRMED AT OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN NEWCASTLE ON 15 OCTOBER, WHEN OUR CHAIRMAN HAMISH LESLIE MELVILLE SAID: 'WE ARE MAKING STRONG PROGRESS IN PERMANENT RECRUITMENT FOR BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS, WHILST INCOME FROM TEMPORARY PLACEMENTS HAS REMAINED FIRM OVERALL, AND SHOWN AN IMPROVING TREND IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS. WE ARE SEEING SIGNS OF IMPROVING DEMAND IN OUR MAJOR MARKETS, AND WE HAVE AN ENCOURAGING FORWARD PIPELINE OF NEW BUSINESS PROSPECTS. I THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE WELL PLACED TO ACHIEVE A YEAR OF SOLID PROGRESS, IN LINE WITH OUR TARGETS, AND TO CONTINUE OUR SUCCESSFUL DEVELOPMENT AS A REGIONALLY BASED RECRUITMENT BUSINESS WITH NATIONAL CAPABILITIES.'

This followed a strong improvement in performance during the Group's financial year to June 2003, when our permanent fee income grew by 20% and temporary revenues by 4.5%. Group Chief Executive Lorna Moran said, 'The most pleasing thing about our improved performance was that it was so broadly based. We made strong progress in the public sector, which grew to account for more than 30% of our income, but we also did well in senior recruitment for the private sector, and in permanent placements in traditional areas like manufacturing and engineering.'

'In all areas we are benefiting from the clear strategy and the investment we have put in place over the last few years. Investment not just in new senior teams to spearhead our growth in areas like the public and not-for-profit, finance and commercial sectors, but also in premises and technology. Our unique NRG Connect response handling unit in Newcastle has given us a real competitive edge, and the capability to handle national assignments while retaining all the advantages of being regionally based.'

'Our new offices in Newcastle have also given us interview and assessment facilities that are second to none, as well as a shop window for our growing NRG City, business specialising in professional support staff.'

'With the addition of a London base to strengthen our abilities to handle the most senior recruitment assignments, NRG is well positioned for further success in an improving market place.'

FINDING RDA Leaders



Richard Ellis, EEDA



Margaret Fay, One North East



Terry Hodgkinson, Yorkshire Forward

EARLIER THIS YEAR NRG WAS APPOINTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY TO CONDUCT THE SELECTION PROCESS FOR NEW CHAIRS FOR THREE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES - ONE NORTH EAST, YORKSHIRE FORWARD AND EEDA, SERVING THE EAST OF ENGLAND. THIS WAS THE RESULT OF NRG'S FIRST SUCCESSFUL TENDER FOR GOVERNMENT BUSINESS FOLLOWING THE AWARD OF APPROVED SUPPLIER STATUS FOR EXECUTIVE RECRUITMENT BY THE CABINET OFFICE.

NRG Chief Executive Lorna Moran said, 'We were delighted to win this business, in a competitive pitch, particularly because it gave us the opportunity to help recruit new chairs for the RDAs in regions where we have significant business interests and a real commitment to the success of the local economies. These appointments which require ministerial approval, follow strict rules and processes including working with independent assessors. We were all delighted with the final outcome, which saw the DTI

appoint Margaret Fay to head One North East, Terry Hodgkinson at Yorkshire Forward and Richard Ellis at EEDA - and also that the positive publicity surrounding these appointments helped to raise public awareness of these important organisations. This success provides us with a strong platform to seek further executive assignments in the public sector, where we enjoy a unique position as the only organisation with headquarters in the north of England to enjoy approved supplier status.'

MAJOR PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIP GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

Volume recruitment of both permanent and fixed term appointments has continued for a Central Government Department throughout 2003.

The appointments of some 4000+ staff at locations throughout the UK has been made possible with the technology and resource capability of NRG's Response Handling Centre - NRG Connect.

Successful exercises have ranged from resourcing Executive Officers and Assistants for 19 boroughs in Central London to resourcing Team Managers and Customer Service Agents in Sunderland.

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PICKING SUNNISIDE UP

URBAN REGENERATION IS JUST ONE OF THE CHALLENGING AREAS TACKLED BY NRG'S GROWING PUBLIC SECTOR BUSINESS, WHO WERE COMMISSIONED TO FIND A NEW DIRECTOR FOR THE SUNNISIDE PARTNERSHIP IN SUNDERLAND. FORMED BY PARTNERS SUNDERLAND ARC (AREA REGENERATION COMPANY), CITY OF SUNDERLAND COUNCIL AND ONE NORTH EAST, THE SUNNISIDE PARTNERSHIP IS DESIGNED TO REVIVE A HISTORIC AREA TO THE EAST OF SUNDERLAND CITY CENTRE, TO PROVIDE A DYNAMIC MIX OF OFFICES, SPECIALIST SHOPS, WORKSHOPS, GALLERIES, RESTAURANTS, BARS AND RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION.

