

CPD programme ignites a spark for NZTG members

At a time when the spotlight continues to be firmly on the skills shortage within the construction industry and its supporting trades, New Zealand still faces high demand for knowledgeable and top-quality tradies, with a heightened requirement for compliance.

NZTG members taking part in a recent Schneider C-BUS accreditation programme

NZTG continues to evolve its CPD programme, ensuring it is relevant and keeps pace with market needs and changes

To tackle this need, one trailblazing organisation has successfully implemented upskilling opportunities for its members. In April 2018, NZ Trade Group (NZTG) introduced a component of continuing professional development (CPD) to its member companies, and the uptake has been exceptional.

With a nationwide membership of over 140 electrical contracting businesses, NZTG provides a number of benefits to members that include cloud-based quote and job management software to optimise their operations, collective buying power through its supplier network, collaborative networking to manage workloads, as well as their highly successful CPD programme.

"The CPD programme has been highly beneficial to every member business, to NZTG as an organisation and to our industry as a whole," says Andrew Jameson, NZTG's general manager. "Because it has been created by contractors for contractors, it is relevant to their needs and is a tangible way of demonstrating that creating and maintaining a network of competent, high-calibre members is at the forefront of our minds. This programme hopes to set an example for the electrical industry as a whole towards what should become standard practice to retain a working licence."

HIGHER STANDARDS

As the only provider of a structured CPD programme in the electrical trade at present, NZTG's aim is to position its members as market leaders and proactively encourage higher standards of business competence, compliance and technical upskilling. The initiative is designed to create a larger pool of highly



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skilled contractors managing sustainable and successful businesses.

The CPD programme is based around three categories:

- ▶ Business competence – provides skills on business management and includes learning around software training, formulating/updating business plans, annual business health audits, business coaching and more
- ▶ Business/industry compliance – helps demonstrate competence in business and industry compliance, covering health and safety, insurance reviews/assessment, maintaining an industry practising licence and more
- ▶ Technical development – focuses on demonstrating and broadening core competencies and learning, such as supplier training, online technical training, technical skill development and more.

Member businesses need to complete at least seven points from each category, reaching a total of 21 points over a calendar year. The training format includes a mix of in-person workshops, online training and day-to-day best-practice and self-directed learning.

The programme offers members a simple way of bringing together all levels of industry and business training in one easily managed and indexed online matrix that provides a library of content, including videos. Additionally,

the programme offers better networking and engagement opportunities, encouraging contractors to share business information that traditionally they might have been sensitive about sharing with their peers in the same trade.

AN OUTSTANDING UPTAKE

Mr Jameson says 95% of NZTG's members have already completed their CPD requirements for the year. "This is an outstanding uptake and very encouraging. It shows how relevant the courses are and the enthusiasm of our members to continually learn and upskill themselves, their staff and businesses, which results in greater business confidence and opportunities for them and NZTG.

"We've assessed the quality of the training and put together everything contractors need to upskill their business – it's all at their fingertips. We've worked closely with our preferred suppliers who are providing a lot of training, so we know it's all first-class. The CPD programme is set out in a simple-to-follow structure that helps everyone involved."

Recognising the 24-hour nature of the trade sector, Mr Jameson says that NZTG members receive a strong focus on education and training moving increasingly to an online model. It's useful information that will help trade businesses get ahead, faster – delivered when they need it, at a pace they determine, in simple and accessible bite-sized chunks.

He adds that the programme can also help to transform businesses through integrating the training into a yearly business plan. "The flow-on effects of deeper knowledge, staff retention and increased workplace culture can only benefit a business and the industry as a whole, with many members setting the CPD programme as KPIs for their own staff, creating a continued environment of learning."

THE OPPORTUNITY TO UPSKILL

Kris Roberts, owner of KR Electrical in Auckland, has been a member of NZTG for just over a year and says, "One of the key benefits has been the opportunity to upskill and learn through NZTG's CPD programme. In particular, I've really enjoyed and seen the benefit from the business coaching they offer.

"Day to day, we are all busy trying to get the job done and run a successful business, but NZTG offering a CPD programme means it's an easy way for me to stay up to date and relevant, and ensures that we're all at the top of our game."

NZTG continues to evolve its CPD programme, ensuring it is relevant and keeps pace with market needs and changes, ensuring a brighter-looking future for NZTG members.

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