

careers

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WITH  seek

SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS HOW TO MAKE IT AS A CHEF

TICKLED PINK: Celebrity chef Anna Polyviou with Lola Westbury.



MELANIE BURGESS

RELIABLE, hardworking and enthusiastic chefs are in high demand as restaurants and cafes scramble to fill the growing number of roles.

Federal Government data forecasts an extra 10,900 jobs will be created for chefs between 2017 and 2022, representing a 12 per cent increase.

This is on top of positions that will become available as other chefs retire or change industry.

Based on discussions with employers, the Australian Jobs 2018 report reveals the most in-demand chefs are those who can show they are reliable, hardworking, and enthusiastic, with a positive attitude – in that order.

Star Entertainment Group executive chef Steven Jones runs a team of 160 staff and says he looks for chefs

or apprentices whose knowledge he can rely on.

“(The right person) has done a bit of research into what your business is about and knows a bit about current trends in the market,” he says.

They should also have a positive outlook in the way they talk and act, and be passionate about forging a career, not just having a job.

Jones says the right person will also fit in with the rest of the team.

Shangri-La Hotel executive pastry chef Anna Polyviou says it is important to encourage young chefs, and mentor and nurture them.

Although her job is busy, she says it is also fun as every day is different.

“I love the rush about it and the opportunities that come with it,” she says. “There are aspects where I can be creative and innovative.”

The *MasterChef* mentor and *Family Food Fight* judge has teamed with

Barbie to inspire girls to follow their passion for cooking with the Junior Executive Chef campaign.

Government data shows just one in four chefs are women.

Polyviou says being a female in a male-dominated occupation has given her opportunities, rather than barriers. “They call me the punk princess of pastry, and I’ve been given cooking opportunities flying all around the world,” she says.

FLEXIBILITY KEY TO GETTING THE BALANCE JUST RIGHT

WOMEN returning to work after having a child should not be afraid to keep their options open if they feel their employer is no longer a match.

Employers often are eager to hire female staff and offer conditions, policies or a company culture more suitable to a mum's new situation.

About 13 per cent of women with a child under the age of two who were employed during pregnancy return to work after maternity leave with a new employer, Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows.

Corporate Diversity Partners found

and chief executive Jeromine Alpe says new mothers should choose a workplace in which they feel valued, supported, comfortable and confident, and in an industry they are passionate about.

She recommends looking out for: **WORKPLACE** flexibility that supports job-sharing, condensed work-weeks, and flexible start/finish times; **PAID** parental leave programs; **EQUAL** pay for men and women in the same role; and **PROFESSIONAL** development opportunities to learn new skills, work on

special projects, attend networking events, and access mentors.

“Many organisations spend time during interviews talking about their company strategies and policies but that does not mean they are taking action,” Alpe says.

“Visit the company's website and LinkedIn company page (to look for) the great initiatives they have in place for their female staff members.”

Jobseekers can also read SEEK Company Reviews, in which employees rate factors such as work/life balance and equal opportunity.

SEEK research reveals women, whether they are mothers or not, typically place more importance on work/life balance than men.

It was a year before Kristie Taylor felt ready to return to her career after the birth of her son Evan.

“For me, the most important thing was coming back to a job that offered flexibility so I chose to come back part-time,” she says.

She now works four days a week as head of marketing at Rise and says the company is a “big advocate of work/life balance”.



FLEXIBILITY: Kristie Taylor changed jobs after having her son.