

A quarter pound of injury prevention ...

... is worth everything when it comes to a safe workplace

By: Jamie Hall

McDonald's owners **Kristen and Hanif Adatia** have a golden rule about doing business under the arches: *Put your people first and the rest will take care of itself.*

That's as true today as it was eight years ago. That's when the couple bought not one, not two, but five McDonald's franchises in Sherwood Park. Two years ago, they bought five more locations in Edmonton, bringing the grand total to 10.

"The first couple of years in particular were just a blur," says Kristen. "We bought the stores in Sherwood Park at the peak of the labour crunch. It was hard just to keep our heads above water."

The couple believes in 'hands-on' management

With decades of experience in the restaurant industry, they brought considerable expertise to the table. And, far from drowning, they ultimately thrived, growing the business and weaving a safety culture into the fabric of every restaurant. Along the way, they added in an infrastructure of senior staff to make sure they weren't being spread too thin.

"We were, and still are, very much hands-on with our people," says Kristen. "You'll always find Hanif at a sandwich table during peak periods."

Kristen's path crossed with Account Management at WCB when she called with a question about the claims process. Seeing a rise in claim costs, she recognized there was a gap in her staff's

knowledge about injury reporting. The Adatias were determined to reinforce with staff and managers alike the importance of safety and of reporting even the smallest of injuries.

Finding an unexpected resource

"Whoever I spoke to when I called didn't have the answer to my question—I can't even remember what it was—and asked me if I wanted to be put in touch with my account manager," recalls Kristen, then laughs.

"I didn't even know I had an account manager. Back then, WCB was a bill I paid and then I dealt with it as it came up, making sure to report quickly when one of our people got hurt."

An account manager offered to educate their senior staff about the ins and outs of WCB, and conducted a training session in a jam-packed meeting room in the basement of one of their restaurants. The Adatias attended, along with store managers and regional managers. The account manager talked about how premiums were set, and explained the missed opportunities in offering modified work to employees.

Minor injuries can have a major impact

Smaller restaurants don't have a lot of serious injuries, per se, the group was

“It was a very collaborative process; like a partnership, really.” — Kristen Adatia

told, but could still really feel the effects of the little ones, so it was imperative to offer modified duties in a timely fashion to help get their people back to work safely and quickly.

Hanif says he could practically see his people connecting the dots during the presentation.

Says Hanif: "You could see all the lightbulbs coming on; they were putting everything together with what Kristen and I were trying to educate them about."

Done, done and done

The account manager started meeting with Kristen on a regular basis. They drew up an action plan and established goals. One by one, Kristen tackled the list of deliverables.

- Increase orientation training for new hires regarding coffee handling and pouring. Check.
- Complete a physical demands analysis for each position. Check.
- Develop an employee injury package. Check.



With the help of their WCB account manager, McDonald's owners in Edmonton, Kristen and Hanif Adatia, are lovin' it since they implemented a new action plan to improve how they manage workplace injuries.

- Brainstorm with staff to develop a modified duty task list. Check.
- Continue to provide a formal modified work offer for all injured employees. Check.
- Review modified work policy and procedures with a view to maximizing early, safe return to work. Check.
- Promote and train all staff about the use of Occupational Injury Service (OIS) clinics for non-emergency injuries. Check.

Partnering for success

For Kristen, the process has been nothing short of a revelation.

"Once I realized I had an account manager, I suddenly had all these other resources. It was just great to have someone who was there for me, and had all these tools to help me.

"It was a very collaborative process; like a partnership, really." **WS**

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- >> **Check out the story** on page 20 to hear more about what you can expect in the seminars.
- >> **See what seminars are available** and find out how to register on page 23.

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