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SDC - STANDARDS OF DIVERSITY
COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE
(CZ.1.04./5.1.01/77.00003)
CSR's Social Pillar in Practice

E V A L U A T I O N

Assignment accepted: February 2015

Materials received:

- Manual "Standards of Diversity communication in the work place
- DVD "Standards of Diversity communication in the work place"
- Promotional flyer "CSR's Social pillar in Practice"

Structure

The programme is obviously very well prepared and professionally presented.

The module consists of Chapter 1 – Diversity communication in the workplace, which is a kind of illustrative introduction to the theme, and Chapter 2, which provides the basic theoretical knowledge about the three types of disabilities and main principles of diversity communication and proper assistance.

It is very clear structure, where Chapter 1 gives a nice practical overview of several steps in employing people with disabilities – from the decision to

employ, till the monitoring. It is based on practical examples and discussion around them. Chapter 2 is structured in a very different way – it is a kind of small handbook of theoretical nature. At the same time, the text is linked to the related videos on DVD, which gives complete picture. It could have been possible to have this Chapter as the first one, which would have enabled easier integration of the theoretical issues and principles and the real situations. On the other hand, introducing the real situations first increases the motivation for further reading and better understanding of applying theoretical principles in the practice.

The structure of paper material is easy to understand and follow, and enable step by step going through the process. Material on DVD might be a bit confusing for the user and it takes some time to establish the proper link between written and video materials, and too navigate through it, especially if the user is not familiar with this kind of approach. More systematic approach would be helpful for broader use.

Style

The language is understandable, clear and adequate. The terminology is appropriate for the employers – it has the scientific background, but it is adapted for the practical use. At the same time, it is not too operational and could be applied for different types of situations. Chapter 1 uses the language of everyday situations in companies, which makes it looks familiar, close, and language in the theoretical part is compatible with it.

Content

SDC module fulfil the most important criteria for a modern educational programme:

- it is <u>relevant</u>, the topic is one of the most discussed, relatively new, but very much needed in a modern society and modern companies which try to be efficient and productive, but at the same time to have human and social dimension. Many companies are still reluctant and do not see the advantages of employing people with disabilities and European documents related to the employment policy and to inclusion of vulnerable groups do consider this problem;

- it is <u>useful</u> and <u>user-friendly</u>, especially from the point of view of employer – it shows that it is possible to employ people with disabilities, not for formal reasons, but to create another atmosphere in the company, increase motivation of employees and improve the relationship in the company;

- it is <u>practical,</u> and easy to use, because it gives employers very clear explanations how and why it is possible, and practical tool to do it, with ways to solve the problems, it is also <u>applicable</u>, because it is based on experiences from companies and on practice; employers can easily recognize problems and situations; the way from the problem detection to the possible solution is clear and short;

- it is <u>innovative</u> methodical approach to introduce the topic and to offer educational programme of this kind as a combination of videos, model situations, text items, analysis, etc. At the same time, this approach is based on adult learning principles, it includes users in analysing the situations, inviting them to critical thinking, facing maybe some of their own prejudices and confronting users with them in a non-offending way, opening the new perspectives and offering the alternatives. Adult teaching theory and practice proved that role-play and simulation is one of the most efficient methods when it comes to the change of the attitudes, transformation of the mind-set, increased awareness, and willingness to act. Even only observing, analysing and commenting them might be a powerful tool.

- it is <u>sustainable</u>, because the proposed approach is not promising one-time solutions, but new and very different style of communication which can positively affect the whole company by transforming its culture of communication. If this aspect is to be improved, awareness rising and sensibilisation for other types of diversities would be needed, some theoretical knowledge too;

- It is <u>experience-based</u> (plenty of examples and simulations of real situations, which makes it obvious that authors know the field very well) and <u>action-oriented</u> (even the Chapter 2 is strong in its activating-intention) and <u>scientifically based</u> (includes the most important principles of diversity communication in the workplace);

Main features of the programme

The relation between theory and practice is one of the strongest suits of the programme. The weak element is the exclusive focus on the communication with disabled people. It is difficult to expect that persons without pre-knowledge about general principles of communication easily master the communication with disabled persons. It is necessary to understand the nature, elements and level of communication, general barriers and different approaches to communication. Further on, some kind of sensibilisation for diversity in general would be needed, because introducing supportive communication with disabled requires not only

knowledge, but sometimes also the change of attitudes or the mind-set ad high level of reflective thinking. This change of the attitude can be initiated by the model situations depicted, but the change of the organizational culture asks for more complex actions.

The programme offers a practical guideness for the employers (including benefits), but at the same time it 'sends an important message' about this social problem that exist in many European countries. It is based on human and social values and sticks to them consequently, without ever losing sight of economic reality and company's practice, and it gives an important contribution to the inclusive employment policy by opening new opportunities and widening the access to the labour market to one of the most excluded social groups.

The model situations makes the programme attractive for employers, because they recognize the reality of the companies, the realistic dangers and communication 'traps'. They are chosen in a way that makes them applicable to different situations and companies, since they are not fully context dependent. Still, the question of applicability to the completely different kind of companies is justified. The programme is more sector-dependant than culture-dependant (although some of the concrete examples do refer to the Chezk reality, but they could be easily changed for the use in another context (since the researches show that prejudices and resistance are pretty much common to the employers in various European countries. Therefore this programme could be used in many countries across Europe and could help to tackle the serious social problem and contribute to the European economic, employment and social policy.

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