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Pay and Benefits
 Training and Development
 Career Development
 Working Conditions
 Company Culture



Facts and Figures

Total Staff: 400
Locations: Reading (HQ); eight other locations in the UK; seven overseas
Sector: Engineering and environmental consultancy
Annual Turnover: £43m in 2009

Biggest Plus

The opportunity to work on really interesting and variable projects that make a difference to society and the environment

Greatest Challenge

The current economic climate and the effect that has on clients being able to fulfil their aspirations

Summary

Peter Brett Associates LLP (PBA) is a multi-disciplinary consultancy, bringing engineering, planning and scientific skills and experience together to deliver sustainable development and infrastructure projects worldwide. PBA was established as a private partnership in 1965 in Reading, originally providing structural advice. In 2008 the consultancy converted to LLP (Limited Liability Partnership) status and it is now one of the UK's leading independent multi-disciplinary consultancy companies. The mission statement sums up PBA's ethos neatly: "To be personal, trusted advisors, creating value



PETER BRETT ASSOCIATES LLP

for our clients, opportunity for our staff, and deliverable, sustainable solutions worldwide." There are 36 members of the LLP.

About the Organisation

PBA has grown organically over the past 40 years and now has 400 staff spread across its UK offices in Reading (HQ), Ashford, Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, London, Northampton, Taunton, Warrington and West Malling, and seven international offices in the Czech Republic, Germany, Mauritius, Romania, Slovakia, South Africa and United Arab Emirates. PBA is now one of the largest independent consulting practices in the UK. The consultancy has developed a reputation for providing quality and innovation, working in close collaboration with its clients and associated professionals.

The business has managed to be profitable throughout the current global economic downturn. Turnover for the whole operation in 2009 was £43m.

PBA currently offers over 40 services covering water, environment, infrastructure, land development, and transport and buildings. "We adopt a client-focused approach to business, valuing long-term relationships," says Keith Mitchell, chairman elect. The organisation has

won many awards, with a typical example being PBA's involvement in the RIBA architectural award for the University of Oxford's biochemistry building phase 1 – PBA provided structural and engineering services, plus associated transport, acoustic, geotechnical, waste and environmental consultancy services.

The building was also shortlisted for the BCSA Steel Design Awards 2009 that promote excellence in the field of steel construction and design, focusing on efficiency, cost effectiveness, aesthetics and innovation.

In July 2009, PBA won the best raft competition in the annual WaterAid raft race on the River Thames. In WaterAid's 100 highest peaks' challenge, PBA's team climbed the highest peak on the Isle of Skye, raising money through sponsorships. Simultaneously, all 100 highest peaks in the UK were scaled by organisations to raise funds for WaterAid. Now, a PBA team is in training to tackle WaterAid's climb of Mount Kilimanjaro in 2010. It's true team working in action. And fun too. Indeed hard work coupled with having fun constitutes the company's ethos.

Company Culture

"Our employees are the key to the success of our business, because our clients buy their



enthusiasm and service as well as their technical expertise," says Richard Puttock, partner. "A happier and more satisfied workforce is good for the community where their skills are employed."

"We are passionate about our work. We apply new ideas and encourage everyone in the practice to be creative, develop their skills and challenge traditional thinking," says Felicity Griggs, head of HR. "We provide knowledge and expertise in our respective fields and leadership to our teams of engineers, environmental and transport planners, modellers and scientists. We adopt a personal approach that consistently results in satisfied clients, repeat business, recommendations and referrals."

At PBA individuality is important – it's an organisation where people are assets, where

they are able to express ideas and display critical thinking to solve clients' problems. "Adding value is key," says Puttock. Staff are not pigeonholed or constrained. Indeed there is a family feel, as staff say in independent opinion surveys. "People are valued and it is essential we strive to maintain that."

Communication is vital. The company is holding 360-degree feedback sessions for senior managers to help them manage better. Coaching and mentoring are available to help them develop their management and communication skills.

"We like people who can think freely, be innovative, challenge ideas, but most importantly, be prepared to work as part of a team," says Griggs. A team spirit is vital in an organisation



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Richard Puttock, partner

that has nine business groups (or business divisions), including the international wing.

Innovation and Creativity

There is an active R&D programme where the company asks staff in groups to monitor areas of the business that would benefit from R&D and then the business funds the projects. "The Equilibrium tool kit was developed for delivering sustainable developments for clients," says Puttock. "It takes the client through their development, to ensure that they understand all the sustainability issues and achieves the maximum benefit for what they're trying to do. This will be done for each stage of the development cycle. We've shown it to clients and had a great reaction. Clients like the tool kit." PBA is constantly looking to maximise new technologies for the benefit of its clients.

Although many of PBA's ideas result in a construction project, it's equally true that to achieve the vision of a sustainable future, it's essential to create an environment that leads to changes in behaviour.

PBA is constantly looking to maximise new technologies for the benefit of its clients. "We are advising on ways of obtaining energy from waste using all available processes, including anaerobic digestion," says Puttock. "Waste after minimisation should be seen as a resource and managed appropriately." That's not just something for large-scale projects, but also at a local level.

