

Finland



Co-funded by the European Commission

# My chefs finally have time!

Place of action:

**Lunch restaurant**

Storyteller:

**Riikka, chief of the restaurant**

Synopsis:

**Jukka, an employee with a disability, works as an assistant in the kitchen of the restaurant**

## The win was obvious

"I want to be open for people with a disability, the work tasks are suitable for this, and support was given from the beginning. This is why we did it. We had some tasks during busy lunch times that were overloading the tasks of my personnel. We needed a new employee, who could perform 4 hours per day three times a week, to release chefs and other staff. This new employee would take over some of the 'mis en place' tasks, which enabled the chefs and other staff to focus on the work corresponding to their qualifications. We work closely together with a job coach of this service provider for people with disabilities. She knows what our needs are and made very quickly the right match for us."

## Organising support

"We selected Jukka. He started first with an internship without salary and now he is working with a normal temporary work contract. He learns quickly and is able to work quite independently. That last part is very important in our popular lunch restaurant, where some hours are busier than others, and there is not always someone available to give guidance. Luckily for us, Jukka is very well guided by his job coach. She supported Jukka at the start, how to carry out the work, how to plan and other aspects important. I was also involved in this first period. We, the job coach, Jukka, and me frequently had meetings to discuss the tasks and other essential points. That worked out very well, and guidance is hardly needed anymore."

## An open discussion

"Jukka's colleagues come with different backgrounds, there are multiple nationalities and so on. Their attitudes about disability vary, I am very aware of that. This awareness of the possible cultural barriers that exist in a working environment, is quite essential, according to me. Some colleagues didn't have experience how to communicate with a person with disability. It was important to 'sell' the idea of re-arranging tasks and hiring a new employee to enlighten the workload for my staff. I had an open discussion with them, they agreed with the win - win situation and that made it easy for them to take this new employee with a disability as a part of the work community. When starting in the job, Jukka was open to the colleagues about his partial work ability. It was his wish to be open about it and it helped them to take Jukka as one of them."

## It's the right thing

"I have a very open attitude, which I think is important. There are no barriers in my own mind, and I feel this is the right thing. To give a change to someone for whom it is more difficult to get employed. I need to know the atmosphere and how all the employers are feeling, I am sensitive in this. The regular meetings with Jukka work. For me, it is important to be as open as possible, and explain to my workers as much about Jukka's disability, as he himself considers relevant".

### **The essential job coach**

"For me, the close cooperation with the job coach played an essential role. She was easily available for all practical arrangements, filling the forms and so on. The job coach informed us about all kind of situations that might happen and how to prepare for this. And, it is my experience now, that I can always contact her, whenever needed."

### **A continuous drive**

"Jukka picks up more and more tasks. Almost all tasks are according to his ability and performance. Whenever he sees a task, he thinks he can carry out, he discusses this with his colleagues and then, if possible, he can pick up the task. Learning a new task costs time, we take this time to go through this new task in detail and he can practice as many times as needed to carry out the task fluently. Picking up new tasks is really meaningful for him."

### **Fresh instead of pre-prepared**

"For sure there is added value. Now that Jukka is taking care of the dishes, my kitchen chefs can use their working hours for preparing even better lunches. For example, they are now able to prepare home-made vegetable steaks, instead of using some pre-prepared products. My customers notice this, and my customer flow has increased. Also, my entire staff feels good, there is more diversity."

### **It's always about the match**

"I would certainly do it again. I also think it is important to be open and objective in whether it works out well or not. Earlier we had one intern, and very soon it became clear there was no match between the intern and the work that needed to be done. Also, this intern would have needed much more guidance than we were able to offer him, it was only seen in practice after the work started. In advance it is sometimes not so easy to clarify this, and in some cases only trying is the way to find out, if person really fits in."

### **Ask for support**

"I would recommend my fellow company owners to be open for it, have an open mind. Not all people are suitable for specific tasks, but suitable persons can be found. And ask for support, before and during the recruitment process, and at the start of the work. The smooth cooperation with a job coach is the key to success."

" My entire staff feels good,  
there is more diversity."



Inclusion simply makes great enterprises



Co-funded by  
the European Union