Mike Dixon, Director of NRG Public Sector, said: *'This was a demanding and fascinating brief to find someone capable of really revitalising Sunnyside and providing a focus for development of a regeneration master-plan. We needed someone with a proven track record of delivering complex development projects, wide-ranging property experience and the ability to work with a variety of stakeholders from the public and private sectors.'*

Tom Macartney, Chief Executive of Sunderland ARC, was delighted with the success of the recruitment process, which has resulted in the appointment of Ian Wardle, formerly with George Wimpey, as Director of the Partnership. He said, *'Ian has all the qualities we need to make Sunnyside the Grainger Town of Sunderland, and to attract major investment to make this a really attractive and exciting business, entertainment and residential area.'*

Supporting the business voice of the North East

AS A NEWCASTLE-BASED QUOTED COMPANY, NRG GROUP HAS ALWAYS HAD A REAL COMMITMENT TO THE BUSINESSES AND PEOPLE OF THE NORTH EAST AND TO THEIR REPRESENTATIVE INSTITUTIONS. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE IS THE NORTH EAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (NECC) - THE LARGEST CHAMBER IN THE UK. OVER THE LAST YEAR NRG HAS BEEN DELIGHTED TO HELP THE CHAMBER UNDERGO SIGNIFICANT CHANGES BY FACILITATING A NUMBER OF KEY APPOINTMENTS, NOT LEAST THEIR NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE, GEORGE COWCHER AND MORE RECENTLY ANDREW SUGDEN, THE NEWLY APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND REPRESENTATION.



Maggie Pavlou, NRG Director, has been actively involved with the Chamber for many years, as a member of its Council and Chair of its Education, Training and Development committee. This year she was appointed Vice-President of the Chamber and will ultimately become the President in 2005 when she will become the first woman ever to hold this role.

Maggie commented: *'I believe that the NECC has a crucial role to play in maximising the*

opportunities for business within the region. There are some remarkable people and organisations within the NECC - it is a very effective and truly representative organisation with a very clear regional perspective. Whilst this was by no means the driver behind my interest, I am of course, delighted to be able to continue NRG's long tradition of firsts for North East women!'



INVESTING IN Scotland's future

SINCE JOINING NRG SCOTLAND AS DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS IN DECEMBER 2002, LYNNE STOCKEY HAS LED A MAJOR PROGRAMME TO REBUILD AND REFOCUS BUSINESS THERE, SUBSTANTIALLY STRENGTHENING THE NRG TEAM TO SUPPORT CURRENT AND PLANNED GROWTH.

Senior appointments in the last few months include Fraser Currie to head sales and marketing, Andy Underwood and Jon Hayward to strengthen the growing NRG City brand, and Brian Searle to provide specialist consultancy in the technical and engineering sector. The development of the business will be further assisted by the relocation of NRG's Glasgow base to new premises later this year.

Lynne reports: *'Our new offices in West Regent Street enjoy a prime position at the heart of the city's main business district, making them readily accessible for clients and candidates alike. They also provide a superb, high profile platform for our successful NRG City operations. Our new, modern facilities will include a dedicated response management unit, permitting us to handle high volume recruitment campaigns and giving us a real point of difference from other operators in the Scottish market.'*

The public sector business in Scotland, headed by Alan Walter, has shown strong growth this year, making a number of high-profile appointments for clients including the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh, Napier University and the University of St Andrew's, which tasked NRG with filling the newly revived, historic post of Quaestor and Factor - the head of the University's finance and estates functions.

Other growth areas in Scotland have included call and contact centres, where we have placed

250 staff in temporary and permanent positions in the last six months. In the same period, we also recruited high numbers of IT support staff for one of Europe's largest helpdesk suppliers.

Traditional industrial sectors have been resilient too, with NRG successfully meeting demand for 200 temporary staff within two weeks this summer, for one of Scotland's largest manufacturing services companies, based in Greenock.

Lynne Stockey is pleased by the evidence of economic buoyancy all around her. *'With so much gloom and doom about the export of jobs, particularly in areas like manufacturing and call centres, it is great to have hard evidence of continued growth. We are winning new clients across all sectors,*



and building up a new team of first class consultants to support them - with at least another 20 people expected to join our business by the end of the year. The Group's willingness to invest in people, facilities and technology underlines our real commitment to Scotland and our belief in the future potential of the country.'



