# **Case Study - Bethell**

## Profile

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| Company Name: | Bethell Construction Ltd |
| Business Sector: | Construction |
| Postal Address: | Bethell Head Office Europa House, Europa Park, Stoneclough Road, Kearsley, UK phone: +44 (0)1204 439100 email: solutions@bethell.co.uk [www.bethell.co.uk](http://www.bethell.co.uk/) |
| Postcode: | M26 1GE |
| Fleet Size Overall: | c. 80 |
| LGV: (Up to 32 tonne) | c. 7 |
| Light Comms: | c. 40 |
| Company Cars: | c. 30 |
| Private vehicles used for business purposes: | c. 19 |

## Company Overview

**Bethell** is one of the UK’s leading, independent construction companies. The team has earned a formidable reputation for delivering cost-effective, quality, experienced solutions to even the most complex of site challenges. **Bethell** is passionate about providing an unrivalled service to its client base of public bodies and private sector customers. Its site presentation, technical, equipment, quality and safety standards are consistently high priorities across the business.

**Bethell**provides high quality, value-added solutions drawing on a wealth of experience and a successful track record of project delivery. The company’s vision is to develop a business ethic of working together with clients to enhance our proficiency at “delivering what is promised”. **Bethell** strives to:

* Recognise that Health and Safety is of paramount importance.
* Deliver projects in an efficient and professional manner.
* Work harmoniously, fairly and with a joint aspiration to achieve continuity of business.
* Promote a culture of teamwork while still recognising and valuing individual skills.
* Achieve continuous improvement collectively.

Partnering is an essential part of the **Bethell** project management process which starts with a common strategy and vision and continues through shared objectives and shared resources. It thrives on a collective desire to produce a new or improved way of working and produces the best balance of time, cost, quality and performance. Together with its clients **Bethell**can ensure:

* Earlier co-ordination of design/construction proposals.
* Predictable workload and project cost.
* Reduction in duplicated resource.
* Economies of scale.
* Shared training of personnel.
* Building relationships.
* More opportunities for fresh ideas and innovation.
* Certainty of delivery, cost and quality.
* Reduced lead-in period.
* A team approach with common objectives.
* Continual improvements.

## Nature of Operation and Driving Activities

Picture 1 – **Bethell**Employees on site

At **Bethell**, its people are considered, without doubt, to be its greatest strength and also its keenest competitive advantage. The **Bethell** business models, processes, technology and plant – they can all be copied in time by competitors – not so with its people. **Bethell’s** people, as individuals, bring the intellectual capacity and skills base needed for the business to excel. They also bring the passion for what they do, the relationships that cannot be duplicated and the years of experience that make that all important difference.

For **Bethell** its people demonstrate how the commitment to a common vision can achieve the most ambitious of goals. That is why **Bethell** has always placed huge importance on employing, wherever possible, a direct workforce of people who stand out from the crowd. **Bethell** is immensely proud of its people and of the unique contribution each and every one of them makes to the ongoing success of the business.

”It is a measure of character and aptitude within a business when it recognises the potential impact of failures in health and safety before they occur. It can then strive and continually improve upon its position, working from the foundations up to be a stronger, more focused and safer business.***Bethell***has always been a business that achieves. Its investment and support in the area of Health and Safety is phenomenal. That is why we will always have a strong health and safety culture and we will always seek to find “solutions based on experience” from within and from benchmarking others”.

Ian Madden, Health, Safety, Quality and Environment Director, Bethell

Picture 2 – **Bethell** Vans project the Company’s Ethos (Upgraded to modern efficient vehicles reducing fuel consumption and emissions to the atmosphere)

The importance of good health and safety is evident to anyone who has seen the consequences of health and safety failure.**Bethell**has an experienced and highly qualified **Health, Safety, Quality & Environment (HSQE) Department** dedicated to improving all of these four areas within the business.

**Bethell** has a good safety record which is subject to continuous improvement. A fully integrated ‘safety first’ culture at all levels within the company is in place. Regular HSQE meetings are attended by all employees and sub-contractors and highlight areas requiring additional focus. It is **Bethell’s** policy to place Health & Safety as the first item on the agenda at internal meetings. In addition, Health & Safety is a topic for weekly conference calls, thereby ensuring that it is treated with the priority it deserves.

