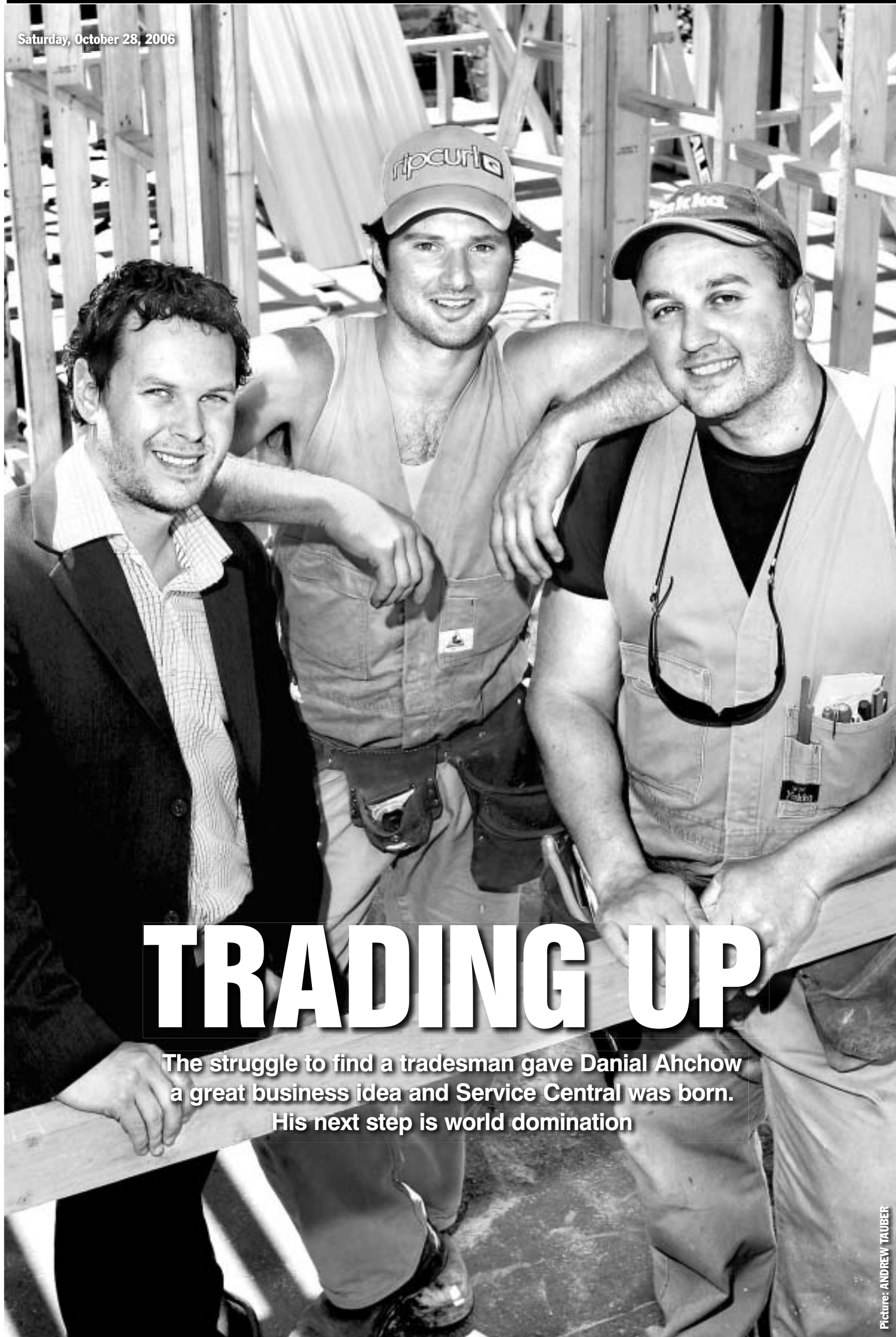


# careerone

in print, online, any time

Saturday, October 28, 2006



## TRADING UP

The struggle to find a tradesman gave Danial Ahchow a great business idea and Service Central was born. His next step is world domination

Picture: ANDREW TAUBER

## INSIDE

### ASK KATE

Kate Southam says the free Career Planning Program sponsored by the Federal Government is a great service for jobseekers. You must be a registered jobseeker with a jobseeker ID number to access the service and you can ask Centrelink or a Job Network consultant about registering for the next program in your area.

### HEALTH CAREERS

Ann Burke (below) broadened her career base in community nursing when the Maternal and Child Health nurse took on the role of family services officer at the City of Bayside early this year.



### THE EXPERT

Author Warren Frehse says a career coach or counsellor isn't just an option when immediate career-choice assistance is required. Many don't realise that a career counsellor can assist people in all stages of their career life, and in fact, doing so can even prevent problems occurring later.

### ODD JOB

A haft presser was employed in the 19th century Sheffield cutlery industry to press bone/horn into knife handles (hafts).



# Service road

Danial Ahchow was fed up waiting for tradesmen to arrive. So he did something about it, writes **DANIEL HOY**

## COVER STORY

**A**NYONE who has heard the words "I'll be there between 9am and noon or 2pm and 5pm" knows how frustrating waiting for a tradesman can be.

