

# Rhys and Sue Baker ready to clean

When couple Rhys and Sue Baker got together seven years ago, running a commercial cleaning business wasn't in the crystal ball for 2010. But now, a year in to owning the first Paramount Services commercial cleaning franchise in Whakatane, they are both thoroughly enjoying it – and their clients are delighted with their service.

In retrospect Rhys reckons his early years as a butcher and hospital theatre technician prepared him well for commercial cleaning. "As a butcher you are forever scrubbing down the shop and obviously the standards of hygiene required in an operating theatre are extremely high."

Rhys was schooled in Kawerau and started his butchery apprenticeship there. His grandparents lived in Whakatane and he spent a lot of time with them. "My

family has been a part of the Eastern Bay of Plenty for five or six generations," he says. Rhys spent eight years in Australia working as a butcher and at Osborne Park Hospital in Western Australia before returning to New Zealand.

Rhys and Sue met when they were both working at Harvey Norman at Mt Maunganui, she in administration and he in the electrical department. Rhys went on to become an insurance broker while Sue became office manager for a Tauranga cleaning company bought by Paramount Services.

Working as a cleaning company office administrator-cum-client liaison gave Sue a clear idea of what it takes to run a successful cleaning business – and when the Whakatane franchise came available it was a natural progression.



Sue Baker at Focus Chartered Accountants

## A growing business...

Today Paramount Services' Whakatane clients include professional firms Focus Chartered Accountants and planning and engineering company Harrison Grierson, department store Farmers, the Hub retail park, HirePool and the Ministry of Education. Services include general office cleaning including vacuuming and toilet cleaning, vinyl floor strip and seal cleaning, telephone and computer screen and keyboard sanitising and rubbish removal. They also bring in other specialist services such as window cleaning as clients require them.

The business is a significant employer, with four full-time or part time staff – Erin Colban, Leeana Mason, Patrick Mason and Jess Ngatai. Rhys looks after staff management and site duties while Sue is the first point of contact for

clients and administration as well as site inspections and she puts the gloves on to clean two to three days per week also.

Rhys and Sue are keen to attract more business. Professional service firms such as lawyers and accountants are good clients, they are willing to employ professional cleaners and appreciate a high level of service and attention to detail.

They are also interested in rental house cleans, one-off builders' cleans, holiday home cleaning, and hard floor strip and sealing in businesses and homes. "Polished floors are a big part of our business and I am confident that the floors we do at Farmers and other sites are the best in the area," says Rhys. "This service can be done for residential vinyl flooring to enhance the look and also to protect the owner's investment."

Sue says attention to detail and a proactive approach helped win the business of one client. "We kept driving past the front door and there was a dirty great hand print on it. It had been there for weeks and it bugged us. So we called the company and they said come and talk to us. They had just taken on another cleaning company but they didn't even show up. We did and the client is glad we did."

Rhys says one of the benefits of owning your own cleaning business – and having great client relationships – is the work hour flexibility. "As long as we do the job and do it well clients don't mind what time of night we do it. That means I can organise my own time." When he has free time Rhys will often cross the road from his house to Ohope Beach and surf-cast for snapper and kahawai.



Rhys and Sue Baker balance their busy work life with time at Ohope Beach

## Paramount Services Whakatane clients say...

"Paramount Services has been doing our cleaning for two and a half years. Franchisees Rhys and Sue Baker provide a very good service. If they've got any issues they contact us by phone or e-mail or use the reception desk communication book. Quite often cleaners work in the dead of night and you don't know who they are but with Rhys and Sue the lines of communication are always open. They also pay attention to detail. For example, when we shifted into our new office Sue pointed out some dirty marks on a glass balustrade on the stairs and cleaned them off for us."

**Susan Keys, Administrator, Ministry of Education**

"We have been more than happy with our Paramount Services cleaning, particularly since Sue and Rhys took over the franchise about a year ago. They give a really personalised service. They make the effort to pop in and see us about once a month and that's something I value. They offer quite a range of services and will make suggestions about extra things that need to be done like windows, carpets and office equipment, which helps to maintain our professional image."

**Tim Fergusson, Office Manager, Harrison & Grierson**

"We contract Rhys and Sue Baker from Paramount Services Limited to clean our office premises. We think that Rhys and Sue are superb and the best cleaners that we have had. We are extremely happy with the service they provide. We had no difficulty in telling when Rhys and Sue initially took over the cleaning contract. They started with a total clean of the whole premises from top to bottom. We noticed the difference instantly – literally from the first step into the office – a fresh smell, clean surfaces and sparkling floor. We appreciate that Rhys and Sue work in with us and can perform their work outside of our office hours. They now come in twice a week to keep on top of things. Sue and Rhys are very easy to deal with and they communicate well with us. We think that it's great that they continue to ask if we are happy and that they make suggestions for us. Overall, Focus Chartered Accountants Limited is very pleased with the service and high standard of cleaning we receive and would highly recommend Rhys and Sue to any other businesses."

**Colin Leonard, Director, Focus Chartered Accountants Limited**

"Our Paramount Services cleaner does an excellent job. We've used Paramount Services as our cleaners for well over two years. Rhys and Sue took over as franchisees about 12 months ago. They do our general cleaning – lunchroom, toilets, office and reception on a weekly basis. It's great having professional cleaners and I'd have no hesitation recommending them."

**Garth Cunningham, Branch Manager, HirePool**

## Make a clean start

### With Paramount Services Whakatane

Paramount Services owners Rhys and Sue Baker offer clients the best of both worlds - personal service from a local owner/operator combined with franchisor back-up and support.

Clients give glowing praise for the quality of their cleaning and their commitment to customer service.

Behind Rhys and Sue and their staff is New Zealand's leading commercial cleaning franchise, Paramount Services, named Best Business Services Franchise 2009/2010 and Supreme Franchise System 2008.



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