

## Innovation in Flexible working

Coca-Cola Enterprises

February 2009



### **EFA overview**

Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) has a rigorous set of procedures in place to ensure that all its recruitment procedures are age neutral. The company doesn't specify age limits and it ensures that at interview stage, questions are purely competency based. Its recruitment agencies have strict guidelines to follow to ensure that the company is being promoted to all age groups. The company's recruitment skills training course has been rewritten to ensure that age diversity issues are incorporated and mock tribunals have been developed to highlight areas of potential discrimination against older workers. It wanted to go one step further and design some roles that would directly appeal to would be recruits who want to work flexibly.

### **Initiative**

CCE wanted to create a new role that would meet the needs of the business and appeal to people who wanted to work flexibly, particularly those with caring responsibilities or older people wanting part-time work.

### **Aims of initiative**

CCE products are sold at peak times during the day – morning, lunch and after school. The company needed staff to go into stores at these specific times to make sure that shelves are full, to identify any problems with stock shortages, record sales levels and restock where necessary. It is a physical role but can be carried out by people with little previous experience. The company devised a new role to meet these business demands and to offer flexible working to potential recruits.

### **Approach**

The company looked at potential applicants for the new role of Instant Consumption Merchandiser within its sales regions. CCE initially thought that it would attract parents and carers as they could work in the middle of the day during school hours but it soon became apparent that the role appealed to older workers who were attracted by a part-time role with flexible hours.

There are now a significant number of older workers applying for the role. At present, nine recruits working in this role are over the age of 60 and 36% are between the ages of 40 and 60.

All existing employees have the right to work beyond retirement age. Several people are already doing this and CCE anticipate that it will be able to offer the new role to older, existing staff who want to keep working but with reduced hours. This positive approach to employing people who are near, or over, retirement age means the company does not lose key skills and experience.

# Case Study



# Case Study

## **Challenges**

Some managers were reluctant to recognise the potential of older workers but this has been overcome now the new recruits are in place and handling their jobs well.

## **Outcomes and benefits of the initiative**

CCE reports happy, engaged employees doing jobs they enjoy and offering CCE great experience and talent from local communities. The company is benefiting from a good mix of skills that enables employees to share learning and expertise. The older workers make valuable mentors for younger staff. The new role has also allowed CCE to retain older staff who want to work shorter hours. CCE puts lots of time and effort into communicating its approach to age diversity and believes this is the best way to make sure the idea is embedded across the organisation. It delivers awareness briefings to staff and ensures that the issue is covered regularly in its company publications.

Some personal examples are a good way to illustrate how CCE's new role appeals to older workers.

### *Example A*

After working in the paper trade since 1959, Tommy was made redundant in May 2008 but with retirement far from his mind, he wanted to stay in work to keep himself active. His son who was working for CCE as a sales representative told him about the new role of Instant Consumption Merchandiser and referred him for the position. Tommy said: "My application was successful and I love the job. CCE is a fantastic company to work for, offering good work-life balance and good training standards."

### *Example B*

Brian worked for CCE as a technical operator for over 20 years but when his disabled wife's health deteriorated he retired to look after her. Brian said he had never really wanted to stop working and when his old manager called him to let him know about the Instant Consumption Merchandiser roles, he was keen to return to CCE part-time. The company has been able to adjust Brian's hours several times to ensure he can still carry out his duties at home.