



# THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

**PROGRESSION IN EMPLOYMENT:  
PRACTITIONER STORIES FROM THE EUROPEAN LABOUR MARKET**

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About the Progression in Employment Case Study Collection

The Progression in Employment project is designed to capture evidence and insights on developing and implementing upskilling pathways for workers on low incomes.

The Case Study Collection presents examples of effective employer practice on progression across three sectors (retail, hospitality, health and social care) and six countries (UK, France, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Spain).

The examples provided are from both small and large employers and represent a diversity of approaches to progression. It is hoped that the case studies will stimulate awareness amongst employers about the issue of progression for workers on low incomes.

The case studies as a collection offer insights into the practical steps that employers can take to both enhance the working lives and opportunities for the most disadvantaged sections of the workforce and at the same time address real business challenges such as talent shortages, quality, and adaptability to change.

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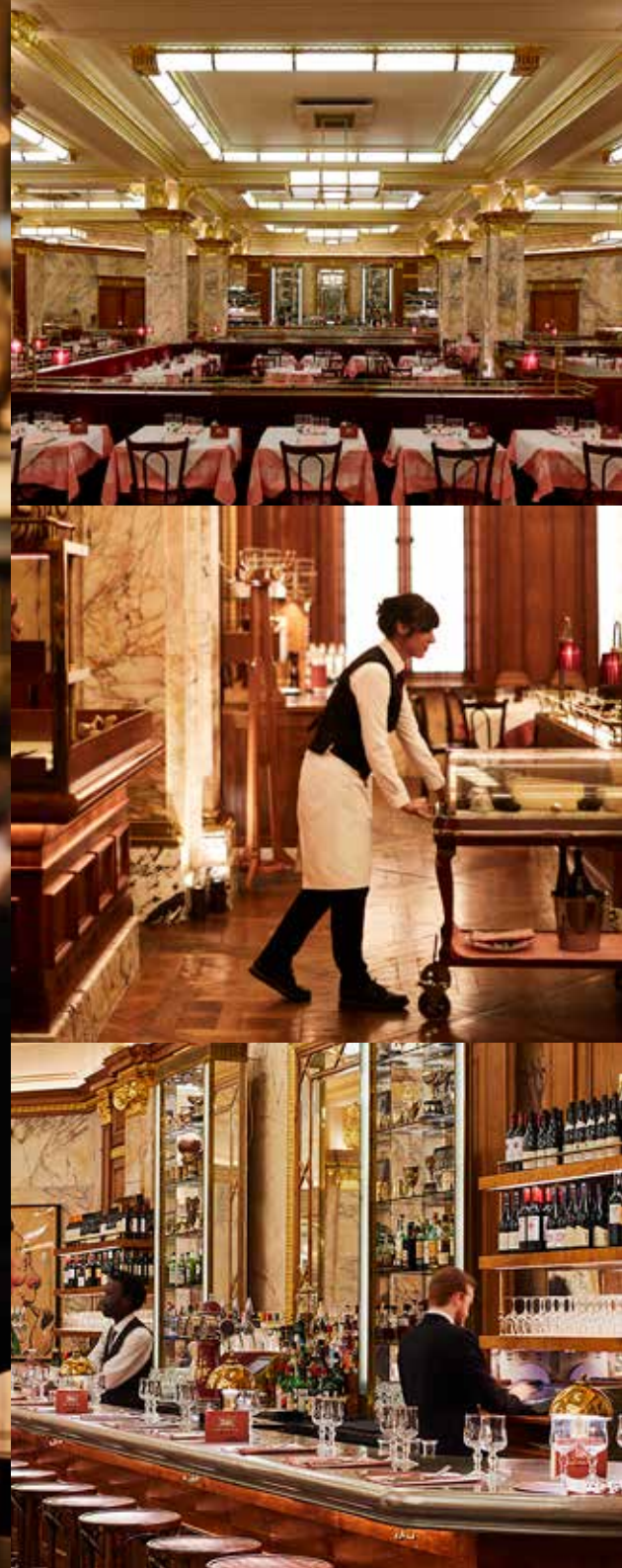


# CORBIN & KING

UNITED KINGDOM

## About the organisation

Corbin and King is a restaurant and hotel company spread across seven locations (six in London and one in Bicester). The company has a strong belief that people are their biggest asset, and aim to provide the best service to their customers, but also the best working environment for their staff.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

### Why the company invested in employee progression?

*"If you have happy staff you have happy customers."*  
GENERAL MANAGER

Corbin and King have gained a reputation in the industry for its excellent training and career progression, and this has played an important role in attracting and retaining highly motivated and skilled staff. The company also has a strong belief in giving back to the industry and helping to develop the next generation of talent.

Investing in the development of its workforce is also a way of addressing a number of challenges facing the company and the industry. For example:

- Skills shortages partly created by the closure of vocational colleges offering a pathway into hospitality.
- The image of hospitality as low-paid and stressful in the UK.
- A tight labour market.
- The potential impact of Brexit, with large numbers of hospitality staff being EU nationals.

The provision of upskilling opportunities and progression is also a way of enhancing the wellbeing of staff, and of providing work that offers variety and inspiration.

### Approach to developing employees

Many practices are in place to help staff develop and progress. These include:

- A 'training journey' being mapped out for every position in the business, outlining the career trajectory, the roles and skills it includes and the training needed to progress at each stage.
- All staff are provided access to their training journey during induction and can also find it online. The 'C&K Way' is a three month induction programme designed to give staff the opportunity to develop the skills needed to progress.
- *"If you've got the right attitude then we can give you the skills, and we can develop you and push you through the organisation."*  
GENERAL MANAGER
- New hires are initially put on a rotation, allowing them to work in various roles and departments to get a sense of the business and the opportunities available. Internal movement across departments is also encouraged.
- Development opportunities are open to all and widely publicised through weekly emails sent to all staff, outlining upcoming training courses and opportunities for promotion.
- All staff have access to an online training programme. Online courses are available 24 hours a day and are found to be useful for those working unsociable hours.

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- In addition to online training, internal and external courses are also available. Staff are encouraged to attend training, even if it is not directly linked to their job role.

*"Everything is there in place for you but you've got to be the person that wants it. Nobody is going to do it for you but if you want it, then there are many opportunities, the training is all there for you."*  
CURRENT MANAGING DIRECTOR

- To support non-British staff, training materials are translated into ten different languages, and there is a bespoke online English language course focussed on relevant restaurant vocabulary.
- Staff are encouraged to attend management and supervisory training, regardless of what level they currently hold, to get a sense of where their career might lead. The 'C&K DNA' programme has proved helpful in mapping desirable management behaviours and developing the skills and confidence of lower-skilled workers to move into those roles.
- Specific programmes have been launched to encourage and support women to enter management positions.
- Employee pulse surveys are conducted every 90 days, after which action plans are created, which can include communication for amendments to existing company development plans.
- Employees have regular one-to-ones with line managers to discuss career goals and progression. Yearly appraisals include 360° feedback with the aim of receiving an accurate assessment of staff performance.





