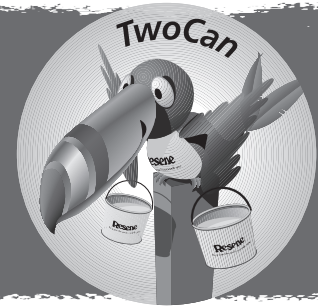


“ I think we can all safely say that this has been a very odd year and hopefully one we'll never repeat. If it's one thing we have noticed though, we've all spent so much more time inside than normal that the desire to decorate has been fuelled for many, by a growing boredom or dislike of their existing wall colours and for many, by the desire to hunker down and make the most of what they have. And when it comes to making the most of what you have, you can't go far past paint and stain to make even the oldest surface look new again... ”



## Maximising your productivity

It's always a good time to be thinking about your productivity. Even if you are already rushed off your feet, it's still something you should be constantly working to improve.

There are many variables that contribute to the success of a paint contracting business.

1. Pricing correctly with an awareness of your 'real' cost structures and a good understanding of the margins needed to remain in business and be successful;
2. The technical knowledge and skills that you and your team have;
3. Your ability to network, communicate and market your business which ultimately will secure contracts at good margins;
4. Managing the productivity of the painting process.

The last point, productivity is rarely considered, or only in a cursory way and yet is the real key to the success or otherwise of painting businesses. Too often the focus is on securing future work, often at unacceptably low margins or on input costs, such as the cost (per unit) of the paint used and/or the accessories and tools used to apply the paint.

In contrast the most successful painting businesses are acutely aware of how productive their business is and will target ways or look for opportunities to improve productivity.

Once a professional painter moves away from being a sole trader (aka one-man-band) operating on their own or with a mate undertaking smallish painting contracts to a larger enterprise that employs other painters, the business model needs to change to be successful and remain so. No longer are they able to simply work harder to make a dollar, they need to sell and manage the time needed to complete projects for home and business owners and construction projects. The dominant cost, no matter the size of any painting task is the time needed to complete it. Even though a painter starting a business can very often work harder and smarter than others, once staff are employed, maintaining productivity becomes the essential management task.

### 1. If you are selling time, then the following is important:

- You are only making money when you are preparing and/or applying paint.
- The rest of the time can be necessary and important, but it is still downtime and by definition is unproductive. Activities like coffee breaks and travel time fall into this category as does bookwork.

- Have a plan of work and make sure all the materials and equipment are ready beforehand. Use the email and phone ordering process you got used to during lockdown/level 3 to save time getting your supplies.
- When you're doing quotes on the job, try and schedule them only when you are in the area already to reduce travel time. Promote your work to the local area so your team can spend more time painting and less time driving.
- The more effective and efficient you are at getting paint onto correctly prepared surfaces, the more productive you are, and the more money you should make!
- 2. **Measure productivity in order to understand where opportunities are (or might be) to improve:**
  - Back cost all jobs to understand the true costs and time involved. Done well this will help you price better in the future helping to ensure you have enough margin to cover your costs and make a reasonable profit. It will also help identify opportunities to improve productivity. Conversely, back costing will also tell you what went wrong and what could be done to improve or overcome this issue. This may also help to show you which types of work to focus on in future.
  - Review your work processes, including incorporating more flexibility into work practices, for example, at Resene our building and maintenance crews take two breaks of 30 minutes each per day at 10am and 1pm, but do not take morning tea or afternoon tea breaks. This saves time going back and forth to the work locations and in clean-up and the crew prefer it too.
  - Embrace new techniques; equipment and technology that will improve your productivity. Mechanical sanders like the Broadwall Giraffe Sander, fine finishing spray units and even your mobile phone can dramatically increase productivity. They come at a cost but are found in the vans of successful painters.
  - Watch for and embrace new paint technologies, Resene has consistently introduced between 5-10 new products every year. While some are targeted at DIY consumers others have been developed to save time and improve painter's productivity. These systems including Resene Broadwall 3 in 1 and Resene CyberCote are more expensive on a per litre basis but in the right circumstances can dramatically improve productivity meaning you can reduce your cost per litre applied.

