

Distribution Manager

"I can take the skills that I learned in this job and go work for any warehouse that distributes any kind of product. If you work hard and add some education to your experience, the possibilities are endless."

WHAT I LIKE BEST ABOUT THE CAREER

"I like working with people and a lot of variety in my work. This job gives me plenty of both."

THE WORKING WORLD

"You've got to be true to yourself and feel good about what you are doing."

EMPLOYER

Parmalat Canada
(Refrigerated Products Division)

EDUCATION

Grade 12
Work-related training seminars

YEARS IN WORKFORCE

14 years

SALARY RANGE

\$40,000 - \$85,000

CAREER PATH

Driver, Supervisor,
Operations Supervisor,
Distribution Manager



• Steven • Metcalf •

WHAT IS A DISTRIBUTION MANAGER?

It takes many people to produce a safe, high quality product. Getting that product to market in the same condition involves a similar team effort, often under the leadership of a distribution manager. Coordinating the work of drivers, shippers and receivers, maintaining a fleet of vehicles and keeping careful records of all shipments are part and parcel of this job. At Parmalat Canada's Refrigerated Products Division, that job belongs to Steven Metcalf.

WHAT DOES A DISTRIBUTION MANAGER DO?

"It boils down to managing people," says Steven, who supervises the work of 40 to 50 contractors and employees in delivering

products to markets in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan. "Any company that distributes a product needs someone to manage that process - to ensure the right people and procedures are in place to get that product to the right place at the right time and in good order." Steven is in charge of hiring, training and supervising the workers who fulfill this mandate.

Marked by Diversity As a full service dairy, Parmalat provides a wide range of goods, ordering in shipments from a network of specialized plants across Canada. On an average day the team ships 20 - 30 trailer loads of fluid milk, ice cream, cheese, butter, yogurt, juice and other products. "I couldn't even begin to name all the labels we carry," says Steven. Parmalat's wide-ranging product line is matched by a wide range of customers, including grocery store chains, restaurants, schools, "mom and pop" operations and other

RELATED CAREERS

Receiver

Receivers ensure that all incoming materials have been shipped according to proper procedures and regulations and meet company specifications upon arrival. The receiver keeps careful records of all incoming product, including raw materials, packaging, office supplies and equipment.

Shipper

Shippers ensure that all outgoing product is loaded and transported according to procedures defined by the company, the customer and regulatory agencies. Detailed documentation is required to ensure the company can track distribution of its product in the event of a product recall.



plants or distribution centers. Making sure all of these customers receive good service is the prime directive for a distribution manager.

Constant Change "You have to change constantly," says Steven, who welcomes the variety in his work. "Products, markets, equipment, technology, even management styles are always evolving. A distribution manager has to know the business, the product and the company expectations - and accept that these things have to change if we are going to remain competitive." Helping others to accept change in their jobs goes with the territory.

HOW TO BECOME A DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

Steven has spent most of his working years in the dairy business, starting as a delivery truck driver just out of high school. He learned to do this job through experience, working his way up as driver supervisor and operations supervisor before taking this position a year ago. Over the years Steven has upgraded his skills through work-related courses in distribution and computer programs. While a degree or management certificate may be useful for this kind of work, Steven stresses

that education can never take the place of experience in this field. "You need a minimum of five years in the distribution field to do this job. It's rare to see someone hired off the street for this job - usually, companies hire from within."

People skills and organizational abilities are key to this job, as well as the ability to handle the stress of constantly shifting priorities. You have to be able to learn quickly and like a lot of variety in your job.

THE FUTURE

The trend to larger companies and increased specialization has led to growth in opportunities for distribution managers. Where it might have been possible at one time to make all products in one plant, companies now find it cheaper to transport products than to duplicate equipment and processes at each plant. Steven sees no shortage of opportunities for a person in his position. "I can take the skills that I learned in this job and go work for any warehouse that distributes any kind of product. If you work hard and add some education to your experience, the possibilities are endless."

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