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In Today's Tight Labour Market, High School Grads Can Make Big Salaries

With Additional Training, Could Make Six Figures

Welders, Plumbers, Technicians

TORONTO, April 25, 2018 — In today's tight labour market, the hiring experts at Express Employment Professionals are reporting high demand for workers without four-year degrees—and many of those workers are earning wages that can rival those of four-year university graduates. High school grads are in demand and can make big salaries.

"When I look at the job market today, if you are graduating high school, you have so many options other than attending university," said Dwayne Williams, an Express franchise owner in Guelph, Ontario. "There are great careers in the skilled trades, and these are careers with huge potential for growth."

Williams says some common well-paying jobs for which only a high school degree is needed include:

- Welder
- Electrician apprentice
- Plumber apprentice
- Maintenance technician
- Accounts payable/receivable clerk
- Millwright apprentice
- Heavy equipment operator

According to Statistics Canada, in 2018 the number of people in the labour force with only a high school education will equal 5,135,900 out of a total workforce of 19,808,200—or roughly 25 per cent of the whole Canadian workforce.

Workers in these jobs can expect to initially earn \$40,000 to \$60,000 a year. With some training and experience, but not a four-year degree, Williams says workers in these or similar fields can earn \$70,000 a year and up.

“We need more skilled workers. I would like to see the education system, governments and policy makers put more of a focus on supporting the trades,” Williams said. “Not every student has what Google is looking for—and, actually, not everybody suits that environment. Working with your hands and building things can be very appealing to many students”.

Hanif Hemani, an Express owner in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, estimates with just some training after high school, trade jobs offer good options for graduates, even in an economic downturn.

“Even through market changes, which we have been seeing due to the fluctuating oil and gas market, I do still feel that the trades offer more resiliency than some of the other traditional roles, like engineering and similar fields,” he said.

Hemani says employees who work as automotive technologists and diesel technologists, can earn more than \$20 an hour, plus over time—or well above \$40,000 a year, right at the start of their careers.

Williams also points out the huge opportunity in these fields, due to the approaching retirement of many who are currently working in these jobs.

“In a few years, anyone working in these skilled trades will be able to write their own ticket. There is so much opportunity and it’s growing daily as the current group of skilled and experienced workers approach retirement,” he said.

According to the Canada Jobs Bank, workers in jobs without four-year degree can make up to \$60,000 a year.

Job	Average Hourly Wage	Average Yearly Salary
Accounts payable clerk	\$20.19	\$41,995.20
Welder	\$24.02	\$49,961.60
Heavy Equipment Operators	\$27	\$56,160.00
Plumber apprentice	\$29	\$60,320.00
Electrician apprentice	\$29.70	\$61,776.00
Millwright	\$29.33	\$61,006.40
Maintenance tech	\$29.33	\$61,006.40

(Government of Canada Job Bank, Wage data from September 2017)

“A degree is not synonymous with a successful career and a well-paying job,” said Bill Stoller, CEO of Express. “Despite what conventional wisdom leads some to believe, it is entirely possible to earn a good living without a four-year college education—and you can do it debt free. There is, of course, no replacing the value of hard work, a willingness to learn and good interpersonal skills, which are almost always required for professional success.”

If you would like to arrange for an interview to discuss this topic, please contact Kellie Major at (613) 222-7488 or email kellie@mapleleafstrategies.com.

About Bill Stoller

William H. “Bill” Stoller is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 800 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Since its inception, Express has put more than 6 million people to work worldwide.

About Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.4 billion in sales and employed a record 540,000 people in 2017. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com/CA.