

Germany



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More precise work & warmer climate

Place of action:

Manufacturer of plastic parts

Storyteller:

Mr. Hahn

Synopsis:

Mr. Schmidt, having a mental disability, has a permanent contract, working in assembly, packaging, and in plastic parts production lines

Good experiences ask for more

"When I took over the business from my father, I already had one employee with a disability. It was a son of a family friend, and my father gave him a job because he wanted to help the family. The son had a visual impairment, he worked at the assembly line packaging large items and did some light tidying. He did very well and because of these good experiences I decided to employ more people with a disability. In my spare time, I am committed to helping people with disabilities, so it was an opportunity for me to give these people a professional chance as well."

An everyday occurrence

"It has been a long tradition in the company to hire employees with a disability. It is 16 years ago now, that my first employee with a disability started working in my company. Ever since, I hired more staff and colleagues with and without disabilities work side by side. They celebrate holidays and attend sports events together. For them, it's an everyday occurrence."

Making the match

"Let me pick out one of my employees, Mr. Schmidt. Just to explain how it works. First, I contact the local integration specialist service, supporting the participation of people with disabilities in the open labour market. I explain my needs and requirements to the integration specialist, discuss with them the ins and outs of the work, and then they recommended some candidate who would be suitable for the job. This is also the way when we were looking for somebody to work on the assembly and the packaging. Of the proposed candidates, we choose Mr. Schmidt and organised an internship for him for some weeks. This worked out quite fine, and then we offered him a contract."

Instructions as any other worker

"In the beginning, we were really relying on the support of integration specialist, they guided and trained him in how to work and found out in which way this could be done best. Of course, with the help of his supervisor, who knew all about the work processes and the tasks to be done. They together quickly found out. Mr. Schmidt did not need any special work instructions. We already work with pictures in our instruction, and these were well understood by Mr. Schmidt. I heard about the possibility of receiving a specific grant for an induction process that takes more time and requires more personnel. It became clear there was no need for this grant."

The match makes the success

"At the very beginning, 16 years ago, it took time to convince the supervisors to employ a person with a disability. There was a lot of uncertainty that people with mental or physical disabilities would not be able to do the tasks. However, it worked well for the first colleague with a visual impairment. Now it is no longer an issue. The supervisors take care of making the match between the tasks and the person, in this case Mr. Schmidt who started with tasks he was already familiar with. And, if new tasks come up, he gets trained. For this we again can count on the support of the integration specialist services. They practice with him the memorisation of the new tasks and procedures, with the support of the supervisors, who need to be sure Mr. Schmidt masters the new tasks. The supervisors pay more attention to his work processes compared to his colleagues without a disability. However, nobody notices and for me it is no issue. "Mr. Schmidt works according to strict procedures that are rehearsed and he follows these procedures exactly. As a result, his work is of excellent quality. He works at a slower pace, but his quality justifies this completely."

Key role of the integration specialist services

"I would like to emphasise the importance of working together with an integration specialist service having experience in guiding people with a disability. I know for example, their expertise in applying for compensatory allowance if the employee with a disability works very slowly and performs less. In the case of Mr. Schmidt, this was not necessary, but it might encourage my fellow entrepreneurs to hire a person with a disability, without worrying about the quantity of the production. They also help with legal issues, especially in the opposite direction when things don't work out. Many of my colleague entrepreneurs think if they hire a PWD and it does not work out, they can hardly terminate the employment contract. This is not the case, the integration specialist services help with this and look for opportunities at other companies. It's good for the employee and it's good for the company, since they know their employee is not left alone and has a new chance. This legal security is of real support."

Taking away the worries

"I did not use all these services in relation to Mr. Schmidt, but I must say these options take away a lot of worries. I did make use of some of their mentoring and training services and in, of course in the beginning, in their support in "picking" Mr Schmidt as a potential employee. This mentoring was intensive at the start, because Mr. Schmidt had to get adjusted to the work tasks, but also the daily routines and the communication in our company. Over time this mentoring is still taking place, but with much greater intervals."

A warmer atmosphere

"Mr. Schmidt knows the procedures and does the work very well. He makes fewer mistakes than a colleague without a disability because he always strictly follows these learned procedures. The atmosphere in the company is also warmer, friendlier, and more tolerant because of his presence. The colleagues are aware that they make the world a better place with their good behaviour and willingness to help. We were awarded once for the Inclusion Prize, that was good for my staff and for me, it also meant additional publicity for us as a company."

Reducing the prejudices

"I am open to contact my fellow entrepreneurs in person and convince them to give people with disabilities a chance for a job. I know there are many fears and uncertainties, though if you get in touch with people with a disability, many prejudices shall be reduced. It is a good feeling to know that you also support people and experience this gratitude. However, it is also a responsibility, and I recommend all to work closely together with integration specialist services."

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Inclusion simply makes great enterprises



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