



For more info on Foster Construction, check out [fosters.co.nz](http://fosters.co.nz)

**The Foster Group**, based in Hamilton, employs more than 170 people from labourers, carpenters and site managers, through to quantity surveyors support staff and senior management.

Apprentices make up a 5th of Foster Construction's workforce because they are committed to continually building the construction industry with enthusiastic young people, driven to succeed.

It's not uncommon for someone to start off as an apprentice, learn the tools, and eventually end up managing a multimillion-dollar project.

## BECOMING A CARPENTRY APPRENTICE



### Recommended Skills

- Drive
- Attention to detail
- Respect for others
- Commitment
- Willingness to learn



### Useful School Subjects

- Maths
- Statistics
- English as you need to be able to communicate effectively and to a high standard, both written and verbal

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

## DEXTER SUTHERLAND CARPENTRY APPRENTICE

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

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

I was originally working at ACC but wasn't really enjoying the office life. I'm more of an active person. I had a few friends that were doing a building apprenticeship and I helped them to do some jobs on their own house. That made me think, "hey, I'd like to try this!" I approached Foster and they asked me to go for an interview. They gave me a trial for three months and then they signed me up!

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

It's probably one of the most satisfying jobs you'll ever do, but it's hard. You need to be willing to commit and you need to realise that you're not going to learn everything straight away. You will make mistakes but so long as you're willing to learn from those mistakes you'll succeed. It's going to take time, you have to be committed, motivated and, in the end, you will benefit. It's a great industry to be in!

### TOP CAREER TIP

**ALWAYS KEEP LEARNING AND NEVER THINK YOU'LL KNOW IT ALL. I'VE BEEN TOLD BY GUYS AT THE TOP OF THEIR CAREERS THAT THEY COME TO WORK AND ALWAYS LEARN SOMETHING NEW. IF YOU STOP LEARNING THEN YOU'LL STOP PROGRESSING.**

### → WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNT ON THE JOB?

I've learnt a lot! I've nearly completed my building apprenticeship, so I've learnt how to build from scratch. I have also learnt a massive amount of communication skills because you're working with clients closely. They are spending a lot of money and expecting excellent results. Communicating every day is the most important thing by far. To communicate changes, movement, what subcontractors are doing, clients and more.



## DEXTER SUTHERLAND CARPENTRY APPRENTICE



### → WHAT DO YOU ENJOY ABOUT THE WORK?

What engaged me was the whole hands-on aspect of the industry and being able to gain skills that I can use in my personal life. I've done all this work on my own house that I never thought I would have been able to do before. Also, looking at something I've completed, with all the hard work that went into it, is so rewarding. The most satisfying part is looking at the building. For example, when you drive around Hamilton and see a high-profile building that you helped build. One day hopefully I'll be the one in charge of building that building!

### → WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW WHEN YOU LEFT SCHOOL?

That you don't have to know everything straight away! I didn't know what I wanted to do, and I didn't want to go to uni, but that's what all my mates were doing so I felt I was behind. But really it can take you years to find out what you want to do, so long as you are getting out there and experiencing all kind of jobs it doesn't matter what you do.

### → WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU HAD TO OVERCOME?

The full learning process of becoming a builder is a challenge. I wasn't really a mechanical person going into it, and I didn't know how to use the tools, so I was as green as green to start with. Learning is the biggest challenge.

### → WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO WITH YOUR CAREER?

As far as my abilities let me! I would like to be a site manager, where you're in charge of the whole site and managing everyone (in two-to-five years), from there I would like to become a project manager and run multiple sites. That's the objective, and with Fosters if you want it, you can do it. Here there are guys in their 20s and 30s that are running the biggest sites in the Waikato. It's because they are committed, and their work is their passion.

### → WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT WORKING AT FOSTER CONSTRUCTION?

There is a real family aspect. It's friendly, you're not scared of your boss and you can talk to anyone. They do as much as they can to help you. It's not scary to make a mistake... you can just tell someone and they will work with you to fix the situation. They really look after you.

## A DAY ON THE JOB

**7am** I arrive at work, have a look at building plans and see what stage of the process we are at. We tend to be working at a building site for a good couple of months because the builds are so big. We generally know where we are at, but we need to nut out what needs to be done in the next few days. We look at working drawings, work out what the priorities are and then make a plan with the team.

**8am to 10am** My tasks could be putting up frames, pouring concrete, and standing pre-cast panels – all kinds of stuff!

**10.15am** After a break, I could be doing any of the above. I'm also doing a bit of training first year apprentices, showing them how to do things as part of my training. You're always teaching the skills you have learnt to others... showing them the right way to do things.

**1.30pm** Lunch break

**2pm** We are always doing something different, so it really keeps you engaged. In the afternoon I could be organising subcontractors or talking with clients to explain the build and what's happening.

**5.30pm** Knock off time!

**FOSTER**  
CONSTRUCTION