## *“It went from a job to a career.”* EMPLOYEE

Workers who started in low-skilled roles and who have since progressed highlighted two key factors in their success. The support of line managers and the overall culture within the company of investing in staff; and the articulation of clear career pathways and the provision of development opportunities to pursue one or more of those pathways.

### NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

*“As soon as they get the feel for someone, they see that you’re working hard, then they invest more in you.”* CHEF TRAINER

- Staff can also ask for meetings with senior management, who are keen to support lower skilled staff throughout their development. Developing informal mentoring relationships with staff was seen as important in progression.

*“One of the biggest parts of my journey at Corbin and King has been the people in my support system... I feel they’ve 100 per cent supported me...I’ve been given a chance.”* EMPLOYEE

- Staff also have the opportunity to visit suppliers to gain expertise and knowledge about products sold in the restaurant.

### THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

## Key learning and outcomes

Corbin and King report a management stability index of 86 per cent and lower levels of turnover than is standard in the industry. Staff have high levels of engagement and many alumni have returned to the company after a period elsewhere. Their success in recruitment and retention has enabled the company to increase its profitability and aid expansion.

*“We found in order to retain our staff it was incredibly important to show them what their journey could be, but also not to impose upon them that had to be their journey.”*

GENERAL MANAGER

There are lots of individual stories of progression. The current Managing Director joined 15 years ago as a Personnel Administrator and one of the restaurant General Managers joined five years ago as the head office receptionist with little hospitality experience, for example. There are also lots of stories of those joining as temporary workers moving into senior management positions. Perhaps, the developmental focus of Corbin and King is best summed up by the quote:

*“It went from a job to a career.”* EMPLOYEE

Workers who started in low-skilled roles and who have since progressed highlighted two key factors in their success: the support of line managers and the overall culture within the company of investing in staff; and the articulation of clear career pathways and the provision of development opportunities to pursue one or more of those pathways.



## About the organisation

Penrose Care is a homecare business based in Hampstead, North London, which provides in-home care to the elderly and those with disabilities. Care services offered by Penrose include short visits, day visits, sleep-overs, night care and live in care to people unable to care for themselves. It is a small organisation, with less than 25 full-time staff, 22 of which work directly with clients. Care-workers work a minimum of 20 hours per week, with flexible working patterns available.



### NEW SKILLS ~~AT~~ WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

*“We genuinely want people to be the best that they can, and we want them to have working conditions so no one else can poach them... It’s a virtuous cycle. So we invest in them, and because we run the organisation in such a way that we can pay the staff well and earn good money they stay here and we can continue to invest in them.”*

MANAGING DIRECTOR

**In the UK there is a current shortage of health and social care staff, and so demand for staff is high. Penrose Care are aware of the need to attract and retain care staff and see the provision of training and development as a way of doing this.**

The home care provider also understands the pressure that care staff are under and the increased scrutiny regarding the quality of care they provide. Penrose Care specifically recruits those with no care experience and train staff in-house to avoid the risk of ‘negative behaviours’ perceived to be typical in the industry. Penrose Care believe this will lead to better quality care.

Finally, Penrose Care have a strong underlying philosophy that workers in the care industry should be respected for the work they do. By providing training and development opportunities, the care home wanted to show their employees that they are valued. The manager felt that care worker exploitation is common in the industry and leads to poor care, and they aimed to provide all staff with good working conditions.

## Approach to developing employees

Penrose Care implemented a number of practices to help the development of low-skilled employees. These included:

- Having a direct and transparent route of progression. The career trajectory within the organisation follows four successive steps: Care Worker; Senior Care Worker; Deputy Manager, Manager.
- Undertaking an externally provided national minimum training standard course for care workers.
- Following the training, employees had the opportunity to attend non-compulsory courses in relevant issues such as dementia and end of life care.
- 30 hours of professional shadowing, observing an existing care worker to gain a sense of responsibilities and services required. This should provide them with the experience they need to work independently.
- Having completed this training, care workers were further encouraged to take ‘advanced courses’ in specialisms of interest to them. Having completed at least one advanced course and demonstrating good performance, care workers can then progress to the role of senior care worker.

*“Sometimes the manager says ‘which area do you want to learn more?’ and I have the opportunity to do more courses.”* CARER

- Although management were mindful that caring is a vocation (and many employees would like to remain on the ‘frontline’), those who have an interest in the administrative side of the organisation could progress into this part of the business, and into a deputy manager role when available. The Level 5 diploma in Health and Social Care is legally required for this, and Penrose Care fund employee training.

*“There is a formalised training programme if they don’t have any background in managing... if there’s a course they want to take, if we can afford it we’ll fund it and we’re not dogmatic about what they take.”*

MANAGING DIRECTOR

## Key learning and outcomes

*“[Our] career progression approach...was incredibly successful because we take people, you know, on the bottom of the totem pole and brought them to a place where they are very successful.”*

MANAGING DIRECTOR

The continual investment in staff development helped company loyalty and led to employees feeling valued. As a result, Penrose Care has high levels of retention, and this is also reflected in high levels of patient satisfaction. Employees also welcomed the choice in additional training to match their areas of interest within the care industry, strengthening organisational commitment.

A key learning outcome is the role of equal access to training provided by the organisation to all staff. Having a manager who has previously worked in frontline care positions also meant that they understood the importance of progression and this was critical to the development of the training and progression routes.

*“The best thing about my training is that I can know more about different topics, maybe you can go to a client with a different condition... you don’t know, but if you’ve had training or online courses it’s more easy to work.”* CARER



## About the organisation

Hantverket is a restaurant in Stockholm City Centre employing 30 full-time and 10 part-time employees. The restaurant is known for its focus on sustainable food and was awarded 'Restaurant of the Year' in 2017 at the annual Restaurant Gala in Stockholm. Hantverket stands out in a sector dominated by poor working conditions and high staff turnover.



### NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

Faced with low levels of employee and customer satisfaction, Hantverket decided to invest in developing staff to deliver excellent customer service through engaged and motivated employees. Developing staff was also part of an underlying philosophy of sustainability – in terms of food and ingredients, but also working conditions and staffing.

## Approach to developing employees

Hantverket's philosophy of sustainability extends to its approach to managing staff, with employees provided with clear schedules and sustainable working hours. Given its small size, the approach of Hantverket to the development of staff is relatively informal in some respects but has been driven by clear leadership from their business manager.

*"To work with our Business Manager is an enormous privilege. Having that kind of leadership in a restaurant is not common within this sector."*

HEAD CHEF

Hantverket has formalised job descriptions and in doing so made the type of jobs available, skills needed and possible ways to develop a career in the company more transparent. This has been supported by regular performance reviews and weekly meetings between staff and line managers to discuss how they are performing, ways they could develop, and into which types of roles. In some cases, roles have been customised to fit individual strengths enabling individuals to 'job craft' to some extent.

*"I was a Waitress first and then I became First Waitress. I believe it is because Hantverket is good at supporting those who they see are taking a greater responsibility. During the performance reviews, you first discuss the things you already do within the company and secondly which areas you want to develop. That way they develop more personalised roles for each individual."* MEMBER OF STAFF.

