

Teamwork

Looks like we are seeing the beginning of the end of the crisis, either that or the thought of a general election in the UK and what may follow is tempting a lot of our fellow Brits over here to Spain. Even my favourite weekly read, the Costa Blanca News was even sold out at the newsagents that I use, so I had to go on the hunt for one elsewhere

This rather arbitrary statement is based upon the fact that I have never been so busy, as my services are more and more in demand. OK whilst many jobs are from referrals it would be egotistical and wrongheaded of me to think that it is because I do a fantastic job. It's just one of those surges that happens in all businesses from time to time and I'm sure that normal service will be resumed as soon as possible

Problems and challenges

It would be difficult to describe what I do or fit me into a pigeonhole; even my registration as an autonomo is non-specific. The nearest description would be facilitator which means that I have to pull many threads together to achieve the end result which is a satisfactory result for the customer. Whilst I work largely alone, I cannot work in isolation

It is unusual for there not to be a challenge with every job that I undertake, whether it is incorrect paperwork, wrong dates, an unexpected problem with a car, missing data and fairly often, inflexible bureaucrats. Hardly ever does this affect the job in hand and the customer is normally unaware that an issue has arisen. This is because like anyone who has practiced in a certain field for any length of time, the issues can be repetitive and so the solution has already be found

Of course, our dear friends in the Civil Service would not be able to justify their existence if every now and again they didn't throw in a curved ball. Last week, they decided that customers had declared themselves as resident when buying their properties, when the customer had done nothing of the sort. The effect of this was the liability to pay import tax, which for the customers involved would have been about 2500 euros! Some new jobsworth had decided that anyone buying a property must be a resident! After a lot of work by my lawyer including appeals to higher authority, the problem was resolved, but not without me having to constantly placate my concerned customers.

I get a lot of satisfaction from resolving these issues and seeing the job through to a successful conclusion; it's one of the things that drives me on. On Friday though I had reason to be thankful that all of the independent people that I work with are so flexible and professional

Urgent job

A call was received which started out as a routine enquiry. It then turned out that the two- month deadline for avoiding import tax (about 750 euros in this case) expired on

the following Monday. He didn't have the correct document from the Consulate which closed just over an hour later and is not open on May Day Monday, his headlights were still British and none were in stock. His Padron was with his solicitor whose office had closed for the afternoon and he had very little money on him. Meanwhile I was collecting a set of headlights which were over an hour overdue, so I set off to find the delivery driver. I also had to advise the customer of the delay with his lights and contact another whose new Spanish number plates I had arranged to deliver, but he had already left and has no mobile!

The Team

I hit the mobile phone and started calling up all of those from whom I would need help to get this latest job done as a matter of urgency without the customer having to pay the taxman large amounts of dosh as well as taking care of my other customers

The customer was asked to rush to the soon-to-close Consulate and gave him directions, then called the Consulate and spoke to a member of staff who knows me well from my regular visits and explained that we had a rush job and would it be possible to wait for him. "Do my best" she said and was waiting for him when he arrived at closing time. Thanks Laura

I called Hermann the engineer who speaks English and asked him if he could locate the customer that I was delivering to and pass on a message that I was delayed. Cheers mate!

The lights were not in stock, but ordered for Monday; no problem until I got a call that the warehouse also had none. I called another supplier who didn't have exactly the right ones, but similar which would be OK and promised them for first thing Monday. Ta Joaquin

I needed this car to pass its ITV without the correct lights, so spoke to the boss at the station who said he would do what he could and trusted me to have the right lights fitted later. Great, Estanislao, though his subordinates would (understandably) not do this when I got there; we will have it through for the second time on Monday when the lights have been changed

Straight to my lawyers with what paperwork I have which is incomplete. She'll drop everything and process it as soon as I turn up with the ITV pass. You're an angel Maria Jose

The upshot? First customer has his lights fitted and the car passes, the second customer has his papers and I fit his plates. Another customer is prepared to help out and receive his plates on Saturday. The urgent job will be completed on time. All of this is down to fantastic teamwork by a bunch of guys and gals that work independently of each other and do not know each other, only me

Great work by all of them; what a feeling of job satisfaction. Now I know what I do

