

PREPARATION FOR PEAK



Packing at JL Magna Park

PHOTOS: JEFF HOPKINS, JAMES MACKENZIE, LYNDIA HARTLEY, BURESH JAIN

Extra help is on the way

The opening of John Lewis's £150m Magna Park 2 and 3 distribution centres means the division is better prepared than ever to take on peak. Distribution teams last year processed 18% more parcels than in the previous year across the Black Friday weekend. How will they cope this year? With an extra 900 temporary agency recruits, says John Munnely, Head of Operations, Magna Park Campus: "Agency staff are essential at peak – when we really depend on them."

Waitrose is taking on 5,000 and John Lewis more than 3,400 temps, but roles can turn into careers: Dino Rocos, who's at the helm of John Lewis this Christmas, joined as a temp at Peter Jones in 1976!

Why Christmas matters...

Christmas. At £1.8bn, there's really no bigger deal in our business. That was the amount of money that passed through the Partnership's real-life and virtual tills in the six weeks that made up our peak festive period last year. And this year? Who knows what our sales (and profit) figures will be once we've negotiated the three

'peaks' of Black Friday, Christmas and John Lewis's Clearance 2016.

As Partners in this business, we hopefully already grasp how crucial the next few weeks are: as retailers, we take the majority of our annual sales and generate most of our annual profits in the last three months of our trading year. That leaves a lot of our

full-year performance riding on a handful of winter-time weeks.

It's a nail-biting time, made even more intense thanks to the increasingly fierce competition, the changing 'shape' of Christmas (no longer a smooth build-up but now a series of Black Friday-influenced spikes) and the advent of online.

How is it for you?

Individual Partners have individual experiences of peak trading, but they can all agree: dull it isn't...

“ We're anticipating huge crowds for our first peak. We'll be maximising on our use of tech and innovation to take mobile payment and using Mnetics to make Click & collect even quicker. The Bond Street Development in the heart of Essex will rival London as a destination for Christmas entertainment and shopping.”

Gavin Aurokium, DM, EHT & Catering, JL Chelmsford



“ I joined as a Christmas temp at JL Nottingham in 2013. Partners are genuinely relieved to see temps arrive as they know the selection process has been rigorous. It was a nine-week whirl, but I knew I wanted to return and I'm pleased to say that I'm still a Partner now!”

David Hall, Local Reporter, JL Oxford Street Chronicle