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Assessment centres for the public sector benefit clients and candidates

IN LINE WITH NRG'S CONSTANT COMMITMENT TO INNOVATION AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT, WE HAVE RECENTLY DEVELOPED A NEW COMPETENCE AND CRITERIA-BASED SELECTION APPROACH SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED FOR PUBLIC AND NOT-FOR-PROFIT CLIENTS. THIS CAN REPLACE OR COMPLEMENT THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH IN THIS SECTOR, WHICH IS TO MAKE SELECTIONS ON THE STRENGTH OF INTERVIEWS BY PANELS. NRG CLIENTS WHO HAVE MADE USE OF THIS UNIQUE ASSESSMENT CENTRE SYSTEM INCLUDE THE UNIVERSITIES OF DURHAM AND NEWCASTLE, THE ROYAL ARMOURIES IN LEEDS, BALTIC ARTS CENTRE AND THE NORTH EAST CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

Maggie Pavlou of NRG explained: 'Assessment centres offer a much more in-depth approach to the evaluation of suitability of a candidate than can be achieved by traditional interviews or even through psychometric testing. This not only helps to ensure that our clients select the right person, but also

allows candidates more time to explore whether the position is right for them should they be offered it.

By getting it right from both perspectives, we hope to ensure not only immediate satisfaction for the employer and employee alike, but also longevity of the appointment.'

"The approach taken is thorough and very professional, geared to getting as full a picture as possible of the leading candidates. In fact, their assessment centre approach works so well, you wonder why you aren't running all your recruitment along similar lines."

Jack Boyd, University of Durham.

'Our approach is tailored to the requirements of each client and ranges from a 24 hr fully facilitated experience to a half day focused approach, with all exercises and activities designed to provide a thorough assessment of each candidate's abilities and competencies. An assessment centre evidences not only if a candidate can do the job but sometimes more importantly how they would be in the post.'

'My own professional background in Human Resources - including working as the HR director of a major North East plc before joining NRG - has given me a very practical and operational perspective on recruitment in general and specifically executive search and assessment centre design which we believe enables us to offer a service unmatched by our competitors.'

NRG Group awarded S-CAT Service Provider status

AS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DRIVE FOR EFFICIENCY AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR, THE TREASURY'S OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT COMMERCE, THROUGH ITS EXECUTIVE AGENCY OGC BUYING SOLUTIONS, HAS ESTABLISHED CATALOGUE BASED PROCUREMENT FACILITIES AVAILABLE NOT JUST TO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUT TO THE WHOLE OF THE WIDER PUBLIC SECTOR.

S-CAT, the services arm of this service, provides public sector organisations with a simplified means of procuring and contracting for a wide range of business and professional services. This year new categories were incorporated, including Human Resource Services, and NRG Group underwent an exacting multi-stage tender process to achieve service provider status in Recruitment for an initial four-year period in June 2003.

Organisations who can use S-CAT include Government departments, Executive Agencies, Local Authorities, NHS bodies, educational establishments, police forces and utilities - both public and privatised.

Using S-CAT gives them much speedier access to services while at the same time ensuring best value and full compliance with EU procurement regulations.

NRG Business Development Manager Margaret Anderson said: '**S-CAT supplier status is a real badge of quality and allows us to market NRG Group with even greater confidence across the whole of the public sector. It enables us to provide even speedier and more efficient recruitment solutions, and will provide an excellent platform for the development of our public sector business in the years ahead.**'

HELPING THE OFFICERS CLUB BUILD ON SUCCESS

THE OFFICERS CLUB IS A REAL HOMETOWN SUCCESS STORY FROM THE NORTH EAST. STARTING ONLY IN 1992, IT HAS ALREADY FIRMLY ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS THE UK'S LEADING NATIONWIDE VALUE MENSWEAR RETAILER, WITH 190 STORES AND MORE THAN 2,000 EMPLOYEES, AND AMBITIOUS PLANS FOR FUTURE GROWTH.

To handle peak demand over the 2003 Christmas season, and support its plans for 2004, The Officers Club recently commissioned NRG to help recruit 300 additional temporary staff for their central warehouse and distribution centre at Cramlington, Northumberland. This is the latest stage in a long-standing relationship between The Officers Club and NRG.