**Bethell** operates a fleet of about 80 vehicles, which contains task specific equipment as well as the vehicles to move its personnel about their operations. The activities which involve the **Bethell** fleet are therefore, by their nature, complex and demanding. **Bethell** ensures that all its activities are conducted in accordance with all agreed legislation.


Picture 3 – A **Bethell**vehicle highlighting the range of task equipment

Although **Bethell** rent or lease the majority of vehicles within the fleet, the responsibility of ensuring the safe operation of the fleet and adherence to legislation remains solely with **Bethell**.

## Organisational Structure

**Bethell Construction** **Limited** which conducts its activities under the policy and procedures established, laid down and monitored by a central shared services and H.S.Q.E. department.

The outline organisation of the trading company is given in the Diagram below:



## Work related Road Safety Policy and Procedures

### Policy and Procedures

**Bethell** has clear policy and procedures for the use of its vehicles. These set out and identify all necessary responsibilities and procedures relating to drivers and their Line Management, to ensure that **Bethell** complies with its Operator’s Licence (‘O’ Licence) conditions. Management is responsible for the implementation of policy and procedures and for dealing with matters, which might result in breach of them. Management is also responsible for ensuring that all staff, contractors and agency personnel, associated with **Bethell** are also made fully aware of policy and procedures. It is a matter of company policy that all light commercial vehicles which have had additional equipment fitted are treated as vehicles operating under the stricter ‘O’ Licence regulations.

**Bethell**’s Transport Department is responsible for carrying out random Internal Inspection Audits on any Commercial Vehicle over 3500kg (3.5 tonnes), to ensure all **Bethell** operations remain compliant with their ‘O’ Licence requirements. Any changes to this procedure or issue of authorised changes will be made by the HSQE Compliance Manager, in conjunction with the responsible **Bethell** reviewing manager, in accordance with the Management of Controlled HSQE Documentation procedure.

**Bethell** lays down clear policy and procedure for:

* Daily Checks.
* Defect Reporting.
* The procedures to be followed to document Daily Inspections and Defect Reporting.
* The conduct and documentation of mandatory safety inspections.
* Vehicle Loading and Load Security.
* Driver’s Hours including the use of Tachographs and Record Books.

It is **Bethell** policy that o**perational needs must NEVER override safety considerations**. **Bethell** insists that safety inspections are carried out on a six weekly basis or prior to the 42nd day after the previous inspection date. After each safety inspection has been completed, the service / inspection sheet must be forwarded to the Transport Department at **Bethell** Head Office in Kearsley, Greater Manchester for checking and filing. A copy must also be kept in the location vehicle file. All safety inspection and repair records must be filed and stored for a minimum of 15 months as part of the vehicle’s maintenance history.

### Mobile Phone Policy

**Bethell**policy complies with the Law. It prohibits the use of hand-held mobile phones while driving. Where professionally fitted hands-free kits are available, it encourages its drivers to plan journeys so thatthey include rest stops where messages can be checked and calls returned. It cautions against the use of hands-free kits while driving.

### Driver Profiling

Minimising road risk is a key objective for **Bethell**. It is its policy regularly to attempt to identify safety concerns and gaps whose resolution might have a significant impact on safety. **Bethell** is therefore keen to improve Driver Standards and Driver Behaviour in order to reduce avoidable vehicle accidents. It achieves this through a process of Driver Profiling and remedial Driver Training. The **Bethell** ethos is that it expects its employees to drive within the law, safely and responsibly and that it provides appropriate assistance and training to enable its employees to play their part.

Operational management within **Bethell** is responsible for ensuring that all drivers are put through the Driver Profiling process and complete the remedial training identified. **Bethell** uses the “Driver Profiler” on line risk assessment tool which provides its drivers with low, medium and high risk assessments of 8 different traits (aggression; alertness; stress; dislike of driving; anticipation; attention; violation and error). These assessments allow individuals to receive the appropriate level of training. The “Driver Profiler” also provides a debrief to the participating driver with advice and tips on how to improve their profile.

**High Risk Drivers**are the priority group for “Driver Development Training”. The course for this group is tailored to individual needs and is focussed on maximising safety margins and minimising risk. A classroom course is followed by an intensive in-vehicle training session with an instructor. This category of driver is re-profiled every 12 months. **Medium Risk Drivers** attend a “Driver Theory Workshop” which covers topics most pertinent to this group focussing particularly on the reality of occupational road risk. This category of driver is re-profiled every 18 months. **Low Risk Drivers**receive encouragement to continue their performance. This category of driver is re-profiled every 24 months.

