



FUELLING SUCCESS

STARTING OUT AS A ONE-VEHICLE SUB-CONTRACTOR, MARK THOMPSON NOW HAS A 185-STRONG FLEET – A FACT WHICH BEARS TESTIMONY TO THE WILL, DESIRE AND TEAMWORK BEHIND HIS ENDURING SUCCESS

“I left school in 1984 aged 16 and played a bit of rugby,” says Mark Thompson in the understated manner that we soon realise is typical of the man. It turns out Mark was a member of the redoubtable St Helens Rugby Football Club squad –

an experience which doubtless etched the value of teamwork and determination on his mind and provided the basis for a commercial philosophy which has served him well over the years.

Today, as Managing Director and Founder of

Mark Thompson Transport, a member of the Kinaxia Group of companies, Mark Thompson runs a fleet of 185 vehicles. To achieve that from a standing start is a remarkable achievement by any measure, so how did he do it? It's a

question initially met by more understatement (“Well, it just grew, really...”) but a bit more digging reveals the grit and ambition you'd expect from a former rugby league player:

“I started in transport in 1988 driving a 7.5-tonner as a subbie



for TNT," says Mark. "I could see there was plenty of opportunity for anyone willing to give it a go, and by the time I was 22 I was running five vehicles. It was all about delivering good service – I was prepared to do whatever it took to get the job done. Simple as that, really."

The next milestone for Mark came in September 2000 when he purchased his first tractor unit.

"I was night trunking for Target Express and that tractor unit helped establish us as a regional subcontractor for them. Within 18 months we had a fleet of four heavy trucks – the parcels business was growing quickly and I looked to capitalise on that growth."

The plan obviously succeeded as Mark Thompson Transport soon picked up Target Express's Scottish trunking contract.

"Since then, we've bought a truck every month," he says. "Today, we've got 157 heavy tractors, ten rigids and 18 vans on the fleet, plus 103 trailers of our own, although a lot of what we do is traction only."

To manage such a rise in a relatively short space of time, Mark is assisted by two key colleagues, Operations Director James Scott and Operations Manager Adrian Boardman and a team of 185 drivers. "Every member of our staff is a vital cog in the wheel

of the company," says Mark Thompson. "There's no way anyone could run an operation of this scale on their own; great teamwork is essential for us."

The first Scania truck to enter the fleet was a pre-owned unit purchased as a trial in 2012. "That was an R 400 sleeper cabbed four-wheel tractor unit," says Mark, "It was ideally suited to our work and started a new purchasing pattern for us. In September 2013, we took our first four new Scania's, all R 440 6x2/4 twinsteers with Highline cabs.

"We then took six more, V8 500 horsepower Toplines this time, and they were just brilliant. We're now on to new generation models and by the end of this year we'll have 50 Highline-cabbed S 500 6x2/2s in service.

"We've already got 32 on the fleet and they're doing well on fuel – averaging 10.5-11 miles per gallon each. Our drivers appreciate them for their smoothness, quietness and comfort and we like them for their build quality, reliability and that fuel performance, of course.

"The other thing for me is our dealer, Haydock Commercial Vehicles; they don't just sell us trucks, they're a service provider who focuses on delivering a high quality service which enables us to keep our fleet on the road – and that plays a key part in helping Mark Thompson Transport deliver first time, on time, every time."



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