Alongside these reviews, opportunities for informal development are made available through job shadowing, regular talks and seminars from external speakers from the sector, and visits to other organisations in the industry.

There is a strong focus on building a collegiate culture where staff can learn from each other and to build a team ethos important for excellent customer service. There is also an emphasis on learning what is happening in the industry and constantly innovating dishes.

*"It is important that we assist each other all the time. We should serve each other more than we actually serve our guests. Having a strategy is difficult, but having a culture is much easier. The key to a sustainable working place is to build the company on a 'feeling' that you want to give to the customers, rather than from a strategy."* BUSINESS MANAGER

*"We want to remain interesting, fresh and constantly alert to new things, and this requires a huge amount of work."*

HEAD CHEF

## Key learning and outcomes

The main outcomes from investing in low-skilled employees have been higher job retention, new knowledge and skills gained by staff, and both high quality service delivery and a better working environment for staff. The company has seen increased employee dedication and loyalty.

*"We still have the same staff as when we opened two years ago. All have chosen to stay in the company. This is quite unique in Stockholm and for the sector in general."* HEAD CHEF

Keys to success of the initiative has been a focus on developing the right culture, and having the right balance between standards and empowerment, giving workers a degree of freedom and choice in how they exercise their responsibilities.



# ambea:

SWEDEN

## About the organisation

Ambea is an independent provider of care in the Nordic countries. The company group in Sweden consists of the brands Nytida (disability care), Vardaga (elderly care), Lara (its training company), and Klara (staffing). Vardaga is the company's biggest brand and primarily employs assistant nurses.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

### Why the company invested in employee progression?

The company has invested in developing its employees partly in response to talent shortages in the sector. In particular, the ageing population and a decrease in younger people who choose elderly care as a profession, has prompted a focus on offering greater career development opportunities to enhance the attractiveness of working in the sector, particularly amongst younger people.

*"Strategic recruitment and strong branding are vital, where career development is an important part in this."*

SENIOR MANAGER

### Approach to developing employees

Ambea has established a number of new roles to facilitate career progression. A role of 'Service Assistant' has been created as a step towards the more advanced role of 'Assistant Nurse'. This has enabled Ambea to recruit, and then develop employees who may not have been able to be recruited direct into an 'Assistant Nurse' role. In addition, in response to an increase in cases of Dementia, the company has established training to enable employees to work in accredited Dementia care homes.

There is also the opportunity to undertake additional training to specialise in this area and achieve the role of 'Head of Dementia', a position available in multiple care homes. Heads of Dementia meet on a regular basis to share knowledge, increasing opportunities for informal learning. Ambea is looking to replicate this initiative with other types of Care such as Palliative Care.

*"Before, we were just working with the patients like we always did. But we were never really certain of what we did, and why we did it. We just did as our supervisors had taught us during our training. But now it is different. I really have the tools to handle a situation by myself and I know why I am doing things the way I am."*

HEAD OF DEMENTIA

Assistant Nurses can become managers and are offered training in leadership. Roles such as Head of Dementia are seen as an important stepping stone.

*"It is not possible to become an operational manager as an assistant nurse, but we do offer the opportunity to become group managers which typically is responsible for 10-15 people. This is a career pathway for those who in due time want to become managers. Getting other responsibilities along the way, such as Head of Dementia, is thus important."*

OPERATION MANAGER

In addition, Ambea supports progression in a variety of other ways including:

- Supporting and incentivising employees to gain recognised qualifications through flexible work schedules, monetary awards on completion and pay rises.
- The provision of training to support becoming a Supervisor.
- Annual company-wide planning of career development opportunities.

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*"We look from the individual's perspective and the competence of the employee, while at the same time mapping the needs of the company. Based on that, we identify a gap. This way, we can set up the plan for next year's career development opportunities."*

HR MANAGER

- Thematic work groups each with their own 'Head of', providing an opportunity for progression.

### Key learning and outcomes

Ambea reports:

- Improvements in service delivery.
- Savings in recruitment costs.
- Enhanced employer brand.
- Increased professional pride amongst staff as key benefits from their approach.

Key to successful implementation of the approach has been senior management buy-in and the involvement of workers.



# Scandic

SWEDEN

## About the organisation

Scandic is a hotel company that has doubled in size over the last eight years. It employs workers as housekeepers, waiters, kitchen staff, bartenders, receptionists as well as in a variety of other roles. In response to its impressive growth and increased competition for talent, Scandic has focussed on developing its own staff. The company has a target of filling 100-150 management vacancies annually.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

In such a competitive industry, Scandic has identified its staff as key to delivering high levels of customer service and competitive advantage. Scandic has prioritised the internal development and progression of staff so that in each hotel there is a critical mass of employees who know the business, its values, culture and ways of working well.

*"We want our values and culture to saturate every hotel that we own. Internal recruitment should therefore make up 50 per cent of the staff for each new hotel that we open."*  
HR MANAGER

## Approach to developing employees

Scandic combines a number of practices to support the development of team members including:

- Yearly performance reviews to understand individual career aspirations and identify suitable development opportunities.
- Regular one to ones with managers to assess and monitor performance, and also progress to achieving development goals.
- Mapping different job roles to enable individuals to see how they can progress within their area of work, and what skills they need to develop.
- The opportunity to try new areas of work and experience different parts of the organisation through a programme of cross-training, facilitating awareness of different opportunities in the company and upskilling staff.

*"It is a way of testing something new while also deciding if we like it or not. I am for instance interested in the tasks of a Housekeeping Manager. It is therefore written in my performance review that I should have the opportunity to test it for 1-2 months."*  
HOTEL MANAGER

- Opportunity to participate in 'TopTeams', an initiative of project-based teams tasked with improving an aspect of the company's work, for example ensuring and enhancing the quality of food.
- Use of an app featuring e-learning courses and customised learning journeys for each of the main professions or areas of work.

*"We are developing so-called learning journeys for specific roles. For instance, if you work with housekeeping, you should easily see which courses you must attend, which movies to watch etc. in the app."*  
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

- Provision of a mentoring programme.
- Opportunity to apply for, and participate in, two leadership development programmes, 'Talent' and 'Future Leaders'. 51 per cent of individuals that have participated in the 'Future Leaders' programme are now in management positions.

## THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

## Key learning and outcomes

*"There are many success stories. Five of my receptionists are working at the IT division now, another of my receptionists is now, like myself, a Hotel Manager, one of my summer interns is a business controller."*  
HOTEL MANAGER

Alongside individual stories of success, Scandic's approach is successfully developing their management population of the future, a significant proportion who have progressed from frontline roles. More than half of participants of their leadership programme, open to all workers, have progressed into management positions. Scandic's approach has also, they believe, improved retention and reduced recruitment costs, as well as encouraging greater internal mobility and improved customer service.

Key learning points include:

- Mentoring and coaching are effective ways to support in-work progression and do not need to be very formal.
- New ways of using technology can create more transparent in-work pathways, such as an app for the intranet and e-learning modules.
- Building a culture in the company where it is easy for employees to try out new roles and work areas.
- Transparent career paths make in-work progression routes clearer and facilitate progression.

