

Destination Canada: an employer's experience

Many Yukon employers have hired employees through the Destination Canada Forum that takes place annually in France and Belgium. Karina Lapointe, owner of Café Balzam, is one of them.

"It took some time before I used international recruitment. It is easier to hire French people who have already arrived and have a WHV," says Lapointe.

Labour shortage

"I've been told that the labour shortage is not only affecting the Yukon. But imagine here, they are travellers or people who are coming to have an experience."

But there are two sides to hiring people with a Working Holiday Visa. Some don't have a lot of work experience in the food service industry, but

if they are motivated, a little training is all it takes. That is the good part. The negative part is that they don't stay working at the café for long.

Karina Lapointe is having difficulty recruiting local labour. That is why she has turned to international recruitment. Submitted photo.

As a result of Destination Canada, Karina Lapointe received several applications. Half of the résumés were promising. "People see the food industry differently in Europe than we do in Canada. It's more of a career in Europe. Candidates already have a strong professional background," explains Lapointe.

Different experiences

Up to now, she has only hired one person through the international recruitment program. This employee, who had already obtained a WHV, participated in the Forum in Paris. Her first idea was to work in Quebec, but the Association franco-yukonnaise's representatives did such a good job promoting the Yukon that she changed her destination because the territory and the café's offer really interested her. The collaboration between employer and employee was successful.

Last spring, Karina tried to hire another candidate who took part in Destination Canada in Brussels.

For the hiring of someone who does not have a WHV, the Mobilité francophone program was suggested. "Several people told me that it went smoothly, that it was fast. For me, that wasn't really the case. But I know that it was super fast for other Yukon employers," says the owner of the Café Balzam.

"I had work to offer her at that time, but it took too long with the government," regrets Lapointe. She wanted to hire her as restaurant manager with the Mobilité francophone program, but the start of the summer tourism season kept the café owner very busy. Also, when she tried to pay the online fees for opening the Mobilité francophone file, she couldn't connect to the government computer system. "There were lots of little things that made everything take time," adds Lapointe. To this day, there has been no resolution.

But these setbacks do not discourage Karina Lapointe. She considers the Mobilité francophone program very attractive, as it forces employees to work for only one employer. If candidates leave their jobs, they must return to their countries.

"Again, this year, I will send job offers for the next Destination Canada Forum. I will try again. Currently, it's not working very well with local staff. They are really not reliable."