

Tradesman Inner Circle Member Profile

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1. Tell us a little about your situation, business, family etc.

I completed my apprenticeship in 1999 with G.C Cooper Plumbing and stayed on as a sub-contractor full time until 2002. We specialized in industrial/commercial maintenance and installations. It was a great company to work for as I gained priceless experience in many areas of plumbing and forged great friendships with co-workers. My boss was a stickler for perfection which played a major roll in how I perform my work and present my company today.

After 18 months of working for J&R Jones Plumbing doing new homes, 6 years with G.C Cooper Plumbing doing industrial and commercial work, and 6 months with Australian Hot Water Services, I decided to open up shop myself.

Over the course of 10 years we have experienced a few different phases and have taken different directions to what we specialize in. Today we are a branded company that specializes in Residential Maintenance/Renovations & Emergency Plumbing. The business consists of myself, Tristan (my wife plus book keeper, office manager), a 2nd year apprentice and a newly appointed tradesman. We have 2 trucks on the road and are hoping to expand to 3 within the next 12 months.

I live in North Warrandyte, Victoria with my wife Tristan, son Ned 5, daughter's Darcy 3 and Hazel 1. We have two dogs, a heeler cross called Pi, and what looks like a ridgeback cross kangaroo called Shelby.

My interests are 60's and 70's muscle, sports and racing cars. I love spending time with my family, listening to music, eating good food, water skiing,

snowboarding and especially having a beer and talking crap with mates.

My pride and joy is my replica 1965 AC Shelby Cobra. I am an active member of the Cobra Car Club of Victoria. I take the car to club runs, car shows, historic race meetings and drive it in events on the race track myself.

2. What's the biggest challenge you've faced in the last 12 months?

The biggest challenge we have faced in the last 12 months would have to be the restructuring of our whole business. E.g. Name change and new logo design, invoice and report books made up, marketing material, new uniforms, change of bank account names and supplier account names etc.

3. How have you tackled that challenge? How do you feel about it?

We have put in the hard yards utilizing spare time effectively to get these things taken care of without eating into too much valuable income earning time. It has taken a while but we can see the light at the end of the tunnel now!

4. How have you and your business changed since joining TIC?

Where do I start. We have changed in more than a thousand ways. **We have new motivation and stride in the way we operate.** We have changed our name and our business identity. **We have put systems in place that were non-existent before.** We were always chasing money, and now we collect payment on the day for 80% to 90% of all jobs. **We are more confident in business in general.** **TIC has opened up a world of opportunity and taught me to think outside of the square.** **Overall we are a more professional operation and bottom line our profit margin is up by 280%!**





5. Where do you see your business in 5 years?

In 5 years we hope to have expanded to 4 or 5 trucks with tradesmen in each, and 1 or 2 apprentices to help with the workload. I hope to stand back from being on the tools so I can focus solely on organising jobs and bringing in new clientel.

By this time all of our kids will be at school so hopefully Tristan can take on the role of Office Manager full time.

Away from work we hope to have completed our renovation.extension so that we can start to pay it off... We hope then to be able to rely on our staff to lighten the work load allowing us to spend time with the kids and entertain guests in our newly renovated home!

6. What are the top 3 things you have learnt about business that you would recommend to others, and WHY? (eg; life plan, watching numbers, customers first????)

Tip1 and why:

Be honest to yourself, and honest to your customers. You cannot go wrong!

Tip2 and why:

Know your figures and your market. Know what you have to charge to earn a profit and know what to charge to be competitive and fair. You are not doing yourself any favors by plucking a figure out of thin air! Potentially you could run your business into the ground for either not charging enough or being branded as a rogue for over charging!

Tip3 and why:

Learn to delegate. Apprentice's will not learn without hands on experience and throwing them in at the deep end every now and then. If you want your business to expand, you cannot do everything! There are other tradesman out there as good as you!

7. Favorite tool and why?

Mini Excavator – Makes money, cheap to run and maintain. Turns a nightmare of a job on a shovel into an easy one.

8. Tell us something quirky about yourself that your buddies don't know (eg. you have a favourite coffee cup that sings happy birthday!, you're the only one in your extended family that is left handed)

I own the box set of "Macleods Daughters".

9. Who would you most like to have lunch with and why (eg. Richard Branson, just to say I'd had lunch with him! or to ask him how he gets so much stuff done)

Carroll Shelby (brainchild for the AC Shelby Cobra) He used his identity as a international racing driver and winner of the LeMans 24hr enduro race to persuade the Ford Motor Company to fit a Ford V8 pick-up truck engine into a already 30 year old English AC sportscar. His aim was to build a car that would beat the likes of Ferrari and Jaguar on the USA and International racing circuits.

The outcome was his Cobra's won everything there was to win in the USA and went on to be one of the most successful race cars ever produced. He then designed a streamline Cobra known as the Daytona Coupe which won LeMans 24hr and is the only American car to ever win a World Sportscar Championship.

The 1965 AC Cobra 427 S/C has performance that can be compared with modern day sportscars. The AC Cobra is the most replicated and one of the most desired cars in the world. Carroll Shelby is the classic underdog, he had a larger than life dream that he turned to reality through sheer drive, persistence and passion.

Sir Jack Brabham (Australian racing driver and race car designer/constructor) Formula 1 World Champion 1959, 1960 and 1966. Founder of Repco-Brabham Racing Cars. The only person to ever win a Formula 1 World Championship in a car bearing his own name. It is unlikely this will ever happen again.