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IN OTHER NEWS

Satisfaction Survey

A few people have been asking us about the satisfaction survey being run by the PGDB.

It appears this survey is about your views on a range of services provided by the PGDB and where improvements could be made.

The Board wants to measure the level of satisfaction registered tradespeople have with the range of services they provide. So it's about services not about policy or decisions.

For example you may be asked about the standard of the letters you get from the Board, but it won't be about the content.

Your response may be that the letters seem threatening or condescending or that they are easy or hard to understand.

You may respond that you read and enjoy everything the Board sends you or you might say you trash it without reading it.

So really to participate in the survey you need to have had contact with the Board.

If you haven't had contact you need to tell them why,

New Trainee Limited Certificate Fee.

In previous years there were no fees charged for trainee limited certificates, although there were costs incurred to issue them. These costs were absorbed into other licensing fees.

The Board have now set a fee of \$45.00 per trainee rather than increase licensing fees by \$12.00 per license for something that was already covered and paid for else where. Master Plumbers said this during the consultation:

"The fee proposed is reasonable and we believe will reflect the work involved in issuing a limited certificate for this group. In addition it educates apprentices on how licensing works including the need to pay for the privilege of working legitimately in this industry."

Did anyone think of the likes of licensed plumbers who are doing drainlaying? They simply pay an extra \$45.00 for nothing. In fact the industry ends up paying an extra \$142,200.00 for something that was already covered in existing fees.

What's the Industry Solution?



We received this very relevant email as a result of last weeks issue and we wish to thank the writer who took the time to send it to us with his views:

One of your writers gets it right where this conflict has been going on for quite a

while with no result and worse. The rhetoric and protests and newsletters all add up to the Board carrying on their merry way. It's probably because as bureaucrats, they couldn't possibly understand life on the outside, where you have to actually do something productive to earn a living. (We are talking about the non trade people, the ones that are trying and succeeding, to sway those trade people on the Board to the bureaucratic thinking).

They see themselves as administers and all their training allows them to do is follow guidelines written by other bureaucrats so they all end up chasing their tails. They would be completely bewildered when they are criticized as indeed, you could only describe their actions as bewilderment.

I have always found that in order to gain a solution it can be the prudent thing to actually offer the solution. If it is a sensible, practical answer it can often be the way forward. We haven't seen any move forward yet so maybe it's time to change tactics.

The Master Plumbers may well swing on board the cause if this approach is taken. Have you ever had a meeting with their executive? It seems to me that if the forces get joined you would have real power. It would be important for there to be total respect for each others agenda, but the common denominator here is the Trade and how it is administered. It is in everyone's interest for there to be

for example “I haven’t had a need to contact them” or “I don’t contact them because you can’t get a straight answer.”

It’s all about how you feel they communicate with you, are you getting value for money?



Hi everyone.

We had a few requests for the Editor to have a go at answering the questions in last week’s issue, so here we go.

Should fees be about survival of an organisation or about what is best for protecting health and safety of the public?

Ed: Certainly some fees are required for the administration of the Board but these should be on a cost recovery basis and should only be for the functions of the Board.

We believe over the years there has been some very liberal use of the fees.

The Board seem to be getting a lot wrong which stretches their finances and now stretch the interpretation of the legislation to meet their financial budgeting requirements.

Is the Board being productive or just active? It seems to me that there is always a lot said and a lot implemented but nothing seems to improve?

Ed: It seems more time is spent patting themselves on the back for creating or altering bureaucracy than anything else.

Nothing new seems to have occurred and things that have been altered have created more issues, so we would say they are active.

Are the Board inventing things to do to avoid the

an amicable solution.

So have you guys got the solution? MP’s are really only good at talking, not thinking.

Many thanks for the feedback and questions. We believe for there to be a solution there must be a problem.

The Issues



It seems industry and tradespeople are carrying the burden for a lot of others.

