

opening [doors]



THE BETTER CHOICE STAFFING TEAM, ANNA SMITH, CENTRE. PHOTO CREDIT: FIONA BRAMBLE

ANNA SMITH, PRESIDENT/OWNER, BETTER CHOICE STAFFING on the unique challenges for newcomer job-seekers in Victoria and how her team has helped newcomers and local employers find a mutual match.

Q: What is your cultural background, Anna? **A:** I was born in Manila. I've lived in Florida, Chicago, San Francisco, New Zealand—I've been all over. My husband and I finally agreed on Victoria.

Q: Do you agree that the idea of "it's who you know" is a true barrier for newcomers accessing employment opportunities in Victoria?

A: Absolutely. When I first moved out here (from New York), I was told that if I didn't have friends or family here, I was out of luck—that it is really about who you know. I thought it was an exaggeration, but it was true. I have never lived anywhere where who you know matters so much.

Q: Does that experience make you more inspired to help newcomers find employment?

A: Yes! We love working with newcomers—really anyone who is having trouble finding work and has exhausted other avenues. They've gone on job boards; they're going to job fairs; they're doing all the right things but they're just not hearing back.

Q: How does a newcomer start the search with you and your team? Is there a cost?

A: There is no cost for the job seeker. We are contracted with employers, not job seekers. The best place to start is to come

in and see us or contact us via our website or email. We welcome walk-ins, but please also send us an electronic copy of your resume.

Q: Tell me about the employers you work with. **A:** We are fortunate to work with a lot of good companies and hiring managers and we've become very close with them. I listen, truly listen to what they want. At the same time, I know that there might be something they are not seeing [with a candidate] and I have gone

“

IT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES THAT HAVE THE EAR OF SO MANY EMPLOYERS TO USE THAT TO HELP OTHERS, TO BE AN ADVOCATE. I THINK WE CAN BE A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE JOB SEEKER AND EMPLOYER.

so far as to say, "Listen, try the person out, one or two days, to see if they are a good fit. We'll cover the cost." I've done that with certain contracts because I know they are asking for specific skill sets that a

newcomer to Canada might not have but that most people can pick up in half a day. That's often all anyone needs. The employer usually says yes because they've got nothing to lose!

Q: How do you find a match for the employer and job seeker? **A:** We go through our list of everyone that we know that's looking for work and we provide all the information to the job seeker. There are agencies that hold back information because they don't want the job seeker to apply directly with their client, but that doesn't make sense to me. How is a job seeker supposed to make an informed decision if they don't have all the details? We give the job seeker the name of the company, the address, the rate of pay, everything!

{ TOP TIPS } FROM ANNA

1 SIGN UP
WITH ALL LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES TO OPEN UP MORE OPPORTUNITIES. EACH AGENCY REPRESENTS DIFFERENT EMPLOYERS, SO DON'T JUST SIGN UP WITH ONE AGENCY.

2 BE FLEXIBLE. DON'T BE AFRAID TO TAKE AN ENTRY-LEVEL JOB. IT GIVES YOU CANADIAN EXPERIENCE AND A FOOT IN THE DOOR.

3 COME IN
TO SEE US AT BETTER CHOICE. MEETING YOU IN PERSON IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF US HELPING YOU FIND EMPLOYMENT. P.S. DON'T BE NERVOUS!

4 REMEMBER
YOUR SKILLS ARE TRANSFERABLE. THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT JOBS THAT REQUIRE YOUR SKILL SET AND EXPERIENCE.

ACTION PLAN >>>
visit >>> better choice staffing
 1124 Blanshard Street
 Victoria, B.C.
betterchoicestaffing.com
CONTACT >>> anna smith
 250-590-5120