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BUSINESS

Single dad finds Working Solution

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Mario Garcia needed to earn some extra bucks but didn't want to be away from his two sons most weeknights.

The divorced dad's dilemma got him thinking creatively, and that led him to a Web site for work-at-home moms that posts job openings.

"I was looking for something, having shared custody of the kids, that I could do at home," says Garcia, of Union City. "There are so many scams online that I really had to do some research to find something legitimate ... something that wasn't asking me to send them money or anything like that."

His diligence paid off about a year ago, when Garcia's initial surfing of wahn.com (work at home moms) led him to a posting by Working Solutions. The company, founded in 1996, employs home-based workers to do customer service for Fortune 1000 companies.

After e-mailing his resume to Texas-based Working Solutions and being interviewed by the company via telephone, Garcia landed a job as a booking agent for its client, a hotel online booking Web site. He also received all necessary training and software without leaving home.

"It was all done by phone or computer," Garcia says. "And the job is great because I can pick my own hours and get paid for all of my time, even if, occasionally, no customers call in."

Garcia works full time weekdays as a logistics manager for NUR America Inc. in Moonachie, the U.S. arm of Israel-based NUR Macroprinters Ltd., which makes wide-format printers for the advertising industry. His sons are 15 and 10 and spend a lot of time at his house.

"I'm an early bird, so I work when the kids are still asleep in the morning and after they go to bed at night," says Garcia, noting that he puts in about 15 hours working helping customers find lodging each week. "The benefits are huge when you consider that you're at home, with your kids, instead of commuting somewhere and being out all the time."

The 40-year-old says Working Solutions also deserves credit for keeping some call-center jobs in the United States. The company prides its "home-sourcing" business model as a way to stave off offshoring job trends. A recent survey supports that opinion. A report released this week by CFI Group in Ann Arbor, Mich., found that customers who believed they were dealing with a call center outside the United States rated their overall satisfaction 26 points lower than those who believed the center was based in the U.S.

"Everybody is complaining that everything is offshored nowadays," Garcia says. "It's nice to see people here getting an opportunity to work from home."