Here’s some examples:

• A lot of the blame for leaking buildings was laid on the trades rather than the failings of the bureaucratic systems. The trades became the diversionary scapegoats. Hence we find ourselves bureaucratically accountable for the health and safety of the public and their property when before we had done it morally.

• Self certification was the Government’s way of putting their hands in the air and saying to the public “Hey it’s not our responsibility, take your problems to the industry as they are self certifying. Take them to the courts as we are just the Government.”

• People playing with qualifications and the manner in which trainees get there in order to hold people accountable. Educationalists got involved and the emphasis on trade training was lost to numbers and money.

• Supervision requirements were tightened by the Board to hold people accountable.

• The Board transferred from a regulatory function to a heavy handed enforcement regime to hold people accountable in the name of health and safety of the public. From zero funding for discipline to two million dollars in ten years.

• The Board transformed from an appropriate sized regulatory organisation to what it is today.

• The Board and Minister started to get influenced by the one and only industry organisation at the time.

• The ITO and Board started heading in different directions and both became inefficient burdens on the industry. Both lost respect and credibility.

• Training disappeared and trades people paid the price by being qualified when not appropriately trained. Costs increased to what they are at today.

• With the levels of qualification a lot of people stopped at Licensing level rather than carrying on to Certifying level. The exam scheme let the industry down.

• The industry reached a stage where they got sick of leaches and paying for others mistakes.

So there are a few of the issues/problems and there are numerous related issues but this publication would become a War and Peace novel if we tried to cover them all.

Quite ironically the solution to most of the problems is proper

important things that should be done?

Ed: We feel they are inventing things that they believe are important but to the rest of us seem a waste of time.

There seems to be a lot of fixing of things that aren't broken and the rest of the time is spent defending those that they get wrong.

They have certainly avoided apologising to industry for a decade of bullying and cock ups.

You would think that if a Justice of the Peace had knowledge of a regulation not being right or even a possibility of it not being right that they would have a moral obligation to stop the action. If it was a purposeful act is there anyone who can accept a complaint about the behaviour?

Ed: It would appear a complaint could be made with the Justice Department who administer the Act. It would have to be about the individual's standing as a JP not about the issue in question.

Everything happens for a reason but sometimes the reason is people are stupid and make bad decisions. Shouldn't people who make bad decisions be held accountable?

Ed: As far as the secretariat is concerned they probably get a wrap over the knuckles but in public the Board would either sweep the issue under the carpet or down play it.

As for the Board itself, the only person who can hold them accountable at this stage is the Minister and it seems he won't do anything because he appointed the Board and the Board's failure is his failure.

If CPD is so brilliant then why do we need all this money for discipline? If offences are increasing doesn't that mean CPD is

TRAINING.

Oh – and just for the record – we are happy to meet with Master Plumbers exec any time – we have made a couple of approaches but they don't seem keen. Perhaps with a new CEO the attitudes might change. We are always open to meeting any group who wants to discuss the issues facing this industry.

Trade Training



Trade training for apprentices is a fallacy – we don't believe there is any. The lack of **appropriate, cost effective, identified training** at all levels is a problem.

Instead of training people to qualify with the required skills there is a push to train them once they are qualified. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) seems to be the tool of choice.

Educationalists are running the training and are currently pushing for qualifications along the lines of:

- Constructions skills at level 2 which the training institutions sell to people. (This is conceived as something that would be done at secondary schools).
- Pre Trades skills at level 3 which training institutions sell to people. (Trainees will get student loans or pay up front for this – at present these courses seem to range from 3 months to 12 months and costs vary accordingly. Attendance at them does not reduce the cost or time of an apprenticeship. It is not mandatory to attend one of these prior to undertaking an apprenticeship. Some employers love them, others hate them.)
- Apprenticeships at level 4 which people pay for but which are assessments not training. The view is that the “employer” will do the training on the job. It is our understanding that the majority of employers who have apprentices would like to return to “training” at polytechnic and most tutors would prefer this as well. The assessment regime is not working.
- Training from licensed level to certifying level which they sell to people.

