

Bright sparks

Mace: a success story from simple beginnings to an outstanding example in 2010

Double award-winning electrical and security installer, Mace, has spent the past 25 years building up a reputation that is now an inspiration to all businesses.

It's been achieved by the passion of the firm's founder Simon Chapman and the Mace team, where everyone knows what is expected of them and delivers.

Mace started out with two-full time engineers and a part-time secretary back in 1985. One of the new company's first activities was to join the Burton Chamber. Continuous membership for more than 20 years has been important to the expanding business. Today, 16 engineers are employed on projects as far a field as Newcastle on Tyne and London.

The company, led by Simon Chapman, has recently relocated to prestigious new offices on Burton's Granary Wharf that offers further opportunities to expand.

Significant in the growth of the business has been the commitment to what Simon Chapman identifies as "pride, passion and ownership". This philosophy extends to all areas of the organisation, and, according to customers and clients, 'sets Mace apart'.

"Today Mace is quite a diverse company and it's constantly developing. Many clients are attracted by our 'single point of contact' for their electrical infrastructure,

burglar alarms, fire safety and air conditioning," commented Simon.

As the firm has expanded, the key to winning new contracts has become more than simply one of offering an attractive price; though that still remains important.

"First class customer service from start to finish has been our hallmark from day one", pointed out Simon.

And this is no idle claim, for the 'Mace professional approach' starts from the first enquiry for every new contract – commercial or domestic – and is completed with customer feedback when the work is finished.

It was this innovative approach that won Mace its second Vodafone award as Marketing Business of the Year.

Despite and perhaps because of the current recession, environmental concerns have remained important to the company's growing number of clients.

The new Granary House offices are equipped with automatic light-sensitive units, which when activated switch on low energy lighting. These work in-conjunction with a photo-cell, so that they only operate when natural light falls to a pre-determined level.

Additionally, the offices on the first level are fitted with special down lighters that 'funnel' natural light and replace incandescent lights. "The savings have already been dramatic," confirmed Simon.

The greening of the business has also continued on other fronts.

Fuel purchases for the fleet of combi and larger transit vans have been reduced by pre-planning routing to and from each job to minimise 'engineer miles'.

Taking this a stage further, Mace is now investigating the introduction of electric powered vans for its local work. The team has plans to introduce the first alternative powered van within 12-months.

Delivering commercial and industrial electrical systems, full fire alarm and fire protection services, and air conditioning design and installation, Mace has worked with many esteemed companies over the years, both nationally and locally, including Knott Avonride, Roger Bullivant, Repton School, Arriva Bus, Bombardier Trains, TL Derby, Bristol Street Motors, Vodafone, Deutsche Bank, the prison service, doctors' surgeries and Abbotshome School in Rokester.

By introducing remote 24/7 monitoring, Mace has been able to

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reduce costly call-outs, but still maintains high levels of protection and business security for customers.

The introduction of intelligent monitoring with specialist software now allows the firm to monitor its clients' alarms. In the event of a mains failure or flood, they will be alerted by Mace and able to solve the problem before it becomes a major one for the business.

The same system is used to flag-up when a client's alarms need servicing. It is another component in the customer service ethos of Mace.

To deliver its outstanding customer service Mace has also invested in staff training.

Working closely with Burton College, seven apprentices have been trained as electricians, and ongoing training for staff is given high priority. The business exploits all the latest technologies with each engineer equipped with a PDA. Job sheets are constantly updated and engineers can respond quickly to any client emergencies.

Final and lasting positive impressions of the firm are cemented by Mace' engineers carrying commercial vacuum cleaners in their vans, so that clients' premises are left clean and tidy when jobs are completed. Blue overshoes are worn to reduce dust and damage to finished floors and surfaces.

Local purchasing has always been important to Mace. Supporting the local economy has been one of the cornerstones of the business since its inception. This policy set the company apart in its winning entry for the Business of the Year Award. Over 64 per cent of the company's purchases by value are made from local suppliers in East Staffordshire.

The company, a long-standing Burton Chamber member, has received numerous accolades, including Burton Business Awards' award for a small business employing up to 25 employees; and an award from Sir John Gifford in recognition of the work involved in designing the CARE Initiative alarm system for elderly residents.

"We value and immediately act on feedback and information we receive from every customer", added Simon Chapman, "They are our ears and eyes and tell us what we are doing right and in a few instances where we can improve".

"As I said, Mace is an evolving business. We are determined to continue to grow. By offering full design and management of every project from initial drawings through to completion, we deliver complete contracts. Clients like that approach and their businesses grow, at the same time so does Mace".

It's a winning formula for this business; and one that this growing firm is determined will continue.



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