

Future bright for apprentices

September 13, 2007

It mightn't be the Young Rich List but the inaugural Business Network Apprentice Hall of Fame should be just as inspirational.

As noted in this column last week, there is more to encouraging young people into apprenticeships than the minimum wage debate.

It is all about reminding everyone - students and parents - that taking up an apprenticeship does not preclude anyone from following their career dream; that starting at the bottom does not mean you can't make it to the top.

Indeed, these pages have featured numerous small business success stories in that category, such as last week's subject, Bruce Dicker from Wagga Wagga, who started as an apprentice aircraft mechanic at 15 and now owns BeeDee Bags with sales of \$12 million a year.

Recently we had the moving story of Mary Toniolo, who was responsible for her underprivileged family when she was a child and had 20 years of struggling as everything from barmaid to chauffeur to housewife. Now she's suddenly a multi-millionaire with her world-acclaimed Bella Dancerella range.

Or what about Keran Wicks, who left school at 13 to work in a petrol station, overcame hardship as a single mother and is now thought to be the only female in the world running her own video network?

There was Brian Cregan, who started off as an apprentice carpenter but today runs one of Australia's most successful surfwear companies, Ocean & Earth.

Neil Smith, who left school at 15 to become a lab technician and ended up with his own successful orthotics business, has already inspired others. Soon after his story appeared, the city of Ballarat contacted me, wanting to use his encouraging case study to help with the problem of their high level of early school leavers.

Perhaps the best apprentice story is that of Eugene Hansen, a former plumber and gas fitter who now runs Omni Trade Services, which employs 30 tradespeople.

Here's what Hansen said of his business motivation: "One of the things I did from day one in business, before I could even afford to pay myself, was to pay an apprentice to work for me because I believe the opportunities I was given as an apprentice were extraordinary."

Then there are those who will feature in coming weeks: the former fitting and machining apprentice who is now running one of Australia's biggest, best run and most dynamic spare parts group; and the soft-hearted young shopfitter from Sydney's west who ran a cafe to support his mother through her marriage break-up and is now running his own business.

My personal favourite. however. is a group I recently discovered.

Join the conversation

2 people are reading this now.

Comment on Twitter .

Read tweets .

Top Small business articles

1. [Wheels for hire: cashing in on the quirky](#)
2. [Seal the deal: how to draw up a contract](#)
3. [Vehicle sales fell in May](#)
4. [How to build a Twitter strategy for your business](#)
5. [Additional funding for disability employment](#)

+ [More Small business articles](#)

Story Tools

Share on Facebook

Email this story

Print this story

Winning Through Video More video

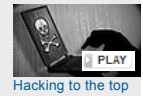
Planet-saving bacteria



Bussed-a-move



The perfect male



Hacking to the top

Blogs

SALES OF THE CENTURY

“ With a wave of business sales likely this decade, planning ... ”



Posted in: [The Venture](#)

Date: Jun 18, 2010, 12:29PM [Comments 1](#)

THE RACIST WORKPLACE

“ Australia's two football codes have been united in the most ... ”



Posted in: [Work In Progress](#)

Date: Jun 18, 2010, 3:03PM [Comments 7](#)

A REVAMP WITH A DIFFERENCE

“ Why applying zero-based thinking could encourage staff to ... ”



Posted in: [Enterprise](#)

Date: Jun 17, 2010, 12:42PM

Editor's picks



Power words: search engine secrets

If inserted in your website's copy, one word above any other can boost business.

[Prev](#) | [Next](#)

called the National Association of Women in Construction, which was established 10 years ago to support, assist and mentor women in the challenging field of construction.

Last month the group held its Victorian "Crystal Vision" awards. Among those honoured were a woman who started her own carpentry business at 20 and an ex-policewoman who became an apprentice electrician at 39.

NAWIC even has an annual "outstanding apprentice" award. Last year's winner started her own cabinet-making business and this year won the award for outstanding achievement by a practising tradesperson.

janineperrett@access.fairfax.com.au

Real Estate



Ever thought of furnishing your house for free?

Domain

- Buy real estate
- Commercial space for lease
- House price hibernation

Jobs



Are you burnt out?

