

If you ask anyone running a business what is their secret to success, the answer is virtually always the same – employing amazing people. At Timpson we rely on our 3250 wonderful colleagues to deliver amazing service in every shop, every day to every customer.

We always look to recruit on personality, not education, skills or previous experience. We want happy, fun, kind, reliable, sparky men and women who “get it”.

Our culture suits these sorts of people as we trust them 100% to run the business their way. We call it Upside Down Management – the bosses don't give orders, it's their job to help, look after their colleagues and make sure everyone is happy.

Over the last 12 years we have been recruiting men and women from prison – not because we felt sorry for them, but because they had amazing personalities. It was a risk, but it worked. We now have over 300 “Foundation Colleagues” in our business, covering every aspect from the warehouse, to finance, shop managers to area managers. We judge people on their ability not on their past.

It works for us, and it works for other companies too. We are proud to have pioneered this route to employment for us and other companies across the UK. We will help anyone who wants to find a superstar in prison, as there is no better feeling seeing a happy colleague with a future.

**James Timpson OBE, chief executive, Timpson**