

# Clear benefits from hosting with Etco



"We've hosted hundreds of Etco apprentices over the past 20 years and currently have 18," says Bruce Dalton, Managing Director of Auckland-based Dalton Electrical.

Bruce says the support provided and the flexibility of hosting provides confidence for employers.

"You want someone who will be a good fit with your workplace culture," he says. "If you employ your own apprentice and they aren't a good fit, that can be tricky and it isn't good for the apprentice either. In that situation, Etco will find them a placement they are better suited to."

"We've had people who have not fitted well here and gone on to do very well at other places and people who haven't fitted well elsewhere but have done very well here. Different people suit different places and the best thing for your business is to have people who are engaged with what you want to do at an early stage."

"We aim for apprentices to stay with us for their entire apprenticeship and they almost always join the business at the end. We provide them with a wide range of experience across our two divisions and see it as a way of building up a good technical workforce."

Bruce says the range of Etco resources, such as co-ordinator support, bespoke learning management system and e-diary provides significant advantages.

"It's brilliant. Everything is in place to support apprentices. A good

measure of Etco's success is how quickly its apprentices complete their apprenticeships. Non-Etco apprentices usually take longer and you often find, at the end of three years, that they still have units that haven't been signed off. With Etco, none of that stuff gets missed."

Bruce also welcomes the pastoral care provided. All apprentices can access free Southern Cross healthcare insurance and Etco's Switched On programme provides support, from practical advice to counselling on anything from financial or housing concerns to personal issues.

"Etco's HR and counselling service provided wrap around support really fast," says Bruce. "As a larger company, we have our own EAP system but a small business might not know how to react in such situations – but Etco has it covered."

Etco has a long-standing record of its apprentices succeeding in the Master Electricians Challenge and Dalton's Etco apprentices have carried off the Industrial title seven times since 2009.

"We encourage all of our apprentices to enter," says Bruce. "It isn't simply about winning, it's about benchmarking yourself against your industry peers, exposure to new things and sparking new interests."

Bruce is so committed to Etco's

apprenticeship model that he served on its board for a number of years.

"I'm passionate about training," he says. "Etco is owned by Master Electricians, it's not there for profit, it's there purely for industry good and is very much aligned with our company values."

Simon Rogers, partner in Stewart and Rogers Electrical in Wellington says that for many years the business has combined employing its own apprentices with also hosting Etco apprentices – but now it's switching to purely hosting.

"One of the main reasons is the amount of time we've needed to put into monitoring and supporting our own apprentices," says Simon.

"That's increased over the years. When I was an apprentice I had one text book for my entire apprenticeship. My son is doing his apprenticeship and has a new textbook a year. Managing them through that is very time-consuming but the Etco co-ordinators take care of all that for you."

"Etco apprentices are of a very high standard. We have had over 60 over the last 25 years and have eight currently. Some people say hosting an Etco apprentice is more expensive but I find, over a four year period, they contribute more to your business and when you factor in all the time required to manage and support your own apprentices that balances out."

## Etco costs vs rate

The only cost an Etco hosts pay is an hourly rate for the productive time while the apprentice is actually working for them.

Etco pays all costs for apprentices during sick leave, annual leave, statutory holidays or while they are on block courses, covers all their learning fees and provides their PPE and a \$1,700 start-up tool kit.

While the hourly rate for hosting an Etco apprentice may be more than you'd pay your own apprentice, once all the aspects Etco covers are taken into account, the actual cost to the host business works out at around 20 per cent less than employing someone yourself.

If you would like to find out more about hosting an Etco apprentice, see [www.etco.co.nz/hosts](http://www.etco.co.nz/hosts) or give us a call on **0800 ask etco**.



Dalton Electrical MD Bruce Dalton provides pointers to third year Etco apprentice Bodie Johnson.