

# The accounting field offers long-term careers and a good living wage

by Stella Shepard



Rachael Mella, Chartered Professional Accountant, CPA, CA, co-owner of Mella & Shea Chartered Professional Accountants.

**R**achael Mella, Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA), Chartered Accountant (CA) and **Brian Shea**, CPA, CA worked together since 2000 and have been partners since 2014. Their company, **Mella & Shea Chartered Professional Accountants**, has offices in Charlottetown and Montague.

“There will always be a need for accountants and accounting technicians within the business world. It’s a career that offers a good living wage for PEI,” says Rachael.

Rachael has been in public practice since 1997, and earned her CA designation in 2007. Rachael’s area of practice includes accounting, auditing, taxation, personal financial planning, estate planning, business plans, management consulting, and advisory services. She is the lead partner of the audit engagements including municipalities, co-operatives, not-for-profits, and profit-oriented entities.

Brian is the founding partner and has been in public practice since 1975, and earned his CA designation in 1977. His area of practice includes accounting, auditing, taxation, personal financial planning, estate planning, business plans, management consulting, and advisory services.

## About the staff

There are currently six full-time staff and one part-time staff who work year-round. “There is very little turnover with staff within our company,” says Rachael.

“We have on-the-job training students from the Holland College Accounting Technology program during the busier tax season, which runs from January to the end of June.”

## Staff titles:

- Senior Associate
- Senior Accountant
- Accounting Technician
- Administrative Assistant

## Wages and benefits

“Wages depend on work experience,” says Rachael. “A recent accounting technician graduate could earn \$13 to \$15 an hour. A person with experience earns a higher standard wage.

“It can be a struggle for accounting firms to retain staff because some leave public practice for industries or government that can offer higher wages.

“Most accounting firms pay a salary but we pay by the hour. This provides our staff with flexibility. Also, we provide over-time during tax season. We retain staff by offering flexible working hours and health benefits.”

## Education/training

“When hiring, we stress practical experience more than education,” says Rachael. “For example, if an applicant does not have a university degree but has done bookkeeping for the last 10 or 15 years and people are satisfied with their work, that means a lot to us. A university degree will give you the theory but it won’t give you the practical experience.”

Rachael also says they are finding that with the increasing diversity of the Island, bilingualism in any second language is an asset.

“In-house training is continuous,” says Rachael. “Willingness to learn is very important to us.

”There are advancement opportunities for experienced accounting technicians to become senior technicians.”

## Hiring needs

“We don’t have strong hiring needs at the moment, but will as we grow,” says Rachael. “We accept resumés and hire as needed, especially during the busier tax season months.

“We look for people with practical experience and a willingness to learn and to work with our Island-wide clients to help them succeed.

“The most difficult positions to fill are for senior accountants with five-plus years of experience working in an accounting firm.

“The best way to get your foot in the door is through on-the-job-training,” says Rachael. “We will consider hiring student accounting technicians after they complete an on-the-job-training program.

“To stand out during the hiring process, people should highlight their work experiences,” says Rachael. “If they are fresh out of college or university and don’t have experience, we look at their class marks.

“We plan to continue growing the business Island-wide, which will result in new hires.”

For more information about **Mella & Shea Chartered Professional Accountants**, visit [www.mellashea.ca](http://www.mellashea.ca)



# Summerside car dealership has growth potential

by Stacy Dunn

**S**ummerside Toyota retails approximately 400 new vehicles and 200 used vehicles each year. Between vehicle sales, service, parts and administration, the dealership currently employs 28 people, ranging in age from 18 to early 60s.

“I have worked in nearly every position at the dealership,” says **Craig Passmore**, General Manager. “I started in the industry 11 years ago when I was in the middle of my RCMP application. I needed to work while I was waiting, so I applied with O’Regan’s Automotive Group in Halifax.

“I loved the industry, and I was given the opportunity to advance and develop personally and professionally. I vividly remember withdrawing my RCMP application and I can honestly say it was the best decision I could have made. This industry is incredible and full of opportunity.”

## Job titles

- Sales Associates
- Service Advisors
- Parts Advisors
- Administrators
- Accountants
- Accounts Payable

## Hiring needs

“We will be hiring Sales Associates and Technicians in the next six to 12 months,” he says. “We look for great people. We consider applicants with experience and qualifications an asset, but it’s a misconception that you need them to get in the door. I’m a perfect example – I was a university student looking for a job before I settled into what I thought was my ‘ideal’ career.”

## Education/training required

“Today’s Technicians are part electricians and part computer programmers. We deal less with heavy mechanical and parts replacement than with electrical and computer type diagnostics. This required skill set is quickly changing what students are learning in Automotive Technology programs across the country.”

Besides grade 12 education, trade designations and certificates, Technicians are required to participate in manufacturer training and other in-house personal and professional training.



Craig Passmore, General Manager, Summerside Toyota. Submitted Photo

## Hiring process

The dealership takes on apprentices and students for on-the-job training, job shadowing, and co-op placements. Open positions are advertised on Career Beacon and Facebook. Applicants can also email resumés and cover letters or drop them off in person, addressed to Craig Passmore. “Job seekers are also welcome to stop in with a resumé and we can discuss available positions.”

## Compensation and advancement

Wages are between \$16 and \$28/hour. Sales Associates work on commission. Full-time staff receive full benefits and a RRSP matching program. “Advancement within the company is good. For the right person, the opportunities are endless.”

For more information or to apply, call 902-436-5800 or email **Craig Passmore** at [cpassmore@summersidetoyota.com](mailto:cpassmore@summersidetoyota.com)

Visit [www.summersidetoyota.com](http://www.summersidetoyota.com)

For the full interview, visit [www.employmentjourney.com](http://www.employmentjourney.com) and search **Summerside Toyota**.



The Employment Journey Inc. is a monthly publication available to residents and businesses of PEI. The publication is produced by Gloria Welton. Funding for The Employment Journey is provided by the Canada/Prince Edward Island labour market agreements.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Canada, the Government of Prince Edward Island or the Publication Manager.



**The Employment Journey Inc.**  
129 Harrod’s Lane, Fairview, PEI, C0A 1H2  
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