

Scott Construction's board room walls are lined with certificates but for owner Justin Candish, there's one that really stands out.

He says the Westpac Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce Supreme Business Award that Scott Construction received last year is different to the others.

“Winning industry awards is at the heart of what we do but winning a business award was a huge buzz. It's not often you get the chance to be compared against businesses from different industries.”

Company founder Kevin Scott bought Candish into the business in 2007, employing him as GM to help re-energise it. Candish, a carpenter by trade, struck a deal at the time of his employment to purchase 50% of the company if he got through the first year. Scott Construction employed about 17 staff at that time.

Candish says the company already had a lot going for it, having operated since 1970 in a boom and bust industry and maintaining a great reputation throughout that time. “It made me realise what an innovator Kevin was to keep the business alive.”

Candish adopted that same approach in his management, putting innovation at the core of everything they do. He says they ensured they were on every tender list available, they looked to the region's primary industries for opportunities and they raised their profile around high end commercial and architectural work.

These initiatives saw Scott Construction land some major contracts such as the development of Saxton Oval Pavilion, Summerset Retirement Village in Stoke, the Cawthron Institute's main Halifax St building and Olive Estate in Richmond. In 2010 Scott Construction's staff numbers had hit 50 and started to diversify into other sectors of the construction industry.

“We realised that Scotts was at a maximum size for Nelson and knew if we wanted to grow, we had to look outside the region.”

Over the last few years it has branched into Blenheim and Christchurch and most recently acquired Nelson-based Kidson Construction, a civil construction business with strong West Coast connections.

Candish says the Westpac Nelson Tasman Business Awards entry process was a great opportunity to review the business and recognise the contribution Scott Construction's founder had made. “You don't often get the chance to stop and look back at where you came from and how you got there. We created a really good document as part of that which we've been able to use repeatedly since for things like bank proposals and registrations of interest. There's not many weeks that go by where I don't pull it out at some point.”

The business awards have helped Scott Construction win contracts. Candish says the awards evening is an enjoyable and useful event for raising profile and networking with other business people.

“It's a great night with your staff and you've got a captive audience of 500 people in the room.”

FACT BOX

Scott Construction

Stoke-based construction firm

Founded in 1970 by Kevin Scott

Fully owned by Justin Candish who first came on board as the GM in 2007

Includes Scotts Construction in Marlborough and Canterbury, Kidson Construction and the Concrete Company

Employs 130 staff

Won the Westpac Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce Large Business Award in 2013 and Supreme Business Award in 2014

Entries for the 2015 Westpac Nelson Tasman Chamber of Commerce Business Awards close on 25 September and winners will be announced at a gala dinner on 6 November. For more information see www.commerce.org.nz

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