



Cory DeBruyn, owner of The Electricians, used an apprenticeship as a springboard to become an electrician and own his own business.

Christopher Smith, Exhibitor Staff

Apprenticeship program sparks business success

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Cory DeBruyn's life would be the envy of most 25-year-olds, and he's done it all without attending university or inheriting a fortune.

The licensed electrician owns his own house on Margaret Drive and employs six people at a ground-floor, back-door Colborne Street shop called The Electricians.

"I've got everything but a wife," he joked.

DeBruyn started on his career path as a 16-year-old Pauline Johnson Collegiate student through the SWAP program, a forerunner of the current Ontario youth apprenticeship program. He went to school three days and worked two. The work appealed to him so much he be-

came a full-time apprentice.

DeBruyn is a living example of what can happen when young people take skilled trades seriously as a career path, rather than automatically assume post-secondary education is the way to go.

DeBruyn spent five years apprenticing at Wireworks Electrical Ltd. on Copernicus Boulevard, then another year in Australia, before returning to spend a year at Pro-Mar Electrical Services and two more years at another company on Copernicus, RBF Electrical and Automation Services.

With all of that experience and still just 23 years old, he joined The Electricians as an apprentice to owner John Borda.

Borda retired eight months ago. DeBruyn bought him out and began to expand the business. There were two licensed electricians

and an apprentice under Borda. DeBruyn still has two licensed operators, but he's expanded the corps of apprentices to three and added a bookkeeper.

"I brought in some new customers and kept it solid, and I kept his customers happy," he said.

Reputation is the key to success, he added. "That's what anybody runs their business on."

The team specializes in commercial and industrial work, DeBruyn said, but will gladly answer residential calls, even though there's little money in that end of the business.

DeBruyn can be found on the rugby fields during his time away from work, both as a flanker for the Brantford Harlequins and as an assistant coach for the PJ team. "That's my stress reliever," he said.