



KEEPING COMPANY

Electrical firm's heart in new talent

COLLETTE DEVLIN

A LOWER HUTT electrical contractor has won recognition for putting new talent at the centre of its business.

Seven Electrical won a training award on behalf of The Skills Organisation industry training organisation (ITO), in recognition of the exceptional number of young people it has trained.

Managing director Ian Butturini said providing high quality training was a key way to address the current low productivity issues in the construction industry. But investing in training was an added cost for firms, he said.

“The ‘lowest price is best’ mentality is a significant disincentive to investing in training. Yet many – although not all – main contractors take this approach.”

Firms that invested in their people might not be the cheapest but provide significant quality and productivity gains, he said.

Since Seven Electrical started 25 years ago, it had trained more than 80 young people to become licensed electricians – many of whom still work for the business.

The biggest change was a shrinkage in a qualified work-

force, Butturini said. “Many people leave to go overseas.”

The subcontracting industry contributed to about 80 per cent of the construction industry workforce. Sub-contractors lost more than \$18 million in retention payments owed to them following the collapse of Mainzeal in 2013.

Since the Mainzeal collapse, the Specialist Trade Contractors Federation (STCF) pressed the Government to change the law to ensure the retention is held in trust for the subcontractor.

Butturini was a key figure in STCF's successful campaign, calling on the Government to change the law to provide them with greater protection from the collapse of construction companies.

Seven Electrical was hit hard following the collapse but it was “bouncing back”, Butturini said.

“Industry leaders are talking it up but I don't see it just yet. There is a gradual recovery and it's improving; I guess it's a matter of waiting to see what will happen in the next three or four years.”

There was a shortage of trained electricians in New Zealand and, like most areas of construction, few women were taking up the trade. There needed to be more

ways to promote the electrical contracting industry to female school

leavers, including providing more information in schools, he said.

“Females who do take up electrical apprenticeships generally do very well. My experience is that they are meticulous.”

Seven Electrical was actively supporting the government's drive to recruit more female school leavers into skilled trades.

It currently had two female electrical apprentices, Halina Bucknor and Matilda Anderson, among its 16 trainees.

The company has a rolling programme of recruiting trainees for its four-year training programme, to a maximum of 16 at one time.

It was one of a few New Zealand electrical companies to provide apprenticeships on this scale.

“Financial success is good but having a qualified workforce is just as important,” Butturini said.



16 Nov 2015
The Dominion Post, Wellington

Author: Collette Devlin • Section: Business Day • Article type : News Item
Classification : Metro • Audience : 64,851 • Page: 4 • Printed Size: 566.00cm²
Market: NZ • Country: New Zealand • ASR: NZD 3,411 • Words: 515
Item ID: 498022031

isentia.mediaportal

PMCA licensed copy. You may not further copy, reproduce, record, retransmit, sell, publish, distribute, share or store this information without the prior written consent of the Print Media Copyright Agency. Phone +64-4-4984487 or email info@pmca.co.nz for further information.



Minister for Women Louise Upston presented electrical subcontractor Seven Electrical with an industry award for its contribution to apprenticeship training. With her, from left, are apprentice Halina Bucknor, managing director Ian Butturini, apprentice Matilda Anderson and The Skills Organisation chief Garry Fissenden.