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IN OTHER NEWS

Training or a Corporate Fund Raiser



The more and more the Federation gets involved with the training needed in the industry the more and more money we see getting wasted.

The NZQA Qualification review is a prime example of a process that we believe has been railroaded to develop a qualification that will make people money and we believe will not produce the tradespeople needed to prosper as an industry.

Some good work has been done in developing what skills and knowledge are needed but the qualification being pushed still requires people to be under supervision and undergo a further 2-3 years of training and supervision.

It has been no secret by some employers and representatives of employer organisations on the relevant committees that they don't want a lot of Certifying tradespeople.

They have openly stated they are happy with licensed

Walking the Fine Line



As the year draws to an end we thought it appropriate that we reflect on the years that have passed and what the Federation has helped to achieve.

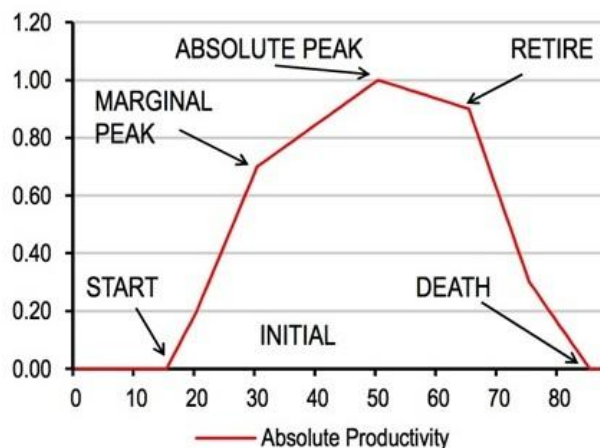
On reflection we have been walking a fine line, but to understand what we mean you need to understand what a fine line is. A fine line is a very small difference, for example a fine line exists between keeping it tasteful and going over the top and sometimes there's only a very fine line between genius and madness.

The expression to walk a fine line is often used to mean "to achieve or maintain a balance" and that could well summarise the Federation's actions. What about the fine line between confidence and cockiness, well we best leave that one to opinion, but we feel we have been confident in everything we have done because we have spoken the truth.

Over the years the Federation has walked a fine line between giving up and wondering what the hell we have left to hang on to, and as the years have passed, with no positive responses from the Government and the Board, that line got thinner but this year, the line got thicker with positive actions and lines of communication being developed with the Board.

The funny thing is that the British bank HSBC has just released a report which graphs productivity over a person's life using a single thin line.

Productivity vs age (years)



Note: Values here are indicative. The calculations use an absolute peak of 1.0, with the marginal peak at 0.75, in line with theoretical estimates. Productivity defined as contribution to the economy in terms of output.
Source: HSBC.

tradespeople and that the qualification of Licensed Plumber, Gasfitter or Drainlayer provides an out for people if they don't want to go for the higher qualification of Certifier.

This approach can really only be for a couple of reasons. Firstly Certifying tradespeople cost more than Licensed tradespeople and secondly there is less risk of a Licensed tradesperson going out in opposition to the employer company.

From the Federation's point of view the Licensed Qualification creates a number of problems. There is the fact that they have sufficient knowledge and skills to do the job but still require "supervision" so they are paid less.

A lot of them do "cashies" to supplement their main income and this opens up the black market and holds legitimate business prices down as there is a ready supply of people willing to do cheap cash jobs for the consumer.

It also creates a problem where work is going unsupervised and puts the public and their property at risk.

The Federation has been an advocate for having "training courses" not these stupid week long assessments that we believe simply waste time.

It seems an environment has been created that trains apprentices to pass assessments not to be good tradespeople.

Every time the Federation brings this up at meetings the Skills Organisation (ITO) and employer representatives bring up that it would cost more to run courses.

From our point of view this is

So your whole life, with all its challenges and accomplishments, can be summed up with one thin red line on a graph. The HSBS report included a graph that describes the productivity of the average person over the course of their entire life.

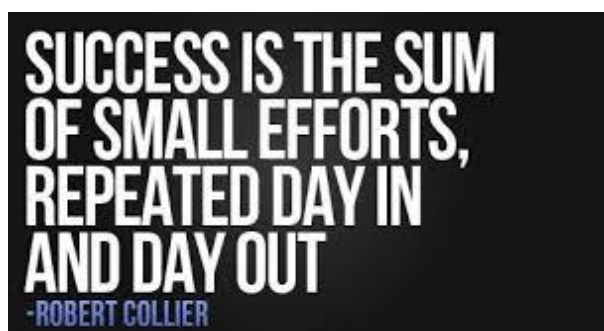
So prepare to be depressed because according to the graph, you reach your "marginal peak" around the age of 30 and then reach your "absolute peak" at 50. It's really all downhill from there. Forget all the milestones and big life events you've been busy adding to your Facebook feed because it all seems to boil down to this: you're born, you climb up to your "absolute peak", you retire, become more and more useless by the day until you're no good for anything - and die.

