

# Professional



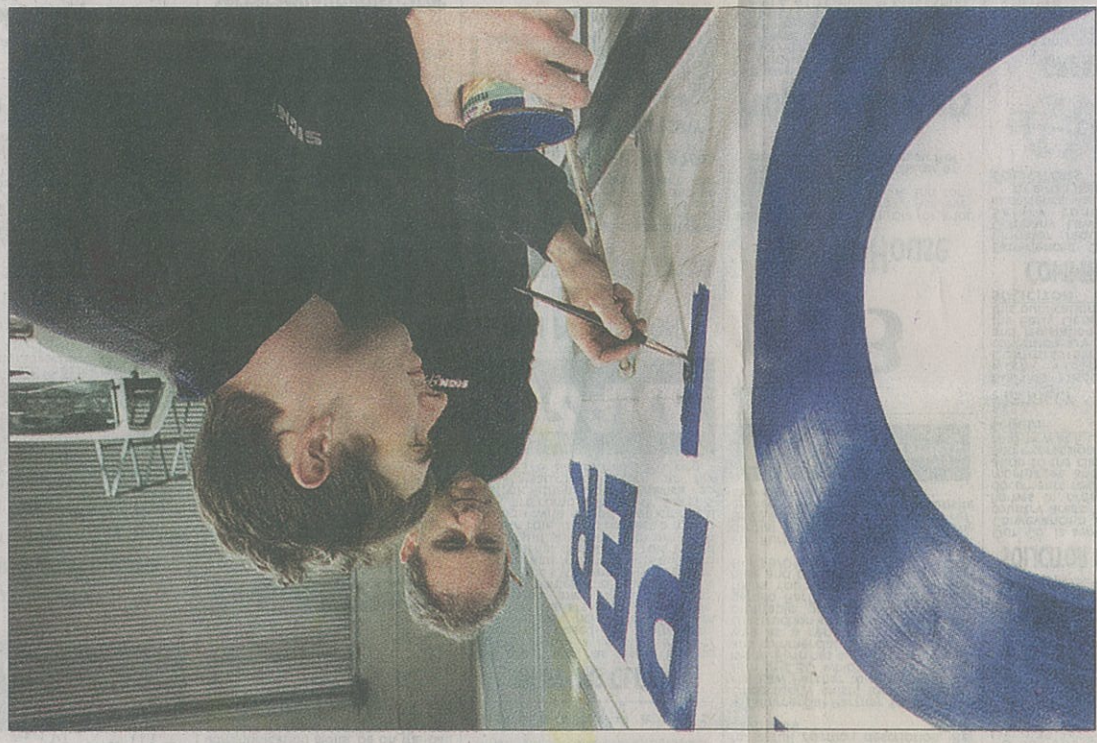
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SATURDAY MAY 11, 2002

**MENTOR** Marcella Bidinost

**DR WORK** Denis Baker

## Art of signing in the computer age



SignFX's Steven D'Elia, left, with apprentice Nathan Penny, right.

Qualified plumber Nathan Penny, 22, recently switched careers and opted for a signwriting apprenticeship under Steven D'Elia from SignFX.

that by the time I was 17 I had a company registered and could trade on my own. My father was in the building industry so they used to require a lot of safety signs. I did a bit of work from home. It got to the point where I was so busy I gave contracting away and decided to lease premises. The first was a pigeonhole factory in Fawkner for \$50 a month; things have grown from there.

**NATHAN:** In terms of finding signwriting apprentices, I've found that if you're keen you will get one. Doing the pre-apprenticeship, I came across a lot of people who weren't that interested; they were just doing the first three years involve schooling for one week a month. It's easy to come to work now that I enjoy it.

**STEVEN:** My uncle and father used to run a petrol station and requested some signs to be made. I finished school in Year 11 and started a four-year plumbing apprenticeship, but then decided it wasn't for me. I didn't want to be 50 years old and still digging holes. I did the signwriting pre-apprenticeship at Victoria University in Sunshine, which gave a run-down on how to paint and signwriting theory, and then started the apprenticeship at SignFX in late September. The apprenticeship lasts four years.

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**STEVEN:** My uncle and father used to run a petrol station and requested some signs to be made.

**NATHAN:** I'm being taught layout as signwriting, you learn general as signwriting, if you can afford a \$5000 computer, you can be a signwriter. Of course, that can bring the trade down. There are a lot of signwriters you'll see set up one day and then gone the

day at work can be completely different. I've always said to the apprentices that the sign industry is very diverse. You come out a very good tradesperson. As well as signwriting, you learn general as signwriting, if you can afford a \$5000 computer, you can be a signwriter. Of course, that can bring the trade down. There are a lot of signwriters you'll see set up one day and then gone the

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**Q** I have a degree in sociology and a graduate diploma in training and development.

**A** I am passionate about training and want to make a career out of it. I am currently working in a government job, in a lowly admin role. I look in the paper every week and use an HR organisation and employment agencies to job hunt. My colleagues are optimistic about my chances and they all agree that I have a lot of skills and attributes that are not currently put to use. Any advice?

**A** Don't find yourself waiting for advertised jobs to come to you; that will also draw competition and keep you out in the cold. While you probably lack experience in training roles, is their potential in you? You certainly appear to have the desire, and that's a great start. I'm sure you could also sit down and put together a considerable list of transferable skills, experiences, knowledge and personal attributes that would be more than useful in training areas. So why not do that?

People skills are very important in planning and delivering quality training and development. If you have those personal skills then put them on show. Write to other government departments, larger private-sector businesses and other organisations (in areas that interest you). Send them your resume, attached to a letter that expresses your career interest, promoting yourself as a product that can be developed. You have nothing to lose.

Make sure your letter is followed by a phone call within two weeks to let them know just how keen you are about snatching a job with their training unit.

**Q** I am completing a diploma in business marketing at TAFE. My work history has been in sales, marketing, coordinating and promotions. I am looking for work in the "events & meeting" business.

**A** The Australian tourism industry is starting to move again after what has been a particularly tough past eight months. Apart from people such as yourself, studies in event management are producing graduates

**Q** Can you give me some ideas about contacts and possible careers in the tourism industry?

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**Dennis Baker** is an employment consultant and author. He has published two books on job hunting. *Personal Job Hunting and The Secrets of Personal Job Hunting*. His answers and advice can also be found on [www.mycareer.com](http://www.mycareer.com)



on training, careers and industry links.

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