



Sue Robertson with Beau Waters, Vice Captain - West Coast Eagles and Lindsay O'Sullivan, CCI WA - Chief Officer Business Solutions.

EDGE and the Hospitality Industry working together to

Employ Outside the Box

Earlier this month CCI WA and EDGE jointly hosted the launch of CCI Western Australia's "Employ Outside the Box" initiative, promoting the rewards of a diverse workforce and the business case for recruiting and retaining workers from a wide range of backgrounds, including those with disabilities.

The Australian Hotels Association also supports the Employ Outside the Box initiative. In a media release earlier this year AHA CEO Des Crowe stated, "Australian hotels have long been and remain a highly accessible workforce entry opportunity, and the AHA today welcomed the launch of employer guides on expanding workforce participation . . .

Hotels have always been a gateway to employment for a diverse cross section of the community. Many people begin their working lives as young people working behind a bar or serving meals in their local hotel, and the flexibility in working hours is welcomed by students, parents with young children and people seeking a second income . . .

With hotels in many parts of the country facing chronic labour shortages it is vital that every effort is made to maximise the productivity of the workforce. It makes business sense to employ 'outside the box' and create more diverse workplaces, not only when there are shortages but as part of an ongoing strategy."

In this edition of INSIDE EDGE, we profile just some of our success stories within the WA hospitality industry. These employees have already looked "OUTSIDE THE BOX".

Indeed, many are now asking "What labour shortage?"

Enjoy.

Sue Robertson
Managing Director
EDGE Employment Solutions

Jennifer Duncan goes the distance

It's not Jennifer Duncan's disability that makes her remarkable working in the hospitality industry, it's her longevity. In a sector where bosses often bemoan the transient nature of much of their workforce, the fact that Jennifer's held her job for three years makes her pretty special.

Employed as a bus-person at Crown Perth, Jennifer Duncan has proven she's adaptable, reliable and keen.

"She can do the job 110%," says Lee van Lenten, Crown Perth's Staff Dining Manager, and Jennifer's boss.

Jennifer's first job at the five-star complex was working in the Atrium restaurant. She did this successfully for two years, until the restaurant was closed for its multimillion dollar renovations. Jennifer was offered the chance to retrain elsewhere.

"With so much redevelopment taking place at the resort, staff are given the opportunity to move to different areas of the business, and Jenny was reallocated into the staff dining room," says Lee. "We were happy to take her on. Jenny has fitted into the team very nicely."

Jennifer's duties include refilling cereal, juice and condiments on offer for staff meals, wiping tables - basically, anything that makes the dining experience pleasant for her colleagues.

"I just like getting everything ready - like the hot foods, before all the people come in for their dinner" she told INSIDE EDGE.

Lee believes it's about finding the right person, then giving them appropriate duties.

"So long as their capabilities match the job, whether they're disabled or not shouldn't make that much of a difference," she says. "It's also about getting the people that want to do the job."

Jennifer works 12 hours a week, but is happy to do more, when required. EDGE Job Coordinator, Maja Dordic believes that flexibility has also been a bonus for Jennifer's employer.

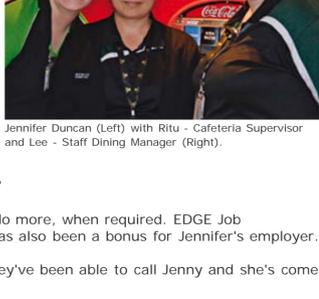
"At times when they've needed someone extra, they've been able to call Jenny and she's come in, no problems.

She's got great tenure, she's never sick, she's always on time, she never leaves early. Whatever tasks they give her, or whatever shifts she's given, they can count on her. They know they've got that reliability."

Jennifer, in turn, enjoys and appreciates the job - as well as the regular income.

Due to be married later this year, like many brides-to-be, she's currently putting every cent she earns towards her "big day".

"It's helping us pay the wedding off, it's good!" says Jennifer.



Jennifer Duncan (Left) with Ritu - Cafeteria Supervisor and Lee - Staff Dining Manager (Right).



Introducing James Szczyglak

James Szczyglak is a bright, well presented and politely spoken 23 year old who happily welcomes patrons to Crown Perth's Convention Centre and smoothly handles their enquiries.

Guests could include anyone from dignitaries like the Governor or the Premier of W.A., through to everyday mums and dads. James' enthusiasm for the position that he's held for almost five years is obvious.

"I'll greet anyone who comes through the glass doors with a smile," he says "I love working in a really big team which we do at Crown Perth. It's a really fun environment!"

Assistant Banquet Manager, Grant Humeston believes James has been so well supported that many colleagues don't even realise he has depression.

James makes a positive contribution to the team.

"With guests and clients, he's great!" says Grant "With the tasks and jobs he's given, he does them on time and well."

"Here at Crown's Convention Centre, I don't think people view James as having a disability. I think we all think he's capable of doing the job so we don't view him that way."

Matthew Mitter at Crown

If you've ever indulged in five-star luxury at Crown Perth, odds are, you will have marvelled at all the seemingly "little" touches that transform the experience from ordinary to luxurious - immaculately dressed staff, tasteful interior décor, crisp sheets to name just a few.