Key to effective implementation has been the buy-in of senior management and effective, open communication about the initiatives to support progression.





SPAIN

## About the organisation

Ausolan is a co-operative which specialises in providing catering and cleaning services to clients, mostly public or private schools. Ausolan owns various large kitchens throughout Spain where they cook and distribute meals. The company also manages schools that have their own kitchen, and are in charge of the food purchasing, cooking and serving at each school. Ausolan has grown, partly through acquisitions, and now has 11,000 workers and 1,800 clients.



### NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

As the company is focused on the cleaning and catering sectors, many of the jobs typically only require low skills, and many of their workers have no qualifications apart from basic compulsory education. As a services provider, the company recognises that the workforce is the core of the company, and the skills, productivity and motivation of employees directly impacts the quality of the service provided and client satisfaction. Following a period of growth, the Management Board recognised the need to re-focus efforts on developing the capabilities of their staff.

*"In the last five years we have been working hard with the lidera plan, which is aimed at managers, to reflect on their management style."*

SOCIAL UNIT AND HR REPRESENTATIVE

## Approach to developing employees

The company has developed a range of policies and practices to support employees to develop their skills and to create a positive work climate. For example:

- There is specific training provided at inductions, including risk prevention and quality issues.
- A basic six hour training course is compulsory for all employees to attend annually, to refresh basic knowledge, and update on important topics related to the organisation such as food handling practices, quality systems etc.

*"I have learnt many new things thanks to the training actions of the company."*

EMPLOYEE

- Extra training on different topics can be provided dependent both on the requirement of the posts and the specific needs of the employee, usually delivered by external providers. For example a current programme is being run to train 'dining room supervisors' at schools to deal with bullying.

- 'Specialised training' is offered where new competencies linked to the business can be learnt. Participation is not compulsory but depends on the interests of the worker.

*"I am now attending a course on good practices and quality processes."*

EMPLOYEE

- The company has invested in the capability of its managers through the 'Lidera Plan', an intensive management development course designed to promote managers' self-awareness, empathy, ability to listen and communicate effectively.

*"Managers' attitude towards their employees has a direct effect on employees' attitude."*

SOCIAL UNIT AND HR REPRESENTATIVE

To understand the training needs, and to help provide support and mentoring to low-skilled employees, Ausolan has implemented a range of other practices including:

- An annual survey of workers' training interests.

*"The company has asked workers, via written surveys, to communicate whether they are interested in receiving training and in which fields."*

LINE MANAGER

- Individual performance assessments of all workers where line managers can discuss worker training and career development interests.

*"We carry out individual performance assessments with our workers, and this allows us to see their attitudes, involvement with the company, interests in moving to a new post, etc."*

LINE MANAGER

## Key learning and outcomes

Key outcomes from the approach taken by Ausolan include improved management capability, with low-skilled workers reporting improved relationships with their managers. The training provided by the company has been well-received by employees and has supported the development of skills as well as confidence.

A key learning point reported was the importance of understanding individual employee skill gaps that need addressing and focus training and support on these to improve worker confidence and retention.





ITALY

### About the organisation

The Carpigiani group was founded in 1946 originally as a family business, and was acquired by the ALI Group in 1989. It produces and exports machines for the production of Italian ice-cream. The majority of employees have basic technical or commercial skills. In 2014, Carpigiani received a prize for the best practices in the HR field from AIDP – the Associazione Italiana per la Direzione del Personale.



### NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

### Why the company invested in employee progression?

The company’s philosophy is that by enabling employees to grow, the company will grow too. The company believes that by investing in the skills of its workforce, it is also investing in its future success.

The company started to invest in employee development in a more structured way after the ALI Group acquisition, to provide fair opportunities for skill and competency training for all. The new HR manager had a philosophy to develop a ‘company positive’ environment, with a new strategy to create valuable opportunities for employees, and let them develop their own career path.

*“I hope that more companies in the future will understand the importance of increasing the education of their workforce.”*  
EMPLOYEE

### Approach to developing employees

Following a review of the level of education of Carpigiani staff, the HR manager found that one-third of staff did not complete high school and lacked qualifications. The company created the ‘Diploma in Carpigiani’ project to give employees the opportunity to achieve a Diploma as a ‘mechatronics expert’. The project was designed to overcome the reluctance of workers to engage in study activity. Features of the project included:

- Costs of the teaching materials were covered by the company, and training took place at the organisation so that employees could easily attend.
- Participants came from different parts of the business enabling learning and knowledge exchange.

More broadly, Carpigiani has in place a range of HR practices that support progression including:

- The provision of workshops and training programmes.

*“Carpigiani gave me an opportunity.”*  
EMPLOYEE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAMME

- The development of an internal factory school which provided specific courses on technical subjects to train new employees with necessary organisational skills. Topics taught could be put directly into practice.
- Cross-learning between departments was encouraged so employees were able to experience different areas of the organisation and identify where they would like to work.

### THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

- Internal positions and promotions were advertised clearly throughout the organisation.
- The organisation developed a partnership with a local technical college so they can identify and invest in the technical skills of future employees.

### Key learning and outcomes

The achievement of the diploma for ‘Diploma in Carpigiani’ participants was viewed as significant for their personal and professional growth, and was well received as the contents were directly related to the job.

The course enabled some participants to change their role within the company after the programme, whilst others have started to think about continuing their education further at university. As well as developing technical skills, the project has also served to help employees build networks and relationships across the company.

*“The project was a source of pride for the company and for the people that carried it out.”* HR MANAGER

A key learning for the company was the importance of making training as easily accessible as possible to enable the participation; and the benefits of the informal knowledge exchange and network building that occurred amongst employees as a result of the programme.



## About the organisation

Coop Alleanza 3.0 was created in 2016, with the merger of three different coops (Coop Adriatica, Coop Estense and Coop Consumatori Nordest), which had been active since the 1980s. The company operates in the retail sector and has 436 supermarkets covering 12 regions in Italy. In 2018 the company won a prize at the HR Innovation awards for Capability Assessment.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

The company prides itself on its ethical approach to HR, and its belief in caring about employees as people and not just as 'human resources'. Coop Alleanza 3.0 focusses on the professional and personal development of its employees as part of its approach to HR management.

*"In comparison to other employers we have a different ethical approach."*

HR MANAGER

## Approach to developing employees

After the 2016 merger, the company sought to offer a new optician service within its stores. Initially, these specialist services were outsourced as it was difficult to find qualified opticians in the labour market. To offer internal staff an interesting development opportunity and to meet the skills shortage, the company devised a programme 'Progetto Ottici (Optician Project)' to train employees for a diploma in optometry. The programme was targeted at low-skilled workers and offered a route to progression and higher job satisfaction.

The company received 204 applications for the course, with individuals selected on their motivation and willingness to study. The two-year programme involved study at a school of optometry and a mandatory internship programme in an opticians' practice.

49 participants with an average age of 41 completed the course. 73 per cent of the participants were women. All participants are now working in the company as opticians. The view from participants is that it has been a positive experience in terms of personal growth and improving their career.

