

True Fulfilment

Nigel Spink and Paul Munro have both found fulfilment in a career change and are loving life as van drivers.

Nigel and Paul work for THE Pallet Network (TPN) as van drivers, delivering single pallet loads.

The pair decided on a career change after they took a van from the Midlands to Sunderland and back when Nigel was moving house. Before that, Nigel's career path was that of a professional football player, coach and manager, while Paul had run his own marketing agency. "We realised on that trip that we both loved van driving so we decided to go into business together," says Paul.

They started off contracting for TPN in 2011 and signed up as full-time employees in 2021, working out of its Minworth Hub. In their Luton box vans they are responsible for rectifying errors – essentially, delivering time-sensitive goods that were not loaded onto the right trailer at the depot. "If a pallet hasn't made the correct overnight truck for whatever reason, we run it to the customer to make sure the goods still arrive on time," says Paul.



A typical day involves logging in with TPN's operations department, which assigns them to a location. "It might be the Minworth hub or another depot," adds Paul.

Both men would heartily recommend their job to others – but with a few conditions. "I would 100% recommend it," says Nigel. "You have to really love driving, obviously, and I do – it's great to see the country. You also need to be good with people. I love this part of the job, too, as I meet loads of interesting customers. I've made some really good acquaintances over the years."

"It is the perfect job if you love driving," adds Paul. "About 90% of your time is spent behind the wheel and it remains without doubt my favourite part of the job. You also have to be a people person. Ultimately you are the last person in the chain from order to delivery, so it's important that you leave a good impression."

While driving for TPN can entail working outside of office hours during the week, Nigel says he still maintains a great work/life balance. "We normally only work Monday to Friday, so your weekends are your own and I make the most of mine. I play hockey and also enjoy rugby and cricket." For Paul, it has to be a reciprocal relationship. "TPN really looks after us because they know we put ourselves out for them. As an employee I couldn't ask for a better employer."

The most enjoyable element of the job for Nigel is its sheer variety. "The best thing about the job is not knowing who or what you are delivering," he says. "We could be delivering anywhere in the country from Glasgow to Cornwall. Sometimes we are also reassigned to other regional depots to help them, so it is really varied work."

Paul also loves this aspect of his job. "There is no such thing as a typical day," he says. "Part of the beauty of this job is I have no idea where I am going when I wake up in the morning."