So it looks like life is one slow march towards inevitable death which is depressing, but what isn't depressing is the achievements being made in the industry being pushed by people who are reaching their absolute peak! If you think about where the industry may have been had the previous regime continued, we would certainly have been on our death bed. We are still critical but not dead. A lot has been achieved and life is too short to stress ourselves with people who don't even deserve to be an issue.

Sometimes it takes an overwhelming breakdown to have an undeniable breakthrough and that could be said about the relationship between the Federation and others where they have been rocky to say the least, but now they relationships are becoming workable.

Robert Collier once said "Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out" and we believe the Federation has maintained that stance every week with the production of the Fellow Practitioner which this week is up to 284 editions!!!

Chairman's View



In Fellow Practitioner Issue 100, May 2012 we questioned the newly appointed Chairman of the Federation, Wal Gordon, about his views of the state of the industry. Now 184 issues later we get an update from him. Remember

Wal has been involved with the Fellow Practitioner right from the start so he has seen a lot happen.

Fellow practitioners

Firstly I would like to extend my thanks to the members of the Federation Executive Committee. They are the unsung heroes of the industry and have pushed for five years to get change to the way we are regulated. But they couldn't do it without the members of the Federation who have provided opinions, finance and support. Those in the industry that support the Federation should proudly tell others they fund and support change - be proud

bullshit and the opportunity to get good tradespeople is being jeopardised for others to make money.

The Federation believes the process should be starting from the end product which we feel is a tradesperson who has the knowledge and skills to do the job unsupervised and is accountable for their own work. That's the end product but the first step.

The second step of the process should be to look at what skills and knowledge the individual needs to become the first step.

The third step in the process should be to look at the delivery method - how are the knowledge and skills going to be taught, practiced and tested?

From those three steps we have all the information needed to get our finished product, a tradesperson who has the knowledge and skills to do the job unsupervised and is accountable for their own work.

The cost is what it is and to look at cost any earlier than when we have decided what is required for the desired end product is to dilute the end product.

Put simply the end product becomes a budget product. A product that we get for what we are prepared to spend.

The big question is what do we end up with in the future? We already know the skills and knowledge in the industry now have been diluted so how many times are we going to allow them to be diluted?

Are we going to get to the stage where we pay the Skills Organisation or equivalent organisation as our ITO \$25,000 to supply us with a directive magazine and a

of it because it does make a difference and we thank you.

Wow 284 issues of the Fellow Practitioner. What started out as simple protest action to get real information to practitioners has changed the face of the industry and some people are addicted to their weekly update of what is happening. I think the Federation Committee has done a great job getting the information together; making sure it was right and then getting it out to Federation members and others. They put in some huge hours and they do it not for pay, not for position, but because they know what they are doing is the right thing to do. They deserve a huge vote of thanks from practitioners and the industry.

They have tried to ensure relevant information is available to practitioners, uncensored, true in fact and without hidden agendas. The fact that we have had to send out 284 Issues of the Fellow Practitioner is a bit of a sad reflection of the speed of change and the attitudes the Federation has been up against.

The fight for change has gone on for a long time and I believe personalities had a great deal to do with it and that some people in positions of authority made decisions which were wrong and they did not want to back down. They simply followed on from decisions made in the past and did not "man up" to make change. They continued to tell the stakeholders that their operations were squeaky clean and that all was well in the industry. The past, present and future caught up with them.

I am sure that behind the scenes some members of the Board have been pushing for change but it is only since the appointment of the new Board Chief Executive, Martin Sawyers, that we have seen visible signs of progress in getting an "industry supported" regulatory regime. There is still a long way to go and it is not Martin's sole responsibility to effect change however at the moment he is the glue that is holding it all together.

Think back to nine months ago when it was discussed about turning our backs on licensing in 2016 - that's how bad things had got when as an industry organisation we were happy to defy the Government regulation of the industry. The Minister of Building and Housing still seems to have some hidden agenda and can go on notice that if he attempts to implement change that is not supported by the industry he will be the one endangering the health and safety of the public. The Government have already done it with the Gas Certification regime they implemented.

When you regulate people you need to lead by example. The Minister informed me in person at our one and only meeting that there is no way he would ever appoint me to the Board, so it just goes to show you that it's about personalities and him wanting "Yes Minister" people to follow his direction whether it is right or wrong after all he has nothing to lose as he doesn't fund the industry.