We all know getting three quotes is the smartest way to find someone to work on your home, but sitting through a day of waiting often means we go with the first and only one.

Like most of us, Danial Ahchow was frustrated with how difficult it was to find quality tradespeople.

But unlike most, he did something about it.

"I was frustrated with how hard it was to find quality people through the Yellow Pages," he says.

"It would take forever to find someone and then they wouldn't return my calls. So my father and I started building the Service Central system in 2003.

"In July 2005 we launched Service Central to the market and have had more than 17,000 jobs listed already. We expect more than 1000 new job requests a week by the end of this year."

Service Central is free and aims to match people to tradesmen. By calling 1800SERVICE and explaining what services you require, they find you up to four quotes.

Every business they find is independent and has had its qualifications checked by Service Central.

Ahchow knew he had a great idea, but turning an idea into a successful business is where most people stumble.

Fortunately for Ahchow, his previous job prepared him perfectly for turning the idea of Service Central into a reality.

After completing law school in 2001, he started as an employee-relations adviser at the RACV and two key projects helped shape his vision for Service Central.

"First, as a project manager for the bi-annual employee satisfaction survey, I learnt that employees commonly want more freedom, fair recognition and rewards for their hard work," he says.

"Second, when managing a project on refining the management of RACV's 600-plus sub-contractors, I learnt that the contractors love their freedom and pay structure, but are concerned about generating a constant flow of work.

"This led me to explore the world of contracting, convinced that there must be a better way of generating work for businesses than the Yellow Pages."

After creating the business and watching it grow, Ahchow has seen his role evolve.

"My role now is to be constantly aware of scaling the business to meet the growing demand," he says.

"Service Central has huge growth



**Serves you right:** Service Central's Danial Ahchow has explored the world of contracting. Picture: ANDREW TAUBER

opportunities, including moving interstate and overseas.

"Currently I'm dedicated to developing the IT system, sales team, and marketing strategy to ensure that Service Central achieves its full potential.

"The hardest part of my role is finding quality staff who are looking to work in such a fast-growing and constantly changing company.

"I work closely with our strong management team to ensure Service Central is well positioned for next year and beyond."

Ahchow is keen for Service Central to grow and not just Australia-wide. He is confident the business will work anywhere in the world, making "world domination" his ultimate goal.

"Service Central solves two fun-

### JOB LOT

**How does Service Central choose its tradespeople?**

"We review all companies that apply to join Service Central," Danial Ahchow says. "A service provider's business needs to be properly registered, fully insured and licensed or qualified."

"Once registered, each service provider needs to

maintain a minimum of a 2½-star rating out of a five-star rating from consumers to maintain their position.

"Being a market place, we work on supply and demand. Given this, we have limited places available for each type of service. We are very particular about which businesses we allow into these limited spots."

damental problems," he says. "We make it easy for consumers to find businesses and we provide a fairer and more cost-effective way for businesses to have a constant stream

of customers. Given that these fundamental problems are common across the globe, we're working hard to roll out this service across the world."

## THE EXPERT

### WARREN FREHSE

AUTHOR

**Q** Surely a career counsellor or coach is someone you see only when you need to find a job or are leaving school or tertiary studies. What else can a career counsellor do? Can they help me if I am gainfully employed and happy in my job?

**A** Most people see a career coach or counsellor when they need immediate assistance with career choice.

Like going to the dentist, they see them only when the tooth has cavied in and there is much pain to be relieved.

Many don't realise that a career counsellor can assist people in all stages of their career life, and doing so can prevent later problems.

#### LATE TEENS AND EARLY ADULTHOOD

This is the stage when you are trying to discover what you like doing, what you are good at, and what educational qualifications you need to pursue different career paths.

A counsellor can help assess your interests, values and aptitudes, and provide career information.

#### LATER ADULTHOOD

At this stage, ambitions and promotions are paramount.

This is where you can seek help to set goals and action plans to help you get where you want to go.

They can help you identify obstacles and assist you in removing them.

A counsellor can help you gain skills to deal with people issues and office politics and build your employability.

#### MID-LIFE

This time presents issues such as dealing with inertia and feeling stuck in one's job.

It is also a time when retrenchment or redundancy can occur.

You will need help in developing a job-search plan, re-establishing confidence, building self-esteem and learning valuable networking skills.

You will need to tap into the hidden employment market.

#### RETIREMENT

This time can be about seeking a new lifestyle, volunteering and mentoring others.

Those leaving the full-time workforce have many opportunities to find a variety of new interests and maybe part-time work.

When you need professional support seek the advice of a career practitioner who can help point you in a new direction.

**Warren Frehse is author of *Manage Your Own Career: Reinvent Your Job; Reinvent Yourself* (Pearson Education Australia) rrp \$24.95, and is a member of the Australian Association of Career Counsellors, the Australian Psychological Society and the Australian Human Resources Institute.**

**For a career counsellor in your area, visit [www.aacc.org.au](http://www.aacc.org.au)**