



For more info on Comag, check out comagltd.co.nz

Comag is world famous in Matamata – a plumbing, gasfitting, drainlaying and roofing business who operate Waikato-wide and pride themselves on being a great place to work.

Comag provides an excellent working environment and is committed to developing team members and providing them with opportunities to thrive and succeed in their trade.

Plumbing Apprentice and former Matamata College student John Couch left school and grabbed an apprenticeship opportunity at Comag with both hands.

BECOMING AN APPRENTICE



What sort of person do you need to be?

- Have people skills
- Outgoing and willing to work
- Work well in a team
- Reasonably physically fit, or at least like being active
- Flexible - prepared to do some office time, charging out jobs and doing other paperwork

To find out more about this sector, profiles of young people like you in the industry, and career tools and tips...

scan here



Q&A

JOHN COUCH
PLUMBING, GAS FITTING, DRAIN LAYING APPRENTICE

The FutureForce® Crew sat down with John to chat about his role...

→ HOW DID YOU GET THIS JOB? WHAT GOT YOU INTERESTED IN THIS CAREER PATH?

While I was still at school, I called in to Comag and asked for an after-school job as “shop boy”, helping out and cleaning up. I also worked there in the school holidays and I really enjoyed it. When I got my NCEA Level 2 I asked them for a job, and they took me on.

→ WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT ON THE JOB SO FAR?

- Basic plumbing skills
- Problem solving
- Working with others in my team
- Working with other tradies
- Converting imperial to metric and vice versa - plumbing fittings are measured in inches

→ WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE SOMEONE LOOKING AT THIS TYPE OF WORK?

Dive into it head-first because there are so many opportunities. Most people think about the stereotypes of plumbing work but there is so much more to it than that.



TOP CAREER TIP

DIVE INTO IT HEAD-FIRST BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES. MOST PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THE STEREOTYPES OF PLUMBING WORK BUT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO IT THAN THAT.

→ WHAT SCHOOL SUBJECTS ARE USEFUL FOR YOUR WORK?

Numbers are big in construction, so maths definitely helps. I wish I knew maths was so important when I was at school! I also wish I did graphics. At tech we design and plan pipeouts and make patterns for sheetmetal templates, so this might have been easier if I had some background in it.

→ WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO WITH YOUR CAREER?

My aim is to become certified as that is the highest you can go in plumbing. It will open doors and I could go anywhere with it. One day I would like to own my own business or be part of a company.

JOHN COUCH

PLUMBING, GAS FITTING, DRAIN LAYING APPRENTICE



→ WHAT SORT OF PERSON DO YOU NEED TO BE FOR THIS TYPE OF WORK?

You need to have people skills as you need to be outgoing and willing to work with others. Every day you are working with other tradies so you need to work well in a team. You need to be reasonably physically fit, or at least like being active, as you can be on your feet 10-12 hours a day. You will also have to be prepared to do some office time, charging out jobs and doing other paperwork.

→ WHAT DOES SOMEONE NEED TO KNOW WHEN STARTING OUT AT WORK?

I get ready to get up early every day. Show up on time, or even early, as this shows you are keen. If you arrive and you know what's happening for the day, you can get stuff out and get it ready for when the team gets there.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT WORKING AT COMAG?

The atmosphere. We are all similar minded people and into the same stuff, so we have a lot in common. We have a great culture as a group outside of work. Your workmates become your mates.

→ WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR KEEPING BALANCED AND MANAGING STRESS?

You're not married to the company; you're allowed to have your own time. I play rugby and go hunting. Work does occupy a lot of your time so it can be hard to remember a work/life balance, but it is important.



BE THE APPRENTICE THAT EVERYONE WANTS TO TAKE WITH THEM. WHEN JOBS COME IN, BE THAT PERSON THAT THEY WANT TO HAVE ON THEIR TEAM.

WHAT DO YOU DO AT WORK?

I have mainly been working at country clubs which are all new builds, and we do pipe outs, drainage and gas fitting, also fitting taps and cylinders, that type of thing. I mostly work on new builds but have done a few renovations which I enjoy as you really need to think about how to fit things. It's really good problem solving.

What does a typical day look like for you?

I start at about 6.30 am (sometimes 6 am when it gets light enough) and get home about 7pm. I choose to make the most of long hours while I can but many plumbers work from 7.30am until around 5pm. I usually work with another apprentice and a foreman. We also get to meet a whole lot of people as we work with other tradies and we're all similar people with the same mindset, so you make a lot of friends. Twice a week I go in half an hour early to do my computer work and charge out jobs.

