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AWARD SUCCESS

THE HIGH STANDING THAT SUNDERLAND-BASED MCNALLY AND THOMPSON ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS HAS BUILT UP OVER ITS 20-PLUS YEARS OF OPERATION WAS ONCE AGAIN UNDERLINED WITH AWARD SUCCESS AFTER IT WAS NAMED SME OF THE YEAR AT THE CONSTRUCTING EXCELLENCE NATIONAL AWARDS 2016 FOR THE SECOND TIME IN FOUR YEARS.

"The award is recognition from our industry peers that we've achieved a standard of excellence in everything that we do," explains Fred Hood, Managing Director. "From our point of view, it's validation of the approach that we've taken for the past two decades. We're predominately based in the north-east and generally focus on electrical contracting in a wide range of sectors from extra care housing and hotels through to schools and colleges. We have gradually grown the business to the extent that we now have a turnover of approximately £7.5m supported by a workforce of 55 employees, of which around 20 have been with us straight from school."

This emphasis on developing young talent has been a key factor behind McNally & Thompson's success, particularly at a time when there is such a severe skills shortage industry-wide. "Due to our quality-led approach it has always been important to have people with the right skills and the right attitude," adds Mr Hood. "Of course it's possible to go to the market to get labour but standards can vary dramatically, whereas if we develop our own people in-house in-line with the McNally & Thompson mind-set then we can mould them in the right way."

As it looks to build on last year's award success, McNally & Thompson is looking at utilising its strong infrastructure further by taking the business to the next stage in its development.



"In terms of current opportunities, we've got a strong mixture of contracts and we're carrying out work with Travelodge and Lidl. We're also involved in the development of Darlington Civic Theatre, which is currently undergoing a full refurbishment. In addition, we've got some general housing work, so while there's no single market that is currently exceptionally, by spreading



AWARD WINNERS

MCNALLY AND THOMPSON ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS



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FRED HOOD, MANAGING DIRECTOR

ourselves over a number of sectors we can ensure a solid pipeline of work."

This ability to mix and match its workload by employing a flexible approach has played a strong part in McNally & Thompson's longevity as a business. "It's been absolutely vital," outlines Mr Hood. "We've got several key customers that been very loyal, while the Constructing Excellence success has helped to raise our profile and increase awareness of the standards that we operate at. As a result, we've had an increasing number of

unsolicited enquiries from companies. Once we've carried out a project for them we invariably secure repeat business with them. Before long we've clocked up a stream of projects and it snowballs from there. Given some of these contracts are in excess of £500,000, it only takes one or two of them for us to be able to really push on. It's all been organic growth and we're very fortunate that we haven't had to carry out much marketing at all as a business."

Despite the progress it has been making and the

latest addition to its award collection, there remain a number of hurdles that McNally & Thompson is continuing to have to contend with, particularly from a staffing point of view. "Our employees are a tremendous asset for the business so it's essential that we retain them. As I mentioned previously, we're very committed to training to ensure that they develop to their fullest capabilities. This not only ensures that we have more skills within the business, but also means that they are better prepared to tackle whatever challenges that come their way.

"By bringing in two or three school leavers each year we're also able to ensure a high level of continuity within the business too. This has helped insulate us from the skills shortage that the wider industry has been affected by, allowing us to maintain steady growth without having to compromise on the quality

of service that we're able to deliver. Our approach also helps instil a much stronger sense of loyalty in our people, which in turn helps with staff retention.

"Looking ahead, we're committed to retaining our existing client base by ensuring our customer satisfaction levels remain high. They're currently around 91 per cent, which is good, but we're striving to increase them further to around 95 per cent. We've got a strong workload in place for the rest of 2017 and into 2018 so we're well placed for more sustainable and profitable growth."

It's clear that rather than resting on its laurels, McNally & Thompson is instead committed to developing further. "We haven't got massive growth plans but a ten per cent increase on last year's turnover is certainly more than achievable," concludes Mr Hood.

And if more awards come its way, all the better.



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Park Electrical Distributors is the North East's largest independent electrical wholesaler with a near £20 million turnover. Established in 1991, it has branches in Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland and Teesside. In addition to its role as a wholesaler, the company has specialist divisions - Lighting Design, Energy Solution, Building Technologies and Industrial Services - that deliver bespoke solutions to generate significant long term energy savings that are also proven to increase productivity and raise staff morale. Environmental stewardship is high on the company's priority and this is achieved by focussing on Light Emitting Diode (LED) technology that significantly reduces carbon footprint.

Congratulations McNally & Thompson Ltd from all the team at YESSS Electrical!



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