



JN BENTLEY

MARK WOOD LOGISTICS MANAGER
JOHN HAY GROUND WORKER

The global management, engineering, and development consultancy Mott MacDonald offer clients full, UK wide feasibility, design and construction services. J N Bentley is a civil engineering contractor working with the design house at Mott Macdonald, forming the partnership: Mott Macdonald Bentley. This partnership predominantly provides engineering solutions in the water industry, delivering new process plant and pipelines for the refurbishment of old, outdated systems.

Mark Wood is a Logistics Manager responsible for the deployment of operatives around the business. He also manages the training requirements of those operatives and interfaces with the distribution of those plant around various sites.

We spoke to Mark about how terptree was able to help provide a solution to a particular challenge they were facing.

How did you discover terptree?

Victoria (terptree) was brought to our attention through Access to Work. We approached them after one of our operatives, John, explained he had hearing difficulties.

What were your initial requirements from terptree?

It was apparent that John's hearing equipment wasn't suitable for the environment because of the device's functionality. It was causing him difficulties in the workplace, and he needed an alternative.

John was made aware of an alternative device that could filter out irrelevant background noise and amplify only those sounds that are required in a situation. But it was quite expensive. To assist John, we approached the company to see if we could help because it was important to us that he had access to equipment that made him comfortable and that his safety was not compromised in any way.



What function has terptree performed for your organisation?

When it arrived, some training was required around using the equipment to ensure John could get the most from it in relation to his role, the environment and the people he worked alongside. We also realised it was necessary to help John further by raising awareness amongst the wider team of line managers and colleagues to understand better what it's like to be deaf.

What terptree did was hold a training and awareness meeting with us all present - myself, the site manager, and his peers. Victoria covered deafness in the workplace, explaining how to support employees with hearing difficulties. This made us aware that we may have others within the business who have hearing difficulties but haven't told us, for whatever reason.

To help identify if this was an issue, Victoria also provided us with briefing materials and information that we can develop into a poster campaign and roll it out across the business. This will help remove any stigma attached to being deaf and support employees who may have been afraid to tell us they are experiencing difficulties.

What benefits has this brought?

Now he has this new equipment, John doesn't have to put all his concentration into trying to hear what's being said at briefings. It has become an easier task for him as he can listen to and absorb the important information shared. He now feels part of it instead of having to concentrate on filtering out background noise.

We can see his uptake and involvement in these briefings have improved. And the risk of him missing out on vital safety information or being unaware of alarms or passing equipment has been removed, so his personal safety has been increased.

Communication with his team has also improved, and indirectly, so has John's performance.

What would your advice be to others?

One of the biggest benefits for us has been the raised awareness of deafness in the workplace and how we can now reassure our employees that they do not need to be afraid to talk to us if they have hearing difficulties. Many

companies may have similar issues they may not be aware of, so it's worth exploring and taking advice.

Why would you recommend terptree?

From my involvement in the process, I can attest to how well everything was set up and delivered, especially considering technology was necessary because of the social distancing rules at the time.

The material they use is easy to understand and easy to follow, and the offer of ongoing support is genuine – we were given details of contacts should we ever need them.

I was more than happy with the service terptree provide and wouldn't hesitate to recommend them.

We also spoke to John Hay, deaf employee who works as a Ground Worker, to get his experience of working with terptree.

How did you discover terptree?

I was having problems with my hearing and asked my company for help. They brought in Access to Work, who introduced me to Victoria Williams at terptree. I was able to get to know Victoria well, and we spoke often – sometimes daily. She would enquire how I was getting on, and we talked about everyday scenarios and how difficult it was for me at work.

What were your initial requirements from terptree?

At J N Bentley, we have a general briefing in the morning as it helps us keep up to date with what's going on in the company. But the briefing is often held out in the yard where the machines are, and there are usually people talking. Also, we work in open farmland, so amongst the wind and the rustling of the trees and the coughs and general talking of up to 20 blokes, it was often impossible to try and pick out the voice of the person taking the briefing.

It became very difficult and reminded me of the TV advert where the wife asks if he would like a sweet. You can see he is miles away because he can't hear the conversation, and he can't join in because of the ambient noise. That's exactly how I sometimes feel, so I wanted my company to be aware of it.





What function has terptree performed for your organisation?

They helped make my colleagues and company aware of how many people are deaf and how so many of them suffer in silence and don't ask for help. My boss didn't realise so many people out there are suffering from hearing loss.

I've been hard of hearing since I was five years old, and I've learned to cope the best I can. But it can be hard. For example, if I go to the pub, I tend to back away from the group because I can't hear. I prefer one to one situations where I can read people's lips, but I felt I had to apologise for looking at people lips because they didn't realise what I was doing.

In terms of raising awareness within my company, terptree have been a great help. They were able to explain on my behalf what it means to be deaf, and I really felt Victoria heard what I had to say – people don't realise what it's like. She listened and helped me put it into the right words to explain to my supervisor and the person from HR.

What benefits has this brought?

My company now has a better understanding of my situation and needs, and they are going to implement signs, briefing notes and posters.

What would your advice be to others?

Make the company you work for aware.

If they don't know what effect not being able to hear is having, they can't do anything about it. It took me a while

to do it as I didn't want to sound like I was whinging or moaning that I can't hear. But if you keep asking people to repeat themselves, it makes them short-tempered, so in the end, I knew I had to. I wanted to make people aware of what not hearing means.

So my advice is don't be scared to say something. It has definitely helped me, and the lads I work with are now more aware of what I'm going through and understand why I don't join in.

I've now offered to help Victoria raise awareness in schools of what it means not to be able to hear.

Why would you recommend terptree?

I would recommend terptree because they understand what your needs are.

I don't want people to feel sorry for me, and they didn't. They were practical, and they found solutions. They get that impaired hearing is not a disability, and really, you just want people to be aware of what's going on.

I know I can talk to Victoria and the terptree team any time, and they do listen to what you say. I really appreciate what they have done for me.



Hi, I'm Victoria, Founder of terptree. Call us today to find out how you can attract, serve and retain deaf customers and offer a world class deaf customer experience on **01635 886 264**.



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