

How Loblaw is leading the retail sector in inclusive hiring

For Loblaw, finding, hiring and keeping the right talent to fill vacancies and grow the company is a major business challenge. As a leading national food and pharmacy retailer, Loblaw employs roughly 200,000 people across Canada. The company operates more than 2,400 locations under banners including Loblaws, Real Canadian Superstore, Zehrs, No Frills and Shoppers Drug Mart.

For many of the company's stores, hiring qualified people with disabilities has helped address this issue. George is one of 6,000 people with disabilities employed through Loblaw stores across Canada. He is not just an example of the company's strategic recognition of talent, but also highlights the company's commitment to inclusivity. In 2019, Loblaw was named as one of Canada's Top Diversity Employers for the ninth consecutive year.

Strategic hiring makes Loblaw a business leader

George is a part-time cashier at a Real Canadian Superstore location west of Toronto. He's been a Loblaw employee since 2008 and is seen as one of the best employees at his store by managers and colleagues alike. George is a person with Asperger's Syndrome.

His skills and abilities are true assets to his employer: he is one of the fastest cashiers in the store and has memorized names of colleagues and regular customers. George even often remembers the birthdays and anniversaries of his supervisors and colleagues. He makes customers' shopping experiences more personal by letting them know an item can be price-matched.

George is a two-time recipient of the annual President's Pin—the highest honour given to Loblaw employees for their exemplary service.

With high-performing and valuable employees like George, Loblaw is tapping into the talent of people with disabilities. The company's commitment to being diverse and inclusive is widely recognized in the business community, and this has helped Loblaw make its mark as an innovative retailer and national business leader.

Numbers you need to know: retail sector

The retail sector is Ontario's largest employer, with annual sales of more than \$200 billion. This sector faces constant labour gaps as up to 44% of retail jobs are part-time or seasonal. This can lead to high turnover and retention challenges.

According to Government of Ontario labour market information and statistics, retail salespersons represent the largest labour shortage, with a projected gap of more than 20,000 from 2017 to 2021. It is also projected that there will be up to 20,000 openings for cashiers.