And, if you've had occasion to send items for laundering, odds are that you'll have been served by Matthew Mitter. Matthew has been a laundry attendant at Crown Perth for the past 4 and a half years. So for those trousers you got back, folded perfectly along the crease or the shirt hung "just so", you can probably thank Matthew.

Laundry Operations Manager, Doreen Cocks, says Matthew wasn't the first person with a disability to be employed in her team and she was open minded about his inclusion.

"I have a niece with disabilities and I know what she can do," she told INSIDE EDGE "I've previously worked with people with disabilities and I saw how it changed people's attitudes."

Doreen says she's been pleased to see Matthew taking the initiative more often, as his confidence has soared. That's also led to pleasing increases in his productivity.

"At first, he would only fold and sort clothes. Over the last twelve months he's ventured to do more."

Doreen's also seen changes in the way other staff-members interact with Matthew.

"My staff have learnt to ask him, not tell him what to do. It's a subtle change but in a positive way."

EDGE originally secured the position for Matthew. Over time, the number of hours he works has increased to 35 per week.

For Matthew, it's much more than "just" a job - this position also gives him independence. He lives alone, takes public transport wherever he wants and can afford to have fun - all as a result of working.

"It makes a lot of difference," he says "I can pay rent, I can go out, buy things."

More importantly, it makes him happy.

"I just like it I suppose, like working with the people, it's good."

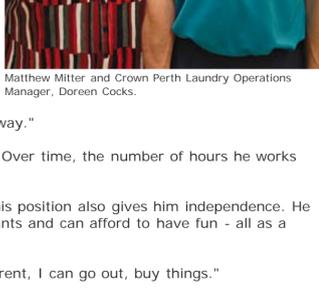
EDGE Job Coordinator Wayne Cook credits Doreen Cocks' positivity with the success of the collaboration.

"She's listened to what might benefit Matthew and at the same time, what might benefit Crown, so that's a win-win situation for both parties," he said.

He believes many employers don't realise that some people with disabilities have even higher productivity rates than their able-bodied colleagues.

"Show someone with a disability the A-Z of a procedure and six or months later, they'll still be following the procedure," says Wayne "With mainstream workers, if the work is of a repetitive nature, they'll say "I know the short cut" and as a result they could jeopardise the quality of a product."

Matthew Mitter tells INSIDE EDGE, that even after four and a half years, it's still a good feeling to be able to tell people he works at Crown Perth. He's keen to mark his next milestone" I haven't got my 5 year pin, yet!" he says with a laugh. Asked if he's looking forward to getting it, his answer's simple, but definite. "Absolutely!"



Matthew Mitter and Crown Perth Laundry Operations Manager, Doreen Cocks.

Five-star service from Terry Price

Terry Price won't forget the day he started working at "In Room Dining" at Perth's five-star Pan Pacific Perth hotel.

"The first person I served, I remember that, because he tipped me in American dollars," the 20 year old tells INSIDE EDGE.

Later that same day, a subsequent customer was also American - but unforgettable for a different reason. This guest was a celebrity - alternative heavy metal-glam rock American star, Marilyn Manson. Known for his androgynous and provocative style, when the male singer came to the door to collect his meal, he also didn't disappoint.



"He had all his makeup on!" remembers Terry.

Since then, Terry's served the Springboks rugby team on their last trip to Perth, even passed Tony Abbott in the foyer, on his way to work. He says he enjoys meeting people and serving them at the Pan Pacific Perth. Terry has worked there for almost a year.

Peter Knight, Human Capital and Development Officer at Pan Pacific Perth believes Terry's an asset to the team.

"Terry is one of a number of people with disability we have on staff. In our organisation we look at what people can do, not what they can't. He's working around 32 hours a week for us and doing a great job."

Terry's duties include preparing trays and delivering them to patrons rooms, polishing glasses and cutlery, as well as taking special care of hotel club members by providing fruit baskets, wine, even chocolates. He enjoys the tasks and likes his colleagues - what's more, he appreciates the opportunity.

"If you care about your job, you do your job properly, you take pride in what you do" says Terry.

It's a winning attitude perhaps born out of Terry's love for sport. A keen athlete, he trains 5 or 6 days a week, and is intending to compete in 200 metre and 400 metre events at the Australian National Championships later this year.

And while many people would balk at the idea of starting work at 6am, Terry's supervisor has scheduled his shifts, to suit both Terry and Pan Pacific Perth.

"She's got my roster all perfect," Terry says "She lets me do early morning shifts, so I can do training."

"Everyone is different, so we work with every staff member to create a flexible and supportive environment," says Peter Knight.

"It's a logical approach - happy employees ensure a productive, welcoming hotel."

EDGE Job Coordinator, Sarah Ditommaso believes her work with Terry has complemented the hotel's thorough training. But it's the Pan Pacific culture that gives employees a great start.

"It's very team-orientated, very supportive, almost like a little mini family, which I think is fantastic!" Sarah says.

"Not just for Terry, but for anybody starting a new job."

