



# From trainee to the top for bus manager

Managing director for Stagecoach North Scotland **David Beaton** recalls the road to his success at home and away

**PERSON BEHIND THE BUSINESS**  
PRESENTED BY **BID**  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

**Q** How would you describe your business?

**A** Our business is broadly split into two categories. School transport across all of the Highlands and Orkney Islands under contract to the local authorities and commercial networks in and around the Moray Firth area with small localised commercial networks spread throughout the area.

**Q** What led you into the business?



Managing director for Stagecoach North Scotland, David Beaton.

Picture: Callum Mackay

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**A** I fell into the bus industry by accident.

I answered a job advert for trainee bus drivers in 1988 while living in Edinburgh and started work for The Scottish Bus Group. On moving back north, I rejoined Rapsons Coaches in Portree as a driver before becoming depot manager in the late '90s.

Stagecoach acquired the Rapsons Group in 2008 and I moved across with the acquisition.

I became operations director in 2013 and then was offered the opportunity to work in America with Stagecoach in 2014.

Myself and my wife Anne moved to Dallas where I became service delivery director for all Megabus operations across the USA. We lived in Nashville for a year and then Chicago for three years where I became managing director for three operating companies in Illinois.

We returned to Scotland in 2019 when I became managing director for Stagecoach North Scotland.

**Q** What makes Inverness a great place to run a business?

**A** Inverness is a fantastic place to operate a

business as it is very diverse and equally as challenging.

No two days are ever the same. It is a real melting pot where people from all over the Highlands and beyond come to work and play. The city is expanding all the time and the real challenge is can the infrastructure keep pace?

**Q** What is your greatest achievement?

**A** Returning to Scotland and becoming managing director in north Scotland where I was born and raised. It's something I will always be really proud of no matter how tough the job becomes.

**Q** Who do you admire in business?

**A** People who take a chance. Sandy Rapson took a chance on me running his Skye operations in the '90s and gave me every opportunity to progress in his business. Sandy taught me that loyalty and trust were the two biggest factors in making a team work well together and

I have always stuck with that throughout the years. You are only as good as the team you build around you.

**Q** What's your advice to budding entrepreneurs?

**A** Take a chance, life's too short not to. But if you think something is not right, take a step back! Always follow your instincts.

**Q** Can you tell us more about yourself?

**A** My hobby is following Celtic FC which I am very passionate about.

Family time is when I am happiest, spending time with our sons and their families is very important to me. I have also been involved with the RNLI since the early '90s, serving as a crew member and 2nd coxswain over the years and have become the chairman of the Portree Lifeboat Fundraisers since returning from America.

I am also a non-executive director and sit on the board of Caledonian MacBrayne and High Life Highland.

**Stagecoach North Scotland, 1 Seafield Road, Inverness**  
T: 01463 251350 W: [www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com)  
For more information about Inverness BID:  
T: 01463 714550 W: [www.invernessbid.co.uk](http://www.invernessbid.co.uk)