

Interview with Kayla, Blackbird bakery
Ella Anderson, Careers 9

Kayla : Blackbird Bakery, Kayla speaking. How may I help you?

Me : Hi, I'm the student skills Canada talked to you about. I'm wondering if you have ten minutes to do a quick interview with me?

Kayla : I do actually!

Me : awesome! So I'm going to record this conversation and take some notes to use for one of my classes. Is that okay?

Kayla : Sure.

Me: So firstly I just want to know how long you've been the owner of the bakery.

Kayla : Since it opened in 2012.

Me : Alright...and what made you want to start the business?

Kayla : Um well I was working in a bakery elsewhere and realistically there's a maximum amount of growth that you can experience if you're working for a small business. I do like small businesses and so there is a point where you have to either plateau or admit that you are going into business for yourself. So I chose the ladder option.

Me : And how did you discover your love for baking?

Kayla : I used to bake with my mum when I was small. She taught me how to bake when I was, like, five.

Me : Aw, that's cute. Do you require any sort of training or education to do the job that you do?

Kayla : Well you can go and do either a culinary program at various colleges, you could get a business degree. There's lots of things that could probably help you out - I don't have any specific training that is directed at this. I did other things in school so I just kind of simplified it to this.

Me : Alright, um, where do all your fantastic recipes come from? Do you make them up yourself?

Kayla : For the most part. Basically what I do is I'll look up recipes online, just looking for inspiration or ideas and then kind of tweak them. Once you learn the basic chemistry of how things go together, you can look up an idea and say "oh, I like how espresso goes with this" and just kind of wing it on your own. Sometimes you just look at something and think "oh this should be delicious together" and you just kind of figure it out. And that's pretty much a combination of research and experimenting or just jumping in and seeing what happens.

Me : Well I really like everything you make there.

Kayla : Oh thank you!

Me : So I just have two more questions : How has COVID-19 affected your business? What adjustments have you made?

Kayla : It's been an interesting and inconsistent impact. So at first we had a bit of a dropoff business as everyone was kind of adjusting and learning the new system. We were trying to decide whether or not it made sense for us to close or stay open and what would be the safety requirements. So we had some conversations with public health and we were deemed an essential business, much to my surprise.

Me : An essential business..

Kayla : Yeah and so basically we were instructed that we were supposed to stay open until - and hopefully this doesn't happen- there is a level of community spread that only critical

businesses can remain open. Those are businesses that maintain health care or basic food supply like grocery stores. So we're essential but we're not critical. So should things get drier enough, we would be instructed to close under that umbrella but other than that, we were instructed to stay open and what happened is a lot of other businesses that served a lot of the same product ended up closing either for physical reasons or for safety reasons or for anybody who has kids and have to stay home as well. So we're having a lot of people who HAD to close their businesses for a lot of reasons and that's kind of made it so there's less options for people to go out and do things. And since they can't travel, they can't do all these other things, they're kind of turning to food for comfort and we've seen a little increase in business because of that. However it is very inconsistent, so we'll have a busy couple of days when people must just be feeling very blue and eating stuff and then it'll drop off for a few days again. It's just seesawing back and forth. So that has been a change in terms of demand.

The other change we've had is the supply chain. It's the same degree of inconsistency. So sometimes you can get things in, sometimes you can't get things in, so any week we might not have the ingredients we need. And there are some things where you can just wing it and make other things instead or alternate or sub but realistically there's a maximum amount of solutions you can do. So we're playing with the menu and trying to be a little bit more open in terms of what we can make and when and more forgiving of ourselves when we can't make things because we weren't able to get the supplies or ingredients we needed.

Me : Okay and I just have one more question but thank you, that was a really good response. Um, can I just ask you what you love most about your job at the bakery?

Kayla : I guess the thing I like the most about it is the variety. I'm not necessarily a good fit for jobs that require a lot of sitting still or doing the same thing for an extended period of time. In an environment like this, you're bouncing between doing baking, administrative tasks, I do the bookkeeping as well. I also do staff management, training, maintaining the

front. So it's sort of a juggling act - a lot going on and so that's very much suited towards someone like me. Also, I guess another aspect I like a lot is the autonomy to make a decision. I don't have to refer to a management or anyone else. If someone wants a donation, it's my decision. I get to say "here, take this cake, have fun and I hope you make a lot of money!"

Me : Alright, well thank you so much for talking with me.

Kayla : You're very much welcome, any time.

Me : Is there an email I can reach you at to send you a thank you letter?

Kayla : Sure, the email address is blackbirdbakerywhitehorse@gmail.com

Me : Cool, well thank you so much and I hope you have a very nice day.

Kayla : Same to you.

Me : Goodbye.

Kayla : Bye.