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Autumn 2007 | Issue 163

connections

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Why steady growth works for Instalec

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Over the past 30 years Instalec has gone from a one-man band to a successful regional firm with nationwide clients. And despite the looming retirement of its original founder, company director Lesley Jeffs sees no sign of business slowing down

Steady progress

By Richard Pagett

Instalec is based in Luton and contractors work around the south-east, but you will sometimes see vans travelling further afield when they are working for their numerous nationwide clients.

The company was formed more than 30 years ago by Paul Jones, then a sole trader. Today Instalec is a thriving company involved in all aspects of electrical work, with an impressive client list including large construction companies, various educational establishments and commercial clients such as rightmove.co.uk, The Clancy Group and Morrison Utilities.

Jones is still involved in the business, but *Connections* spoke to his colleague Lesley Jeffs, director and company secretary. Jeffs won the Bedfordshire businesswoman of the year award in 2002 and for good reason – office-based, she is integral to the running of this efficient and professional business.

"Instalec became an Approved Contractor in 1984," Jeffs explains. "It was a business decision, and the right one. The company started to really grow in the past eight years. Paul had a back injury, which meant he had to step back from the physical aspects of the work, instead running and marketing Instalec, taking on new staff and bigger contracts. We became a 'proper' company, if you like."

Personnel issues

Jeffs has been involved since 1995 and became a company director in 2000. "Business is fantastic," she says. "It has been one of our most stressful yet bumper years. But we're not immune to the issues affecting the whole of the industry. One of our biggest issues is finding good personnel, as I expect it is with many electrical contractors. We have been down the agency route, and we spend a lot of money on advertising, but



