

Forster on a winning cycle



'We're probably ahead of the game, but it's our business to be' – Forster Board Director, Peter Gilheany.



Forster is an ethical marketing, design and PR company based in Southwark, and was recently named Britain's greenest business for 2009 by The Sunday Times. Here, Office Manager Joanna Foy talks about the Enterprise 'A New Way to Work' scheme – a free travel planning advice and support service for London businesses – and how it has helped Forster achieve its 'greenest business' status.

'We signed up to Enterprise as part of an ongoing commitment to reducing negative environmental impacts, and encouraging the use of sustainable transport,' explains Joanna.

An Enterprise travel advisor worked with Forster to gain an understanding of their business and employee travel requirements, in order to provide a tailor-made travel plan for the company.

An opportunity to reduce Forster's business travel costs and improve their green credentials was identified, through the introduction of pool bikes for travel to meetings. To support this initiative, Enterprise supplied match funding for the pool bicycles. The results have been immediate. 'These initiatives have caused quite a stir and have attracted lots of interest,' explains Joanna Foy, Office Manager for Forster, '25 per cent of staff have taken advantage of the bikes by cycling to meetings, and with cycle confidence training on offer during Bike Week, this looks set to increase.'

Forster's transport solution package from Enterprise also included cycle training and the provision of maps to discourage the use of cars to travel to work, and encourage staff to start cycling and walking instead. 'The training sessions were brilliant and exactly what I needed. I now use our pool bicycles all the time, and two of my colleagues are considering buying their own bicycles as a direct result of the cycle training experience!' says Joanna.



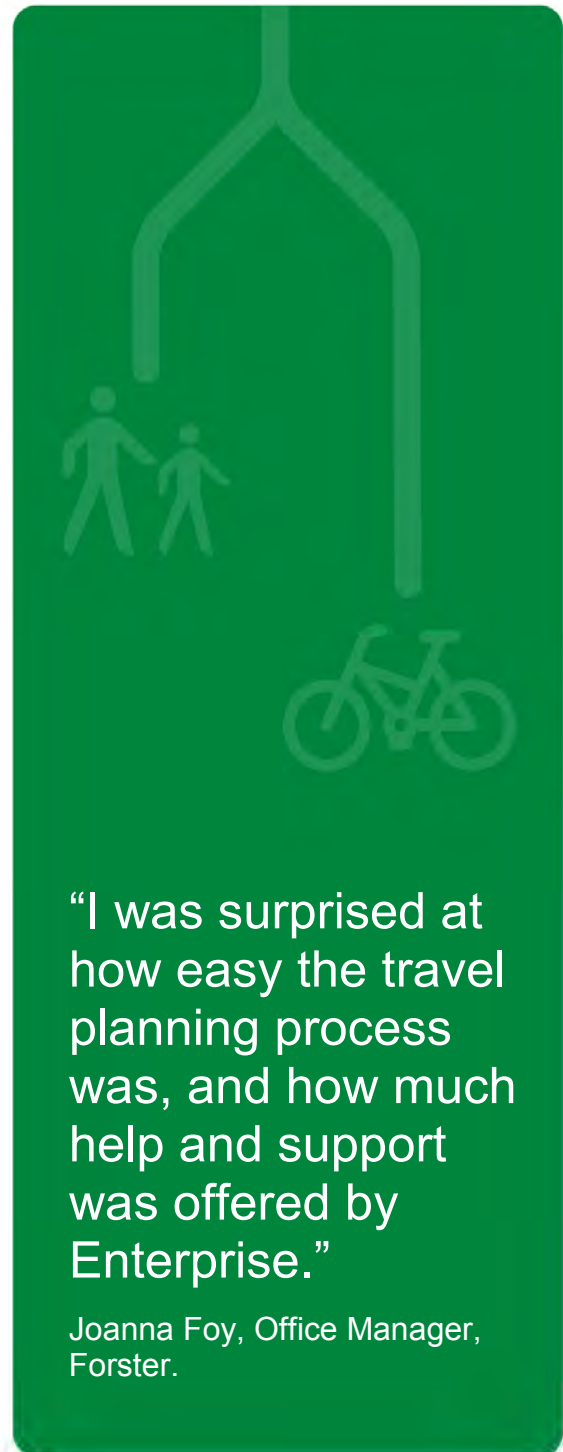
Forster has introduced other innovative measures to encourage travel behaviour change which have been a winner with their staff. Joanna explains: 'the company introduced a policy of giving staff five minutes extra holiday per walk or cycle commute, which can add up to 2.5 days over a year.'

In keeping with the ethos of making green travel behaviour fun, Forster maintains its employees' interest in the travel plan by participating in sustainable travel events. Joanna says: 'To encourage walking we took part in National Walk to Work Week through information provided by our Enterprise travel advisor. We held lunch time walks and offered prizes to those who clocked up the most miles during the week.'

The company is certainly 'walking the talk' when it comes to sustainable travel, with a 15% increase in the number of staff walking to work over the last year. As promoting positive change is Forster's raison d'être, Board Director Peter Gilheany is thrilled with how Enterprise has inspired Forster staff, including himself: 'The best way to involve people is to make it easy, fun and relevant. I love our pool bicycles, the sense of freedom they bring, their role as a conversation opener and the way they make me exercise without realising it!'

Joanna is also impressed with how Enterprise was delivered with minimal time and resources required: 'I was surprised at how easy the travel planning process was, and how much help and support was offered by Enterprise.' Chief Executive Jilly Forster agrees: 'Businesses assume it's going to cost a huge amount but it doesn't. It's a win/win situation.'

Enterprise has been a resounding success for Forster. 'The travel plan measures that we've implemented have been a key element in helping Forster achieve the Sunday Times Best Green Company award,' says Joanna.



"I was surprised at how easy the travel planning process was, and how much help and support was offered by Enterprise."

Joanna Foy, Office Manager,
Forster.

Where can I find out more?



Phone: **0870 094 9011**



Email:
enterprise@anewwaytowork.org



Click: **anewwaytowork.org**