



Co-funded by the European Commission

# If there is a will, there is a way

Place of action:

**Restaurant**

Storyteller:

**Jarmo, ceo of the restaurant**

Synopsis:

**Jani, an employee with an intellectual disability, works as a kitchen aid**

## **I decided to act**

"I am very proud of having a number of special employees. It was seventeen years ago, when I saw this announcement about hiring a person with partial work ability. I then realised there were tasks in my restaurant that would probably match with their capacities. One of my close relatives had a disability, which made me aware about the challenges they encounter in finding employment. This, together with the announcement made me decide to act and contact the employment agency for persons with partial work ability."

## **Tasks of genuine importance for me**

"If there is a will, there is a way, that is how I think. First thing we needed to do is find suitable tasks. We looked for tasks that were of significance for our restaurant that would match with the capacities of the jobseekers of this employment agency. The job coach of the employment agency was of great help in this. We found some suitable tasks; tasks that matched the jobseeker and are of genuine importance for me, as employer to fulfil. We set up a profile and then started the recruitment process, which went smooth. Jani was the one we chose. After trial period of three months, we hired Jani. Now he is working in the kitchen for about 15-20 hours per week."

## **Too much of all**

"Sometimes, I have difficulties understanding the needs of Jani. Fortunately, there is the job coach whose task it is to be sensitive for this and to ensure both sides understand each other. It took some time to find out how to guide and how to work together with Jani, who has an intellectual disability. In the beginning, I assigned him with too many tasks, I was too enthusiastic, but that did not work. It was just too much. Then we took away a number of tasks and created a balance between the tasks and his capacities. After a while, Jani felt secure and suggested even new tasks himself. That worked out quite well."

## **Take your time**

"I cannot emphasise enough the importance of spending enough time in the first working period. We spend time to teach them the tasks and the quality our customers expect. What they learn in the beginning, how to perform the tasks, it can't be easily changed. So, it should go well from the beginning. And then, if you want to change something, spend time again, together with them, so they learn the new way of performance in the right way. This also makes the role of the supervisor quite crucial in this first orientation period in work."

### **This is how we work**

"In the beginning we also had some challenging moments. We had some attitude problems with young trainees, who were not familiar with people with disabilities. It took some time to let them understand how it works in this company. The principle in this company is, and has always been, that everyone who starts working here, is equal to others. An open and honest discussion atmosphere is important and that's what we have here, in this work community. These trainees finally understood 'how it works' and things turned out alright. People with disabilities do not by any means want pity, they want to be treated like all the others."

### **The importance of the matching**

"In the past years, I had several trainees with a disability. Some had to leave, because of the lacking match between the tasks and the person. In one case, the candidate was allergic to something and in another case, standing for many hours was not possible for the candidate. Other internships worked out well. I now have two employees with an intellectual disability. They know their work, and the guidance process is really limited in time. The local disability services visits once a week at a morning coffee break and is asking how all is going and whether advice is needed."

### **The essential support of the job coach**

"The recruitment of Jani was seventeen years ago, and, in that time, I was really happy with the support of the job coach of the employment agency. Without this job coach, I would probably not even have started this recruitment at all. This job coach helped a lot with paperwork, legal matters, and other practical issues. It feels quite secure when you receive such a support. I still am happy with this support. It is for my employees, but it is also of great help for me. The job coach told me once, he really likes to work with us, he appreciates our openness to hire persons with a partial work ability, not for charity but for a genuine need."

### **A brand image**

"The employment of employees with a disability actually has been part of our brand image already for a long time. We have a recognition of a responsible employer, and I am proud to say we are nominated as Employer of the Year in this region. I would recommend my fellow employer to do the same. These persons are highly motivated and are a very good role model for others."

" An open and honest discussion atmosphere is important and that's what we have here, in this work community."



Inclusion simply makes great enterprises



Co-funded by  
the European Union