

employer of choice

Better Workplaces

Assisting Tasmanian small businesses to attract and retain employees



Tips from Fairbrother

- First class training and development will attract high quality job seekers as well as high profile projects
- Foster a healthy, happy and safe workplace
- 'Grow your own' by promoting internally – the trainees of today will be the leaders of tomorrow
- Provide quality tools and challenging work tasks to keep your highly motivated employees engaged

Excellence attracts excellence at Fairbrother

Founded in 1973 by Royce and Thea Fairbrother, Fairbrother is one of Tasmania's leading building construction, joinery and facilities management companies. Managing Director Craig Edmunds explains that Royce has succeeded in fostering a brand which is recognised and respected throughout the community for being committed to excellence.

Target the best people to gain a competitive edge

The key has been to target people with a strong work ethic and a commitment to a lifelong vocation and high quality work. Fairbrother invested in an apprentice program to attract, develop and retain Tasmania's best new tradespeople.

The program includes individual training plans, coaching and mentoring. The apprentice mentors provide day-to-day support for technical and personal development, and advice on financial, relationship and drug issues when necessary. They also help to promote a healthy workplace that is enjoyable to work in.

Typically, apprentices complete their training with such outstanding results that Fairbrother uses them as a key selling point for job seekers. They have certainly attracted plenty of high calibre applicants; in 2006, 340 applications were received for 16 carpentry and joinery apprenticeships and in 2007 that number is up again! Most applicants select Fairbrother as a prospective employer based on its reputation or because of endorsement from existing employees, family and friends.

But, like many other companies, Fairbrother has had difficulty filling highly-skilled professional roles. So in response they developed the "Building Leaders" program, which is provided to first year apprentices and company directors alike. Knowing that all employees will have the foundations needed to build management and leadership skills, Fairbrother will now be able to promote from within, and retain their employees' skills and values.

Continually challenge high achievers

Brett, a first year apprentice, was attracted to Fairbrother by the opportunities to take projects from the drawing board right through to completion. There is no shortage of challenging work at Fairbrother and the Building Leaders program has enabled third and fourth year apprentices to run small projects of their own much earlier than they would otherwise.

By providing opportunities and challenging its staff, Fairbrother has a relatively low turnover (less than 4 per cent) and has succeeded in retaining many valuable employees for much of their careers. Peter started with Fairbrother as an apprentice over 25 years ago and is now one of the company's current directors and a testament to much of what the company stands for.