

Danish lessons on the schedule at Combitherm

Five years ago, Combitherm received the Integration Award from Sprogcenter Midt because “...the company takes great responsibility for integrating new Syrian citizens into the workplace and also stands out by its incredible inclusiveness.”

At the time, six Syrians were employed, and Danish lessons were an important part of the integration and helped with the daily understanding at Combitherm. And it still is. Combitherm currently has 33 employees, 14 of whom are Syrian, so Danish lessons are back on the agenda.

Language lessons strengthen communication

Combitherm has never been busier than in the past year, and at the same time, a process has been initiated to look at how we can reduce waste and streamline all production processes, which also means an increased focus on language, says Combitherm COO Torben Hallstrup:

“We’re going through a process where it will be important to communicate effectively and accurately about what’s happening in production. And we want all our employees, including our Syrian colleagues, to actively contribute to this process. Many have been in production for several years and have valuable insights about the specific tasks we need to hear.”

Language skills build confidence

The Syrian employees can speak Danish but are often reluctant to step forward and talk about professional topics, and Torben Hallstrup wants to do something about it.

“We need to improve their language skills to give them more confidence so they can more easily explain what they have observed in production.”

Abdul Rahman Mustafa, one of the 14 Syrian employees, says he gets shy when speaking Danish, especially if there are words he can’t remember, but the teaching pushes him in a good way.

“It’s good that we’re practising, and I hope I learn to speak more.”

The training has also been well received by Mohamad Ismat Hussein, who says:

“I’ve been in Denmark for eight years and have worked here at Combitherm for seven years. There are great bosses and colleagues here. In Syria, I worked as a clothing designer,” he says.

Mohamad Ismat Hussein has a wife and four children, three of whom live at home. The eldest daughter lives in Vejle and is studying to become a dentist.

“My whole family speaks Danish. It’s just me that’s not so good at it yet,” he explains.

Work-related language is in focus

Combitherm has received financial support from the Confederation of Danish Industry’s (DI) Danish Industry Competence Development Fund for the project, where the employees from Syria learn Danish once a week for 26 weeks.

“Furthermore, the company also pays part of it because some of the lessons are during working hours. We want the Syrian employees to become even more integrated into the company and thus into Danish society,” says Torben Hallstrup.

UCplus is responsible for the Danish lessons, so every Thursday, UCplus’ language consultant, Jette Kaspersen, moves into Combitherm’s canteen with conversation cards and other specific objects to get the conversation going among the Syrian employees.

The training focuses on strengthening and expanding employees’ language skills, and she often uses words and phrases from everyday work as a starting point.

All methods help to make the employees’ language better and more precise, improving communication among all Combitherm employees.

Read more about UCplus and the collaboration with Combitherm here:

Danish: <https://ucplusdansk.dk/combitherm-loefter-udenlandske-medarbejderes-sprogkompetencer/>

English: <https://ucplusdansk.dk/en/combitherm-strengthens-the-language-skills-of-their-foreign-employees/>

Further information

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