In addition, if a driver is involved in an accident or if checks on driver licences establish that a driver has incurred points, Line Managers are required to re-profile the driver or to review the need to raise his/her risk status. The purpose of this process is to decide whether the individual should be allowed to continue driving for the company. Any driver who refuses to undertake the profile assessment is prohibited from driving on business for the company.

## Work related Road Safety Guidance for drivers

### Driver’s Handbook

Every employee is issued a personal copy of the **Bethell** Vehicle, Car Allowance and Private Vehicle Usage Policy and Scheme Rules. This copy is, in fact, also a very comprehensive Driver’s Handbook. The **Bethell** Chief Executive requires that all employees sign an Acknowledgment Receipt for their copy and that they confirm that they have been briefed on its contents, understand the requirements and agree to comply with them. It is **Bethell** policy that compliance with the Driver’s Handbook is not negotiable.

The Driver’s Handbook covers all eventualities likely to face the company driver. Responsibilities are clearly defined. There are clear policy statements and procedures for:

* Company Cars;
* Alternative Car Allowance Policy where a private vehicle is provided;
* Business Needs Vehicles;
* The Use of Private Vehicles for Occasional Business Uses where the owner does not receive a Car Allowance.
* Company Vehicle Allocation.
* The Use of Company Vehicles.
* Corporate Livery.
* Trackers to allow fuel consumption to be measured and to monitor driver hours;
* Towing and Modifications;
* Dangers of Overloading;
* Taking a Company Vehicle Abroad;
* Negligence involving a Company Vehicle.
* Security;
* Breakdown and Roadside Assistance.
* Accident Procedures;
* Fuel;
* Producing Documentation to the Police and the Reporting of Motoring Offences and Fines.
* Insurance;
* Maintenance Checks, Servicing and Cleanliness;
* A Check List of “Dos” and “Don’ts”.

### Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each Driver (and their Line Manager) to ensure compliance with:

* Daily Vehicle Checks.
* Defect Reporting.
* Mandatory Safety Inspections.
* Drivers Hours and Regulations.
* Drivers Hours, Tachographs and Record Book of Drivers Hours.
* Driving Licences and Convictions (in co-operation with the Insurance Department).
* Roadside Checks and VOSA Inspections.
* Vehicle Overloading and Load Security.
* Internal Register of ‘O’ Licence Documentation and Vehicle Margins.
* Defect Report.
* Record Book for Driver’s Hours.
* Internal ‘O’ Licence Compliance Control Audit.
* Vehicle Insurance Details (in co-operation with the Insurance Department).

## Specific examples of procedures

### Driver Licence Checks

**Bethell** has a clear policy on Driver Licence Checks. It operates 3 complementary systems:

* A visual check of the Counterpart Driving Licence.
* A check with the DVLA.
* The implementation of a delegated authority from AXA to check licences twice a year. This process is now linked to system called “Driver Check”. Employees provide **Bethell** with a mandate to allow their licences to be checked on a quarterly basis. As a result of this, **Bethell**can be pro-active in managing issues such as the accumulation of points on the licence and the loss of a licence.

Drivers are required to be the holder of a driving licence and a driver digital “smart card” for the class of vehicle which they drive. They are required to present the documents showing this entitlement to the H.S.Q.E. (Health Safety Quality and Environment) Department and their Line Manager at any time upon request. Their employment as a driver depends upon having and maintaining the entitlement to drive the class of vehicle they are employed to drive. They are forbidden to drive any vehicle that they are not entitled to drive.

In the event of their being convicted of any offence which results in any penalty points being endorsed upon their licence, whether or not the offence is committed in a private vehicle, they are required to notify the Insurance Department and their Line Manager of that conviction immediately.

An employee who is required to drive any vehicle on company business must have prior authorisation. Authorisation to drive on company business may only be granted to an employee once they have presented their driving licence to the Insurance Department and have completed the internal Driver Check Mandate and signed the Company Vehicle Policy. The Insurance Department will ensure the relevant licence is valid, including the categories of vehicles which are authorised to be driven. If a remote location is involved, the Line Manager of the driver (or other appropriate person) must copy or scan the licence and forward this to the Insurance Department at **Bethell** Head Office for authorisation.

Bethell will ensure that all drivers’ licences are checked every 6 months (as a minimum) and, in addition, on a rolling basis throughout the year. Bethell will hold and maintain a central register of all authorised drivers showing categories and driver entitlement as well as also listing relevant endorsed offences. Should an unauthorised person attempt to drive a company vehicle, this would be treated as gross misconduct and would result in appropriate disciplinary action.

