

Ex-postman is employee of the year



MODEL EMPLOYEE: Instalec's Jamie Swan with Paul Jones and the firm's other award winner Lesley Jeffs.

THE postman didn't have to knock twice when he sought help from electrical contractor Instalec in changing his career.

Postie Jamie Swan, with his heart set on becoming an electrician, wanted some unpaid work experience to bolster his evening class studies.

When he called on Instalec in Ramridge Road, Luton, he found a ready welcome and it was to change his life in the way he wanted, after years in a series of 'going nowhere' jobs.

The story of Jamie's resourcefulness emerged at the 2004 Bedfordshire and Luton Rising Stars Business Excellence Awards when he was chosen as the Employee of the Year.

Instalec managing director Paul Jones said afterwards: "He joined me about five years ago, literally walked in

through the door one day and said 'I'm a postman but I'm training to be an electrician, going to evening classes three nights a week - what are my chances of getting some work experience?'

"I have to say I am fairly dismissive of people when they phone up with these requests but with Jamie I kind of gelled.

"He said: 'I'm prepared to work for you for nothing to gain some experience' but within a fortnight we decided to employ him. He finished training and signed on to other courses and has become totally independent."

Six months ago the firm appointed him as operations manager and he grasped the opportunity with both hands. Mer Jones said: "He has a strong sense of direction and is totally enthusiastic - he really is a model employee."

Jamie, 28, who lives in Matthew Street, Dunstable,

said: "They are really good people to work for - the only company that would actually see me and give me an interview. I tried 20 before Instalec gave me my chance."

He will have two reasons to remember 2004 - the award and his first child. His wife Nicola is due to give birth in December.

Instalec was started by Paul Jones 28 years ago and has a staff of 14 working on electrical installations, repairs and maintenance in the commercial and industrial fields.

Paul Jones said: "You are only as good as your employees and I have some fantastic staff and a fantastic administrator in my fellow director Lesley Jeffs, who won the Bedfordshire Businesswoman of the Year award two years ago.

"Now Jamie has an award and we are all very proud of what he has achieved and looking forward to the future."