*"This was an opportunity to change my role and improve my career."* EMPLOYEE

*"There is a lot of motivation because you are also doing something that helps the customer."* EMPLOYEE

Further development in the role was supported by opportunities to exchange learning and experience amongst the opticians, who are located at different sites.

More widely, Coop Alleanza 3.0 operates a number of different HR practices that support the development of low-skilled employees, including:

- Mapping employee capabilities at all levels (both technical and softer 'people management skills') and motivations.
- Having a transparent internal labour market, with information about internal job opportunities available on the staff intranet.
- Training and development provided at all levels of the organisation – especially when skills are needed to meet business needs.
- Line managers were seen as critical for people development. Workshops for line managers were organised, focussing on: line manager social and professional capabilities; line management responsibilities; collaboration and information sharing; planning and monitoring objectives and creating effective teams.
- Continued training and development courses to update skills relating to specific professions.

## Key learning and outcomes

'Progetto Ottici (Optician Project)' has provided an opportunity to upskill, to change roles and to move into a new career path. At the same time, the project has enabled the company to address a skills shortage and develop a new service.

The organisation highlighted three main factors that were critical to the success of employee progression opportunities:

- The motivation and participation of individual employees (who were boosted and supported by their line managers and other senior employers).
- Having financial and logistical support for training and development.
- Open and transparent communication between senior management, line management and the employee.



## About the organisation

HERA is a large multi-utilities company in Italy. It was established in 2002 following the merger of 11 municipal companies that operated in the Emilia-Romagna region and since then has expanded covering a large territory from Friuli-Venezia Giulia to the Marche region.

The company works predominantly in the water, environment and energy sectors. In 2019 ERA received the 'Top Employers 2019' award for the tenth time. The organisation also rose to 14th position globally in the Top 100 Company 2019 Diversity and Inclusion Index (which has people development as one of the awarding criteria).



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

*"We wanted to make HERA a more digital workplace."*  
HR REPRESENTATIVE

In 2017, in coherence with the corporate objective of developing digital competencies, the organisation carried out a digital skills assessment which identified a lack of skills (particularly digital skills), that were important for business delivery.

As a result, the organisation developed a learning plan to support staff capabilities internally so they had the necessary skills for operational performance. The organisation has since conducted an annual skills assessment to see where further investment is necessary to improve organisational outcomes.

## Approach to developing employees

A number of practices were identified that helped skill development (with a specific focus on digital skills via the HER@futura project), which included:

- A 'Learning Plan' developed by HR – containing an analysis of skills of the current workforce, and identifying skills gaps.
  - The creation of a learning strategy (understanding what actions need to be undertaken to fill the skills gaps).
  - Investment in the professional development paths of its employees, tailored to meet both individual and organisational needs, including discussions about the training and the development needed to achieve career aims.
  - Each employee was entitled to participate in training and educational activities each year.
  - The training was provided by both internal and external experts in the fields, and a variety of training methods were used – including 'podcasts on digital skills' which could be downloaded by staff and listened to on a number of occasions.
- "The video podcasts were interesting, engaging and catchy!"* EMPLOYEE
- Managers were viewed as fundamental to helping the organisation reach its operational targets. HERA introduced a specific manager training programme to enhance current management skills, and prepare up-coming managers for both people and task management roles.

## THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

- A comprehensive internal website, including a dedicated section where vacant internal job positions and progression opportunities were posted, training activities were proposed in e-learning modules and the project 'Her@Futura' was presented.
- Line managers were important for ensuring appraisals were completed where discussions about future training and development needs were encouraged.

## Key Outcomes and Learning

*"The challenge is to involve as many employees as possible for the company's positive growth."*  
HR REPRESENTATIVE

The company reported that in the last year, on average employees undertook approximately 30 hours of training, which is higher than the sector average.

The training podcasts have proved to be especially popular, and easily accessible to staff at all levels. In around two years, participation in digital training has doubled and the company's digital readiness has improved substantially.

HERA are keen to improve the training and development available to staff, and have asked for employee feedback and input into future plans.

### Key learning points highlighted included:

- Recognising that providing opportunities to all staff, regardless of organisational position, helps employees feel valued and motivated towards the organisation.
- Understanding what skills employees already have and where development is required.



## About the organisation

The Katholischer Hospitalverbund Hellweg gGmbH is a Catholic hospital located in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany. The hospital operator has three hospitals, two nursing homes, a service company for logistics and central services, as well as its own school for healthcare professionals. The hospital has received a number of awards for its personal and social commitment towards honouring career opportunities and employee career development.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

The hospital group invested in low-skilled workers to counteract the shortage of skilled staff in healthcare professions across Germany. By offering training and development to those who may not have had the opportunity for further education the hospital aims to attract and retain staff in the profession. The organisation has also, as part of its charitable mission, sought to recruit and train refugees. Refugees face particular issues in finding and securing work including language barriers, lack of qualifications or recognition of existing qualifications in the German labour market.

The management also feels committed to the underlying principles of its charity mission, where each individual should be valued and respected.

*“The healthcare sector in Germany is characterised by a massive shortage of skilled workers in the professions of doctor, registered nurses, and nurses. In the context of the looming skills shortage, as well as the values and focus of the hospital that puts the person first, the hospital has many initiatives to encourage all employees (to progress) regardless of their qualifications or position in the corporate hierarchy.”*  
HR MANAGER

The hospital group believes strongly in the development of staff in preference to external recruitment.

## Approach to developing employees

The hospital developed a programme, ‘Human Future’, to support the integration and career development of refugees, in particular those with low skills.

The programme includes:

- A selection process focussed on individual talents and motivation, rather than qualifications.

*“Trainees with low-skilled backgrounds are often much more ambitious. They also take up offers and opportunities.”*

VICE-PRINCIPAL OF THE SCHOOL FOR NURSING OCCUPATIONS

- Opportunities to participate in orientation programmes which can act as a stepping stone to vocational training in the nursing profession.
- A buddy scheme to aid with integration into the hospital team and to support with meeting organisational requirements.
- Refugees specifically have the opportunity for more frequent one-to-one’s, or ‘intensive supervision’, to provide current performance feedback.
- Counselling support.

In addition to the specific ‘Human Future’ programme, the hospital has a range of HR practices that support the development of low-skilled workers including:

- Internal training seminars (free of charge) that can be counted towards working hours. Employees can choose to attend these if they wish to develop specific skills.

## THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

- Annual appraisals where feedback is provided and training plans for the next year are developed.
- Differentiated career paths – those interested in developing technical skills can follow a specialist career route, whilst those aspiring to take on a leadership position can follow an ‘affiliate executive career model’. Employees are offered a variety of training options depending on their interests and competencies.
- Support from internal mentors.

## Key learning and outcomes

The ‘Human Future’ programme has been viewed as a major success as many refugees have moved beyond an initial internship and are continuing their training in nursing and administration. For the hospital this has helped address the skill shortages they were experiencing.