## Auditing and review

All management processes at **Bethell** are arranged to ensure a rolling audit of all systems managing the safety of employees including work-related road safety.

**Bethell** has also recently launched a new insurance management software. This system, which represents a further significant investment in active risk management, gives **Bethell** much improved control over the whole claims management process and allows **Bethell**proactively to manage its risk position by monitoring trends and providing a wide range of flexible and timely reports for the company’s management.

“We are convinced that this will enable the company to identify areas of higher risk both in terms of capital losses as well as personal and public liabilities and so drive down the number and value of these claims across the***Bethell***companies.”

## Performance measures

See “Pain and Gain” process described below.

## Accident reduction

**Bethell** strives to control its ‘risk’ robustly. The management information systems (the Claimcontol and Drivercheck systems) which it has in place, complement the **Bethell** ethos which is to be mindful of its duty of care at all times.

**Bethell’s** view is that claim statistics are not a helpful device for measuring their commitment to safety as, in reality, they have a fleet which varies in size and number, year in and year out, depending on the tempo of their contract work. As a result, the risk element; type and number of accidents vary accordingly.

## Financial and other benefits

The Insurance Department regularly reviews all areas of the business in which insurance costs affect the bottom line. It identified one area in the business which was causing a major loss to **Bethell**. This was the issue of non-insured vehicle damage. In 2003 the **Bethell** looked at how it could control the flow of cash away from the business. It developed the “**Pain and Gain**” process”. The **Bethell**Financial Director now sets a percentage against each of the **Bethell** operations whereby if they exceed set limits, a “Pain and Gain” process kicks in. For instance, if a **Bethell** operation has an accident whose total costs are estimated to be about £5000, the **Bethell** Head Office takes double this amount from the individual operation's budget to cover these costs. This affects bonuses for those in the operation. Once the final costs are identified, any overcharging will be paid back but the result will have been that all bonuses within the operation are affected. Although this is an effective “carrot and stick” process, the **Bethell** ethos is focussed more on encouraging employees to maintain the highest standards of safety as part of their culture.

A company slogan is "**Remember – Safety is everyone’s responsibility"**.

## Lessons learned

**Bethell** has an ethos of managing solutions and identifying lessons from the problems it has tackled. It identified that its road risk came from its light commercial and other vehicle fleet and not its main task-specific heavy equipment fleet. In the past it had used RoSPA training assets as required, to deal with specific types of accidents and equipment damage. It continues to do so.

However, **Bethell** decided that competence was not necessarily the key factor driving up its road risk. **Bethell** identified driver behaviour and its processes for dealing with individuals with poor behavioural attitudes as a key area for corporate activity. As a result of this decision, **Bethell** now puts its drivers through RoSPA’s “Driver Profiler” psychometric tests to identify their risk potential. Its view is that the **Bethell** safety culture is enhanced if drivers undergo the “Driver Profiler” process.

## Current and future developments

### Grey Fleet Initiative

**Bethell** has clear policy and procedures to cover those employees who take an allowance in lieu of company vehicles. However, it now checks these vehicles more thoroughly against its own standards, particularly in regards to updating insurance details and other statutory requirements such as MOT. This is handled as part of the “DriverCheck”process which allows driving licences to be checked against DVLA records.

## Additional information

### Foreign Nationals

On occasions when there are skills shortages in the United Kingdom work force, **Bethell**has arranged for the appropriate skill sets to be brought in by employing foreign, non-European Union workers, from agency sources. The company has identified that these individuals are a potential risk to the company because United Kingdom law allows them to drive in the United Kingdom for up to 9 months with no need to take a United Kingdom driving test. **Bethell** is reviewing its procedures to ensure that this group of workers meet its standards and policy requirements. In the first instance, however, all prospective foreign drivers undergo driver training tests in order to confirm their ability to drive the company’s vehicles.

### References

* A – BG PRO 02 – Company Vehicle, Car Allowance and Private Vehicle Usage Policy and Scheme Rules (Issue 11 Dec 08).
* B – BG PRO 03 – Driver Profiling Policy and Procedures (Issue 20 Feb 09).
* C – BG PRO 05 – Commercial Vehicles over 3500kg (3.5 tonnes) Operating Procedure (Issue 06 Mar 09)