MyCareer

- Is success luck or planning?
- Download our FREE iPhone app!
- Get Head Hunted!

Weather



The ski season is here! Get our FREE Snow & Ski widget

weatherzone

- Get daily weather email alerts
- Sydney Weather
- Weatherzone iPhone App

Property

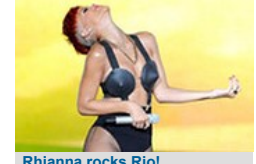


Nice house, could you have afforded to buy it?

APM

- How green is the grass?
- What's your property worth
- NEW Property Pro

TheVine



Rihanna rocks Rio!

THEVINE

- Entertainment & celebrity news
- Latest in Fashion
- Music news and reviews

Compare and Save

[Broadband](#) | [Energy](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Home Loans](#) | [Savings Accounts](#)

Home Loan Hero!



Find a new home loan provider to whisk you away!

[Compare all Home loans](#)

Savings Star!



Rise above the rest with 6.40% savings. Compare Now!

[Compare Savings Accounts](#)

June 30 Emergency



Take out health insurance before June 30 or get taxed.

[Compare Health Cover Now](#)

Google Phones, Everywhere



Google Android Phones are on all carriers, with heaps of deals.

[Compare Mobile Phones](#)

Going Naked, Broadband



Here's how to get Naked Broadband and whether it is for you.

[Compare Broadband Plans](#)

Readers' most viewed

brisbanetimes.com.au

Top 5 Small business articles

1. Wheels for hire: cashing in on the quirky
2. Vehicle sales fell in May
3. Additional funding for disability employment
4. How to build a Twitter strategy for your business
5. .xxx tag ignores porno problems

WAtoday

Top 5 Small business articles

1. Wheels for hire: cashing in on the quirky
2. Seal the deal: how to draw up a contract
3. How to sell wine to China
4. Top 10 global retail trends
5. Fair Work Act 2009

theage.com.au

Top 5 Small business articles

1. Wheels for hire: cashing in on the quirky
2. Seal the deal: how to draw up a contract
3. Vehicle sales fell in May
4. How to build a Twitter strategy for your business
5. New laws used to get entitlements

smh.com.au

Top 5 Small business articles

1. Wheels for hire: cashing in on the quirky
2. Seal the deal: how to draw up a contract
3. Vehicle sales fell in May
4. How to build a Twitter strategy for your business
5. Additional funding for disability employment

Videos

1. Close encounter with a humpback
2. Miss Worlds bus it to Soccer City
3. Cahill: Socceroos never given a fair go
4. Timana Tahu's fiery return to league
5. Hulk backs border protection

[SMH Home](#) | [NSW](#) | [National](#) | [World](#) | [Environment](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Business](#) | [Technology](#) | [Digital Life](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Life & Style](#) | [Travel](#) | [Cars](#) | [Exec Style](#) | [Sport](#) | [Weather](#)

Sydney Morning Herald

[Herald](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Privacy](#)

[Conditions](#)

[Advertise with Us](#)

[Photo Sales](#)

Products & Services

[AM Today](#)

[Last 8 days](#)

[High Contrast](#)

[Text](#)

[Newspaper subscription](#)

[Shop](#)

[Events](#)

[SEO](#)

Connect

[Mobile](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[RSS](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

Classifieds

[Accommodation](#)

[Cars](#)

[Dating](#)

[Jobs](#)

[Real Estate](#)

[Property Price Data](#)

[Tributes & Celebrations](#)

[Place an ad](#)



[Our Sites](#)

[The Sydney Morning Herald](#) | [The Age](#) | [MyCareer](#) | [Domain](#) | [Drive](#) | [RSVP](#) | [Essential Baby](#) | [InvestSMART](#) | [APM](#) | [Stayz](#) | [Weatherzone](#) | [The Vine](#)

[Our Partners](#)

[Business](#) | [Canberra](#) | [Computer Repairs](#) | [Darwin](#) | [Finance Broker](#) | [Lawyers](#) | [Mobiles](#) | [Perth](#) | [Stock Brokers](#) | [Tax Refunds](#)

Copyright © 2010 Fairfax Media