Quite frankly the Federation didn't fight for five years to finally get progress and have some politician, backed by a bunch of bureaucrats that have done "desk to research" to back the Ministers 'plans come along and stuff it all up. The Government have put themselves in the situation of having nothing we need or want. Their legislation will not protect the public it is our skills and knowledge that do that and we can withdraw them any time we want.

Respect and trust must be earned and don't come as part of your employment agreement or political appointment so enough of wasting your time on people that don't really matter because their choices are now limited - let the industry

simple test to become qualified.

In reality more and more responsibility is being passed on to employers for the training of Apprentices but they or the apprentice have to pay for the privilege to do that.

The new NZQA qualifications being developed, in the Federation's opinion, create more problems with regard to supervision, the black market and the watering down of skills and knowledge.

In essence the apprentice or the employer pay around \$12,000 over four years and the Government, (through our taxes) pay around \$13,000 over four years but who is getting the most from it?

We do not believe the industry is getting value for money and the new qualifications are putting more and more cost and responsibility on the employer.

Here are a couple of paragraphs from a report called "The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan"

What is an apprenticeship? An

Apprenticeship is a job that requires substantial and sustained training, leading to the achievement of an Apprenticeship standard and the development of transferable skills.

This definition is underpinned by four principles of Future Apprenticeships:

- an Apprenticeship is a job, **in a skilled occupation.**
- an Apprenticeship requires **substantial and sustained training** lasting a minimum of 12 months and

develop and prosper or have an industry that is forever resentful and non supportive of the Governments actions.

In the later part of this year the situation with the Board changed and there is now a working relationship between the Board and the Federation but there is still a long way to go. Remember the Federation is about fairness and equality, not position or money. Martin Sawyer is putting in immense effort to effect change for the good of practitioners, the Board and the public. He is off to a good start.

We have seen CPD change, a professional investigator bought on to staff to ensure everyone is treated fairly, and the real facts will prove innocence or guilt. We have seen the formation of industry liaison groups and Board representatives actively participating in training and skills development to ensure the Board's actions and those of the industry are travelling in the same direction. The CPD changes alone save the industry millions of dollars and thousands of hours.

We have seen supervision direction sent to the industry, fees have been worked on but funding still needs to be addressed - however this is a government issue. There has been a reduction of the number of lawyers employed by the Board and the role of those still there has been altered to better meet the needs of the Board.

Education and assistance, not heavy handed regulation and enforcement is starting to show now with changes to CPD and the Board's active participation in skills development. Also the Board's implementation of processes for dealing with complaints where mediation can be entered into at the early stages is ready to make a huge difference to the discipline process. Practitioners are starting to get fairness.

Martin Sawyers is working on that thin line between the Board and the industry and so far is balancing the needs very well. One thing we know is that trust and respect are hard to earn but extremely easy to lose. It can take years to gain respect and trust and that is won through honesty, integrity and consistency. Just one mistake and you can lose everything.

Martin's work can only be successful if he is backed by the Board and there are some good people on the Board but it is something the industry has no control over. The Minister of Building and Housing seems to have his hidden agenda so he will be appointing people to meet his needs. No one knows if he is appointing people to make the Board better or to destroy it.

There are people on the Board that are passionate about the industry and its future and are prepared to listen and make change but there are also people on the Board that appear to be there for "position".

The Federation still supports the stances of "do the crime - do the time" and "get legal or get out". It is time for the Board to support legitimate practitioners to take back the industry for the "cowboys" and not just go for the "Easy Targets" as they have in the past.

Some of the changes that have occurred were recommended by the Federation years ago but it doesn't really matter whose idea they were that fact that they are being implemented if testament that change can be made. All we can hope for is that it doesn't take as long to implement the next round of change that is desperately needed.

includes off-the-job training

- an Apprenticeship leads to **full competency** in an occupation, demonstrated by achievement of an **apprenticeship standard** that is **defined by employers** and

- an Apprenticeship develops **transferable skills**, including English and maths, to progress careers.

This isn't far from what the Federation has been saying right from the start and you should read the report about Apprenticeship funding **to the employer** . More to follow on this issue.

We must also hope that the Government doesn't impose its ill informed opinions upon the industry and stuff up the progress that has been made. As an industry though, we do need to make those small efforts every week and get more people to make them and be prepared to take on the Government because they seem to have a hearing problem.

Finally thanks to everyone for your support and congratulations to you all for making the effort to fight for change.

Wal Gordon

Chairman Plumbers Gasfitters and Drainlayers Federation

Thanks to Wal for his views and for his tireless efforts on our behalf.

Very soon we will be taking a break so Friday the 18 December 2015 will be our last issue of the Fellow Practitioner for the year so if you want to have a final say this year then get the information sent to wal.gordon@xtra.co.nz now for inclusion.

Issues will commence in late January 2016 or sooner if something important happens.

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