

BUILDING DIVERSITY ON THE PLATFORM OF CSR

Future scarcity of labour supply and being recognised as a socially responsible employer were factors behind the desire of Falck to provide a more open and diverse working environment. This desire had also been reinforced by the EU's [Green Paper on CSR](#) and current Danish employment and integration policies. This large national company that, amongst other things, provides rescue services for motorists has worked with members of the [Vision Partnership in Denmark DP](#) to realise its ambition.

Falck's Objectives

The enterprise is part of the Danish National Network of Company Leaders and it adopts a management method in which its operation is governed by values rather than rules. It has also had a long tradition of cooperation with the trade union movement, and trade union representation at all levels is acknowledged by both the company and its employees. On this evidence, Falck might appear to be a very progressive enterprise but it wanted to go even further by demonstrating its social responsibility in a combination of ways:

- The Image Model in which all stakeholders see the company as being socially responsible;
- The Rights Model in which the trade union movement or shop steward system in the company is a recognised actor in the realisation of the social responsibility;
- The Care Model in which there is an unwritten mutual contract between the individual employee and the company, based on social responsibility.

Falck adopted the [Social Index](#) definition of a CSR company as being one that:

- Ensures that its employees are not forced out of the labour market by providing a good working environment and a good personnel policy that offers opportunities for employees to develop and update their skills on a continuing basis;
- Makes an active effort to retain employees, for example, when they fall ill;
- Is open in terms of creating space for people who are currently outside the labour market.

The Platform

Falck felt that, by and large, it had already met the first condition and so it decided to start on the second before tackling the third. To do this, it agreed to pilot its approach in Århus, the second largest town city in Denmark, through Falck A/S which is its rescue service. Falck A/S, in turn, sought the help of one of the members of the Vision Partnership DP, RevaCenter Århus Nord. This is a publicly owned rehabilitation centre that has "the strengthening of company-related rehabilitation activities", as one of its main objectives.

Together, they built a platform for dialogue that was a forum in which managers from Falck, representatives of RevaCenter, leaders of departments and shop stewards could discuss developments which might benefit not only the company and its employees, but also the wider community. Given the level of cooperation established through this platform, it was possible to investigate not only opportunities for retaining employees but also, to tackle the third condition of being a CSR company at the same time and, to consider creating jobs for unemployed people who were on special programmes.

Making CSR a Reality

Three seminars were milestones in these processes. The first was an Opening Seminar planned in conjunction with RevaCenter, for all managers and trade union representatives from Falck A/S in Århus County and other parties, including representatives from the local authorities of Århus City and the authorities in Århus County, the Danish Federation of Trade Unions and the Union of Commercial and Clerical Employees in Denmark. The seminar commissioned four working groups to consider the themes of:

- Job retention;

- Job integration/company rehabilitation;
- Job creation;
- Promotion of these activities.

In every working group, there were representatives from Falck A/S, RevaCenter and the local authorities in Århus City. The specific results of the work in these groups were a course catalogue for a Job Retention Model used at the second seminar, a Job Integration model and a Job Creation Catalogue.

This second seminar was for all station managers of Falck in Århus County and focused on "Sickness Absence". This seminar kick-started further work on job retention and the publication of a pamphlet entitled "Off sick – and what happens then?"

The final event was a theme day "Job retention – focus on the company's needs" that discussed the possibilities of Falck A/S establishing, with all the municipalities in Århus County, the same sort of partnership agreement that it had made with RevaCenter Århus Nord.

All of this pilot activity in Århus also made its mark at national level where over the last year, the parent company Falck Denmark has established three working groups to:

- Make recommendations on how Falck could most appropriately focus on its corporate and social responsibilities;
- Prepare Guidelines for the Introduction and Management of CSR;
- Ensure a structure for job retention and job integration, based on the experiences from Århus.

Promoting Diversity

As the next step in this process, Falck A/S has set itself the target of integrating 300 - 400 people from ethnic minorities over the next five years and the ground is now being prepared for this ambitious development. Again, RevaCenter Århus Nord is involved as an active partner and has provided a facilitator for this project.

A tool has been developed to measure the degree of openness and diversity in the company's departments and management. This was based on studies of the Danish measurement tool called the [Social Index](#) and was applied by using a combination of individual questionnaires and individual interviews. This process was completed during the initial project meeting.

Following this meeting, the facilitator drafted a report on the personnel structure, and the employees', shop stewards', managers', and executives' attitudes to, and experiences of, diversity. This report also covered recruitment, job retention, competences and work culture in relation to people from ethnic minorities.

In addition, the facilitator has developed a proposal for a plan of action, and a "tool box" for its implementation. This plan of action and the "tool box" takes account of relevant experiences from different DPs and centres in Denmark. The plan of action will continue to build on the platform for dialogue that has already been established and it is expected that the "tool box" will contain a virtual tool, which will promote team building and thus, support a departmental learning process.

The project has both short-term and long-term perspectives. In the short term, the approach is geared to producing concrete results in four large departments in Falck A/S, and in the long term, to involving the entire national parent company. If successful, it will ensure massive recruitment of employees from ethnic minorities.

The Practical Outcomes

These outcomes include:

- The models for job retention and job creation described above that have already been used to retain 19 employees in jobs and to recruit an additional 34 unemployed people into new jobs;

- The job creation catalogue that now contains a description of all the stations and departments of Falck A/S in Århus County, and a statement of the types of duties in every workplace that might be carried out by people with lower skills or reduced working abilities;
- A cost-benefit analysis of job retention, as compared to dismissal and subsequent recruitment of a new employee, carried out by external consultants;
- A model for cooperation between a private company and public authorities at municipality and county levels.

The Future

Everyone associated with these developments feels that their sustainability is assured because the model of cooperation provides advantages for all parties.

It has been agreed that after the end of EQUAL funding, Falck A/S will buy in a central contact person from RevaCenter Århus Nord to work on job retention questions and another central contact person for job integration. There are also agreements in three other counties with RevaCenter Nord on cooperation concerning job retention, and informal cooperation with RevaCenter Århus Nord will continue on job integration.

Apart from the extension of all of these new practices into Falck Demark, the knowledge and experience gained from the Århus pilot projects will also be spread to other companies and to other RevaCenters throughout the country.

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