So where is the good for the industry? Training responsibility for apprentices are placed on the employers who have to pay around \$14,000 for assessments to be done (this includes the First Aid course, the working and heights and also working in confined spaces courses). There are no trade “training” block courses during the apprenticeship (as those who were properly trained would know it), and correspondence has turned into a joke.

We noted in our research that one course required at certifying level only has one supplier in the entire country.

We have apprenticeships where there are no real “training courses”, only assessments, so the skills people are qualifying with are lower than previous years where apprentices were “taught” at polytechnic. Of course employers teach on the job, but in this day and age more and more employers are specialising and so the polytechnic became the safety net to ensure all trainees covered all aspects. The Board rely on CPD to bring up the skill levels and along the way people get caught up in the discipline process. In reality CPD is a failure, as is the current apprenticeship scheme. All we have created is a revenue stream for training providers and the ITO. (Have a look at how many PGD Board members are directly involved with organisations

failing?

Ed: Very good question which we will attempt to answer.

CPD bought about a lot of resistance right from the start. Not so much the up skilling but more the manner in which it was imposed on the gas fitters and now on everyone else.

It went from attempting to get tradesmen to take responsibility for their work, to “we are going to hit you with a big stick until you do”.

Now that CPD is linked to licensing and affects people’s ability to license and work, CPD has become a revenue stream for a lot of organisations.

The current CPD scheme is about “buying points” rather than learning or upskilling. Until this changes then the system will not get the full support of industry.

Recruiting

Just a reminder to get people to look at our web site www.pgdf.co.nz

They can also join the Federation from there and send messages to us.

We are hoping to improve this site for all members soon.

This is all part of our step up plan to make the Federation more credible and to enable us to provide more to members.

Other organisations will determine to what extent we develop as we wish to stick to our goal of ensuring our industry gets treated in a fair and equitable manner but we will go to whatever lengths we need to achieve that.

providing training).

Employers are required to pay for the pleasure of employing, training and having apprentices assessed - but wait there’s more - they also pay to train them once they qualify and then to add salt to the wound, they also pay to take the added responsibility/risk of supervising them until they reach certifying level if they ever do.

Solution



We believe the solution is **inappropriate, cost effective, identified training.**

We believe there should be core trade training courses for the first two years of an apprenticeship where all apprentices are taught the basics of all three trades

at the polytechnic.

After the core trade training they progress on to trade skills training where the courses cover the trade/trades with which they wish to qualify. Over the two years at this level the trade courses ensure the trainees are competent in their chosen trades. This is combined with the on site work experience provided by their employer.

The addition of an extra year to an apprenticeship provides training in advanced skills and legislation etc. Trainees are tested and assessed to ensure they are competent before qualifying as a REGISTERED plumber, gasfitter or drainlayer or a combination of the three.

We believe the current scheme of Licensed and Certifying is allowing an “out” for trainees and a large number are stopping at licensing level.

There has been the argument from senior Master Plumber members that they don’t want to employ a lot of Certifiers and are happy employing Licensed level people. That might be good for them from a business perspective, as most of them are employers, but what about the individuals, what about the entire industry? There seems to be a push towards what Master Plumbers want not the entire industry.

The upside of having everyone qualify as Registered (Current Certifiers) is that each individual is responsible for their own work, they are properly trained, the public can have some faith in their tradespeople and they are competent. We believe when individuals qualify after 5 years and have met the Board’s requirements for competency that they are qualified.

None of this nonsense of finishing an apprenticeship after 4 years and not being able to do you trade unless under supervision of a certifier and then waiting another two years to become Certified. It’s effectively a return of service and money spinner for training providers.

The responsibility for an individual’s work should lie with the individual once they are qualified.

Do you have any stories about training – are you an apprentice, an employer, a colleague of someone training. We would love to hear what you have to say – the good, the bad and the ugly. Send in your stories and we will publish what we can.

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