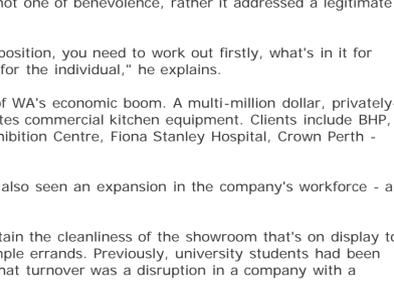
Terry's mum, Franca Price, credits the organisation with an increase in her son's confidence.

"I'm very grateful to Pan Pacific, they've given him a great opportunity," she says.

John McAndrew and Caterlink

"It's been fantastic. You step back and think - "Is it a community service that you feel grateful for?" But it's not. It's the fulfillment of being able to give an individual an opportunity to contribute or have ownership of something."

This is how Caterlink Project Manager Matthew Sharp describes the success of his company's decision to employ John McAndrew. The 31 year old was the first person with a disability to be employed by Caterlink.



John McAndrew with Matthew Sharp - Caterlink Project Manager.

Still, Matthew Sharp is quick to reinforce that John's appointment was not one of benevolence, rather it addressed a legitimate need within the company.

"When you're employing someone in a position, you need to work out firstly, what's in it for the business and secondly, what's in it for the individual," he explains.

Caterlink is one of the success stories of WA's economic boom. A multi-million dollar, privately-owned company, it supplies and fabricates commercial kitchen equipment. Clients include BHP, Rio Tinto, the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Fiona Stanley Hospital, Crown Perth - even IKEA boasts Caterlink kitchens.

Not surprisingly, all that prosperity has also seen an expansion in the company's workforce - a 30% increase over the past 12 months.

The company needed someone to maintain the cleanliness of the showroom that's on display to customers, as well as running other simple errands. Previously, university students had been employed but none stayed long - and that turnover was a disruption in a company with a proven history of retaining staff.

Someone suggested to management that employing a person with a disability might be a good "fit".

"The support for the idea was through the roof - it was amazing, the feedback!" says Matthew Sharp "We decided after the management meeting that we would address it with the entire team and the positive feedback from that was fantastic, so we knew from a team perspective we were bang on the money with what we were trying to achieve."

EDGE recommended John McAndrew. The rest, as they say, is history.

Matthew Sharp says he'd recommend other companies also look "outside the box".

"You would think there'd be a lot of businesses out there that'd be able to take advantage of these opportunities," he told INSIDE EDGE.

Now, John McAndrew works six hours a day, three days a week at Caterlink.

He enjoys his time working in the factory, polishing up the stainless steel and putting equipment together.

"Mostly, I just like the people, they're friendly," he says.

John's parents, with whom he still lives in Bateman, are also very pleased with the success of his appointment.

"John's always liked working," says Betty McAndrew, "to him, it's independence, it's contentment. You don't need to get him up in the morning, John's up and he bounces out the door - he'd always rather be half an hour early, than five minutes late!"

Mrs McAndrew describes Caterlink as "just like one big happy family!"

While there were government benefits that flowed from employing John, Matthew Sharp says they were never an incentive for this company.

"It was about finding the right person for the role," he says "The fact that we've employed somebody who's happy being here, has every intention of sticking around, is working really well for us."

The other plus - the knowledge that Caterlink has given someone who deserves it, a go.

"At the end of the day everyone wants to be a part of something bigger than themselves and to give somebody that opportunity to succeed and have wins and be independent. I think that's the most rewarding aspect of it" says Matthew Sharp.

Ten out of ten for Tyson at Tradewinds Hotel

Jenny McCabe wishes she could employ ten of Tyson Cox! Executive Housekeeper with AHS Hospitality, which services The Tradewinds Hotel in Fremantle, Jenny McCabe describes Tyson as an "awesome employee".

"He is always here, he's never late, he's a willing member of the team and he's just pleasant!" she says.

Tyson, who has an intellectual disability, was the first person with a disability employed in the department.

He loves the job he's held now for nearly two years and tells INSIDE EDGE that he's "very good at it".

Initially working in a pair, Tyson now completes all his housekeeping tasks on his own. Jenny believes he's revelled in the autonomy.

"From the day I put him by himself he has excelled."

"I clean bathrooms, make beds, empty the rubbish and all that" Tyson says, adding "and the people are very nice."

"The increase in Tyson's productivity has been amazing," says Kyla Hort, EDGE Job Coordinator.

Tyson's great work has been attracting attention from his bosses and colleagues.

First, Tyson was awarded an iPod for his performance, by AHS Hospitality.

"He was beside himself, it was beautiful," remembers Jenny McCabe.

Then, a couple of months ago, Tyson was also announced Runner - Up "Employee of the Month", by the Tradewinds Hotel team.

"I thought - very well done!" Tyson tells INSIDE EDGE.

Jenny McCabe believes Tyson Cox is a valuable member of her team.

"He's doing the work, he's doing a job for me and he does it very well," she says.



Tyson Cox with Jenny McCabe (Executive Housekeeper) and Kyla Hort from EDGE.