Pay and Benefits

PBA always pays a fair salary and benchmarks against similar-sized businesses. There is a profit-related bonus for all – 10% of attributable profits is allocated to the bonus scheme and paid in two tranches in December and June. More senior staff (associates, senior associates, directors) also receive a further profit share, paid quarterly and at year-end.

There is a defined contribution pension scheme, where PBA matches contributions up to 7% of gross salary, and up to a further 4% depending on length of service. "If anyone leaves us and returns within 10 years we will add the previous years' service to whatever the staff member has accrued," says Griggs.

Company cars or travel allowances are given to associates and above. Below that, a travel allowance is paid to principal and senior technical employees, and principal administrative employees. Interest-free loans are available to all for bicycles, motorbikes and season tickets, with access to Toyota Prius pool cars for special assignments. There is a preferred car sharing parking arrangement with a guaranteed lift home policy should the car driver have to go elsewhere at short notice.

Holiday entitlement is in the range of 23-30 days. The flexible benefits scheme enables the buying of benefits and buying and selling of holiday. There is death-in-service insurance of five-times salary (can be flexed up to eight times), »



"I was given the opportunity to develop my own ideas for a car parking strategy"

"I joined PBA after graduating with a BSc in Geography. I work in the transport division in the Northampton office and am currently being sponsored by the company to study for an MSc in transport.

"I have had heavy involvement with the Marston Vale project (a 15,400 dwelling Eco-Town project) and began working on it within the first few months of joining PBA. I was initially involved in researching the transport credentials of the site and identifying land ownership constraints associated with the delivery of the on-site transport routes. As the project evolved, I was given the opportunity to develop my own ideas for a car parking strategy for the whole site."

Katie Taylor, assistant engineer
With PBA three years, three months



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permanent health insurance, private medical insurance, dental plan, annual health screening, childcare vouchers, free parking at most offices for staff first (before management, who typically will have to park in a public car park nearby and walk to the office), critical illness cover for staff and partners, gym membership, and an employee assistance support programme. There are long-service gifts for staff notching up 10, 15, 20 and 25 years' service.

Career Development

"We recognise that the continual growth and development of our staff is vital for PBA to evolve; indeed some of the partners started as graduates, which demonstrates our commitment to the development of our staff and promotion from within," says Puttock.

All staff, from administration support to partners, are encouraged to maximise their full potential through an extensive training and development package tailored to them as individuals and developed in conjunction with experienced training professionals. This includes day release to college for young technicians, graduate training schemes, sponsorship for existing staff to study for post-graduate qualifications part-time, and a range of technical and managerial training initiatives. There is a PBA Academy of Training.

"We are passionate about training staff," says Puttock. "We budget for four days training

per year per employee." With the associated cost and allowance for training courses, MSc and technical college fees, this amounts to around £1m per year.

Formal training schemes enable staff to obtain professional recognition through the four main technical disciplines. PBA maintains close relationships with 11 universities, and it sponsors undergraduates in addition to its involvement with the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) Quest Scholarship. More than 50 PBA staff are studying either part-time or full-time for MSc and BSc degrees, certificates and PhD studies in various disciplines.

Some staff join as technicians or school leavers and progress through degrees to become chartered engineers. A number of admin staff have transferred to technical roles after training. A postman joined and received help in completing modules of an Open University degree – he is now working as a technician. "We give opportunities to staff and get the best out of them," says Puttock. "The key is people believing they can do it."

Corporate Social Responsibility

"CSR is a key part of our ethos," says Puttock. "Our commitment to our clients', suppliers, employees and the communities in which we work is of paramount importance to us. While delivering our services we seek to support the needs of our stakeholders in an ethical and

empathetic manner."

Through encouraging innovative thinking and pioneering new concepts, PBA has embraced its economic, social and environmental responsibilities on a local, regional and international scale. The consultancy seeks to deliver sustainable benefits through the work that it does, and the way in which it operates.

PBA commits annual charity donations and holds regular fundraising events for international, national and local charities. Its staff rate PBA very highly for giving something back to society.

PBA is a founding member of Reading Initiative for Tsunami Action (RITA), an association committed to the longer term

rebuilding of the areas affected by the Asian tsunami of December, 2004.

"We have a Give As You Earn (GAYE) system operating through the Charities Aid Foundation, for staff to give to charity in a tax-efficient manner," says Griggs.

The company has implemented an Environmental Management System certified to ISO 14001, including commitments to energy efficiency, recycling schemes, and the review of the potential to build-in environmental benefits on the projects that the consultancy works on.

"We feel that the way in which we value all our stakeholders and the way in which we approach our business helps to define the nature and success of our practice," says Puttock.



"I am currently working towards chartered status of two professional industry bodies"

"I joined PBA's geotechnical division in 2004 after graduating from university with an applied geology degree. My work has been a healthy and interesting mix of geotechnical and geo-environmental disciplines in the UK and abroad, including investigating ground conditions for foundation design, analysing land contamination in the UK, and devising earthworks strategies for building roads and development platforms in Morocco.

"I have been ably supported in my professional development by PBA and am currently working towards chartered status of two professional industry bodies – something that is readily achievable with the flexible work-life balance that PBA offers me."

Simon Walkley, geotechnical engineer
With PBA five years, two months