



**This page:** These key staff at Multinail have all been with the company for over 15 years.

# Long service

A focus on retaining long-term staff makes a real difference to the bottom line for Multinail fabricators. BY JANE CLARK

In a competitive market where margins are constantly being squeezed, maintaining full production capacity is critical to the success of a truss plant. With nailplate providers touching nearly every aspect of the frame and truss business, being able to offer consistency in customer service makes a real difference to fabricators.

Geoff Baxter, owner of BB Truss in Keilor Park, Victoria has been dealing with Multinail for 20 years. "Some people in the industry focus only on the cost of nailplates," says Baxter. "That's only a small percentage of winning a job – it has to be a package. You're really only as good as the support, backup and responsive service you can provide your own customers."

For Baxter, long-standing staff from providers like Multinail make a quantifiable difference to his business. The roof truss industry is unique in that it's not just about products, it's also about providing an engineering service, and a consistent relationship between the same people at

the nailplate company and fabricator makes everything easier and more reliable.

"Having good, reliable, accurate advice from staff who know your business backwards is vital," he says. "Multinail's staff have a good rapport with us, they understand what we're trying to achieve.

"If we get callbacks on site because something's not right, we start losing money straight away. It's not just the time on site fixing problems, it's also the phone calls from the customers. We left our previous nail plate supplier because it was taking three weeks to get a rectification. Multinail delivers theirs in 24 hours. I can honestly say that in 20 years with Multinail, they haven't let me down once."

## COMPANY COMMITMENT

Staff retention has been a focus for Multinail. A combination of attractive workplace culture and a company-wide commitment to innovation and new technologies has helped to attract and retain

talented staff. As a family company, it knows the value of generational knowledge.

Trent Taylor, Multinail's COO, says, "My father Peter Taylor has worked hard over the last 40 years to create a stable, proven and resilient company that is continually evolving and adapting. I think it has given all staff the freedom to really push boundaries, to encourage them to think outside the square."

Recruitment policies focus on matching people to work they love and thrive in. Existing staff are used to fill positions where possible, then other resources are brought in to fill gaps where needed.

"It's also about respecting and trusting our staff," says Taylor. "We hire people who are knowledgeable, experienced and passionate about their work. We're not going to turn around and micro-manage our staff – we give them the freedom to contribute ideas and suggestions. Staff learn that it is easier, faster and in most cases more productive to proceed with their own considered ideas than to wait for endless discussions and committees to give approval for them to proceed."

And it's not always about the engineering. "We have a staff of over 250 who love the

PHOTO: JOSEPH BYFORD

industry and work incredibly hard, but who also know how to have fun," says Taylor. "We get on together. It's important to enjoy work: we have a laugh and we're slightly irreverent in true Australian style, but we work hard because we truly love what we do."

Founder and owner Peter Taylor believes Multinail offers a supportive and professional environment in which each staff member comes to recognise and respect the others' skills and knowledge.

"I'm proud that we have second-generation employees at Multinail," he says. "I believe a long-standing, stable staff reflects a healthy workplace culture with high staff morale.

"It also creates a solid knowledge base. We can act proactively and address problems for our customers before they arise. It also builds trust and loyalty among our customers. We're able to save them time and money because we know their businesses so well," he adds.

## LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Recently, a lunch was held for staff at Multinail's Stapylton head office to celebrate software engineer David Trusking's 30 years with the company and to present a travel voucher for him and his wife.

"For me to have spent 30 years of my life with Multinail, I obviously believe in what the company is trying to achieve," Trusking says. "All staff work with one purpose in mind – to provide the best product and service to our customers. It's an easy statement to make, but at Multinail, it's played out every day in the way we approach our work and how we're supported by management.

"Multinail also looks after its staff: you're not just a number. The IT industry tends to be short term – staff come and go. However, when you find a company like Multinail, you stick around."

Allister Stevenson is one of Multinail's senior software engineers and has been with the company for 15 years. He says that at least one third of the company's many software engineers have been with Multinail for over 15 years.

"I just love the work," he says. "We've got a great team, and we all feel we can contribute. It's not the standard way of developing systems, which is managed from a top-down approach. Here, we each feel that we can have our say and that our ideas will be listened to.

"The culture of Multinail reflects the Taylor family's beliefs and values. Staff are respected and valued... if you need time off, they're flexible. However, it's not just that Multinail believes in its staff, it's that we believe in the work we're doing here – in our case, building great software."

PHOTO: COURTESY MULTINAIL



**Above:** Peter Taylor congratulates David Trusking on his 30 years with the company. A gift of a travel voucher showed Multinail's appreciation for his work and commitment.

## FABRICATOR LOYALTY

The relationship-building pays off on the other side, too. Advanced Truss Systems, a Multinail fabricator based in Morningside, Brisbane, was founded in 1988, and has partnered with Multinail ever since. Owner Mark Osmand says he believes Multinail's staff are more like partners than representatives.

"Multinail retain their staff so you know who you're dealing with. Brenden's been with Multinail for over seven years and he's been our technical rep that entire time. He knows our business backwards, so any issues we have, he's able to fix virtually straight away," Osmand says.

"Truss Plants need to remain operational, so having that level of consistent, knowledgeable customer support really does make a difference."

Geoff Baxter has had the same

experience. "The engineering support from Multinail is unsurpassable," he says. "This level of consistency in service means we can deliver a service with confidence to our customers. Our customers keep coming back, work flow is streamlined and efficient and we're more productive."

Ross Glennie, co-owner of TrussCorp at Bundamba in Brisbane, feels his firm has a similar corporate culture. "Our staff are our biggest asset, we have a great team and they are key to our business," says Glennie. "I remember advice I was once given, 'If you look after your people, they'll look after your business.' With Multinail, I know they have similar principles around their staff."

Glennie sees parallels between the two companies. "We're both family businesses," he says. "We have grown significantly during our 11 years, and Multinail has played a huge part in assisting with that growth.

"There are guys within Multinail who I personally worked with 20 years ago and are still there today. Trent Bucholz is our main point of contact, I met Trent on his first day back in 1997. If we ring Trent, he always picks up the phone. With his experience, he can pretty much answer whatever query we have on the spot. This level of support is invaluable – time is money in any production business." **T**

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