

# Business as Usual

## A Case Study



# De Boer supports motorists – and jobs – after M40 blaze

## The Concept

Having provided a dedicated business continuity service across the UK and Europe, structure specialist De Boer has established a market-leading reputation for supplying emergency facilities to a diverse range of commercial sectors.

The company, which holds total stock offering hundreds of thousands of square metres of accommodation, has assisted clients that range from major international airports to large-scale retailers and from historic sporting venues to Britain's Home Office.

It has now been praised after its rapid response to a blaze at one of the UK's busiest motorway services stations helped restore business as usual for motorists, secured the jobs of workers and provided financial benefits for the insurance sector.



## The Requirement

An electrical fault within an air-conditioning unit at Cherwell Valley Services on the M40 in Oxfordshire sparked a fire within the property's main shopping and dining plaza. Despite the efforts of around 120 firefighters, the blaze went on to destroy the entire building, leaving owners, staff and visitors with the prospect of no permanent facilities on site until next year.

The service station's owner – Moto Hospitality Ltd – had a well-established business continuity plan in place for its entire national operations. These identified the need to get an emergency facility in place as quickly as possible following fire, flood or other natural disaster – and for longer-term, “temporary” premises to be created while a permanent replacement building could be built.

Recalling the aftermath of the fire at Cherwell Valley, Moto Area General Manager Justin Shell explained: “Creating replacement premises was hugely important. In phase one speed was of the



essence – to have some kind of facility available, even though it would be fairly limited. For phase two it was equally very important, but in terms of our brand and customer loyalty.”

As well as supporting Moto's own staff, the service station on the M40 provided employment for a range of other businesses active in the original building. These included national and international retailers including Marks & Spencer, Costa Coffee, WH Smith and Burger King.

## Our Approach

De Boer working with PKL Group, a specialist portable kitchens supplier, was contacted within hours of the blaze by Moto to provide emergency catering facilities following the incident.

However, as Justin Shell of Moto explained: “PKL did introduce us to De Boer but even one of the fire officers tackling the incident mentioned De Boer to us as well.”

De Boer and PKL Group, which worked closely throughout the emergency operation, attended their first meeting with Moto just one day after the fire. Work got under way within 24 hours of those discussions, with De Boer taking just five further days to erect its short-term facility – a structure measuring 8m by 25m – providing 200 square metres of accommodation complete with power and internal fit-out. A kitchen facility was connected to the back of the temporary restaurant.



The facility, created on the western end of the on-site car park, allowed two retailers – Costa Coffee and EDC (Eat & Drink Company) – to recommence operations with seating for 100 people. An adjoining covered area was added soon after by De Boer to provide “overflow” seating for an additional 60 people.

De Boer immediately began work on a more permanent solution – erecting one of its Delta Vista structures, which provided Moto with more than 2,000 square metres of floorspace on the south-east corner of the car park. The assignment involved one of the first appearances in the UK of the Delta Vista, which had only been unveiled to the market by De Boer a few weeks earlier.

The structure, measuring 40 metres by 55 metres, had to be built on a scaffolding base because of the sloping terrain. It was fitted with a number of innovative features including specially insulated roof and automated entrance doors. De Boer also handled add-on services such as power, lighting and specialist temperature control and ventilation.



Once fully operational, the striking glass-sided structure offered a rest area for visitors, with facilities that included Marks & Spencer, WH Smith and Burger King, as well as Costa Coffee and EDC. As with the earlier emergency facility, a separate kitchen area was added to the rear of the Delta Vista.

Mical de Boer, De Boer’s Business Continuity Director, said: “Following the initial blaze Moto required an emergency facility that was delivered quickly and functional in its design. We ensured that a temporary building was in place within a week and then set about creating a longer-term option. The use of the Delta Vista offered a light, airy and comfortable space for visitors while offering great benefits to the client and insurance industry such as reduced running and claims costs.”



## The Benefits

De Boer’s two-stage response to the fire at Cherwell Valley Services was applauded for offering broad benefits – to motorists, workers and insurers.

Justin Shell of Moto said: “We’ve been very impressed by De Boer. On phase one, the speed of reaction was tremendous. The replacement was being created just two days after the fire. On phase two I felt De Boer’s professionalism and knowledge – in advising on how things should operate and the things that needed to happen – were second to none.”

The implications for insurers and risk managers were also important, according to Mr Shell. “The insurers have welcomed De Boer’s involvement. As with any loss adjustor, we were asked to get comparative quotes and De Boer’s figures compared very favourably,” he said.

And the success of De Boer’s work at Cherwell Valley has even offered the prospect of further work with Moto in the future. Mr Shell explained: “We know we can rely on De Boer as a business. Following on from the fire, we are looking at how we can routinely alter and re-develop our service stations and there is clearly a part that they could play.”



## Facts

Build phase one:	5 days
Total facilities provided phase one:	200 square metres, indoor seating 100, outdoor seating 60 people.
Build phase two:	three weeks.
Total facilities provided phase two:	2,200 square metres, for Marks & Spencer, WH Smith, Burger King, Costa Coffee and EDC.

*“We’ve been very impressed by De Boer. On phase one, the speed of reaction was tremendous. The replacement was being created just two days after the fire. On phase two I felt De Boer’s professionalism and knowledge – in advising on how things should operate and the things that needed to happen – were second to none.”*

*“The insurers have welcomed De Boer’s involvement. As with any loss adjustor, we were asked to get comparative quotes and De Boer’s figures compared very favourably,”*

**... Justin Shell, Area General Manager, Cherwell Valley – Moto Hospitality Ltd**



**De Boer Structures (UK) Ltd**, Castle Park, Boundary Road, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 7ES, United Kingdom  
T: +44 (0)1280 846500 F: +44 (0)1280 846501 E: [continuity@deboer.com](mailto:continuity@deboer.com) W: [www.deboer.co.uk](http://www.deboer.co.uk)

Copyright by De Boer