

June 8, 2007

## **BECOGENT SECURES MULTI-MILLION POUND JOHN LEWIS DIRECT DEAL**

Leading Scottish-based contact centre operator beCogent is to create 250 new jobs after securing a prestigious contract with John Lewis Direct.

The three-year, multi-million pound deal will see beCogent expand its Erskine operation to 700 employees, taking its total workforce across sites in Erskine, Airdrie and Kilmarnock to 2,500.

Under the terms of the agreement, beCogent will handle all customer contact enquiries and manage the order process for John Lewis Direct, the web and catalogue division of the John Lewis department stores. This will create significant opportunities in administration, back office, HR and training roles.

beCogent, named Employer of Year at the Orange National Business Awards for Scotland in 2006, has developed a retained portfolio of high-profile clients that includes Argos, Virgin Media, JD Williams, Traveline Scotland and the National Australia Bank Group.

Charles Breslin, managing director of beCogent, said: "Securing this contract, with a blue-chip organisation, is a significant success for beCogent. We faced strong competition from some of the largest outsourced contact centre operators in the UK and the world and there is no doubt it is a major coup for us to have secured the business.

"John Lewis Direct is one of the UK's premier retailers and, more importantly, it shares our core values of integrity, respect and accountability.

"Bringing such a prestigious client on board is testament to the hard work and unrivalled service levels offered by everyone in the beCogent team. It also allows us to add further strength in depth to the team at Erskine, making beCogent one of the largest single employers in the Renfrewshire area.

"Going forward, this contract win places us in a position of real strength and there is no doubt that we will use it as a platform for further significant growth. Indeed, I am confident that we will finalise a similar agreement with another national organisation within the next couple of months."

beCogent was founded in 1999 in response to the rapid expansion of the multi-billion pound call centre sector. It has grown organically, with support from Scottish Enterprise, to become one of Europe's leading provider of outsourced customer contact services.

Press Release



**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

**The John Lewis Partnership** - The John Lewis Partnership operates 26 department stores across the UK, John Lewis Direct - a website and catalogue business, 183 Waitrose supermarkets and Greenbee, a new direct services company. The business has an annual turnover of almost £6bn.

**John Lewis** - John Lewis, 'Britain's favourite retailer 2007'\* typically stocks more than 350,000 separate lines. The website stocks more than 22,000 lines focused on the best of home and giftware and is consistently ranked one of the top online shopping destinations in the UK. ([www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com))

**Waitrose** - Waitrose, named 'Britains favourite supermarket'\* combines the convenience of a supermarket with the expertise and service of a specialist shop. It offers fresh and frozen foods, wines and groceries as well as delicatessen, cheese, fresh fish, meat, patisserie and hot-food counters. Waitrose is dedicated to offering quality food that has been responsibly sourced combined with high standards of customer service. ([www.waitrose.com](http://www.waitrose.com))

**Greenbee** - In October 2006 the Partnership launched Greenbee, a new direct services company which offers a carefully edited range of financial, travel and leisure services with the same levels of integrity, quality, value and service that customers have come to expect from Waitrose and John Lewis. ([www.greenbee.com](http://www.greenbee.com))

\* *Which?* customer satisfaction survey, February 2007

**Issued by Beattie Communications ([www.beattiegrou.com](http://www.beattiegrou.com)) on behalf of beCogent**

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