Chris Olsen, (who heads NRG's Newcastle-based flexible resourcing team), said: '*Our ability to supply quality support staff to meet the peak needs of major retailers and manufacturers in the region is second to none, and we are delighted to have been able to handle this major assignment for The Officers Club successfully. Their rapid growth and the very positive culture they have created by investing in their people make Cramlington a very upbeat and enjoyable place to work - with good prospects for permanent employment.*'

Ian Hoy, Operations Manager at The Officers Club, added: '*NRG really understand the needs of growing companies - probably because they are one themselves. In a fast-moving industry like ours, it is vital to have support from partners like NRG who are able to react quickly and professionally to our needs.*'

EXPANDING PRESENCE in East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire

OVER THE LAST 15 MONTHS NRG GROUP'S YORK OFFICE HAS RECRUITED WELL OVER 100 TEMPORARY CLERICAL STAFF FOR THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES OF THE FORMER HUMBERSIDE COUNTY - EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL.

Cleonagh Murphy of NRG's York office explained: 'We were initially awarded a contract in June 2002 by East Riding, who were so impressed by our service that we were invited to re-tender in June 2003 for an extended contract including North Lincolnshire.'

'We have supplied a wide range of temporary staff for administrative and clerical positions, including secretaries, cashiers, receptionists and customer service advisers. Initial requirements may range from a few days sickness cover to several months while the right permanent candidate is identified - and a significant proportion of our temporary staff have

NRG Group
has been awarded preferred supplier status for Sheffield City Council, to supply temporary clerical administration staff.

gone on to be offered permanent appointments. We are particularly proud to be able to achieve 100% delivery, within seven hours, right across the region - including centres such as Hull, Beverley,

Scunthorpe and Barton where we do not have local offices. This underlines our ability to source, interview and recruit throughout the North, not just within the immediate footprint of our regional bases.'

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SUCCESS in manufacturing

THERE IS A VIEW THAT MANUFACTURING IN THE UK IS IN DECLINE. LEE RANKIN OF NRG'S ENGINEERING & MANUFACTURING DIVISION IS HAPPY TO REPORT THAT CLIENTS IN THE NORTH EAST ARE BUCKING THAT TREND. THE GROUP HAS RECENTLY BEEN INVOLVED IN A MAJOR RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN FOR PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL FOR ITS CLIENT - ASSEMBLY PACKAGING SERVICES (APS) AS THEIR BUSINESS EXPERIENCES HEALTHY GROWTH.

APS, a new client for NRG, was impressed by the fact that NRG could add value through its tailor made consultancy services when seeking a number of manufacturing professionals. Formed nearly 20 years ago to meet a growing demand for a flexible and efficient contract packing service, APS

works for a number of global manufacturers including Procter & Gamble. Operating on the principle that it "packs its clients reputations" and as such quality control and good manufacturing practices are vital elements of the business.

Paul Reveley from ASSEMBLY PACKAGING SERVICES said,

"A major reason for choosing NRG as our 'agency provider' was down to the fact that they were quick to understand our requirements. This was further enhanced by the quality of applicants they put in front of us.

Communication between all parties [APS, NRG and applicants] was managed exceptionally well, and the whole process of recruitment was handled in a very professional manner."

The ultimate test is:

"How good are the people we employed? We are pleased to report that all the new recruits have settled down well and are already contributing to the growth of our business. For APS we found working with NRG an efficient and cost effective solution to our recruitment needs, and continue to see them as a crucial partner in our future development."

NRG's Engineering & Manufacturing division adopted a full range of recruitment methodologies to fulfil the contracts.

The NRG team has expanded into technical temporary placements and is confident that the division will continue to prosper, while clients like APS continue with ambitious growth plans.

NRG Group fields a team in Kielder Challenge

THIS YEAR, FOR THE FIRST TIME, NRG GROUP ENTERED THE LEGENDARY KIELDER CHALLENGE - ONE OF THE UK'S TOP TEAM-BUILDING EVENTS, PITTING AROUND 120 COMPANIES AGAINST EACH OTHER IN TWO DAYS OF TOUGH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL CHALLENGES. NRG GROUP FIELDDED A TEAM OF MANAGERS FROM VARIOUS BUSINESS DIVISIONS, HEADED BY MANAGING DIRECTOR THERESE LIDDLE.



From left - right: FRONT - Sandie Dixon, Therese Liddle, Paul Baron.
BACK - Michelle Brown, Lee Rankin, Kathy Buckler.

We entered the event determined to enjoy it but without fully realising what it entailed and just how competitive the event is.

When nightfall came and we still had the challenge of building a "bivi" otherwise known as luxurious ensuite sleeping quarters for 6 people - we saw that experienced "challengers" had the foresight to come prepared with axes and saws - while we attempted to amass tree foliage using a penknife!!

'I am proud to report that we did not come last - though we were pretty close. The event was definitely worthwhile for team building; I would advocate NRG entering a team next year but we're drawing straws as to who leads that team....' said Therese.

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