

# Opportunity a clean fit

BY JOHN IRELAND  
john.ireland@hbtoday.co.nz

Rail traffic is having a major impact on Mark Garner's life at the moment.

Hired to wash cars at Bay Ford and Mazda twice a week, Mark has 70 vehicles over both lots sparkling clean when he leaves work Tuesday, only to find the numerous locomotives traversing the nearby tracks have kicked up enough dust by Friday to see him get stuck in all over again with the soap and water.

The good news is that Mark, a 41-year-old client of Network Personnel, enjoys his job.

"I like talking to people and working at my own pace," he says while taking a rare break to pose for a photo.

Network Personnel, a department of the Disability Resource Centre, actively looks for work opportunities for its clients, matching job seekers with employers. In Mark's case, Bay Ford general manager Steve Ward was seeking someone to keep the company's vehicles clean after a key groomer left.

"I went through my list of people who are looking for work and came up with Mark," says Network Personnel employment consultant Wendy Odom.

"He did a couple of days as a work trial and on about the third day, Steve said, look, he seems like the right guy, and he's been working ever since."

Steve says it took them 48 hours to realise Mark was going to be ideal.

"He's been great. He's enthusiastic. He's here at



NC271113mark

**WASH DUTIES:** Mark Garner (centre) takes time out from his car-washing duties to chat with Network Personnel employment consultant Wendy Odom and Bay Ford general manager Steve Ward.

PHOTO: JOHN IRELAND

quarter past seven most mornings when he starts at eight. The guys love him. It's a win-win for everybody."

Clean cars are a crucial element when it comes to attracting potential sales.

"You don't want customers seeing the cars covered in bird crap and dust," says Steve.

"What Mark has done is turn that around for us and taken all the pressure off our cleaning guy, which is just fantastic."

"If he's ahead of schedule, he'll paint tires. If he gets through that as well, he'll actually go into the wash bay and help them out doing customer cars. He's just happy to be involved all the way along."

Steve Ward  
Bay Ford general manager

While Mark says the secret to washing cars is to "just take your time and do it properly", he maintains a pace that is truly impressive.

"It used to take two of our groomers a day to do both yards — he does it on his own in a day," says Steve. "If he's ahead of schedule, he'll paint tires. If he gets through that as well, he'll actually go into the wash bay and help them out doing customer cars. He's just happy to be involved all the way along."

"Mark just loves it," says Wendy. "He really enjoys it. He'd like to be here full-time if given the opportunity. He's really embraced this and they've embraced him, which is really good. This is absolutely a success story."