

Career Progression

Andrew Loughlin-Smith says there are opportunities for career development at Palletline, a company with a culture of promoting from within.

Andrew Loughlin-Smith is Night Operations Manager at Palletline. He has been in the role for 14 months after achieving a promotion and has been with the company for 25 years.

“I started as a forklift driver and progressed through,” he says. “As an organisation we offer a lot of opportunities for career progression. I think all my section leaders started out on the forklifts the same as I did.

Palletline have backed me and in return I give them 100% commitment to my job.

They look after us in terms of salaries, as we are one of the best payers in the area.”



“I start a typical night shift by going through our operating system to get sight of what the night has in store for us and then planning accordingly,” he says. “The team arrives in stages, with some starting at 7pm, 8pm and 9pm.” Andrew is responsible for 60 forklift drivers and 72 people in total. “I am always the first one in as I like to make sure everything is running smoothly,” he adds. “By the time my section leaders clock in, they know I will have the operational plan sheet ready for them outlining their crew for that shift.”

While management brings its own challenges, Andrew says the key is being prepared. “It is easy to manage when everybody knows what they are doing. You also have to have the right mentality, which I think is being firm but fair with everyone. It’s also important to communicate properly and that means talking through the reasons behind why I’ve made certain decisions. The other side is listening and helping team members to ensure they can do their jobs, so the business meets its goals.”

There is an element of flexibility required from the team. “Our operation can be impacted by conditions outside of our control, such as road closures or adverse weather. On these occasions the team may be asked to work a little longer to get the job done, and equally, if we finish the night operation with time to spare, they can leave early – so it tends to even itself out.”

Andrew also finds job satisfaction in problem solving. “One of the things I enjoy the most is that every night shift is different, and every night shift is an opportunity to improve. Something might have gone wrong the night before but, in fixing it, we learn how to improve even more by tweaking our processes.”

He finds it no problem to switch back to daytime hours in order to make the most of his weekends. “I usually have my head on the pillow by 4am on Saturday morning and am back up at 9 or 10am, ready to get straight into the weekend.”