



SAFE

KEEPING



WHEN THE STAFF OF **KEYHOLE SECURITY** IN **PORTSLADE** OFFERED TO WORK FOR FREE TO PREVENT THE BUSINESS CLOSING THEY CHANGED ITS FORTUNES AND TODAY THE COMPANY IS TURNING OVER A MILLION A YEAR. WE TALK TO CEO JASON MCCREANNEY ABOUT HOW THEY WENT FROM BUST TO BOOM

#### Sum up your business

We're one of the most dynamic security companies in the UK, in business since 1948. Our company mission statement is: "Your security is our peace of mind".

#### What's the most dramatic thing that's happened to you in business?

The firm got into financial difficulty in 2008. At the time the company was over exposed with five security outlets, all in high street locations across Sussex. With the strain on the public purse the basic turnover dropped to record lows and became unsustainable.

#### What happened then?

As one of the Directors of South Coast Locksmiths which used to trade as Keyhole Security, I was forced by the bank to close the business, and in doing so I had to make 25 people redundant including myself and my wife in October 2008.

As the person in charge at the time of closure I was greeted on the following Monday morning by 11 members of staff who told me that they were prepared to work for nothing.

#### What did you feel about this?

I was very humbled by this and became obsessed with building a new business model for them and all future employees of Keyhole Security, with the same ethos of true commitment where the staff all pull together for a share in the profits.

#### What lessons did you learn?

We had to reduce our fixed costs by working from our 7000 sq. ft head office in Vale Road, Portslade and letting the local shops go. We moved away from the domestic market place and concentrated all our efforts on our corporate and commercial customers. We also realised we had to manage cash flow better.

#### How have staff been rewarded for their loyalty?

During the last fantastic year the staff have received in excess of £10,000 as a 'thank you bonus'. In addition to this they all have a Satachi Trade Account which pays for meals out with the other Satachi local business members in Brighton and Hove.

#### The business has grown rapidly in the last year, why's this?

We have a wireless camera system from Australia which provides remote camera surveillance without the need for power. It can even be used for advance flood warnings and is the recommended device used by the Environment Agency across the Midlands and in North Wales. It's so small and, being wireless, lends itself to covert operations. We have also integrated our camera with DNA spray and 'activate track and trace' GPRS units to battle against serious crime. Security and crime prevention are what we aim to achieve for every customer and client.

#### What are your plans for the future?

We're preparing to roll out the success we have had thus far with the Environment Agency on a national basis. But our GPRS camera system and further integration with Vodafone, one of the UK's best known brands, is one of our major projects for the future.

We believe this will fund the re-investment of our core business of our complete range of security products and services which we offer across the South East to Housing Associations such as Hyde Martlet.

Naturally we hope not only to retain all the staff we have at present but to attract quality people. The best companies are built and maintained by great people who can work together. ☒

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