

Austria



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Glad about the extra hands!

Place of action:

H & K, a furniture company

Storyteller:

Mr. Zimmer

Synopsis:

Mark, having a physical disability, works as an assistant, assisting the specialists in their work

How to relieve my staff

"I needed more personnel. The online furniture market is growing, and I want to keep up with the developments. At the same time, I wanted to relieve my specialists of doing unskilled work, while there is so much work for them to do on their own qualification level. Then, my company grew over 25 employees which means I have to employ a person with a disability, otherwise I will be fined. We have this obligation by law. I had no problems with that. I am open for people with a disability. My son has autism, and I would be happy if he finds a job in the open labour market, once he has finished his education. If I employ someone with a disability, I also have tax advantages. And I realised, the unskilled work carried out by my specialists could easily be done out by an employee with a disability, matching the competences needed for the work. And this is what I planned to do."

With the help of the professionals

"I got in touch with a service provider that supports people with disabilities to find jobs on the open labour market. I knew of their existence because of a short introductory meeting I had with one of their employment specialists. She informed me about their activities and, whenever I had interest for more information, I could contact them. This is what I did, I explained them the requirements of the job and together we made a detailed job description, to ensure

a good match, based on the tasks, requirements, working hours, and other essential elements of the work. Based on this detailed job description, they started looking in their lists of clients who would meet these requirements. Then, I received a number of CV's, and we interviewed some potential applicants. It was Mark who we invited to start an internship in our company. The entire recruitment procedure went quite fast, also because the employment specialist took over all the administrative stuff."

Working towards independence

"I was careful about not wanting too much from Mark when I hired him, after his internship. He did very well during the internship, he could do the work flawlessly. He was faster than we had expected and really motivated and interested in doing more work. He himself asked whether he could possibly expand his area of responsibility and, after consulting his job coach, we gradually gave him more and more tasks; all tasks he was able to carry out effortlessly. One of the tasks he took over, were delivery trips by car. This was a relieve to the qualified workers and Mark really liked this new task. Mark works completely self-organized and independently, he needs only some support from the supervisor. This is possible because the work package was set up before and fitted to Mark's possibilities and because of this, no extra guidance is needed, no extra onboarding for Mark, everything went just the same as for any other employee."

First, the scepticism

"Some of my workers were rather sceptical about hiring an employee with a disability. I could understand this, since we previously had another employee with a disability, where the integration process did not go well. He refused to carry out cleaning work, even though this was specified in the job description, played with the cell phone all the time, hid in the toilet, etc. We finally had to stop this employment relationship. Mark is the opposite, he is very friendly, motivated, helpful, generous, always happy and he fulfils the requirements belonging to his work package. Mark is fully integrated in the team. He himself informed his colleagues about his disability, and all are alert now, for him not to lift too much weight and take breaks."

Part of the team

"Mark is very motivated, we need to slow him down, to ensure he stays in good health and stable. For example, he often wants to lift 'heavy things', he overestimates himself in this regard. He also needs more breaks. We know that and it is planned, and everybody accepts it and ensures he does it. Mark is seen as a worker with a number of tasks specifically delegated to him. When he does his job, his disability is not noticeable, and his colleagues perceive him as any other employee. They include him in their work, they also wanted to work with them on construction sites, which was possible, though to a limited extent, but he felt proud he could."

A classic win – win

"Mark is very much appreciated by his colleagues because he reduces their workload, and he relieves the skilled workers. In this way, I can let my specialist workers focus on their specialist area. For us a classic win - win situation. We are happy with Mark, and we also feel proud. He receives a labour wage. Since he started working, he was able to pay off his debts and move into a nice little apartment, where he had previously lived in a basement. It means so much for us, we are already looking for a new applicant with a disability."

Ask for support

"One of the risks is that we, as employers expect people with disabilities to be able to do more, and then they drop out because they accept it and think they can do it and then it goes wrong. Better to always keep in contact with the service provider and discuss the possibilities. They might be a bit careful. We might be a bit over demanding, still being in a dialogue is the best and will bring the most for your employee with a disability."

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Inclusion simply makes great enterprises



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