

When Ana came to Smart Works, she had been unemployed since the start of the pandemic after losing her job in a bank.

The 33-year-old mother of two had been struggling to get a new position, despite a long and successful career working in the finance industry. She points to the charity for helping her not only get a job but follow a new career path too.



This is Anna's Story



The 33-year-old mother of two, who lives in Greenwich, had been struggling to get a new position, despite a long and successful career working in the finance industry. She points to the charity for helping her not only get a job but follow a new career path too.

“Growing up I knew nothing else other than the finance industry as both my parents are accountants and so I kind of fell into a similar role,” explained Ana. “It wasn’t a job I loved as I am such a people person and sitting behind a desk and not being so hands on was very boring.”

Despite the frustration of the job, Ana acknowledges she was lucky to be on a good salary. However, it was a job that came to an abrupt halt in 2020, when Ana suddenly found herself unemployed. With a new house and two kids aged four and six, life became a struggle as the pandemic hit and Ana found herself unable to make ends meet, relying on her husband’s sole income that had him working 12 hour day shifts and extra cleaning work. “I’d say it was the first time in my life I started to panic. I couldn’t get a grip and going from earning good money in a job to nothing totally shook me up. Thank goodness I am not someone to dwell on my problems though as my upbeat personality kept me going.”

In fact, it was her happy outlook on life - even during the tough times – that made Ana want to follow her desire to teach, a job she had long dreamt of doing with a passion for helping and inspiring others. At a time when home-schooling was stressful enough for parents during the pandemic, Ana used the hours stuck at home to take online courses to be a teacher. It is something she has every right to be proud of - for the time and energy she put into it has landed her a new teaching job. However, she is adamant that without Smart Works input, she wouldn’t have had the confidence to carry it off.

“I was introduced to the charity after being approached by a government programme that was trying to recruit people for a women in engineering scheme,” adds Ana. “I thought through the programme I could use my financial skills on a construction site or something similar but it didn’t work out and fortunately the scheme referred me to Smart Works.

“Through the charity I received the most amazing work advice and coaching experience. The staff me believe in myself and encouraged me to follow my dreams and turn my strengths into a positive. I’m a naturally confident person but where I lacked in self-worth was with my job. They pushed me to rise to the challenge, dressed me in the right work attire for interview, and helped me succeed in getting a job as a lecturer.”

It was just the boost and helping hand Ana needed to steer her in the right job direction. The dress she secured the job in is her “lucky” dress; one Ana wears to all her favourite functions. “I put that dress on and thank Smart Works for not only giving it to me but for making me feel empowered in my choices, to reach out and grasp opportunities.”





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