

Finding a good job

By Dale Landrith | Mar 01, 2014

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The unemployment rate is too high. Too many folks cannot find work. A job must pay a living wage. What is the solution to these problems?

If we took a survey of some folks with good jobs here in Midcoast Maine, could we discover how they came to have that good job? I decided to interview some people with jobs that would be described as good jobs. In the interest of full disclosure, one of the individuals is a long-time business friend and the other three were completely unknown to me prior to the interviews.

Pam – Camden National Bank

Pam is a vice-president and loan officer at Camden National Bank. As a teenager Pam worked many jobs in many different fields. She worked at selling newspapers, in a pizza shop, on a local schooner, bussing and waiting tables at a restaurant, and doing odd jobs for a local artist. She then took entry level employment at Fisher Engineering where she worked for many years while increasing in responsibility and earnings. Pam left Fisher Engineering upon the birth of her second child to have time with her children. Upon desiring to return to the workplace, Pam applied for and obtained a position with Camden National Bank working in customer service. Pam has now worked for Camden National for 23 years; customer service was followed by becoming a loan officer and eventually a vice-president.

Bob – Hannaford Camden

Bob is the store manager at the Camden Hannaford and began his working career at 15 working at Harbor Dogs (Skip's) on the Camden Public Landing. He left the job of flipping burgers and hot dogs to go to work at the A & P grocery store in downtown Camden. Pushing grocery carts at A & P was soon replaced by doing the same at the Camden IGA grocery store in the building now occupied by Reny's. Pushing grocery carts at the Camden IGA was soon replaced by an assistant manager position at Rockland IGA. Bob soon came back to the Camden IGA as the store manager as they moved to the location that is now the Camden Hannaford. As the Camden IGA became Graves and subsequently present day Hannaford, Bob remained as manager and has 40 years in the grocery business. Hannaford will soon begin taking applications for spring and very seldom has to lay off any workers. Advancement is certainly possible.

Nick – Home Depot

Nick is the store manager at the Rockland Home Depot and began working for Home Depot at age 19. He pushed carts, stocked shelves, and worked the sales floor as his responsibilities grew. He had to change store locations and was thus able to assume head cashier, various department manager positions, assistant store manager, and eventually became a store manager. Nick has now worked for Home Depot for 19 years and advanced through the ranks. Home Depot is currently hiring at entry level positions those who have a good attitude, want to work, and can pass a drug test. Advancement is certainly possible.

Shawn – Wal-Mart

Shawn is store manager at the Thomaston Walmart and began his working career with Hannaford in an entry level position pushing grocery carts and stocking shelves. He worked at Hannaford in two different locations for five years prior to joining Wal-Mart in Windham. Shawn began working at Wal-Mart in grocery prior to gaining experience in several different departments both as an hourly and salaried associate. Opportunities in management developed after successfully completing a supervisors test. Wal-Mart asked Shawn to serve in a number of different stores throughout Maine before asking him to become the store manager in Rockland. With the move to the superstore in Thomaston, Shawn became the store manager of that location.

It is noteworthy that nationally 75 percent of store managers at Wal-Mart began as hourly associates within the organization. After accepting an entry level position at Wal-Mart, there are numerous types of positions within Wal-Mart such as cashiers, floor sales, customer service, and more. You may also request to work in specific departments of your interest. If you choose to and then successfully complete the supervisor test, opportunities are open for shift managers, department managers, assistant managers, co-managers, and eventually the store manager position. Wal-Mart currently has openings for as many as 20 associates. A drug test is required.

The common thread running between all of those interviewed is that they started their careers with entry level jobs. Entry level jobs are a starting point and statistics show that 70 percent of those accepting an entry level job receive compensation increases after six months. Often a promotion accompanies the compensation increase. How does a person qualify for that compensation increase or promotion? It is simple. Have a good attitude, be on time, show up for work each day, and work hard.

If I am unemployed, why should I accept an entry level job that may not pay any more than I am already receiving in unemployment benefits or public assistance benefits? In order to get that better job, it is extremely critical to have a job. Someone who is trying to better themselves is always preferred by an employer. In addition, if a person accepts some sort of government assistance as their only future, then the future is now and opportunity ceases to exist, and the prospect of increasing ones standard of living is virtually impossible. Upward mobility is alive and well in the workplace. Go for it.

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