*“Companies should give more chances to people. Hiring refugees will, in a positive way, greatly influence the outcomes of the business.”*  
EMPLOYEE

Employees report increased job satisfaction as a result of improved opportunities for promotion and this has improved retention. The hospital has improved recruitment rates as it is viewed externally as an attractive organisation to work for. The hospital now has a competitive advantage, especially helpful when there is a shortage of healthcare professionals.

Key to the implementation was having a supportive environment where low-skilled workers were encouraged. Having the internal resources to provide the additional training and mentoring was also highlighted as important for success.



## About the organisation

KOOPERA is a not-for-profit cooperative focussed on supporting individuals at risk of labour market exclusion to integrate into employment. KOOPERA's core business activity is the recycling and selling of second-hand products such as toys and books.

The company has a network of over 30 stores as well as a semi-automated plant for the classification and treatment of second-hand clothing and other products. The company has received several regional and national prizes for its work integrating disadvantaged groups into the labour market and helping them progress in work.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

*"This company is special because it is not a common enterprise. It works with people and for the people, particularly those with more difficulties in accessing a job."*

HUMAN RESOURCES AND  
FINANCIAL MANAGER

The main objective of the company is to support low-skilled workers to re-enter and progress in work. Approximately half of KOOPERA employees are individuals being supported through an integration process, with the remainder employed in supporting their successful integration into work. 70 per cent of individuals who complete their programme of support with KOOPERA go on to find a job in the normal labour market, including many who find long-term roles at KOOPERA.

## Approach to developing employees

KOOPERA has a specific programme where low-skilled employees join the organisation for three years, and are supported with the development of social and professional skills to enable their re-integration into the labour market. Individuals can build their experience across a wide range of tasks and areas of work, from customer service roles through to logistics and administrative support functions.

Individuals are provided with a coach to support them over the three years, providing a range of support from counselling through to training. Individuals are also supported by their line manager in their daily work and in developing workplace skills and competences. Six months before the end of the programme, individual participants are supported by their coach in identifying and preparing for suitable job vacancies.

**To support both the development and progression of programme participants, and the wider workforce, KOOPERA has a number of practices in place including:**

- Regular informal meetings between line managers to share and exchange ideas, and support management capability development.
- The provision of training in both general (i.e. use of computers, time management) and specific (security risks, specific job related technology, customer services) domains that are helpful for progression.
- Training line managers to mentor and support progression.
- Programme participants are provided with certificates at the end of their training which are recognised in the labour market and can help with progression both internally and externally to the organisation.
- The opportunity to experience work in different roles and departments.
- Appraisals and performance development meetings where progress is monitored and training needs assessed.

*"My time and work at KOOPERA has helped me to be a better person and better worker."*

EMPLOYEE

*"It is a very rewarding experience when you see disadvantaged people leave the company and they are able to successfully accomplish their labour employment integration process and do well in life."*

LINE MANAGER

## Key learning and outcomes

The provision of training for line managers was valuable in providing the support to low-skilled employees, and line managers reported both professional and personal development.

*"In all these years at KOOPERA I have learned a lot, both professionally and as a person."*

LINE MANAGER

*"The company has changed my life... I am proud of my work, and I do not see myself anywhere else."*

EMPLOYEE

Approximately 70 per cent of those who have entered the specific training programme have progressed into other roles or have continued in KOOPERA full-time.

Having people who believe and are engaged with the core values of the organisation was viewed as critical to the success of the development programme. The provision of necessary resources and training to the whole workforce was a key learning outcome.





FRANCE

## About the organisation

The 'Maison de retraite publique intercommunal de la Durance' is a residential home of dependent elderly patients. The home also has an Alzheimer's unit. The home is based over two sites (5 km away from each other), and has 111 beds available for the elderly. It employs 100 people.



### NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

Management at the residential home recognised there had been a change in the profile of the patients needing care (they were becoming increasingly more dependent and there were more cases of dementia). The home recognised that the skill needs of staff needed to match changing patient needs. As a result a programme was developed to improve the skills and progression opportunities of staff.

There is also a shortage of employees wanting to work in the care sector, and so the care home wanted to retain the staff they had and reduce recruitment costs.

## Approach to developing employees

The 'Paths to Qualifications' programme was designed by a regional association in charge of professional training in the hospital sector (ANFH) and implemented by the company director. The aim of the programme was to help low-skilled workers gain the skills and qualifications they needed for a career in the care industry.

*"We are fortunate to have a director who is in favour of training and for the development of agents' skills and careers. We'd be fools to not take advantage of it...The director listens to the staff, identifies people with ambition and does everything possible to make them reach their goal."* EMPLOYEE

Key factors to the implementation of the programme included:

- Individual employee interviews are undertaken to capture current qualification levels, and to assess training needs.
- The training programme is reserved for the least qualified staff.
- *"If someone at interview does not have the required qualification for a position, I should not stop at that. We can recruit and set up the system to support him/her towards the necessary qualification."* CARE HOME DIRECTOR
- Yearly reviews are undertaken with employees, including discussions about training and development needs and career goals, a training plan is then developed.
- Employees have the opportunity to train for initial level qualifications and are also provided with the chance to specialise through further training.
- *"It's good not to be blocked in your job, and the employer can help you change jobs...Having completed the diploma training to become a 'building maintenance officer', should allow me to move up in rank and move on to the next level."* EMPLOYEE
- Informal coaching and work shadowing are also provided so that managers are able to pass on their experience and 'know-how'.
- Line managers are aware of the responsibility that they have to identify staff they think will benefit from training and who are suitable for progression.
- Communication of the training and opportunities available are clear and transparent so all staff could have the opportunity to develop.

### THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

## Key learning and outcomes

*"When I came back from training the team were happy because I brought them knowledge and new ways of doing things...and the service has improved; less damaged laundry, less annoyance, less complaints from the residents and their families. We even received a box of chocolates at Christmas from their families, which had never happened before."* EMPLOYEE

Having management acknowledge the need for skill development and support the implementation of the training programme was very important. Their understanding of the changing patient needs as well as recognising existing skill gaps was vital for the success of the training programme.

Providing progression opportunities made retention easier in a profession where recruitment and retention is very difficult.

*"If the director offers training it's because he knows that we have the skills. He believed in me. Then you have to believe in yourself. Sending us to training is already giving us a boost."* EMPLOYEE

The training has also meant there is now a talent pool from which staff can be chosen to fill future vacant positions.





## SPAIN

### About the organisation

Uvesco Group leads in food distribution in Spain, with headquarters in the Basque country. The company has been expanding throughout Spain over the last few years. The company sells high-quality products to clients and providing a 'positive' buying experience is a central part of the company philosophy.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

### Why the company invested in employee progression?

Uvesco wants to recruit and develop the best workers to be able to provide the high-quality customer service that is a core part of its offer. Most of the employees are 'salespersons' (cashiers, butchers, fishmongers, shelf-stackers) in front-line positions dealing directly with customers. One of the guiding principles informing the company's HR policy and practice is that of 'excellent work', recognising the importance of its workers' knowledge and skills. Uvesco also recognises its responsibilities with respect to public health, and the importance of ensuring that workers are trained sufficiently in food handling, preservation and nutrition.

