

Helping staff brush up on their motivation skills

A CONSULTANCY firm which specialises in staff motivation has enlisted the help of the animal kingdom to grow its list of southern clients.

The Collingwood Group, based in Morpeth, Northumberland, has signed a deal with ZSL London Zoo and ZSL Whipsnade Zoo in Bedfordshire to use their facilities for its unique brand of team building techniques. The company will encourage its clients to engage in such activities as scrubbing the teeth of Pygmy hippos (pictured) to boost the morale of demoralised staff.

Since signing the deal to use the zoos, the firm has won contracts with a number of southern clients including the senior management team at Carphone Warehouse, Tesco's London customer service division and The Parkinson Society.

Managing director Steve Wake said: "A trusted North-East client of ours asked us for some help in re-motivating her demoralised staff in her London office and our brief was to come up with something different and out of the ordinary.

"With this in mind we approached London Zoo and secured their agreement to deliver in their grounds and to use some of their unique facilities. We have now recruited two more members of staff in London and are in the process of establishing a dedicated London office."



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Queen's banker makes quay expansion move

By Andrew Mernin

THE Queen's banker Coutts has revealed plans to treble the size of its Newcastle operation as it wins the business of growing numbers of North-East millionaires.

The 250-year-old institution with the super-rich client base is to move from the discreet Grey Street offices in which it opened its Tyneside outpost in 1998.

The branch has grown steadily since it arrived with a staff of six bankers and now has 14 staff looking after its 900 clients, who include footballers, actors and landowners as well as many of the region's most successful businesspeople.

It will move in January into 9,000sqft offices in Trinity Gardens on Newcastle Quayside after outgrowing its current premises.

Despite the North-East trailing the rest of

the country on many economic measures, Coutts says that the region is at the forefront of its current regional expansion.

Chief executive Sarah Deaves said: "We are committed to growing the business across the country. Our regional offices are responsible for our strongest growth and this is one of the strongest areas.

"We see a lot of potential here because of the growth of the economy and the number of businesses starting up and growing here. Our growth here could be seen as a barometer of the region's wealth."

The bank, which was bought by Royal Bank of Scotland in 2000, now has 18 regional branches and half of its 309 bankers are sited

outside London. Regional offices are also being expanded in Liverpool and Manchester and new branches opened in Reading and Cheltenham.

Coutts' senior banker in the Newcastle office Bob Dixon said that entrepreneurs make up 95% of the branch's clientele and this was what was driving growth.

"If you look back 100 years this region was one of the richest in the world in certain industries. It was long driven by shipbuilding, engineering, coal-mining and heavy manufacturing and although those industries are going or gone it from them that we are seeing people creating new businesses," he said.

"There is a real uplift here with people starting and building enterprises and we are helping them to do that. Up to now that was mainly in Tyneside and Wearside, but we are

seeing more entrepreneurs coming out of Cumbria and particularly from Teesside, which I would say is now where Tyneside was six or seven years ago.

"We have a strong connection to this region, indeed the personal relationships we have with our customers are the cornerstone of our business, and in 2000 when other banks were pulling out then we were increasing our business up here. I am pleased that we are now expanding further."

He said that although the new office will have room for three times as many bankers there is no schedule for expanding the number.

Royal Bank of Scotland is also moving its Tyneside corporate and commercial businesses and Coutts' stablemate Lombard into adjacent Trinity Gardens offices in January.