

Case Study: Plasterer - Brendan

What do you do?

I own and operate a plastering business. I've been at it for over 20 years, but that doesn't mean I sit around in an office all day. I still apply the plaster by hand, indoors and out.



What is your background?

I studied accounting at college, but I've been doing plastering since I was ten years old. My father was a plasterer, and I helped him out part-time during the holidays. What started out as some holiday fun has turned into my own business.

What characteristics do you need to be successful in your job?

You have to like work. It's difficult and dirty work, with a lot of physical exertion involved.

You also have to pay close attention to detail. Much of the time you're working on restoring the plaster in older homes; you have to make sure you replace the plaster properly without damaging the character of the building.

What other jobs could you do using the skills from this job?

You could do just about any skilled trade, like tiling, for example. Of course, with other occupations, you'll need to take some additional training. You'll only have the basic knowledge.

What changes will there be in the future?

The materials we use today are already a big improvement compared to old materials.

What are the biggest challenges in your job?

Renovation work is definitely the hardest. You're trying to duplicate the design and construction of buildings from about a hundred years ago, and that's not always easy.

Are there many opportunities to enter this career?

Good training is the key to success. So, call your local college and find out about training opportunities near you.

What do you like about your job?

I like the exercise. You work out all day: you work your legs, your arms, and your back.

Also, I like meeting a lot of people. You work alongside electricians, painters and so on, and then when you go to a new construction site, often you meet a completely new group of people.

What do you dislike about your job?

I have my own business, so all the paperwork that's involved and all the running around that's involved after hours are my major dislikes.

What advice would you give to someone interested in your career?

My main advice to somebody interested in the plastering business would be to get involved in it by doing a summer job - helping the plasterer or labouring for a plasterer - and get your feet wet that way. Then you'll pretty much know

what you're in for, for the rest of your life.

A day in the life

6:30 am - 7:00 am

Loading the van for the day's work.

7:00 am - 8:00 am

Driving to the job site.

8:00 am - 8:30 am

Arriving at the job site; covering the work area with cloths; getting supplies out of the van; setting up the work area.

8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Plastering the walls on a home being renovated; using a trowel and a spreader to distribute the plaster evenly on the walls and ceilings; climbing a ladder to apply the three coats of plaster.

12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Eating lunch.

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Finishing up some plastering work indoors; applying coats of plaster to the walls and ceilings using sweeping motions of the arms, standing on a ladder.

2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Going outside and doing cement work on the exterior of the home; getting up on a ladder; applying the cement; making a smooth finish on the outside of the home.

4:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Cleaning up the work areas indoors and outdoors.