

CASE STUDY

HR

Heather Sansom Head of HR Operations



Heather's journey

Heather joined Class Networks as **Office Manager** in 2003. She progressed through several roles during her time there, including Operations Manager, managing the Provisioning & Support desk, supporting the sales team and creating a new marketing department. In addition, she took on responsibility for HR. In 2021 when Class Networks was acquired by SCG, she was **Billing & HR Manager**.

Upon acquisition, there were discussions around her career goals and how SCG could support her to achieve them. Heather was offered the role of **Head of HR Operations**, moving away from the billing element of her previous role and 100% into HR.

Heather and the HR department are at the heart of SCG and the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) programme. The team are involved across the work streams with a particular focus on the areas they are passionate about: the employee journey through the business, succession planning and our recruitment policy. With the mantra of Continuous Improvement, Heather and the team visit the different departments and offices around the SCG Group, promoting good practice, and educating and supporting the managers across the business.

Heather in her own words

“Working for a small business, you tend to be a jack of all trades. I was secure in that role (working at Class) at the time, and happy to have varied responsibilities, but I was aware that there wasn't much of a road to travel in that position. There are limitations within a smaller business, and if I had ever reached the point of looking elsewhere, it would have likely been for something in HR.

When the acquisition happened, it was a surprise, but also a bonus for me. It opened a world of opportunities transitioning from an SME environment to a larger group; it's the same for anyone who has been acquired by SCG. Now within my current role there is so much room to grow, both personally and professionally, across my team by supporting our development, and across the whole Group through wider education and guidance. It's really rewarding being able to help others progress and achieve their own career goals using the knowledge and experience I've gained through achieving my own.”

Heather's standout moment

“Everyone at Class Networks went on an acquisition journey, and I'm proud to have travelled that road and reached where I have. However, for me, my proudest moment thus far was addressing the Group at our Senior Management Team event in November 2023.

Opening my presentation with the phrase *'I love my job'*, was a thrilling opportunity to explain my genuine passion for HR and highlight some of the Group-wide initiatives we've already adopted, such as our new induction process. Going from a position of uncertainty at Class Networks to proudly talking about how we're making things better across the whole of SCG was incredibly rewarding for me. An empowering moment of recognition for HR”.

Heather's view

“Initially when the acquisition was announced, there was an atmosphere of uncertainty, going from that smaller entrepreneurial feel to one of a big corporate. However, it quickly became apparent after early conversations with SCG what a friendly group of people they are.

During my early trips to our head office in Basingstoke, I have vivid memories of getting lost in the building several times. However, someone would always offer to guide me where I needed to be, and I always felt welcome rather than an outsider. It was a pleasant surprise to feel comfortable on that initial rollercoaster journey, supported by individuals who were genuinely happy in their work. Many people are long-time employees, and I think that's always a good indicator.

Career progression within the Group is highly visible, with clearly defined entry level roles, and progression both within existing departments and to regional positions. During probationary periods, managers are given support so that new starters can succeed through transparent objectives; we want to start as we mean to go on.

When a CEO stands up to say *'it's the people who are important'*, it's rare to not only believe and feel it, but to actually see it through their actions. Here, I get to see people who are supported, nurtured, and given opportunities during their time here, which is really refreshing, especially for such a large organisation. There's lots of talk of empowerment in HR, but I truly feel it at SCG; there's trust and respect, which I didn't always have in previous roles, and it's a great feeling to have.”