



GEELONG ADVERTISER BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2009

Geelong Advertiser Business of the Year — Gordon McKay

Switched on for success

Gordon McKay has systems and staff in place to grow to new challenges

GAVIN McKay is extremely proud of his staff and their families after Gordon McKay Pty Ltd won the 2009 Geelong Advertiser Business of the Year.

Despite all the growth in the company, the managing director of Gordon McKay electrical and data contractors said it wouldn't happen without the support of quality, long-term staff and their families.

"I'm proud of what the employees and the staff have been able to achieve over a long period of time. And none of that would be possible without the tremendous support from our clientele. They give us the opportunity to carry out their work over a long period of time."

Mr McKay said the company's secret is its ability to recruit quality staff and hold on to them.

"Their loyalty to stay here over a long period of time. It gives us the opportunity to develop," he said.

But Gordon McKay's real secret is its integrated management system and its ISO accreditation.

"We've got an integrated management system in place to manage our processes and systems. Everyone knows the processes to follow. That's been a major impetus to move the business ahead."

Mr McKay said it's also been important for the company which works in a very risky industry.

"Having an IMS and being quality assured with regards to safety opens opportunities that major clients because they are looking for you to have those systems in place.

"Businesses like Vicroads, Shell and Barwon Water are looking for companies that have those systems

in place to ensure that work is carried out safely."

Some of those companies have been where Gordon McKay has expanded in recent years.

"We took the opportunity 12 years ago to open a division in Melbourne," Mr McKay said.

"That started with a couple of people and now we're employing about 70 people in Melbourne as well as maintaining the same number of people we always have within the Geelong region," he said.

"It's given us an opportunity to expand the business and compete with the other major electrical companies in Victoria."

While the scope of the company has changed over the decades, one aspect hasn't — it's commitment on apprentices.

"Employing apprentices and training have been an integral part of our development. Over the 56 years we've been in business, there's been hundreds of apprentices gone through here. Many still work within the business and now fulfil senior management roles in the company."

Gordon McKay started the company following the new SEC powerlines through western Victoria.

Now the company does maintenance work on the West Gate Bridge.

"There's been a major shift over the last 10 to 15 years about workplace safety. We've had to make sure that we've embraced that safety aspect totally in the company for it to develop.

"We've had to make sure we've brought in external consultants and expertise because you've never made it in safety, it's an ongoing process."



Geelong Advertiser general manager Mark Gardy, right, congratulates Gordon McKay managing director Gavin McKay on winning to 2009 Geelong Advertiser Business Excellence Award.

Gordon McKay first won a Geelong business award in 1986, when it was crowned best small non-manufacturing business.

"To win the overall award voted by your peers when there are so many well-recognised and professional companies in Geelong, it's a huge honour.

"We've continued to develop and grow our business

But Mr McKay always returns the secret to the company's success back to his staff and their families.

"We carry out a lot of after-hours service work for our clients so there's a lot of people being called out in the middle of the night to services.

And that's always an inconvenience on their families, their children, their partners and their wives.

Without the ongoing support of the families of the employees we wouldn't be able to service the clients."

Judges were mightily impressed with Gordon McKay's submission to the awards.

"The amount of work and the level of detail put into Gordon McKay's planning process was incredibly impressive. Significant work around structure and systems has been completed to reduce the reliance on the owner and ensure a more robust business going forward," the judges said.

"It is a credit to the organisation that it has achieved so much behind the scenes in the past year without taking the eye off the client or the market. The business has undergone a major organisational restructure, achieved accreditation in integrated management systems that will increase its access to larger clients, created a new renewable energies department and relocated its Melbourne office."

Judges also praised the integrated management system for its use in managing the workforce which is spread out across two cities and largely on clients premises.

"Typically, this is handed with great thoroughness and a commitment to communication."



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www.gmckay.com.au

