



Auckland company wins top training award

Takanini-based Roof Improvements (2014) Ltd is the Top Roofing Training Company for 2016 – awarded by The Skills Organisation

The directors of Roof Improvements have developed a robust training culture which has inspired many apprentices to reach their personal goals. The company's philosophy is that for the business to continue to succeed it must continuously contribute to the pool of roofing trainees through on-going learning in an organised environment.

Training of apprentices is seen as key to the success of the business and the culture of togetherness, support and respect is a formula that has been a winning one for the company. Witnessing the growth and advancement of young people joining the team has provided great satisfaction to the whole team – the roofing qualification is highly valued, the completion certificates displayed in the main office for all to see.

Letters of commendation from volume builders are also displayed with pride. Training initiatives also add credibility with Roof Improvements' customers.

Clare Barrett, Administrator for Roof Improvements says the trick in the current environment of acute skill shortage is to attract good people in the first place. Brandon Rakena, who walked in off the street looking for work is a fitting example of a trainee who has thrived in the environment adopted by the company. His work is impeccable. Brandon's two brothers have subsequently joined the firm, Dion aged 22 is an apprentice and Tangaroa (16) will be reviewed for an apprenticeship later this year. Brandon, already an LBP, has only one paper to complete for National Certificate and is already a supervisor.

Company directors Dean Foster and Dawson Chung have created an environment and culture of inclusivity – their apprentices feel comfortable about approaching any team member for assistance: they also have exceptional ability to pair trainees with a mentor with a compatible personality. Dean is no longer on the tools having broken his back in a dirt bike accident in 1998 so



Dawson Chung receives his award from Lance Riesterer, GM for the Specialist Trades and businesses at Skills.

all measure-ups are his sole responsibility.

Roof Improvements was formed in 2000, Dean being a sole trader prior to that. Dawson joined the company as Director/Manager in 2002 running the business on a day-to-day basis and applying extraordinary skill with numbers ensuring minimum waste on all contracts.

In accepting the Top Roofing Training Company Award, Dawson singled out Clare for special mention, given that she often goes the extra mile for trainees, encouraging them to learn to drive and acquire driving licences and assisting them with personal growth – developing their attitude, self-esteem, commitment, time management, work ethic and reliability.

The roofing workbook can be daunting for many trainees: keeping track of their progress is now the domain of Carl Mossman who joined Roof Improvements last year, having been lured out of retirement after 43 years on the supply side with Steel & Tube to bring a new dimension of knowledge to the team. Carl runs

regular toolbox meetings with a health and safety segment included. When any learning opportunities arise the company encourages apprentices to attend. First aid, Site Safe, driving licences and attendance to LBP workshops is paid by the company. In the past when seniors in the roofing team were completing qualifications, the company provided pizzas for an office gathering to get the workbooks completed. They were paid for this too. Such is the commitment to current trainees that the company is looking to run a Saturday morning session to progress completions of the workbooks.

Dean and six supervisors have completed National Certificate, continuing on to LBP status. A further two trainees should complete by the end of this year and two have recently signed up.

Roof Improvements accepts that apprentices may move on at some stage, maybe even have their own businesses but equipping them to get qualified, to get licensed and to get ahead remains a key priority.