Productivity improvements are always possible and the people and businesses that chase and keep chasing improvements are generally the most successful.

Article thanks to Nick Nightingale,  
Resene Managing Director

## Pinstriped without permission

It always pays to make sure you clearly warn others when painting is taking place, otherwise you might just find yourself painting something you shouldn't as this local painter tells us...

"Many years ago, we were spray painting a commercial interior.

In those days we used a large pressure pot and air spray. So, we had a lot of overspray and white out.

The interior was clearly out of bounds, if nothing else common sense made it so.



We used 600mm wide masking paper on both sides of the door frames, so we could still walk through the opening.

Our workmate was in a room spraying the wall by a door frame, as he pulled the trigger a white shoe appeared. A split second later the architect appeared, red faced, wearing a suit with an enormous freshly painted white pinstripe!"

If you've thought of a funny decorating story but didn't get a chance to enter it in our last funny stories competition, we'd love to hear it. Please send it to us at [trade@resene.co.nz](mailto:trade@resene.co.nz), subject **Trade funny story**. If we print it in a future TradeLines we'll reward you with a \$50 Resene credit and some colourful m&ms!

## Help us find our history

In 1946, Ted Nightingale started Resene in his Eastbourne garage in Wellington. Today, 74 years on, Resene is still family owned and operated.

To celebrate Resene turning 75 in 2021 we're asking you to help us find our history by sharing any photos, stories or memories you have of Resene from years gone by. We know many of you have been part of the Resene story for

many, many years and we'd love to hear from you with your early memories of Resene – the company, the products, the stores and anything else Resene related you'd like to share..

We hope to use the stores, photos and memories to build an archive of Resene's history to be enjoyed for years to come.

We need your help to build this archive. Please send photos, stories or memories to [trade@resene.co.nz](mailto:trade@resene.co.nz). We'd love to hear from you!

## The importance of a clean and organised workspace... including your work vehicle

Most of us have had to work in less than perfect 'home office' spaces for at least parts of this year, ranging from perching at the breakfast bar, hunched over the dinner table or perhaps lounging on the couch trying to get admin stuff done. It's surprising what you can put up with when you literally don't have a choice.

One of the keys to it working well though is have things neat and orderly.

It's all too easy to let things in your life fall out of order. Whether that be forgetting your phone at home or losing track of time, it happens to everyone.

However, there are some instances where it is extremely important to be on your game. Why is this? Well, it helps to clear clutter, both literally and metaphorically, from your life.

Doing so will help your business to operate smoothly, saving both time and money. Here's how:

### You appear professional and experienced

A tidy workspace and van shows that you are professional, experienced and can handle the project a client gives you with ease. Knowing where everything is will show your client that you are comfortable in your profession, despite the years of experience you may or may not have under your belt.

Adecco, a staffing firm, conducted a study involving over 1,000 people which found that more than half (57 per cent) would judge their colleagues due to a messy desk. These are people that they encounter all the time at work, so imagine how much impact that could have on a client's first impression of

you if you showed up with a cluttered work van, or the impression you might make if you leave things lying around the project while you are on the job.

Taking care to keep things neat and tidy on the job shows the customer you care about their space and helps to ease their stress levels, as well as ensuring you don't accidentally trip on a roller tray that a colleague has left in an odd spot.

### It saves time

You can arrive punctually, having not spent time looking for all the necessary equipment you may have misplaced. Any tools you'll need will be within arm's reach, as you can easily locate exactly what you need. It'll definitely save face when you don't have to ask to borrow a pen!

The job at hand will also be completed more efficiently, if you can quickly flick to the exact paint colour your client has mentioned, or when you don't need to trek out to your van multiple times for things you'd forgotten to bring in. Impressing clients with your efficiency can help to boost your reputation, which is something that only hard work can earn in business.

In a similar survey by OfficeMax, 77 per cent of the sample admitted that clutter impacts their productivity levels, while 90 per cent stated that it negatively impacted their life.

You'll find that tidy work equipment also makes for a clear-headed workday, which helps you stay on top of your stock and supplies, so that you're always well prepared. And if you can get on top of the clutter, your business reputation and work ethic will get a boost too.



Catch you next month!

TwoCan, Editor.

