

Single Working Parents in the Canadian Workforce

Express Owners Reveal Challenges Single Parent Workers Face

TORONTO, Oct. 25, 2017 – Darlene McKenna knew she could help Chad, a single dad from Halifax, Nova Scotia, who was looking for a work situation to help balance his parenting responsibilities with a full-time job.

Back in 2016, Chad's retail job required him to work evenings and weekends; a work schedule not ideal for his young, school-aged child's needs. He wanted a full-time job with Monday to Friday, 8 – 5 hours, along with medical benefits, a location near public transportation and, ideally, the potential to grow into a long-term career.

Chad's situation is not unique in Canada. According to the most recent numbers from Statistics Canada, there are 1,250,185 single parents in the country; families with children under 18 and only one parent at home.

McKenna and her team kept Chad in the back of their minds for almost a year at Halifax's Express Employment Professionals office. She has plenty of experience working with single parents at Express.

"I knew we would find the right job for him," said McKenna. "He was patient with us, too. He stuck with us for the longer term, working on any temporary assignments he could fit it in around his retail job."

After about a year, Chad was sent on a three-month assignment in a shipping and receiving department of a local company. He was hired full time after glowing performance reviews. The job came with medical benefits, no evenings or weekends and provided plenty of room to grow.

"It was a perfect fit," McKenna said.

McKenna saw Chad's drive and work ethic from the beginning. She believes he was successful, despite challenging circumstances, because he was open to any opportunity and had an end game in mind.

Jessica Culo, an Express office owner from Edmonton, Alberta, relayed a similar experience working with a single mom named Tara. Culo provided her with a permanent, full-time job within a large manufacturing organization.

“She was struggling to pay her bills,” Culo said. “Her current employer had reduced her hours because of a slow-down in his business due to a still struggling Alberta economy. The Express opportunity allowed Tara to get back on track and provide for her two teenage boys. She has not missed a day of work since we found her this job.”

Since single parents often have more limitations on the type of work they can accept due to their children, Culo added that childcare and transportation are usually the biggest obstacles between these parents and a job.

In a recent survey of 573 businesses conducted by Express, 12 per cent of owners reported applicants don’t accept positions because of a lack of transportation. Another 9 per cent cited inflexible schedules, while 5 per cent said applicants could not find child care.

“Our recruiters are excellent in listening to the applicants’ wants and needs and figuring out what is not said—challenges about schedules and transportation and working toward a job that is a match,” Culo said.

Bob Funk, CEO of Express, said single parents face a unique set of challenges in finding and securing work.

“In spite of that—or more likely, because of that—we find that they can be among the most dedicated workers,” he said. “While the day-to-day challenges of life often intervene, they find ways to make it work. As more employers hire single parents in the coming years, they should recognize the demands placed on these workers; a little flexibility can go a long way toward ensuring that parents can keep their jobs and employers can keep these stellar employees.”

The survey of 573 businesses, which are current and former clients of Express Employment Professionals, was conducted in August 2017 to gauge respondents’ expectations for the fourth quarter of 2017. Previous surveys were conducted to cover hiring trends of the quarters indicated.

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 Robert A. Funk

Robert A. “Bob” Funk is chairman and chief executive officer of Express Employment Professionals. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the international staffing company has more than 780 franchises in the U.S., Canada and South Africa. Under his leadership, Express has put more than 6 million people to work worldwide. Funk served as Chairman of the Conference of Chairmen of the Federal Reserve and was also the Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.

About Express Employment Professionals

Express Employment Professionals puts people to work. It generated \$3.05 billion in sales and employed a record 510,000 people in 2016. Its long-term goal is to put a million people to work annually. For more information, visit ExpressPros.com.