

Member Spotlight — One of our 1,000 faces

Shea Electric & Communications, LLC

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Number of employees: 4

Year established: 2006

By Karen Boehm

Dan Shea remembers working as an apprentice when he began his career as an electrician more than 20 years ago. It was rote work, running conduit and performing other tasks that weren't particularly challenging or exciting. When he became a journeyman, he vowed to provide a better training experience to his own apprentices.

"When I work with apprentices, I treat them as equals and push and challenge them to learn more—to stretch their imagination," Shea said.

Nearly two decades later when Shea Electric was started, it was Dan's former apprentices who jumped on board without a second thought.

"It was a new venture and they had unbelievable faith in me," Dan said. "One of the guys had been at (our former employer) 12 years and another for 14 years. They gave their notice to join us."

"It goes to show what respect Dan gave them," said Dan's wife, Patty Shea. "That trust speaks highly of Dan and his character."

Shea Electric is built on that foundation of faith, as well as character and knowledge. When Dan and Patty started Shea Electric they hand picked employees who had experience in the field and a well-rounded knowledge of the electrical and communications industry.

Shea Electric provides a variety of services to commercial and industrial clients from Appleton to Beaver Dam, and from West Bend around both sides of Lake Winnebago. Services include commercial and industrial electrical service, small phone systems, voice, data, video, fiber optics, sound systems, paging, security cameras and card access systems. It also specializes in promoting and maintaining standards set by Wisconsin's Focus On Energy program.

Employees are cross trained in each segment of the industry so any employee at any time can respond to a customer's call. In addition to their skills in the field, employees constantly strive to provide exceptional customer service.

"We can all be A workers," Dan said. "We have set the bar high. Maybe we have to help some guys over the bar at first, but eventually they'll be able to make it on their own."

This focus on service and excellence is paying off. During Shea Electric's first year in business, which began October 1, 2006, sales have already exceeded expectations by 10 percent—all without the benefit of a phone book listing in most of the communities it serves.

"We're not even in most of the phone books yet because we missed the cut off," Dan said. "We've gotten business through word of mouth."

Both Dan and Patty agree that the first year, while rewarding, has been challenging as well. With Dan working 80 to 105 hours a week and Patty working a full-time job on top of Shea Electric, balancing work and home life has been a struggle. But they credit their success to the dedication of their employees.

"We opened this business to give other people the opportunity to work for a company where you're appreciated and your work is valued," Patty said.

"Without these guys, we're not going anywhere," Dan added.

Dan looks to his current workforce as the answer to future growth. He estimates that Shea Electric could potentially grow by 100 percent simply by aligning new apprentices with his existing employees. In addition, the Sheas will continue to look for opportunities in new markets.

"In this industry, the sky is the limit," Dan said. "The industry will continue to evolve and we'll stay on the cutting edge."

Fortunately for the Sheas, their new business venture is a labor of love.

"I found a job I love, so I never have to work again," Dan said. ☺



Top row: Dan Shea and Patty Shea.
Bottom row: Pat Yanke, John Jacobs and Chris Hopf.