



front end of the deal. Providing we gather all the requirements and understand the customer, then we can make a commitment to them to deliver what they require, to the specification they need at a price which suits us both. We believe this clarity is what the market wants.

“We hear too many stories of bodybuilders making promises that can’t be kept, and have endeavoured to be different. We are completely transparent to the customer with our timings and make a commitment to build within 20 working days of receiving the truck chassis unless otherwise agreed or where chassis do not arrive in time for their production slot.”

**Toughening up**

While the processes have been developed to ensure the business runs effectively, *CM* gets the impression there’s also been a toughening up in its dealings.

We know the company has turned down deals where the team wasn’t happy with the terms. “You wonder at the time whether you are mad to turn down business,” explains Garry, “but you know it is the right thing to do, and it normally works out for the best.”

Anybody involved in the bodybuilding sector will know Whole Vehicle Type Approval (WVTA) is rattling down the line, and Neil has taken the lead on this at the company. “We’re well prepared for the new legislation,” he explains.

“One of the advantages of us building on van chassis is that we’ve been through a complete learning process to

meet the N1 [vehicles up to 3.5-tonne GVW] standard, which will stand us in good stead to manage the N2 and N3 [up to 12 tonnes and 12 tonnes-plus respectively] requirements as they become effective in October this year. We have all the testing in place for most of our key N2 and N3 types and now it’s just a paperwork exercise for us to be compliant as the regulations take effect.”

The bill for WVTA compliance will stretch into six figures, according Neil, but he adds: “That’s the price you pay for entry into the market. We accept type approval is our issue, as bodybuilders, but customers will have to accept it will lead to a standardisation in the body choices on offer.”

The Brandricks are a well-known footballing family and, predictably, Garry sums up the company ambition with a footballing analogy. “My vision is to maintain the standards and keep doing what we do, but do it better,” he explains. “As I see it, JC Payne is a club with a strong pedigree. We’ve been relegated and have made it back to the Premiership. We’ve got some way to go before we’re pushing for a European spot with the big boys, but we’re building strongly.”

Sentiments his suppliers, customers and staff will be pleased to hear, no doubt. ■

**“We hear too many stories of bodybuilders making promises that can’t be kept, and have endeavoured to be different”**

# Building Britain

Yes, we do still make stuff here in Britain and bodybuilder JC Payne is fighting fit and ready for anything

By **Andy Salter**

OVER THE PAST 15 years or so, we’ve seen a few ownership changes at Aldridge, West Midlands-based bodybuilder JC Payne. Yet, the brand has stayed strong, and it is testimony to the values established by the original family that JC Payne still exists.

JC Payne’s ownership currently rests with the Brandrick family, a name synonymous with the Midlands CV scene, also owning Otis Vehicle Rental and Brandrick Commercials. While Kevan Brandrick is CEO of the bodybuilding business, he is very much in the back seat. It’s his sons Garry, MD, and Neil, legal director, who are leading the rejuvenation. *CM* was struck by the clear

thinking, commitment to quality and belief in the business articulated by the young brothers. From the new strap line, JC Payne – Not Just Any Body, to the growing order book and increased factory output, there’s a buzz around the company that is proof, if any were needed, that JC Payne is emerging from the wilderness years.

Now employing 60 staff, building in the region of 25 bodies a week and with a decent order book, things appear to be on the up – the recent granting of qualified partner status with Mercedes-Benz Truck is a major feather in the company’s cap. OK, it doesn’t have a plush new office block, but you get the distinct impression Garry Brandrick has clear priorities to get the factory processes right, delight the customers and expand from that sound basis.

“It’s five years since we acquired the business,” explains Garry, “and, as you’d expect, in that time we have been through the business and reviewed all the processes and practices. We’ve taken a professional approach to the business where we endeavour to get things right at the



**Going forward:** Garry (left) and Neil Brandrick are leading the rejuvenation at Aldridge, West Midlands-based JC Payne, which employs 60 staff

Images: Simon Everett