

Seeing the value of a good employee

Story by Lisa Clarke | Photos by Peter Wallis





You don't need 20/20 vision to see the value an employee with Down syndrome can bring to the team. This is certainly the case with the team at the Launceston Eye Institute, who say that employee Hayley David is reliable, dedicated and lights up the office.

“Hayley is a very dedicated worker, and we know that we can give her new jobs and she'll put a lot of time and effort into doing them correctly,” says Michelle Thurm, Administration Manager at the Institute.

“Hayley is really great to have working with us. Her attention to detail when we give her some work is really fantastic, and we know we can give her a job and it gets done once she's shown how to do it. She can do it really well and consistently all the time.”

Hayley has been working as an Administration Assistant for two years and takes on any challenge that comes her way.

“Some things I do are the mail, folding the brochures, feeding the fish, and packing the lollies,” Hayley says.

“My favourite part of the job is feeding the fish and watering the plants.”



We're really proud that Hayley is part of our team, and she fits in really well. We can all have fun together and involve her with everything that we do.





When Hayley first joined the team, the team looked at ways they could carve a role for her to both suit her skills, interests and goals, but also benefit the business.

“When Hayley first came to join us here at the Institute, we had a look around the business at all the jobs that our staff were doing. Then we took a little bit off everybody else’s roles and gave her tasks that she could do, which have now become her jobs. Slowly over time, we would find something else and keep adding to our list of jobs and skills that she can do,” Michelle explains.

“Hayley’s a very smart girl. Once she’s shown something, she’s very good at picking it up.”

She’s so good at her job in fact, she often finishes all her tasks ahead of schedule.

“The hardest part of my job is trying to find something to do when I’ve got nothing to do!” Hayley laughs.

“I like to be busy.”

Keeping Hayley busy is one of the biggest challenges Michelle says.

“If I’m on a day off I might forget to put some work out ready, and some others may not realise that Hayley needs some work. But she’s pretty good at trying to go and ask someone.”

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Hayley has a cheeky side, and Michelle says her sense of humour is one of the best things she adds to the team dynamic.

“Hayley is a great employee to have here. We enjoy having her company. She’s a fresh light in the building. She really brightens our day up. We can have a good laugh together.”

“I love working!” Hayley says.



“My best thing [about having a job is my] well-being. When I’m working [it makes] me feel important,” Hayley says.

If Michelle could give any advice to other employers, it would be to just give it a go.

“Give people with Down syndrome a chance,” Michelle says.

“They’re great employees. They’re very loyal and achieve a lot of work. They can do a lot of the things that some of your staff would have to do. And it frees those staff up to do other jobs.”

“You can adjust the tasks to suit the person, and there’s always work to do.”

What is job carving?



- Job carving is when you create a job that fits the skills and abilities of a worker.
- By designing a position from the employee’s perspective, you can think about how the person’s skills can contribute to the company rather than try to fit the person’s skills into current job descriptions.
- Creating customised roles enable people with a disability to maximise their contributions.