*"Uvesco is making a great effort to dignify the work carried out by salespersons {front-line workers}; that is why we have several agreements with the public authorities to officially recognise their knowledge."*

HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANT MANAGER

### Approach to developing employees

Uvesco has a variety of policies and practices that support the progression of workers. These include:

- An open, internal labour market, with new job opportunities open to all the workers who have the skills and competencies required for the post.
- Mapping job roles at all levels to make progression pathways transparent.
- New employees are offered career prospects and work stability through permanent employment contracts.
- Paid-for training to qualify as a butcher or fishmonger, a programme lasting two months and validated by the company by means of an assessment test at the end.
- The company has worked with the public authorities to develop professional experience certificates through which previous professional experience as a butcher or fishmonger is officially certified.
- The company has collaborated with the Public Employment Service to hire unemployed individuals where they complete a relevant course. The company has hired 60 per cent of individuals who have completed the course.
- Recognising the importance of effective leadership and management for quality customer service, the company has developed an internal project known as the '300 Plan', which describes the 'Uvesco' leader and the competencies that a leader within Uvesco must have. Managers take part in a 2-year course developed in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce.

- A key programme operated by the company to support internal promotion into management roles is the 'Cantera Plan'. The programme identifies workers who are not currently in management roles, but could be promoted to such roles in the future and are seen as having the potential to work as a manager or supervisor. Interested workers can volunteer to take part in the 'Cantera Plan' and receive training in the skills to become a manager or supervisor, in particular in areas where skills gaps are identified.
- Line managers receive frequent training to build their capability, again recognising the importance of effective management capability for customer service.

*"Training is essential in our company at all levels. We look for excellent professionals to offer excellent services. Line managers are trained in management skills so that all our workers can offer an excellent service."*

HUMAN RESOURCES ASSISTANT MANAGER

- Inductions ('welcome days') for all recently hired employees, where they spend one day training at the Uvesco headquarters learning the basics (the minimum required by law), in relation to risk prevention, food handling, as well as the company's ethical code.

*"It was nice to take part in the welcome day at the headquarters and get an idea of how the whole company works."* UVESCO SALESPERSON

## THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

### Key learning and outcomes

Uvesco reports positive outcomes including improved employee retention and low turnover levels. Additionally, having appropriately qualified staff meant that vacancies could be filled via internal recruitment. Individuals who have participated in the training also report improved confidence having gained new knowledge and skills. This also translated into improved quality of service.

The company highlighted the importance of strong support from managers (including training for them), and every employee working towards organisational values. Being open and transparent about the availability of training and internal promotion opportunities were also key messages.



# HOTEL WYNDHAM GARDEN

GERMANY

## About the organisation

The Hotel Wyndham Garden is located in the outskirts of Wismar, a smaller city with around 45,000 inhabitants in the Federal State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in North-Eastern Germany. The hotel is part of the GCH Hotel Group headquartered in Berlin that owns more than 120 hotels in Germany, Belgium, Cyprus, Austria and the Netherlands. At the end of 2018, the Hotel Wyndham Garden retained a staff of 45 employees (most of them on a full-time basis).



## NEW SKILLS <sup>AT</sup> WORK

J.P.Morgan

### Why the company invested in employee progression?

When the current managing director of the Hotel Wyndham Garden arrived in 2015, many positions were vacant, having a negative impact on the business. This reflects the significant recruitment problems the hotel and restaurant business are facing in the region. Against this, the hotel director developed a new approach to recruiting staff as well as more broadly its approach to human resources management.

*“Today, in our region it is simply impossible to attract the necessary number of young people to our hotel for an apprenticeship training. For cost reasons it is also not possible to employ professional specialists. Therefore, we had to rethink our strategy of human resources development.”*

HOTEL DIRECTOR

This approach is based on the need to recruit and attract people in a very tight labour market while at the same time to guarantee a high level of service quality and customer satisfaction.

### Approach to developing employees

The new HR development practice developed by the hotel director (in close cooperation with the responsible consultant of the GCH Hotel Group), focussed very much on the recruitment of employees that are situated in the “second tier” of the labour market, i.e. career changers, older workers, workers without a professional vocational degree or workers with a migration/refugee background who may lack German language skills.

This new approach to HR and recruitment focussed on the following elements:

- A selection process focussed on individual talents and motivation, rather than formal qualifications.
- Intensification of on-the-job training and the provision of opportunities that make training and work more interesting for trainees and employees (e.g. production of cheese in the kitchen; Christmas bakery with children from local kindergartens; further training for barkeepers).
- Establishing more decentralised management organisation at the hotel that allows for a more intensive and tailored workplace related supervision and coaching of employees that lack formal professional skills.
- Instead of two main areas (service and operational/technical functions) six areas were defined and senior/more experienced employees became supervisors of these areas.
- Offering non-financial incentives such as opportunity to learn, team spirit, providing support for non-work issues (e.g. apartment search, financial issues, work-life-balance, etc.).

*“I’m from Mallorca in Spain and arrived in the context of the mobility programme for young people in Wismar. After a traineeship in the hotel I started an apprenticeship as a hotel manager in 2014 that I completed successfully after three years in 2017. For me, the training programme was much more demanding than for German students. It was important that there were other Spanish speaking colleagues at the hotel. But crucial for my success was the support of our director and my training supervisor here in the hotel. I’m planning now to do a dual academic study course in hotel management.”*

JUNIOR HOTEL MANAGER

## THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

### Key learning and outcomes

The key learning of the HR practice at the Hotel Wyndham Garden is that it is possible to deal with the challenge of severe recruitment problems by hiring low-skilled workers and other groups that do not belong to the “first tier” in the labour market.

*“For me, the good atmosphere in the workplace, the support I receive from the hotel management and the possibility to adjust working time according to family needs are very important.”*

BAR MANAGER

*“I used to work in a call-centre in Wismar. Due to shift work and long distances of travelling by bus and train this was very strenuous. As the Hotel Wyndham is very close to my place of living, I applied for a part-time job at the reception three years ago. It took me three months to learn all that is needed in this position and today I’m working full-time.”*

The outcome is a multi-cultural and multi-generational hotel staff, a rather flat and decentralised management and leadership culture, driven very much by the personality and strong commitment of the hotel director. This adjustment was also made possible by the national hotel management group that provides the space and autonomy for local decisions and development of tailored HR practices.



## About the organisation

Carrefour Hypermarché is the main division of the retail group Carrefour. It manages 220 supermarkets in France and employs 55,000 people worldwide. Carrefour is Europe's leading food distributor and the second largest in the world.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

## Why the company invested in employee progression?

*“Growing people is a way to keep them.”*

HEAD OF VOCATION TRAINING  
DEPARTMENT AT CARREFOUR

Carrefour Hypermarché's current objectives are to respond to changes in consumer consumption, but still offer good customer services. The group invests in the qualification of low-skilled employees to cope with job shortages and retention. The sector can be viewed as unattractive (it is not a natural vocation to work in a supermarket) and has difficulty in recruiting in certain professions (in particular those related to food preparation: catering, charcuterie, butchery, bakery). The investment in low-skilled workers is also part of the HR strategy to value and provide career progression for all employees, regardless of their starting qualification or diploma.

