

Spencer Constructions (Qld) Pty Ltd

Industry sector

Construction

Number of full-time equivalent employees

14

Business summary

Spencer Constructions is a young but growing construction business based on the northside of Brisbane. We provide residential & commercial building solutions for our clients from major renovations to new homes and commercial developments across South East Queensland.

Founded in 2012 by Benjamin Spencer, it has grown from a one person, home-based business turning over \$250 000 per annum to an office/warehouse-based enterprise that currently turns over \$3,000,000 per annum and employs the equivalent of 14 full-time staff.

We have developed a wonderful team of tradesmen and professionals who model our shared values of Respect, Safety, Communication, Relationships, Quality & Professionalism proudly.

Our teams have had the privilege of working on a number of diverse projects including: beautiful Queenslander restorations, significant lift/raise extensions, commercial defits/refits, a shopping centre facelift, a winery re-development, and a home built from timber milled on site, to name a few.

We are proud to say that our staff turnover is extremely low mainly due to our staff development and succession planning programs as well as our family-oriented approach. 80% of our tradesmen are currently undertaking nationally-accredited courses to further their skills and knowledge.

Criterion 1: Extent and quality of training for employees

80% (8/10) of our tradesmen are currently completing nationally-accredited training. We have 5 apprentices who are at varying stages of their training ie, 3x 3rd year, 1x 2nd year, 1x 1st year (school-based apprentice). They are all completing a Certificate III in Carpentry. Three of our carpenters have either just completed or are about to complete their building courses ie, 1x Diploma of Building, 2x Certificate IV in Building.

The RTOs that we are partnering with include:

- Blue Dog Training (4x apprentices)
- Australian Trade College (1x school-based apprentice)
- TAFE Queensland (1x Diploma of Building)
- Qld Master Builders Assoc. (2x Certificate IV in Building)

With the exception of our school-based apprentice who participates in face-to-face training, our other 4 apprentices complete their training online and submit logbooks/photos of their practical & verified on-the-job competencies on a monthly basis.

Our three carpenters who are studying for their builder licences attend regular weekly face-to-face workshops and submit their assignments online.

We provide work time and mentoring/coaching support for our employees to complete their training as required. We have based our employee training on our performance and development and succession planning processes, taking into account our business growth trends.

We aim to maintain a zero turnover rate of existing staff by providing each team member with promotional & career pathways that meet their needs and desires.

We have instigated a daily mentoring structure to support each employee's performance and development ie

- Contracted Business Advisor mentors Principal Builder and business leadership team members (one day/wk)
- Principal Builder mentors Construction Supervisors
- Construction Supervisors mentor Leading Hands/Carpenters
- Leading Hands/Carpenters mentor apprentices

Supporting such daily mentoring actions are monthly site visits and discussions (recorded in writing) that involve a focus on each individual's performance, development progress, motivators and modeling of our shared/agreed values of: Respect, Safety, Quality, Communication, Relationships & Professionalism. Based on these discussions, we update our Staff Training Matrix monthly and our Succession Plan on a quarterly basis. Monthly awards (\$50 trade tool vouchers & monthly newsletter recognition) are provided as incentives based on the demonstrated modeling of our values.

Criterion 2: Employee outcomes

We highly value the significant opportunities and benefits that formal, accredited training provides for our employees and our business.

We ensure that through our PPR & D process, we identify each team member's key motivators (both personal and business wise). Understanding & integrating each employee's personal goals into their work life is critical to the success of our retention, development and succession processes, and ultimately our business operations and growth.

We are a family based business that treats our employees and their families like they were our own. All of our staff feel confident to approach us to speak about any issues that we can assist with. This approach has ensured that we provide flexible working arrangements, wherever possible, that suit their needs when required and that our mutual values are being 'lived' by everyone in our business.

Specific outcomes that we have identified as a result of the accredited training undertaken include:

- significant boost in self-confidence both personally and in their work roles
- high level of practical competency demonstrated
- increased work and career motivation
- increased level of respect for all team members and almost non-existent conflict- high and sustained morale
- increased team & individual productivity
- reduced number of job defects & waste which has improved our bottom line
- teams have become more self-managing and don't rely solely on higher, off-site supervision
- very high level of job satisfaction and positive attitude to daily work
- improved problem solving skills
- general eagerness to seek and take on higher level duties and responsibilities

Nick Wooldridge is a great example of reaping the benefits of training & development. Nick joined our team in Nov 2015 as a qualified carpenter with 2 years experience. For a young tradesman, he demonstrated a very high level of quality and competence in his trade. We could tell that he had the attitude & potential to go a long way in our business. Realising this, our principal builder, Benjamin Spencer, initiated a coaching and mentoring program that has resulted in Nick progressing through the ranks from a carpenter to leading hand to site supervisor to construction supervisor & project manager in less than two years. Nick completed his Cert IV in Building at the end of 2017 which has proven to be the 'icing on the cake' for his recent development priorities. We have just employed a Construction estimator with a plan to develop Nick's skills (through professional onsite coaching/mentoring) in this area as well. Nick has the confidence, knowledge, ability and people skills to one day be the General Manager of our business.

Criterion 3: Business outcomes


We highly value the significant opportunities and benefits that formal, accredited training provides for our employees and our business.


From our business perspective, the benefits that we have noted include:


- increased level of leadership team's confidence in the strength & achievement of our Succession Plan
- promoting our own staff into new positions that are created as the business grows. This sits very well with our family oriented approach to our team.
- eagerness of all staff to seek out and take on additional responsibilities & delegations that suit their level of development
- improved customer service relationships and points of contact as our team take ownership for job outcomes/timeframes and communication with all stakeholders
- increased confidence in our ability to deliver on our company values & our brand
- increased positive customer feedback regarding the manner in which our team members interact with all stakeholders
- word-of-mouth referrals now account for approx. 90% of our business
- continuously increasing annual turnover and profit (\$250k - \$3m over last 4 years)
- having the ability to take on larger and more diverse projects
- positive supplier/sub-contractor feedback regarding the way our team accommodates for all stakeholders in the building process
- zero staff turnover rate

As our carpenter numbers have increased, we have duly boosted our apprentice numbers to match ie currently 5 carpenters with 5 apprentices. We have a long-standing relationship with Blue Dog Training (RTO) and more recently Australian Trade College and work closely with them to ensure that our apprentices fulfill their training commitments and therefore develop their skills and knowledge accordingly. We also have established an arrangement with Broncos Football Club to employ suitable young, up and coming football stars as apprentice carpenters.....currently we have 3 apprentices linked to the Broncos.

	
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