



THE CUSTOMER COMES FIRST

Professional Electrician's editor Richard Pagett visited Affleck Electrical, a Swindon based contractors which has been a success since it launched in 1998.

Andrew Affleck has been in the electrical industry since 1966, he served his apprenticeship, worked in various companies and went out on his own some eight years ago. In that time his business has grown from two employees (he and son in law Nigel Whelan) to a very significant size, employing 20 people.

"We work along the M4 corridor, covering a wide spectrum of work," he explains. "I'd say that 95% of our work is commercial and industrial, with the other 5% being domestic, national trust work and so on."

Affleck Electrical's core customers include the local Honda factory and its suppliers, Porsche showrooms, some House of Fraser stores and healthcare properties. In fact, the list goes on and 90% of all work comes from recommendation.



"I have to say that our staff are over and above the average standard. We believe in training and taking them on to the next level. We currently have five apprentices here and its something I believe in strongly."



"We've grown to a size where we now have to manage the company more responsibly," says Andrew. "But I'm still on the tools on a few jobs, but not so often now. I have to say that our staff are over and above the average standard. We believe in training and taking them on to the next level. We currently have five apprentices here and its something I believe in strongly."

Recruitment

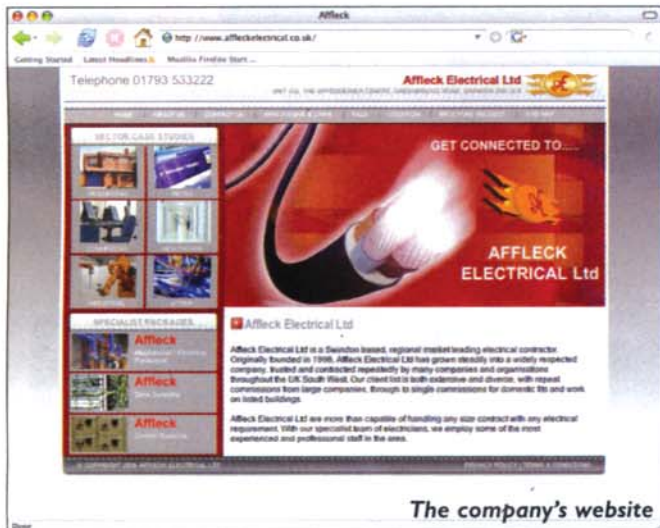
Most of the apprentices are vetted at the very beginning and the company receives between 40 to 50 CVs from school kids a year. One electrician, Darren Hembling has just finished his logbook, completed his 2391 after four years of hard work.

Andrew's son in law Nigel Whelan joined the company in its first week and has seen it grow and grow.

"It's been a fantastic learning curve," he says. "I concentrate on the commercial side of our business, making sure things like the paperwork is here, the communication between us and our customers is good. Electricians know that variations on site are a weak point in any quotation of costings so we look to make sure its all done correctly. This includes our own CAD drawings and leaving ourselves some spare capacity to accommodate customer needs."

The company has recently introduced a job card system with an organised report at the end. It serves as a breakdown of costs and so on for themselves and their customers.

"When we're working with builders and customers, the job specification and needs on site can change daily, so can time and money, so we do our utmost to keep everybody informed," he explains.



Nigel is keen to recommend Business Link as he has found it useful as a business aid.

"They are all over the UK. It's relatively cheap and someone external to your business comes in to look at it with a fresh pair of eyes. So it's things like the operational side of things, how company hierarchy is structured and they try and channel us in the right direction. Our website was developed from the relationship with Business Link and the design can be funded by the DTI. And of course Business Link provides access to funding advice."

Fast moving

Nigel explains that in the future, Affleck Electrical will look towards increasing its Mechanical work and assume a Main Contractor role in more jobs. They also have a Fibre Optic Technician on board and taken on a contract for a school's IT building.

There's no doubt that this fast moving company has customer service at its heart and is the reason it has grown so quickly.

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