*“The employer can remove 80 per cent of the obstacles that may prevent an employee from completing training, but for the rest, it depends only on the employee's motivation to overcome difficulties related to the fact that he or she must undergo training while performing part of his or her usual work, which requires a certain capacity for adaptation and organisation.”*

HEAD OF VOCATION TRAINING  
DEPARTMENT AT CARREFOUR

## Approach to developing employees

Carrefour has developed programmes to encourage low-skilled workers to increase their qualifications with the aim of developing a career within the group.

### The CQP programme

In France, social partners in different sectors can define their own diplomas that are recognised by all employers in the sector - the 'Certificate of professional qualification' (Certificat de qualification professionnelle – CQP). The content of the programme is fixed by the social partners of the branch and the final diploma is awarded to participants who have finished the training period. The CQP is also an externally recognised qualification in the retail sector.

The programme targets employees with low skills who need specific qualifications to progress in their career or employees who may have a qualification but it's not linked to their position or expected position.

- Entry into the programme is not based on level of qualification, but experience, motivation, performance and potential in the role. It gives individuals the same chance, whatever their background, gender, age, origin, etc.
- Store and department managers have a key role in progression, and they are responsible for the training and career development of those who wish to progress. The store manager is encouraged to identify employees able to follow a CQP programme and to suggest they enter it in their annual review.
- Training is provided at vocation training centres on supermarket premises or outside for some specific qualifications (e.g. butcher, baker). The time spent in training is considered as working time, and all costs related to the training outside the premises are paid for by the company so that extra-expenses are not an obstacle to learning.

### The professionalisation contract

This national instrument is used to hire low-qualified employees or people who are far from the labour market and help them obtain a professional qualification. They are offered the six-month period of work (four days per week) and training (one day per week) required to obtain the CQP.

*“This instrument can be scary because we engage people who do not have a diploma, which is frowned upon in France.”* MANAGER

- Informal coaching and work shadowing are provided by managers but also colleagues who are able to pass on their experience and 'know-how'. It is the manager's role to train future employees.
- After six-months, the employer may recruit well-trained employees permanently, leading to employee motivation and commitment which is important for employee retention.

*“Supporting low-qualified employees is a long-term benefit. After six months, we have a well-trained employee, respecting the “codes” of the group Carrefour and who will probably stay in the group.”* MANAGER

Employees receive their diploma at a small ceremony attended by the store manager. For some employees, this is the first time in their lives that they have received a diploma.

*“It is a very moving moment for some who sometimes invite their families to attend this ceremony. Obtaining a diploma, especially in France, is highly valued. It is an important factor in recognition and self-confidence.”*

HEAD OF VOCATION TRAINING DEPARTMENT AT CARREFOUR

## Key learning and outcomes

The CQP is an efficient and effective way to develop low-qualified employees, and solve organisational recruitment problems. It also ensures their future employability in retail (both internally and externally). The CQP has been viewed as a mid-long-term financial investment. Since the introduction of the programme, 1,500-2,000 employees have followed a programme each year to obtain a CQP diploma.

*“Even if there is no statistic, employees recruited through contract of professionalisation or who have obtained a CQP have a lower job rotation rate than employees directly recruited on the labour market.”*

HEAD OF VOCATION TRAINING  
DEPARTMENT AT CARREFOUR

Increasing employee qualifications strengthens their organisational involvement which has led to improved quality of service for customers.





France

## About the organisation

Zara is the main clothing brand of the Spanish group Inditex, focussing in 'fast fashion' and products such as clothing, accessories, shoes, swimwear, beauty and perfumes. There are 127 Zara stores in France, including around 40 in the Paris region. The fashion brand mainly employs young workers, some of them students, in retail positions.



## NEW SKILLS AT WORK

J.P.Morgan

### Why the company invested in employee progression?

*"Regardless of the career path, all employees can potentially become store managers. This 'potential programme' creates loyalty and commitment to the company. Store employees are even included in the support functions at headquarters. The group's HR Director started as a saleswoman."*

HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
DEVELOPMENT AT INDITEX

In the early 2000s Zara launched an internal promotion programme as the company recognised the need for more managers in their stores, mainly because the group opened many stores during that period. They opted for internal promotion of salespeople into positions of responsibility. The aim was to develop an 'in-house culture' to offer internal promotion and progression to those who have been recognised as having potential. This helps the organisation to retain staff, and reduces the competition for employees wanting to work in fashion retail.

### Approach to developing employees

Zara has developed the 'potential programme', an internal talent management programme. Those with few qualifications are encouraged to join the programme to become leaders, capable of leading teams. Since January 2008, Zara has developed a 'youth project' that aims to integrate young people who are very far from the labour market (dropping out of school, illness, very precarious social situation, refugees) directly into the stores. This programme involves 30 young people per year.

*"As a store manager, there is a personal satisfaction when a person recruited as part of a 'youth project' is brought into the 'potential programme'...with the programme we make it attractive for people to want to do it."*

DIRECTOR OF A ZARA PARIS STORE

**The programme includes a number of important factors for skill development to aid progression:**

- Entry into the programme is not based on level of qualification, but motivation, performance, good behaviour and potential in the role. As such, Zara believes that this removes recruitment bias based on gender, age, and education.
- Store and HR managers have an important role in progression, and they are responsible for the training and career development of those who wish to progress. The store manager is encouraged to identify employees who display management potential, and provide them with the training and coaching required.

## THE CASE STUDY COLLECTION

### Key learning and outcomes

*"Thanks to this programme, we get results. We have very good managers, very good HR managers, very good sales people. That's the strength of the company."* HEAD OF THE MEN'S SECTION IN A PARIS ZARA STORE

535 employees have been promoted to higher positions in Paris region Zara stores. Zara finds little need to recruit externally (reducing strongly the budget devoted to recruitment), and has improved talent retention. Strong employee involvement has also translated into improved quality of service for customers. Skill shortage gaps in the company have also been addressed.

Senior management and store management involvement were very important for the development of the scheme, and the provision of training. In-store training reduced any anxiety of 'further learning' that low-skilled employees may experience, and meant that attendance was improved.

*"We empower our managers to detect people in stores who have a progressive profile and who we can imagine leading a team...If the manager does not supervise the employee who has entered the potential programme well enough, the employee may become discouraged."*

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, ZARA, IN CHARGE OF SEVERAL STORES IN THE PARISIAN REGION

- Training takes place internally, on site and during working hours.

*"I really like the internal progression available to everyone. We do not ask for a training background, we teach everything in the field."* HEAD OF THE MEN'S SECTION IN A PARIS ZARA STORE

- Within the training period (which lasts on average between six and 18 months), performance reviews and evaluations are given every 15 days and performance feedback is provided.

- A trainee's level of management responsibility increases throughout the training period to review how employees cope in 'real-life' store situations.

*"They will have to perform placement missions in various stores and on different workstations. After 3-4 missions, they will be able to access vacant management positions."*

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, ZARA, IN CHARGE OF SEVERAL STORES IN THE PARIS REGION



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