

News

Repsol Newsletter



Different disabilities, add value

In Spain, almost four million people have some kind of disability. However, only 40% of this group applying for jobs have work. Although significant progress has been made, there is still a long way to go before equal opportunities are truly reached.

Almost three decades have gone by since the law was passed making it mandatory for companies with over 50 employees to reserve 2% of its jobs for people with disabilities. Society has evolved since then and now nobody argues the right of this group to fully participate in all spheres of social life.

In terms of employment, this objective involves changes in company culture to turn different disabilities into a value, and for workforces to reflect the society they belong to.

Disability and the job market

Studies regarding the employment situation of the disabled population in Spain reveal a group who come across great difficulties in joining the job market. Unemployment rates hover around the 60% mark, half of those people have been unemployed long-term and most of those in work have temporary contracts and hold unskilled jobs.

There are also more encouraging data. According to the 2010 State Job Market Report from the Public State Employment Service (SEPE), in the last five years, the number of job seekers from this group has multiplied and contracts signed with disabled people are increasing at a higher rate than that of the job market as a whole.

Compliance with this legislation is gradually becoming more widespread. At the end of 2008, the government presented the Global Action Strategy for the employment of Disabled People 2008-2012, which has the aim that all companies with the obligation of reserving a share of their jobs for this group fully comply.



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Repsol's commitment

Repsol is among the Spanish companies with the most ambitious commitment in this sphere. Since implementing the Programme for the Integration of people with Disabilities back in 2005, the company has gone from 131 disabled employees to the 360 that currently work in the different Repsol Group companies in Spain, 22% of them in qualified technical posts. To this we should add a further 103 people via indirect recruitment.

The Programme is promoted by the senior management and has the full backing of the trade unions. A Diversity and Reconciliation Committee is in charge of its monitoring. This committee is formed by company executives, where a working group of disabled employees explicitly participates.

"This Programme has meant a very significant cultural change within the Company" stated Marisol Pérez Picarzo, programme coordinator. Beyond the legal obligation, "it involves a firm commitment for managing diversity within the company, as an element that encourages competitiveness and respect for human rights."

Considerable effort is also being made for preparation and raising awareness within the workforce. This year, 2011, over 4900 employees from the industrial area and 1600 from the central offices will receive training "to be able to experience the incorporation of disabled people as something totally normal," continued Marisol Pérez Picarzo.

The company has also published a White Paper, entitled De las palabras a los hechos (From words to actions) to offer its experience to "any company and organisation who would like to follow in our footsteps."

From words to actions

Among the processes implemented we can highlight the analysis of all jobs to establish what employee profile can perform them and what adaptations are necessary. This task has been carried out in collaboration with expert bodies, such as ONCE or Paideia. "Our aim is to commit to equal opportunities and normalisation, and the key is in the job-person adaptation," continued Marisol Pérez Picarzo.

Ergonomic changes and occupational safety and health studies have also been carried out, as have changes in personnel selection methodologies, occupational training courses, small modifications in the furniture, equipment and vending machines and architectural adaptations in toilets, cafeterias, ramps, etc.



Attention to each kind of disability

But the group of people with disabilities is extremely divergent in nature and Repsol's experience also demonstrates the need to establish employment formulas that are differentiated to meet this diversity. Integration activities have been designed with this in mind that are adapted to the requirements of the different Repsol Group companies and the different kinds of disability.

"The processes to integrate people with intellectual disability are performed using the methodology of employment with support. Employees have the support of a job trainer that makes his or her incorporation process easier at every step," explains Marisol Pérez.

The Repsol Foundation, which also performs important work to promote the inclusion of this group, collaborates with the Bobath Foundation to provide professional training to young people affected by brain paralysis and damage.

Enrique Martín, who is 27 years old, was one of those who took part in this programme "After suffering brain damage, I had the chance to study a vocational training module in Administrative Management, which I did not hesitate to do. When I finished, we had to do work experience in a company, and in my case it was in Repsol."

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Enrique Martín has now been working for one year as an administrative assistant in the People and Organisation Office at Repsol and his assessment could not be more positive: "I feel valued, no, highly valued. I am not going to deny that it was difficult, but with desire and effort, it is possible to achieve everything".

New goals

Repsol has now set the goal of strengthening the Integration Programme throughout the industrial area. "In 2010 we concluded the job analysis," continued Marisol Pérez, "and this year we have started to incorporate candidates with disabilities in the Puertollano Industrial Complex." These measures will be exported to the company's other industrial complexes.

The Integration Programme is not just limited to Spain, it is also under way in Argentina, Ecuador, Peru and Portugal and actions are being promoted to integrate disabled people in the workforce in Brazil, the USA and Venezuela. "We have a great challenge ahead," stated Marisol Pérez.