

REBECCA GOWING

PROJECT MANAGER/ENGINEER

Rebecca decided that she didn't want to head straight to university and get a degree once she was out of school as she was unsure about what she wanted to do. She had heard from family and friends that the Electricity Supply industry was a good option, with a range of career opportunities. Those in the industry seemed to be making a lot of money and had amazing houses so she decided to give it a go.

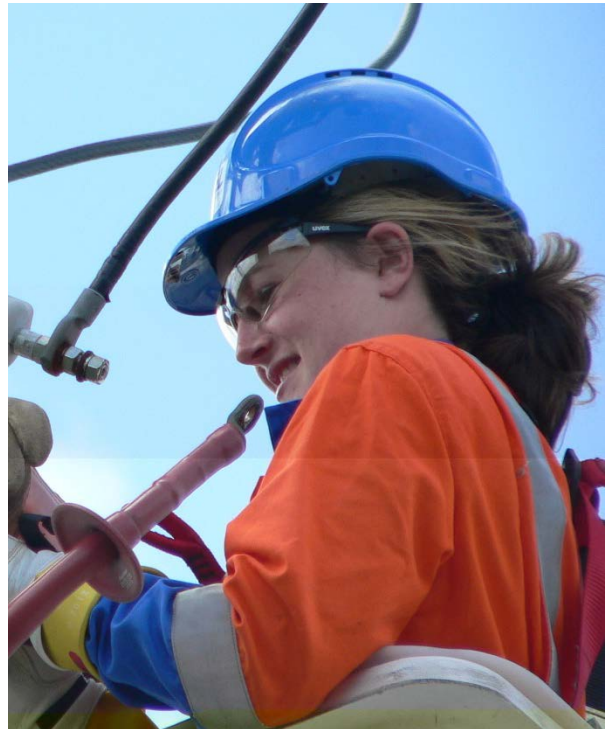
Beginning as an electrician was initially very daunting going from a girls school, where girls were never advised to move into a trade career, to living and studying with around 17 guys. However, as time went along, Rebecca developed more confidence and began to fit in. She soon found the guys got used to her being around, although male workers at some worksites did not quite accept female workers. Rebecca learned not to get offended and found that if you proved yourself with a good work ethic, you would be respected and treated just like everyone else.

Rebecca had the opportunity to work at Orewa, which was a massive construction site where she completed apartment pre-wiring and fitting. She assisted with the maintenance of 2 bladed wind turbines and a class 4 overhaul on a turbine, as well as substation and line distribution maintenance. She was also involved in the wiring and fitting of Westfield malls in Christchurch and Hamilton.

After completing her apprenticeship Rebecca wanted to move into management. However, she either had to wait and work for 5-10 more years, or get a higher qualification to do this. So she undertook an electrical engineering degree. The fact that she originally did not want to study for 3 years, but has ended up studying for 6 years, seems funny to her now. While studying she kept her foot in the door in the Electricity Supply industry by working part time as a junior engineer at Transfield services. In this role she assisted other engineers and project managers with their projects for Transpower (Transfield services had the Transpower lines maintenance contract at the time).

Rebecca is now a Project Manager/ Engineer for Northpower and although more time is spent in the office, the challenge of the work keeps her loving her job. Best of all it has the outdoor practical part, but she can now disappear inside which is great when the weather outside isn't so good!

She is currently managing the installation of a new 33kV switchboard in Tirau for Powerco and the installation of new 11kV switchboard, transformers and arc furnace switches



at AG Price in Thames. She is also managing pole defect work replacement in the Putaruru area for Powerco. Each of these projects requires tracking the progress of work completion, organising competent staff, financially tracking project costs, managing site issues and pricing any additional works and/or variations.

Rebecca's advice for anyone starting out in the industry is to build trust and then the respect will come. Try not to get too caught up in things and don't take anything to heart. Just brush it off and you'll be great.