

EMPLOYER PROFILE

Darryl Croft



Owner Manager

Four OK Tire Locations
Etobicoke, ON

Taking the business route in

While many people go into business in the industry on the strength of their highly developed technical skills, Darryl graduated from York University with a Bachelor of Business Administration and went to work with a "leading national chartered accounting firm, specializing in small and medium sized businesses," before joining the family business. "Although I did not have any direct industry experience," he says, "this base of business training helped me in my management duties and business development with OK Tire."

Training for everyone

"Our knowledge is ultimately what we sell," says Darryl, "so training is absolutely essential to our business success. When employees are hired, they are made aware that training is part of the job requirement." Darryl himself has taken a variety of training since he joined the firm. "I attended many different industry management training seminars arranged either through OK Tire, or leading suppliers. This training helped immensely in the growth and development of the business." To this day, he participates "in a variety of different training courses and groups on an



The Family Business

In 1968, Pat and Roy Croft, with the support of their spouses, Louise and Margaret, started a commercial tire business that over the years branched out to include passenger tire and wholesale tire sales. Still a family enterprise, employing Pat's three sons and daughter, OK Tire in Etobicoke now consists of four separate locations which also offer retail and commercial mechanical service. The company, with a staff of 33, services clients mainly in the Etobicoke area, as well as emergency tire service to customers across Ontario through the OK Tire commercial road service network.

What it means to have an OK Tire franchise

Darryl Croft is very clear on the benefits of being part of a nation-wide chain of stores. "OK Tire is the country's largest group of independent tire and auto service dealers. As a member, we benefit from national advertising and excellent purchasing power with many recognized brands. We have inventory support from our large warehouses and distribution network. The dealer support staff at OK Tire provides business development, human resource and business management assistance. Since every dealer is a shareholder, we also benefit from profit sharing."

OK Tire seeks individuals or businesses with automotive service experience that have a belief in a strong brand, combined with entrepreneurial spirit, proven track record and a high level of commitment to customer service. To be a member, you must also have the financial capability to support growth and a vision for long term business development.

***"Our knowledge
is ultimately
what we sell"***



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Darryl Croft, Owner Manager



ongoing basis. Some may be technical, some are strategic or emerging topics, and others relate to various business management subjects.”

People ARE the job

For Darryl, “The best part of my job is the interaction with different people”. This means his job suits him perfectly, because “this is definitely a ‘people’ business.” He goes on to describe his routine as a general manager for the different divisions, “Most of my day is spent communicating with store managers, suppliers and new or potential customers on many different issues. I also monitor the performance and results for each location.”

The double challenge

Technology is having an impact on almost every aspect of the vehicle service business. Keeping up with the latest technology, is a great challenge for managers like Darryl, “both from a service and repair perspective as well as from a management perspective.” When diagnosing, maintaining and repairing vehicles, technicians must use electronic tools and many different computer software programs to research, identify and repair problems. “Working on new

cars requires new software, new tools and constantly updated information”.

At the same time, making sure the business is managed as efficiently and effectively as possible to meet customers’ needs also requires an investment in new computer software tools that connect the shops to suppliers and customers. This is due to the way “customers find us (Internet searches), how they communicate (email) and how they research our products requires our service advisors and managers to use technology continually every day.” On both fronts, Darryl sees that “there is still much to be done in the industry to realize the full potential of new technology.”

What success looks like – happy customers

“One of the biggest lessons that I have learned” says Darryl, “is that, to be successful in this service business, you must not focus on price, but instead focus on customer service and satisfaction and meeting customer needs. This is easier said than done, but if you are able to meet and exceed customer expectations, you are able to charge the prices required to be profitable.”

We try to make the clients’ visit with us as pleasant and easy as possible. We have great specialty coffee, we provide fresh interesting reading materials, and we have free wireless Internet as well as computer terminals available and we offer vehicle pickup and delivery service in addition to shuttle service. Our staff has the freedom to “do what it takes” to make a customer happy.

The other part of the people equation – satisfied staff

Darryl believes that his staff is attracted to working in “a successful, progressive shop that is continuously improving.” Employees know when they are hired that they are expected to have the proper professional attitude and they are rewarded accordingly with the appropriate respect. “Their opinions are valued and actively solicited when making business decisions. They are given the responsibility and authority to make quick decisions relating to customer service without approval.”

The most important characteristic that we look for is the right professional attitude. The person must be willing to learn, willing to train and willing to work with others. Communication skills are also very important.



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