



Getting to Work: How Elite Spice Made Commuting Easier for Employees



A FAMILY BUSINESS WITH A PEOPLE-FIRST PHILOSOPHY

Elite Spice is a spice processing and distribution company in Howard County, Maryland. It's more than just a business for Sharon Bar, Vice President of Administration, "It also happens to be my family's business." In her role, Sharon oversees everything that impacts the company's employees: HR, safety training, insurance, and benefits. The company's people-first mindset drives everything they do, and it led Elite Spice to embrace providing commuter benefits nearly six years ago, well before COVID-19 made transportation a mainstream workplace concern.

RECOGNIZING A REAL NEED

Elite Spice employs over 500 people, and Sharon recognized early on that many employees don't have access to personal vehicles. Staff carpool regularly, and several employees ride public transit. When a former plant manager spotted an advertisement for Commuter Choice Maryland's program, the company was immediately interested. "It's something that's so helpful to employees that also doesn't require a ton of back-end administration," Sharon explains. "It just seemed like a win all around." That instinct proved right. Elite Spice has offered bus passes for around six years, and the program has continued to provide benefits for the company and its employees.

WHAT ELITE SPICE OFFERS

Elite Spice provides monthly bus passes to employees who commute to their Howard County headquarters, which conveniently sits right next to a major bus stop. The company also takes advantage of the Maryland Commuter Tax Credit, offsetting their transportation-related costs each year. Around 20 employees participate each month, and Sharon says the people who use the transit passes are genuinely grateful. Information about the benefit lives directly in the onboarding package, so new hires learn about it alongside all their other enrollment materials.

THE LIMITS OF COMMUTER BENEFITS

Sharon doesn't sugarcoat the one real challenge: geography. Elite Spice operates from multiple locations, and not all of them are located near convenient bus routes. "We offer it to everybody," she says, "but it's not that helpful" at locations without easy transit access. Her advice to other employers? Start by asking employees what they actually need. "I think it's important to take a census among employees to see which of the options offered are helpful."

A LOW-LIFT, HIGH-IMPACT BENEFIT

For employers who worry that launching a commuter benefit sounds complicated, Sharon's experience offers reassurance. She calls the enrollment process "very simple" and says the online form for the Commuter Tax Credit is easy to navigate. "If there's ever a challenge, it's very easy to communicate on it and to get the situation resolved." Getting to work is one of the most fundamental concerns any employee has. Elite Spice's commitment to helping employees solve that problem, with minimal administrative burden and a meaningful tax benefit, is a model worth following.

To learn more about Elite Spice, visit [their website](#). To learn about how to implement commuter benefits like these for your business or community, contact [Commuter Choice Maryland](#) or your local [Rideshare Coordinator](#).

Pictured to the Right: Elite Spice employees gather in the shape of the United States, representing the company's wide geographical reach.

"Commuter benefits are so helpful to employees and don't require a ton of back-end administration. It's a win all around."

-Sharon Bar
VP of Administration,
Elite Spice



Contact Commuter Choice Maryland today to learn more about the commuter benefits you can offer your staff. It's very likely your organization will realize the benefits too!