

# Lifestyle Tradie

ISSUE #33

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12 QUESTIONS  
TO A BETTER  
LIFE!



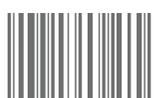
ARE YOU READY FOR  
ROBOTS TO TAKE OVER  
YOUR JOB?

## Ben Van Der Kooy Metropolis Plumbing and Gas

PLATINUM VIP MEMBER

*"Clear direction & improved systems has seen my  
productivity go through the roof"*

 **Lifestyle Tradie**  
*the freedom to choose...*



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# Lifestyle Tradie Member Profile

*"Clear direction & improved systems has seen my productivity go through the roof. We've improved cash flow by 438% and implemented upfront pricing and Xero to name a few."*



**Ben Van Der Kooy**

*Metropolis Plumbing and Gas – Platinum VIP Member  
Multi-Award Winning Plumbers  
[www.metropolisplumbingandgas.com.au](http://www.metropolisplumbingandgas.com.au)*

## **1. Describe your business journey up until now, your family etc.**

We are a multi-award plumbing company based in Perth with two tradesmen and an apprentice.

I have been married to my amazing wife Kylie for eight years and are blessed with three energetic boys; Samson (5), Hugo (3) and Archie (1). Kylie is not directly involved with the business but without her running the house and wisely spending our money, I wouldn't have the headspace to run the business like I do.

I have dyslexia so I struggled at school with reading and comprehension. I enrolled in a pre-apprenticeship course at T.A.F.E - I didn't want anyone saying that my dad just gave me a job. I topped the class for 2 semesters so I can't be all that bad!

At the end of our apprenticeship I finished my plumbing licence, had some business cards and invoice books printed and started my business at the age of 21.

Did I know much about running a business? Not really... A real estate agent that I was working for kindly pointed out that all my invoices didn't have invoice numbers on them. That's a good idea!

8 years ago Shaun started work as a mature age apprentice. I really enjoyed watching his skills improve every day.

Shaun had been with me for a couple of years when my sister moved back to Perth from Sydney. Not long after they started dating and before I knew it, he became my brother-in-law. Just for the record I chose Shaun first! Shaun and Kristy have a little boy called Maverick (1).

Shaun sees the big picture and embraces change. He is exceptionally good with our customers and that's why I refer to him as the "day maker" in the company.

Our new apprentice Synjon has a great attitude, is mature and passionate for the job. It won't be long until he too will be a 'day maker'.

We're multi-award winners having won **'Outstanding Customer Service' Award** from the Kalamunda Chamber of Commerce for the 2nd year in a row plus received a High Commendation for the CBUS 2013 Customer Service Award by the Master Plumbers Association of WA.



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

Trying to get the business to run more efficiently. Going paperless.

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

We've jumped from MYOB to Xero, which has been awesome. I can now reconcile in traffic (LTG joke, credit to Andrew from Everest Electrical)

## 4. How have you and your business changed since joining Lifestyle Tradie Group (LTG)? What difference has this had on your personal life?

**Lifestyle Tradie has given me real direction.**

I've **implemented an up-front pricing system** and a membership/loyalty program. Our **cash flow has improved immensely (by 438%)** now collecting money at the end of every job. This has reduced our outstanding invoices from \$60-\$70K to \$10-\$16K.

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

Totally paperless. An office in the backyard. Have a full WHS system in place. 2 more tradesmen/2 vans

and a full-time office manager.

## 6. What are the top 3 things you have learnt about business that you would recommend to others and WHY?

1. **Get invoice numbers printed on your invoice books** - It just helps you to keep track of all your invoices!
2. **Get help in your business early in your career.** Try and find a trade business coach who has 'done it all before' (preferably with a wife who is a marketing guru...)
3. **Dump 'time & materials' charging.** This made me twice as efficient, totally organised resulting in higher profit.

## 7. Favourite tool and why?

**Ben: Jetter, camera and locator combination.**

It's great to be able to show customers exactly what the problem is, where it is and provide a solution to fix it once and for all!

**Kylie: Thermomix.** Google it!

**Shaun: B Press Crimper.** It makes my job easier especially when the water mains don't shut off properly.

## 8. Tell us something quirky about yourself that your buddies don't know.

**Ben:** I like to eat all my chocolate and confectionery frozen.

**Kylie:** I sneeze every time I have a mint!

**Shaun:** I wish I was Superman.

## 9. Who would you most like to have lunch with and why?

**Ben:** George W Bush. I haven't got anything particular to ask him, but would like to have a chat about life!

**Kylie:** Rachel Jankovich. a blogger, writer and mother of 6 kids under the age of 9. She has the exact same humour as I do and I think we'd have a lot to talk about.

**Shaun:** Chester Williams. the first african to play for the Springboks, he is a christian and I would like to ask him how it felt to part of a changing nation.

